

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN ITALIAN CULTURAL STUDIES

Volume I: Definition, Theory,
and Accented Practices

Edited by Graziella Parati



FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY PRESS
Madison • Teaneck

Published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press
Co-published with The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

10 Thornbury Road, Plymouth PL6 7PP, United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
<insert CIP data>

TM The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

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ITALY MADE IN JAPAN

Occidentalism, Self-Orientalism, and Italianism in
Contemporary Japan

Toshio Miyake

I. INTRODUCTION¹

In the modern age, Occidentalism as a constellation of discourses and practices based upon the notion of “the West” has played a hegemonic role in the configuration of collective identity and alterity. The imagined geography of “the West” has been one of the most effective in inscribing the whole world and humanity along hierarchic and fluid lines of inclusion and exclusion, encompassing global relations of power in geopolitical contexts, and spatializing knowledge practices in geocultural spheres. Although critical engagements that question notions of “the West” have increased since the 1990s among postcolonial studies and cultural studies, “the West” continues to be reproduced as an almost naturalized and self-evident term or as an unmarked assumption.

This paper aims toward a further understanding of modern and contemporary Occidentalism by highlighting two crucial aspects which have so far been neglected in critical theories. The first aspect is the interrelational, intersubjective, and complicit dynamics between hegemony (“the West”) and subalternity (“the East,” “the Rest”). The purpose here is to overcome the common assumption of Occidentalism as a monological and one-sided order exercised only by the dominant side upon the dominated. The second aspect is the heterogeneous articulation of different

historical "Wests" in "the West" in order to question the homogeneous notion of a unitary and coherent "West."

The chapter focuses on the sudden success in Japan of the Made in Italy from the 1990s in relation to Occidentalism, in which Italy has recently elevated to the rank of the most attractive foreign country among Japanese women and youth.³ Occidentalism in Japan offers an exemplifying case of how the manner in which "Easterners" see "the West" has been historically entangled and complicit in how modern Euro-American perspectives have been able to define "the East" (Orientalism) and to impose this cultural cartography in order to determine the others' own identification process (self-Orientalism). On the other hand, the surprising popularity of "Italy" in contemporary Japan suggests the strategic relevance of the Italian looking-glass self as a marginal "West" which enables mediation of deep rooted and contradictory pro-Western and anti-Western tensions.

2. FOR A CRITICAL OCCIDENTALISM

Implementing Edward Said's influential criticism of Orientalism and its essentialized notions of "the East," since the 1990s the very category of "the West" itself has become an object of enquiry in postcolonial studies and cultural studies.³ One of the main issues at stake is how to historicize, deconstruct, and relativize the concept of "the West" and the related Eurocentric or Americacentric geocultural and geopolitical order. However, not only critical investigation of "the West," but also the term "Occidentalism" itself has gained in popularity and has been used in various contexts and for different purposes, thus contributing to terminological opacity.

This study employs the term "Occidentalism" based on two principle assumptions. The first is an inclusive meaning of Occidentalism as the whole range of discourses and practices related to the so-called "West" in terms of identity and alterity. Every kind of discourse or practice contributes to the idea of the existence of something as "the West" or something as "Western," setting aside whether it is a pro-Western or anti-Western discourse, or a Euro-American or non Euro-American discourse.⁴ The second assumption is that Occidentalism is a collective

identification process which has been foundational to Eurocentric modernity and subjectivity, beginning from its colonial expansion in the late fifteenth century, and which has been extended to an America-centric modernity in the twentieth century.⁵ Occidentalism thus is not a simple reversed Orientalism, as widely used in journalistic rhetoric, and limited to anti-Western Islamic ideologies, but, more radically, Occidentalism is the condition of possibility of Orientalism itself.⁶

However, there is still a strong tendency to theorize Occidentalism as a monological and one-sided domination in critical theory, or as a pluralized assembly of unrelated images about "the West" in the social sciences. Both of these approaches risk contributing to the very reproduction of "the West" in terms of an essentialized, homogeneous, and unitary concept. This chapter suggests that there is still insufficient knowledge about the complex processuality of Occidentalism which enables it to reproduce itself in different periods and in widely different regions.

