PRODUCTIONS OF CULTURE IN JAPAN

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Preface

The reading group/workshop on modern Japanese intellectual history, composed of advanced graduate students in the departments of History, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and Anthropology came up with the idea of publishing a collection of papers during the course of our meetings. This idea was given further impetus when the organizers of the 1990 Yanagita Kunio Yukari Summit wrote to me requesting a brief statement concerning the "internationality" of Yanagita Kunio's scholarship, which was the theme of that year's conference. Rather than simply offer my own perspective on Yanagita's scholarly work, I felt that it would be more appropriate for the workshop as a whole to consider the problem of the "internationality" of Yanagita and express its collective opinion. Not only would it be a good exercise for young scholars working on their dissertations to present their findings to a general audience, but there were several in the workshop whose own research was directly concerned with Yanagita. The workshop's statement on the "internationality" of Yanagita's scholarship is included in the appendix.

With the Yanagita conference as a starting point, then, the workshop began looking for another forum in which to develop its arguments. They decided to aim for the 1990 Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs (MCAA), which was held in Bloomington, Indiana. They presented seven papers in two related sessions. The papers included in this volume are reworked versions of the papers presented in Bloomington. They all, in one way or another, deal with the issue of the creation of cultures (in their plurality) in Japanese society. Each of the papers sees new cultures being initiated as the result of intellectual operations that recoup and retextualize older cultures within a new language and to a new purpose. They may be said to be studies on how inherited cultures are reworked in the process of cultural creation.

Noriko Aso discusses three works of Yanagi Sōetsu's and finds that he proposed an aesthetic that theoretically recouped the mingei activities of artisan-craftspeople, who were passed by in modernization. In practice, however, Yanagi acted in ways that did not differ from the purveyors of mass-culture. His aesthetic activities defined him as restricted to the well-educated, middle class.

Gerald Figal traces the genealogy of Yanagita Kunio's conceptualization of "Spiritual otherness." He shows how the character of the inhabitants of the "other world" in folk beliefs changed after the Pacific War, from mythological tengu denizens to human ancestors. Figal then considers the cultural and social implications of this redeployment of the social unconsciousness.
Alan Christy discusses Yanagita’s assessment of the place of Okinawa in the cultural history of Japan. Christy shows how Yanagita emphasized the assimilationist aspects of Okinawa’s past, disregarding explanations that may have placed Okinawa in a Chinese cultural orbit. Yet while Yanagita argued for a Japanese Okinawa, he also disagreed with the Japanese state’s policies of uniting Okinawa more closely to the rest of modern Japan by erasing its past.

Yoshikuni Igarashi, by analyzing Yanagita’s criticism of written history and support for studies of the folk (minzokugaku), points out the privileged authorial position that Yanagita created for himself. Though this fictive subject position, which the hermeneutics of history cannot grasp, is fraught with contradictions, it allows Igarashi to shed light on the history of minzokugaku.

Robert W. Adams turns to the philosophical uses of the limits of rationality in early twentieth-century Japan. Arguing that the concept of nothingness, a mainstay of modern philosophy in Japan, functions as a hiatus of rationality, he traces the development of two different “shades of nothingness” by focusing on how Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime approached neo-Kantianism.

Tom Looser, investigating the Tokugawa Bakufu’s use of cycles of Nō drama during the early nineteenth century, describes how the Bakufu tried to legitimize its power base through opening Nō performances to all classes for the first time.

Kentaro Tomio argues that Japanese modernity in the form of early twentieth-century national culture undeniably established itself in the practice of cultural production effected by Orikuchi Shinobu, the "co-founder" with Yangita of folk studies. By reanalyzing Orikuchi’s work on language, ritual, and historiography, Tomio points to the possibility of an alternative understanding of modernity in Orikuchi and exposes the ideological obfuscation of some postwar Japanese thinkers who often asserted an antimodernist and "Japanist" position for Orikuchi.

The participants began these essays while they were graduate students at the University of Chicago. They are now teaching at colleges and universities or finishing their dissertations. It is hoped that you will find these perspectives on the productions of culture in Japan as stimulating as we did when we were actively engaged in the workshop.

