

## 要 旨

### D. G. Ritchie and Oscar Wilde: The Will to Construction in *fin-de-siècle* Britain

Akihiro Machimoto

In vindication of state interference against Herbert Spencer, who put his faith in the free market's capacity to generate spontaneous order, D. G. Ritchie, a British Idealist philosopher and a New Liberal theorist, introduced a viewpoint that can be called the "will to construction" into his social theory. This concept also applies to Oscar Wilde's philosophy of art. A contemporary of Ritchie, Wilde earned a first class in *Literae Humaniores* from Oxford in 1878 along with Ritchie of Balliol College. In both these Oxford collectivists' writings, a reflection of the influence of Benjamin Jowett, T. H. Green, and Arnold Toynbee, pervades a form of thinking whereby it is asserted that our ordinary, lower self, empirical and utilitarian—saturated with the spirit of industrialism, commercialism, and utilitarianism—should *self-consciously* be subordinated to our ideal, higher self—sometimes associated, as in Isaiah Berlin's criticism on positive freedom, with the transcending moral state.

Thereafter, however, Ritchie and Wilde reintroduced the principles of naturalism, evolutionism, and utilitarianism in the higher sphere into their theories of society and art. Their versions of evolution, for example, include consciousness and human contrivances such as language, social institutions, and efforts of social reform as constituting parts of higher nature. In their understanding, pleasure is not an object of blind and brutish pursuit, but it is something that is coextensive with self-realization defined idealistically. These principles' reimportation functions as a defense of individual revolt, that is, as an antidote to an overpowering State allegedly consequent to Idealist thinking.