3. OCCIDENTALISM AS HEGEMONY

In order to overcome these limitations, two aspects which are almost neglected in critical theories of Occidentalism will be noted. The first perspective is Occidentalism as hegemony. Occidentalism should not be addressed only as a general intersection of identity, power, and culture, but more specifically as a hegemonic process according to Antonio Gramsci's classical notion.⁷ This means that the focus should be on the interdependent dynamics which are intrinsic to any hegemony in order to pay attention to the interactive and mutual relations of hegemony and subalternity. In this regard, critical investigations of Occidentalism and self-Orientalism in modern Japan have highlighted many crucial aspects of interrelational identification and othering processes.⁸

The following passage from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1929–35) stands out for the pioneering questioning of the very concept of "the West" as an epistemological category as well as for suggesting Japanese self-Orientalism as a consequence of modern Eurocentric hegemony.

§ 25. *The objectivity of the real.* In order to understand precisely what significance this concept might have, it seems to me opportune to dwell

on the example of the concepts of "East" and "West", which never cease to be "objectively real" even though when analyzed they turn out to be nothing more than a "historical" or "conventional construct." . . . It is obvious that East and West are arbitrary and conventional (historical) constructions, since (outside of real history) every spot on earth is simultaneously East and West. Japan is probably the Far East not only for the European but also for the American from California, and even for the Japanese himself, who, through English political culture, might call Egypt the Near East, which from his viewpoint should be the West, etc. Furthermore, the purely historical nature of the significance attached to these terms can be seen from the fact that the words "East" and "West" have now acquired supernumerary meaning and even refer to relations between whole civilizations.⁹

This reflection is also important because by integrating this perspective with his more expounded notion of hegemony articulated between social groups, it makes clear that Occidentalism is not reducible to a one-sided imperialist rule exercised by dominant and powerful actors, or otherwise, to a unilateral repression suffered by the dominated side against its own interests. Before focusing only on a counter-hegemonic, subversive, hybrid, and liberating praxis and theory, more critical attention is needed to the active consent exercised by the subaltern themselves: there is no effective hegemony without the active contribution of the subaltern. It is this highly interactive and complicit process between the dominant and the subaltern sides that makes hegemony possible and leads finally to its reproduction also without the use of direct force. This indication remains revealing today, especially in situations of decreasing direct coercion, where critical theorists continue to confront the reproduction of essentialized and hierarchized differences in terms of gender, ethnicity/race, class, region, nation, or civilization.

4. DOING OCCIDENTALISM

The mutual processuality of Occidentalism, Orientalism, and self-Orientalism could be summed up as follows. Occidentalism is a self-definition in the modern age as "the West," first in Europe and then in the United States, articulated through a cumulative intersection of paradigms such

as reason, science, progress, universalism, individualism, masculinity, white race, and others. As Said has shown, this self-definition has been configured by a hierarchic contrast to an other-definition about what is or should be other to itself (Orientalism).¹⁰ Depending on context and period, this other could be "the East," "the Rest," or "Islam." Being mainly imagined as antithetical to Euro-American modernity it will be or must be reduced to nonmodern paradigms such as tradition, emotionality, stasis, particularism, groupism, femininity, coloured race, and others.

The crucial point is that this identification and othering process in order to become hegemonic implies not only the coercive imposition of this imaginary geography on the subaltern, but it relies also on the acceptance and active consent by the subaltern themselves. This applies both to the other-definition of "the West" as cultural other (Occidentalism), as well as to the self-definition of itself as "the East" or "the Rest" (self-Orientalism), in both cases following and reproducing the criteria articulated by Euro-American Occidentalism. The result is a mutual and intersubjective process, a sort of mirror game producing specular identity and alterity representations, which contribute to enforcing each other.