Finally, special thanks are due to Robert Adams for editing and arranging the essays, and to James St. André at the Center for East Asian Studies for overseeing the production of this volume of Select Papers.

Tetsuo Najita
December 1994
Class and Currency in Three Works by Yanagi Sōetsu

Noriko Aso

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.

—Pierre Bourdieu

In the spring of 1992, members of a study group centered at the Nihon Mingeikan (Japanese Folk Craft Museum) held a tea ceremony in one of the museum's exhibit rooms. The tea ceremony was a reenactment of one conducted several decades earlier by the museum founder Yanagi Sōetsu (1889-1961, also known as Yanagi Muneyoshi) which happened to have been documented in close detail. The same room was selected, the same low straw covered benches, the same flowers in the same vase on the same table, and, most importantly, the same tea bowls, including Li Dynasty and Muromachi Period treasures. A brief lecture followed the tea and sweets.

I was invited to this tea ceremony, having been assured beforehand that everything would be very relaxed, that the experience would be, if anything, "anti-tea." Certainly, the members of the study group appeared in cottons and denims, not the linens and silks which might have been expected at a more traditional tea ceremony. Yet the gestures of the women in charge of the utensils demonstrated a more than passing acquaintance with the stylized etiquette associated with high "tea." I was even scolded in hushed tones for not properly holding the tea bowl from which I was drinking. The unveiling and explication of Yanagi's calligraphed list of categories of people to whom he did or did not want to serve tea threw into relief the limits to the "anti-tea" attitude of Yanagi and his followers: while a significant contest over the definition of tea "taste" and its implications was in progress, the fundamental premise regarding the necessity for cultivated taste and the seriousness of the ceremony were never in doubt. Indeed, the lecture on the meaning of Yanagi's innovations (his adaptations of non-tea utensils to the ceremony, his flirtation with coffee, his avowed desire to bring tea to those with no knowledge of it) emphasized that such

seeming departures actually represented a radical return to the simplicity and purity of the early tea masters.

A struggle over the definition of good taste lies at the heart of Yanagi's project to promote the production and consumption of traditional Japanese crafts at a time when the Industrial Revolution was beginning to transform daily life in Japan. Commonly acknowledged as the founder of the Mingei Undō (Folk Craft Movement) and personally involved with every step of the establishment and operation of the Nihon Mingeikan, Yanagi and his philosophy still hold great weight for current movement members, as demonstrated by the meticulousness of the reenactment of his tea ceremony. Of course, one must not conflate the man Yanagi with his movement, which, by virtue of the very fact that it is a movement, has been imbued with the needs and desires of many. Nevertheless, given the rhetoric of the evening, it seemed that the study group members still found something relevant in the "Yanagi School" struggle with the ponderous authority of the institutionalized tea ceremony,² symptomatic of a class skirmish upon which the dust has not yet settled.

* * *

The quote from Pierre Bourdieu which opens this essay clarifies the potential stakes in Yanagi's attempt to redefine the strictures of taste. Bourdieu's study, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, offers a useful paradigm for understanding how "taste" can function as an instrument of power: "art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences."³ He tackles the various implications of "cultural" production by expanding the definition of "capital" beyond a restricted reference to money or labor to encompass "educational" and "cultural" capital, thereby allowing for finer distinctions between the interests of various classes.

Cultural capital refers to an inherited or acquired ability to maneuver socially within the hegemonic group. Educational capital, as

² The tea ceremony has a long-standing affiliation with money and power throughout its history which dates back to the 15th century. During the Meiji period, the institution of the tea ceremony underwent considerable changes, but maintained its cultural clout thanks in part to the participation of businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians such as Inoue Kaoru and Masuda Takashi. See Christine Guth's Art, Tea, and Industry (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

³ Bourdieu, 7.
"guaranteed social capital," provides the Cliff Notes to this essential social knowledge. Schools run by the dominant classes are there to certify the "knowledge" which underpins a hegemonic world view. One endowed with cultural capital may have been born into a family environment which provided a head start in grasping this knowledge, with schooling offering little more than official recognition of such inheritance, or one may have purchased, through schooling, this knowledge from scratch. Although similarly certificated with regard to their cultural skills, these two representatives of different means of acquiring cultural capital have conflicting interests. Those who regard hegemonic culture as their birthright tend to denigrate the efforts of those who seek to make up for lost time through study; meanwhile, those attempting to ascend in society cannot count on scholastics alone to provide them with the status they desire. Other means of asserting authority must be found.

