

**Australia, Japan and Orientalism:**

**Examining common symptom – inferiority complex – of “Natural Partners”**

“Natural Partners” – the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, expressed the significance of the relationship between Australia and Japan in this term last year. Needless to say, over a hundred year relationship between the two countries was not always a peaceful one and some differences, disputes and resentments existed. Even today, some tensions remain. Because of this fact, the term sounds as if Downer, or more broadly the nation, Australia, has completely overcome those issues. Although we need to put a reservation on this interpretation, maybe he was right in using the term. In the present context of international relations, specifically issues concerning Asia, Australia and Japan look close and similar as ever.

The aim of this paper is to present an inferiority complex in relation to the West shared by Australia and Japan which is making them look and themselves to believe that they were “Natural Partners”. The paper will first examine how the concept of “orientalism” by Edward W. Said was received and understood in both countries’ intellectual circle respectively and observe how and where in the world, which Said described as a place where the West’s domination over the East is in practice, they situated themselves. Then the focus will be on their subjectivity to the West which becomes clear from their reading of Said. This feature of Australia and Japan is underpinning their ambiguous relationship with their neighbouring Asian countries.