5. OCCIDENTALISM IN JAPAN

Occidentalism in modern Japan offers an exemplifying historical case of the interrelational process of hegemony and subalternity, even in conditions of minor or absent material coercion. Since its establishment in 1868, the nation-state Japan has never been militarily or politically colonized. On the contrary, it has become of itself a major imperialist power due to its rapid modernization in the late nineteenth century by adopting systematically Euro-American institutions, technologies, and knowledge. In the following decades (1895–1942), aggressive expansionism brought the colonization and military conquest of major parts of Southeast Asia and Pacific Asia (Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and elsewhere). After tragic defeat in World War II Japan emerged again as an industrial, financial, and technological superpower, becoming second in the world in terms of GDP in the 1970s. Despite this material prosperity, and leaving aside the frequent oscillations between pro-Westernism and anti-Westernism,

Japan has never been able to exonerate itself from Euro-American Occidentalism and its essentialized cartography of “the West” and “the East.”¹¹ Even in the twenty-first century, borrowing from philosopher Sakai, this imaginary geography remains the defining reference of collective alterity and identity:

What gives the majority of Japanese the characteristic image of Japanese culture, is still its distinction from the so-called West. . . . The loss of the distinction between the West and Japan would result in the loss of Japanese identity in general.¹²

In other words, the interiorization of the Euro-American gaze as the significant other has been compelling in order to know and recognize itself as well as to know and recognize the others. However, this kind of cultural self-colonization would not have been possible without its own strategic advantages. Since the 1980s, critical investigation on cultural nationalism in postwar Japan has pointed out the complicity between the most influential Euro-American specialists of Japan and Japanese culturalists in jointly establishing the dominant idea of a homogeneous and unique “Japan” antithetical to a generalized “West.”¹³ Sakai has shown how the modern *schema of co-figuration* between a universalistic “West” juxtaposed to a particularistic “East” has been effective in evoking an ethno-linguistic and cultural entity known as “Japan.”¹⁴ Moreover, sociologist Iwabuchi has indicated that national identity in modern Japan has been configured inside a triadic scheme, by strategically positioning itself between two essentialized poles of “the West” (Europe, the United States) and “the East” (Asia).¹⁵ The resulting nationalistic discourses have been proven to be extremely functional both internally, in order to mobilize social cohesion and consent, as well as externally in occidentalist discourses to affirm cultural exclusivity from “the West”, and in orientalist discourses to advocate superiority over “the East” (Orientalism).¹⁶

6. ITALIANISM IN JAPAN: HISTORICAL MARGINALITY

The second perspective suggested in this chapter in order to understand Occidentalism is the need to differentiate the notion of “the West” which is usually assumed as somehow homogeneous and coherent in occidentalist discourses. There are many “Wests” in the “West,” not only

a general European or an American one. In this regard, Italianism in Japan offers a very revealing and yet not addressed perspective.¹⁷

In modern Japan, the idea of Italy has had a marginal role in the articulation of the notion of "the West," which has been modeled mainly on Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States.¹⁸ This is due partly to limited contacts between Japan and Italy, except during the brief military alliance of the Tripartite Pact during World War II. But it is also a consequence of the very interiorization of the hegemonic gaze of European Occidentalism, which had already defined Italy as a southern and less developed country in respect to the supposed founding paradigms of European modernity. In many ways, this idea of Italy corresponds to the representations diffused by middle and north European literary and artistic traditions in accordance with the established experience of the *Grand Tour*.¹⁹ In other words, this is the alluring image of the *Bel Paese*, framed by insisting on its premodern aspects: ancient Rome, Renaissance art, beautiful landscapes, and spontaneous and cheerful people. But for the very same reason, Italy can be dismissed for its present by insisting on its supposed non-modernity in terms of industrialization, rationality, efficiency, and other features of society.²⁰ Looking at the first accounts of Italy by Japanese travelers in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, it is revealing how their gaze was directly framed by English, French, and German readings, but never by Italian texts.

The following is a passage from the diary of Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), arguably the most acclaimed modern Japanese writer, who went to London in the early twentieth century to study English literature:

I thought I saw a short and peculiarly ugly man coming toward me along the street, only to realize that it was myself, reflected in a mirror. It has only been since coming to this place that I realized we really are yellow.²¹
(London, January 5, 1901)

Before arriving in London, Sōseki passed through Italy where he appreciated classical architecture and museums in Naples and Genoa. It is very revealing that in this stage, Italian passengers traveling with him in a train from Turin are described as "hairy barbarians" (Japanese *ketōjin*).