It is at this juncture that the battle over taste assumes a broader significance:

At stake in every struggle over art there is also the imposition of an art of living, that is, the transmutation of an arbitrary way of living into the legitimate way of life which casts every other way of living into arbitrariness.

If one is successful in establishing the legitimacy of one's cultural capital as expressed through the exercise of "taste," then one's way of life, that is, one's class, one's relation to the means of production, receives social validation. However, the closest fought battles are not between radically opposed class groupings. Rather, "[e]xPLICIT aesthetic choices are in fact often constituted in opposition to the choices of the groups closest in social space." While the acquisition and demonstration of "good taste" may serve to emphasize social distinctions between upper and lower, these same actions may also be a means of reallocating power within a given strata.

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4 Bourdieu, 80.
5 Bourdieu, 57.
6 Bourdieu, 60.
7 The above discussion is drawn from the chapter entitled "The Aristocracy of Culture" in Bourdieu, 11-96.
As a Gakushuin and Tokyo Imperial University graduate, Yanagi was very much the product of institutions which occupied a central place in the generation of hegemonic discourses in prewar Japan. However, he did not belong among those who could claim prestige as their birthright. From an essentially academic background, Yanagi grew up in comfort yet had no inheritance on which to fall back. Though equipped with extensive educational capital, Yanagi always remained vulnerable to challenges to his cultural capital due to his lack of financial capital. His dilemma is illustrated by the disparaging comments of one rich collector Yanagi quotes as having said that Yanagi collected *mingei* (folk craft) only because he couldn’t afford anything better. 8

While teaching topics ranging from English Literature to Buddhist aesthetics at such schools as Meiji University, Dōshisha University, and Harvard University, Yanagi published numerous essays and books developing his ideas regarding the revitalization of traditional crafts produced by the so-called anonymous craftsmen (anonymous in contrast to the “named” craftsmen who supplied luxury and other goods to the upper classes), which, in turn, would pave the way for reform in Japanese society as a whole. The theoretical framework which emerges from Yanagi’s writings valorizes the commonplace and everyday, challenging conspicuous consumption among the upper classes. However, Yanagi’s own uncritical use of the adjectives “rare” and “expensive” in anecdotes about his collecting contradict his theoretical claims that true value and beauty are found in the easily available and inexpensive. In light of Bourdieu’s discussion of variant means of acquiring cultural capital, this tension can be explained as stemming from his social position as an academic and taste arbiter, well-educated but not wealthy enough to disdain a monthly salary. The construction of Yanagi’s authority necessitates placing himself as an intermediary between the upper and lower classes, a spokesman for the disadvantaged to the comfortably well-off. 9

Yanagi certainly fits the bill for Bourdieu’s description of the educated contender who seemingly presents a challenge to the “natural” relation between good taste and high birth. However, to avoid prematurely reducing Yanagi to the specifics of his biography, I would like to turn now to a close examination of the relationship

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9 I am aware of the irony of my attempt to critique a location which is essentially my own as well. *Caveat emptor!*
between aesthetics, value and money in several of his essays. Through his own articulation of his social and authorial position, I hope to explore the implications of his class affiliation for his individual work and his movement.

The three works I will concentrate on are the essays “Hin to bi” (Poverty and Beauty),10 “Bi to keizai” (Beauty and Economics)11 and the book Shūshū monogatari (Tales of Collection).12 The first two works are strictly theoretical, even theological in tone. The third work is anecdotal, offering a different perspective stemming from Yanagi’s actual collecting practices. All three deal directly with the issue of money and its relation to value. In the process of settling such questions as how poverty can call forth beauty or how aesthetic and economic principles can work together, Yanagi also creates an authorial identity and a presumed audience for his message.