I spent a good deal of time wandering around in a daze, led by the porter. In the end I squeezed in among some hairy barbarians.²² (Turin, October 20, 1900)

Only two months later, the English looking-glass self would induce self-recognition of himself as short, ugly, and yellow. It exposes the European mirror as a device of ambivalent inscription, which enables a superiorizing modernization as well as an inferiorizing racialization. But it also shows the different effects induced by the Italian mirror.

The situation of scarce interest for Italy, or at the best, mediated by European or American perspectives, has continued almost unchanged until recent years. After World War II, direct contacts with Italy, academic scholars of Italy, and students of Italian language have all increased, as has the differentiation of interests regarding Italy. However, the prevailing notion of Italy, especially in common sense, has been still very ambivalent: superior-seeming because it is "Western," but also inferior-seeming because of its supposed premodern features (mafia, corruption, political instability, economical inefficiency, and others).

Still, in 1986, according to a loose survey conducted by *Dime*, a magazine that targeted young Japanese businessmen, Italians were voted as the stupidest people in the world. The reasons were that Italians are too euphoric, they always go on strike, the women are ugly, the men always go girl-hunting, and they always eat and never work.²³ Twenty years later, in 2006, a more positive image emerged from a comparative survey commissioned by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan. Compared to other "Westerners" (Americans, English, Germans, French, and Spanish), Italians are considered now the most kind, creative, and sexy, even if the most emotive and irresponsible, making Italy the place where most would like to live.²⁴ In 2008, a national survey by NHK (Japan's Public Broadcasting Organization), elevated Italy to the second most-loved foreign country in the world, second only to Australia, and rising from twelfth place in 1983. Actually, Italy is the most-loved country when considering only female and young respondents.²⁵ At present, consumer analyses continue to identify Italy as the most attractive destination for travel among all age groups and both genders.²⁶

What happened during these twenty years that apparently changed ideas in Japan about Italy?

7. THE "ITALIAN BOOM"

Starting in the early 1990s and reaching its peak around 1997, an explosion of Italy's popularity occurred in Japan. Gastronomy, fashion, de-

sign, *Serie A* soccer, package holidays to Italy, and the Italian language, have been the driving elements of this sudden, and ongoing popularity. The reasons for this phenomenon are related, as in other countries, to the success of the "Made in Italy" brand in the 1980s, when Italian output, especially in the fields of fashion and design, gained excellence in international commercial competition. On the other hand, this success has reached unparalleled levels in Japan, thanks to contingent intersections of specific internal conditions.

The "Italian boom" in Japan was in the beginning an urban, female, and mainly consumerist phenomenon. It was activated and amplified by fashion and lifestyle magazines, which play a dominant role in the creation of new trends and in the instruction of consumer choices.²⁷ Behind this boom, there has been above all the restructuring of the labor market and the immersion of women as workers and consumers in the 1980s, who, when compared to male workers, hold much more autonomy regarding leisure time, disposable income and personal savings. The new purchasing power of young women as regards specifically to Italian products was further enhanced by the dramatic increase of the Japanese currency in relation to the Italian lire, which almost trebled in the early 1990s. This favorable exchange rate made package tours to Italy and shopping in Milan, Florence and Venice a very affordable and popular activity.