Yanagi’s aim in the essay “Hin to bi” (first published in the magazine Kōgei in 1936) is to demonstrate an intimate relationship between poverty and beauty. His argument begins with the definition of poverty as “material lack,” but this state is soon reinterpreted as being “unencumbered by unnecessary goods.” Finally, poverty is determined to be “spiritual plenitude,” or, essentially, a state of grace. In notes for a lecture on the same topic, he cites St. Francis: “His doctrine teaches us, [sic] that unless we possess nothing, we cannot have everything. Poverty is richness.”13 As Yanagi’s numerous quotes from both the Bible and Buddhist scripture indicate, this understanding of poverty has well-established credentials. However, the concept “poverty is richness” can either empower the poor or be used to pacify them. Depending on who the “we” in Yanagi’s text refers to, the political implications of St. Francis’ injunction differ.

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10 Yanagi Sōetsu, “Hin to bi” (Poverty and Beauty) in Min to bi (The people and Beauty) (Kyoto: Seibunsha, 1948), 311-326. First published in Kōgei (Crafts), No. 63 (Tokyo: Mingei Kyōkai, 1936).
12 Although some of the essays originally appeared elsewhere, this volume was first published as a book in 1956.
13 Undated personal notes in the Yanagi Sōetsu Archive Room at the Nihon Mingeikan in Komaba, Tokyo, Japan.
If “we” is all-inclusive, as might be assumed given that the min- in mingei is an abbreviation of minshū,14 then the future that Yanagi envisioned would see the end of class distinctions.15 Not only should “we” learn abstract lessons from the poor, the producers of mingei, but we should become one of them. Yet Yanagi’s ability to romanticize the condition of the poor immediately marks him as an outsider. David Spurr describes the inequality of this relationship in the context of international “class” divisions:

The aestheticization of Third World reality...is made possible by...cultural and geographic distance, while it also marks the ratio of power that holds between one class of people and another....[T]he aesthetic stance itself is taken from within a position of power and privilege: the power to perceive poverty as aesthetic value is a privilege not granted the poor.16

While the construction of an aesthetic stance may not blatantly assume dominance over the observed, the potential for mastery plays a crucial role in the dynamics of this relationship.

A bifurcation lies hidden in Yanagi’s advice to dispense with the unnecessary. On the one hand, “we” are all caught up in a web of materialism from which we need to break free. On the other, “we” must learn from “them” how to do so. Similarly, the minshū of mingei both refers to everyone, the general populace which includes Yanagi, and it refers to “them,” the producers of regional crafts. In “Hin to bi,” the structure of division dominates. “We” are the well-off, as can be seen in the following quotes:

Those people (sorera no hitotachi) do not have privileges, economically speaking, but for those who live so far from sin, there are many privileges not available to us.17 [my emphasis added]

14 Mingei is a neologism coined by Yanagi from minshū (the masses) and kōgei (crafts).
15 Of course, given the limited suffrage constituted by minshūshugi during the Taishō and early Shōwa period, the inclusive sense of minshū should not be over-estimated. Yanagi is fairly clear, however, that he is speaking of “the people” in general rather than just “the gentry” or even “the proletariat.”
17 Yanagi, “Hin to bi,” 324.
Yanagi challenges an elitist value system by reconfiguring privation as privilege and, as seen below, virtue:

I am not at all trying to celebrate the material tragedy which springs from extreme poverty. However, I am pointing out that there exist various virtues which necessarily accompany poverty. We should regret that, in many ways, we, rather than the artisans, are far more sinful human beings.18 [my emphasis added]

Yet, despite Yanagi's claim here that he does not wish to celebrate the impoverished circumstances of the lower classes, he does appear a bit callous when he laments his own luxurious sinfulness. At a time when Nōhonshugi (Agrarian Fundamentalism) and militarism were on the rise in the countryside in response to miserable living conditions, it seems a little odd to view poverty as monkish austerity rather than the lack of such necessities as sufficient food. While it would be unjust to dismiss Yanagi as simply a purveyor of the opiate of piety to the masses when he is engaged in an attempt to decenter his own elite position, the implications of his injunctions must be further explored.