Another specific and curious aspect has been the popularity of Italian language lessons. This contributed to transforming Girolamo Panzetta (b. 1962), from Avellino and a language instructor for an Italian language program broadcast on NHK from 1991 to 2005, into a media star. He brilliantly exploited the stereotype of the Neapolitan man as *mangiapizza* and *mangiapasta*, and as a joyful scamp and fashion-conscious Latin lover to make it his trademark. First, he spectacularized the boring formats of TV language programs, and, second, he deployed his popularity to become an omnipresent columnist, an author of tens of books on Italian culture, and a successful model for TV commercials and magazine advertisements. At present, this celebrity has made him the most famous Italian in Japan, just behind Leonardo da Vinci.²⁸

However, the most prolific, popular, and authoritative voice on Italy has been the writer Shiono Nanami (b. 1937), whose books became standard readings in the 1990s for everyone traveling to Italy.²⁹ Shiono first gained attention thanks to her novelized biographies of historical figures in the Italian Renaissance, like Cesare Borgia and Niccolò Machiavelli, and her bestselling books on the history of Venice. These were

followed by a monumental work of historical narrative about ancient Rome (*Romajin no monogatari*, *Stories of the Romans*, 1992–2005), in fifteen volumes, which sold about eight million copies.³⁰

Investigation of Shiono's textual Occidentalism, including her numerous essays in influential magazines of literary criticism and geopolitics (*Bungei shunjū*, *Gaikō forumu*), uncovers a split West, both essentialized.³¹ One premodern West is valued as exemplary and found in the Italian past, the Roman Empire and the Renaissance. These are highly appreciated for their polytheism which supposedly enabled a rational, realist, free and inclusivist spirit directed toward the commonwealth (*res publica*). On the other hand, a modern West (mainly French and American) is considered to be at present in a state of crisis. It is disapproved for being rooted in Christian or Enlightened monotheism, which caused an absolutist, exclusivist, idealist spirit, favouring false illusions of equality, individualism, and democracy.

Italy would be magnificent in its continuity with the past, but at present it is described as mainly amusing and sensual. Japan is considered as essentially polytheist, including the author Shiono. This would give a curious hermeneutic advantage compared to modern Euro-Americans, supposed to be monotheistic, in order to understand better the original spirit of ancient Romans like Julius Caesar, and as a consequence, to learn how to emulate their imperial and hegemonic efforts. This singular interpretation about Japan's hegemonic potentiality and leadership on the global scale for the twenty-first century has not only sold well, it has also been enthusiastically received among the conservative political, bureaucratic and corporate establishment.

8. OCCIDENTALISM AND ITALIANISM: THE MARGINAL CENTRALITY OF "ITALY"

The success of Shiono's Occidentalism in the last two decades highlights a deep-rooted configuration of Italianism in Japan, putting aside more ephemeral market trends. Italy has become more and more attractive because, on the one hand, it is perceived as the cradle of the much loved and feared Western civilization. On the other hand, Italy does not cause so much subjection as the United States, England, or Germany because

its present is perceived as less developed or inferior compared to Japanese modernity. That is why all of Italy's most popular and trendy icons are, and ought to be, somehow premodern and invested with some traditional sense of authenticity: the family-style or romanticized cuisine, the handicraft quality of fashion or design, the ancient monuments, the Renaissance art, and amusing people like Panzetta.

The prevailing notion of Italy continues to be mainly configured as a kind of exoticized and orientalized West framed by an ambivalent process of both superiorization of its past and inferiorization of its present. It is the very ambivalent configuration involved in this othering process and the self-assuring results that proves to be particularly attractive. "Italy" is seductive because it allows Japan's cultural identity to put itself in a strategically favorable position with regard to the difficult and deep rooted tensions of pro-Westernism and anti-Westernism.

Of course, there are many other more or less diverging and conflicting voices about Italy, ranging from passionate admiration expressed in book titles like "How to Become Italian" or "Why Italians are Happy," to more racist attitudes, which are particularly rampant in Internet forums with such discussion titles as "It is Ridiculous to Consider Italians as White."³² However, in addition to these extreme positions, worthy of mention is an increasing appreciation also of Italy's modernity *sui generis* and its enabling life-style.³³ This perspective has been present among left wing scholars, attracted in the past by Antonio Gramsci, Eurocommunism, Antonio Negri, and L'Ulivo, but has further merged in recent years with a more general dissatisfaction against Japanese-style or American-style modernity. The ongoing economic recession since the 1990s and the growing awareness about the social costs caused by Japan's postwar modernization, has favored interest in Italian administrative decentralization, regional differentiation, bar culture, slow food, and agritourism. The Italian past and tradition are still appreciated, but most important, its present is not necessarily judged according to an assumed superior Japanese or American modernity. Italy's *different* modernity is arguably becoming a receptacle both of nostalgic projections of a more authentic and relaxed lifestyle, as well as of critical enquiry for an alternative and sustainable modernity.

It must be added that this kind of perspective, even if widespread among scholars and specialists of Italy, remains still fragmented and a

minor voice compared to the prevailing discourse of Italy as an oriental-ized West. Of particular interest for a critical Occidentalism is that in contrast to the hierarchic and essentializing configuration of the latter, the perspective of Italy as an alternative modernity is inspired by a more unstable, more critical and less assuring assumption of Japanese identity and modernity. This allows a more hybrid and fluid identification and othering process which suggests the possible emergence in the future of a more de-essentialized discourse of "the West," "Italy" and "Japan."³⁴

9. CONCLUSION

The "Italian boom" in contemporary Japan has been surprising not only because of its dramatic intensity as a consumerist boom in the early 1990s, but also for its ongoing and deep-rooted duration, establishing Italy as the most-loved foreign country among women and young people. Leaving aside the problematic issue of the intrinsic quality of Italian food, fashion, people or culture to explain this success, this popularity may not be so surprising if related to historical identification and othering processes in Japan framed by Occidentalism. "Italy" as an orientalized "West" proves to be at present the most suited cultural other in order to satisfy self-assuring identification and mediation drives in the face of the so much loved/feared hegemonic "West."

The enquiry about Italianism in Japan needs further and more detailed research, especially in regards to the evident differentiation in terms of gender and age of the "Italian boom," as well as in relation to different media discourses.³⁵ Moreover, two open issues are crucial for improving a polyphonic comprehension of the interrelational dynamic of Occidentalism and Italianism which are becoming increasingly relevant in the global age.

The first is the hegemonic mediation of the American perspective in the construction of the notion of Italy. In the case of Japan, after World War II, the country was reconstructed under the dominant political and cultural influence of the United States. This means that all prevailing images of Italy were originally made in the United States. Pizza and pasta were introduced by Italian-American soldiers, and *espresso* and bar culture are now popularized by Starbucks. *Roman Holiday* remains

one of the most-loved films, and other Hollywood films, such as *The Godfather*, enjoyed tremendous success. What, then, is the relation between "Italy" made in Japan and "Italy" made in the United States?

The second and interdependent issue is the relation between "Italy" made in Italy and "Italy" made in Japan. In other words, how does the self-definition of cultural identity in Italy interact with the definition of Italian cultural otherness in Japan? What are the relations between Italian institutional nation branding and its reception in Japan, as could be seen during promotional events like "Italia in Giappone" (2001, 2003, 2009) organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Fondazione Italia-Giappone and The Italian Chamber of Commerce?

One final suggestion for a critical Occidentalism is that despite the historical specificity of "the West" and its differentiation as "Italy" in Japan, together with similar notions in other non-Euro-American contexts, they may be all constitutive and complicit to the global reproduction of Occidentalism. The so called notion of "the West" in order to prove hegemonic needs to be both reproduced as a self-definition in Euro-American contexts as well as an other-definition in the more or less subaltern rest of the world.

NOTES

1. This study has been conducted at Kyoto University (Department of Sociology, 2008-10) thanks to a postdoctoral fellowship offered by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. It is a further development and integration of a journal article and a book chapter published previously: Toshio Miyake, *Occidentalismi. La narrativa storica giapponese* (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2010), 95-116; Toshio Miyake, "Il boom dell'Italia in Giappone: riflessioni critiche su Occidentalismo e Italianismo," *Between* no.1, (May 2011), accessed June 25, 2011, <http://ojs.unica.it/index.php/between/article/view/100/72>.

2. See NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, ed., *Nihonjin no suki na mono* (What Japanese People Like (Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2008), 113-16.

3. See Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 275-333; Fernando Coronil, "Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1996): 51-87;

Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Couze Venn, *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity* (London: Sage, 2000); Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Politics, Culture and History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

4. See James G. Carrier, *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); and Bonnett.

5. See Hall; see also Venn.

6. See Coronil; see also Mignolo.

7. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975).