By defining poverty as a state of grace enjoyed by "them" (the "non-we"), Yanagi creates an Other which has been idealized. Representations of an Other in general refer back to the Self.19 This process of idealization has far more to do with a desire to reform or critique the Self, in this case, the upper classes, than with the concrete living circumstances of the poor. In "Hin to bi," Yanagi uses the example of the poor to highlight the grasping behavior exhibited by the upper classes. The virtues of the poor include humbleness, simplicity, strength, and health. According to Yanagi, true beauty is distilled from this combination of qualities, as he explains in his tribute to the type of pottery that provided the specific inspiration for this essay:

I want to emphasize that the beauty of such commonplace things as "kurahanka" could never have been born except from the poverty of the people who made them...the humbleness which accompanies a poor

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18 Yanagi, "Hin to bi," 323.

19 Surr's *Rhetoric of Empire* and Edward Said's *Orientalism*, among others, elaborate on the workings of this general dynamic.
lifestyle can be seen working in a positive way in the beauty of these objects.\(^{20}\)

The attraction that Yanagi feels toward these qualities probably stems from his observations of their opposites among his well-to-do acquaintances. Certainly, his continual disapproving citations of such "common" opinions as "only expensive things can be beautiful," make it clear that he spends a good deal of time with people who do not have to bargain-hunt.

In short, Yanagi is not addressing the poor in his essay, "Hin to bi." If his concerns were their concerns, he might have been a little less stringent in his criticism of the *Nōmin Bijutsu Undō*, the Farmers' Arts Movement, founded by artist Yamamoto Kanae in 1919 to help out farmers in economically depressed areas. Yamamoto urged farmers to take up painting and handicrafts in their spare time to supplement their income. Aesthetic concerns took second place to the goals of making ends meet and providing farmers with a creative outlet.\(^{21}\) Yanagi took a much sterner stance, arguing that a rural revival would come about only through strict adherence to the aesthetic principles of *mingei*—regional character, practical use and simplicity. Although Yanagi characterized the *Nōmin Bijutsu Undō* as manipulated by urban tastes into producing frivolous Western-style goods,\(^{22}\) the programs advocated by Yamamoto's movement were put into practice on a much wider scale.\(^{23}\) This is due in part to the fact that the audiences for these two plans of action were very different. Yamamoto opened a school in Shinshū for training the children of farmers in painting and other arts, and many other regions quickly followed suit. Meanwhile, Yanagi relied on his pen to make his point. However, readers of his essays had to be wealthy enough to afford the beautiful but expensive limited editions of *Kōgei* (Craft), the journal published by the *Mingei Kyōkai* (Folk Craft Association) from 1931 to 1951. Farmers trying to

\(^{20}\) Yanagi, "Hin to bi," 321-322.


\(^{22}\) Yanagi, "Mingei to nōmin bijutsu" (Folk Crafts and Farmers Arts) in *Min to bi* (The people and Beauty) (Kyoto: Seibunsha, 1948), 353–365. First published in *Kōgei* (Crafts), No. 51 (Tokyo: Mingei Kyōkai, 1935).

\(^{23}\) Idekawa, 20.
make a little extra money in their spare time were not among its subscribers.24

Yanagi further develops his theories regarding the relation of beauty to poverty in the essay "Bi to keizai" (first published in the magazine Kokoro in 1948). He argues that the supposed zero-sum game between aesthetic and economic considerations can be resolved in mingeigaku (the study of folk crafts), a study uniquely capable of demonstrating that aesthetic and economic principles can never be privileged one over the other. According to Yanagi, the two fields are merely flip sides of the same phenomenon: "The 'object' constitutes the link which joins beauty and economics. Or rather, all objects have two sides to them: aesthetic value and economic value."25