8. See Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (Oxford-London: Nissan Institute-Croom Helm, 1986); Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan* (London: Routledge, 1992); Kōichi Iwabuchi, "Complicit exoticism: Japan and its other," *Continuum* 8, no. 2 (1994): 49–82; Naoki Sakai, *Translation & Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

9. See Antonio Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci. Prison Notebooks*, Volume III, trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 176; Italian ed., Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* (1975), Q. 7, 874 (see also Q. 11, 1419–20).

10. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

11. For a genealogy of the imagined geography of "the West" and "the East" in Japan, see Toshio Miyake, "Setyō ('Occidente') e tōyō ('Oriente') in Giappone. Breve esplorazione di una geografia immaginaria," *Atti del XXIX Convegno degli Studi Giapponesi-Firenze 2005* (2006): 255–68.

12. Naoki Sakai, "ad vocem «the West»," in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*, ed. Sandra Buckley (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 564.

13. See Dale; see also Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto, and Yoshio Sugimoto, eds., *Images of Japanese Society: a Study in the Structure of Social Reality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); see also Yoshino.

14. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*.

15. See Iwabuchi, "Complicit exoticism."

16. For the Japanese Orientalism of "Asia," see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Kang Sang-jung, *Orientalizumu no kanata e: Kindai bunka hihan* (Beyond Orientalism: Critics on Modern Culture) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996); and Kōichi Iwabuchi, *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

17. As with Occidentalism, the term "Italianism" is not used here in a conventional way, but in a very wide meaning including the whole range of discourses and practices related to Italy in terms of identity and alterity. Every discourse or practice contributes to the idea of the existence of something as "Italy" or something as "Italian."

18. For the most comprehensive collection of essays regarding historical relations between Italy and Japan, see Adolfo Tamburello, ed., *Italia-Ciappone 450 anni*, 2 vols. (Roma-Napoli: Isiao-Iuo, 2003).

19. See Cesare De Seta, "L'Italia nello specchio del 'Grand Tour,'" in *Storia d'Italia*, Vol. 5, *Il paesaggio*, ed. Cesare De Seta (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), 125–263.

20. See John Agnew, "The Myth of Backward Italy in Modern Europe," in *Revisioning Italy: National Identity and Global Culture*, ed. Beverly Allen and Mary Russo (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 23–42.

21. Natsume Sōseki, in Donald Keene, *Modern Japanese Diaries* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 219.

22. Ibid., 217. "Hairy barbarians" translates the original Japanese word *ketōjin* (lit. hairy Tang people), a derogatory term for Chinese and other Asian people which became common after the subjection of the Chinese Empire to British colonialism and its defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895.

23. The survey was conducted by journalist Enokido Ichirō among sixty respondents, who were asked to indicate the most stupid people in the world and the reasons for their choice (*Dime*, Nov. 6, 1986). It was met by harsh protest both from the Italian Embassy in Tokyo as well as from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

24. Survey commissioned to the agency NetRatings and based on 5000 respondents. See D'Emilia, "Mad For Italy," in *Viste dalla Camera*, special edition, June/July (2006): 33–43 (Tokyo: The Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan).

25. The survey was conducted in 2007 and totaled 3600 respondents age 16 and above. Italy ranked first as a whole among female respondents. Among the male respondents, Italy was first in the 16–29 age group, third in the 30–59 age group, and seventh in the over-60 age group. See NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 113–16.

26. See Brand Databank and Nikkei Design, eds., eds. *Sanmannin no shōhi: sedai x seibetsu x burando de kiru* (Consumption of 30,000 persons by Age, Gender, and Brand) (Tokyo: NikkeiBPsha, 2009), 196–201. It should be noted that the top ranking desire to travel to Italy is not equivalent to real travel,

which is conditioned by financial, working, and family criteria. In 2002, Italy as a real travel destination ranked sixth (849,000), far behind to top ranked United States (5,896,000), among Japanese travelers. See Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, *Kankō hakusho* 2004 (White Paper on Tourism 2004) (Tokyo: Kokuritsu insatsukyoku, 2004), 9.

27. The magazine *Hanako*, a trendsetting publication in the 1990s targeting young, metropolitan, white-collar women, had the most prominent role in marketing the first consumerist fad for Italian cuisine. In its April 1990 issue, *Hanako* featured a special issue on the dessert tiramisù, which became a sort of national obsession for much of that year. It inaugurated the boom of Italian food as stylish, young, and informal, and contributed removing conservative and formal French cuisine as the defining hallmark of "Western" food in Japan. For an ethnographic study of Italian food in Japan, see Rossella Ceccarini, *Pizza and Pizza Chefs in Japan: A Case of Culinary Globalization* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2011); and Merry I. White, "Ladies who Lunch: Young Women and the Domestic Fallacy in Japan," in *Asian Food: the Global and the Local*, ed. Katarzyna Cwiertka and Boudewijn Walraven (Richmond, Surrey, U.K.: Curzon Press, 2002), 63–75.

28. See Chris Betros, "Italian dressing: Fashion and food make Girolamo Panzetta one of Japan's most famous Italians," *Metropolis*, issue 710, November 2, 2007, accessed April 20, 2010, <http://archive.metropolis.co.jp/tokyo/710/faces.asp>.

29. Shiono has published since 1968 more than forty books of historical narrative, fictional biographies, and essays, mainly regarding Italy's past and present. She has received the Suntory Literary Prize (1981), the Women's Literature Prize (1988), the Shinchō Literary Prize (1993), and the Shiba Ryōtarō Prize (1999). Recently, she has received awards from both the Italian government (Grande Ufficiale Order of Merit, 2002) and the Japanese government (Person of Merit, 2007).

30. For a more systematic study on Shiono, see Toshio Miyake, *Occidentalismi. La narrativa storica giapponese* (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2010), 117–245.

31. Even if scarcely acknowledged among critical theorists, the perception of a double West in Japan is becoming current in common language as seen in the increasing semantic differentiation between the Japanese term *seiyō* (lit. "the West") and *ōbei* (lit. Europe and the United States). The former indicates a traditional and "cultural" Europe rooted in scholastic and academic acculturation, while the latter evokes a more modern and familiar United States framed by mass media. See Yuiko Fujita, *Cultural Migrants from Japan: Youth, Media, and Migration in New York and London* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 19–70.

32. See Kaori Shiina, *Itariajin ni naru hōhō* (How to Become Italian) (Kyoto: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2002); Fumiji Yamashita, *Naze Itariajin wa shiawase nanoka* (Why are Italians Happy?) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2003); 2channel Internet forum, *Itariajin ga hakujin to okashii darō* (It is Ridiculous to Consider Italians as White), accessed April 20, 2010, <http://academy6.2ch.net/test/read.cgi/geo/1241350364/>.

33. Beginning with businessman Osade Yoshinori's *Seikatsu daikoku Itaria* (Italy, the Great Country of Lifestyle, 1993) (Tokyo: Nihonbōeki shinkōkikō-JETRO), the Italian way of life became a popular topic in the publishing world. It was followed in 1997 by the surprising success of the Japanese translation of Italian sociologist Francesco Alberoni's *L'Ottimismo* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1994), which sold more than one million copies.

34. Among more critical and nuanced representations of Italy, worthy of note are sociologist Itō Kimio's *Hikari no teikoku/metkyū no kakumei: kagami no naka no Itaria* (Empire in the Light/Revolution in the Labyrinth: Italy in the Mirror) (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1993) and the autobiographical works on Italy by multicultural writer Suga Atsuko, *Suga Atsuko zenshū* (The Complete Works of Suga Atsuko), 8 vols. (Tokyo: Kawadeshobōshinsha, 2007).

35. This issue will be addressed in my forthcoming research project: *Beyond "the West" and "the East": Occidentalism, Orientalism, and Self-Orientalism in Italy-Japan Relations* (FP 7 Marie Curie IIF, Ca' Foscari University Venice, 2011–13).

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