As two aspects of one whole, Yanagi reasons, they must be governed by the same fundamental principles: use, abundance and low price.26 These three goals are linked by the weight Yanagi places on the volume of exchange as a measure for the health of an aesthetic or economic system. If these principles are upheld, then goods will circulate rapidly, to the benefit of producer and consumer alike. The concept of "health"27—in an ethical sense—provides the foundation for his assertions that the profit motive only warps the economic machine and that low prices per se are in the interest of producers as well as consumers. Although Yanagi admits that economic and aesthetic principles seem to be in conflict more often than not, he argues that mingei offers both an illustration of and blueprint for the potential reconciliation between these systems.28

For Yanagi, the more an object satisfies the three aesthetic and economic goals, the more absolute value it has. In an ideal world, all goods would be valuable, that is, they would be useful, cheap, and readily available. He describes this harmony in the following manner:


25 Yanagi, "Bi to keizai," 47.

26 Yanagi's own particular understanding of economic principles might not meet with the approval of classical economists, although he was not unfamiliar with the writings of Karl Marx. Nevertheless, Yanagi never explicitly deals with such issues as the differences between pre-capitalist and capitalist economics.

27 The use of the concept of "health" to aesthetically evaluate works of art as well as Yanagi's occasional adoption of the rhetoric of a physician in "diagnosing" aesthetic ills can be traced back to one type of Chinese discourse on calligraphy (A. Burkus, oral communication).

[T]o the extent that beauty and economics can be brought into accord, use becomes the foundation of beauty, abundance becomes the promise of beauty, and low prices guarantee beauty.29

Beauty and value are interchangeable concepts in the Yanagi school of aesthetic economics (or economic aesthetics). True beauty and absolute value mark the fulfillment of the ideals of use, abundance and low prices. Their synthesis, in turn, serves as a shorthand for an exceedingly fair world in which everyone would have access to material and spiritual satisfaction regardless of their financial resources.

Yanagi differentiates crafts from the fine arts by writing: "Crafts seek a sense of society. This beauty is social beauty."30 Crafts embody true beauty and value, which are not derived from a relationship with money, but rather from a connection to social responsibility. Although Yanagi seems to share a concern with the problem of unequal distribution with Socialists and Communists, his solution takes a very different tack. In contrast to the Marxist emphasis on reorganizing ownership of the means of production, Yanagi favors the reorganization of consumption. If economic and aesthetic value can be redefined as originating from availability and practicality rather than scarcity and luxuriousness, if everyone can be taught to want less rather than more (even if it is more for everybody), then happiness is within anyone’s grasp.

This drive toward “less” emerges clearly in Yanagi’s celebration of the qualities of humbleness, self-sacrifice, simplicity, repetition and even unconsciousness. Craft objects are well-positioned to fulfill the requirements of use due to their sacrifice (gisei) of individuality (kosei) and their humble devotion to service. Objects which possess a distinctive character “...often demonstrate resistance toward the user. The greater the individual character, the more likely it is that the user will be used.”31

The quality of simplicity contributes to ease in usage: lacking specialized functions, the object lends itself to multiple uses. Simplicity

29 Yanagi, “Bi to keizai,” 50.

30 Yanagi, “Bi to keizai,” 61.

31 Yanagi, “Bi to keizai,” 60. One might compare this with the standard critique that the producer is produced, as it were, in factories where the rhythm of the worker must accord with the rhythm of the machine of mass production.
also satisfies the demands of production in bulk,\textsuperscript{32} for with every unessential attribute stripped away, the object can be produced quickly and cheaply. Moreover, simplicity emerges from the repetitious nature of a craftsperson’s work. Comparing the economy of movement observed in the skilled craftsperson and the gestures of a tea master, Yanagi describes the weight of custom and tradition in these movements as a certain kind of freedom, the craftsperson entering into a state of unconscious grace as he or she works. Yanagi explains: “With this freedom, the producer goes beyond even an awareness of working. Repetition draws the producer into an unconscious state of production.”\textsuperscript{33} Thus it seems that the slogan “Less is More” sums up Yanagi’s main point in “Bi to keizai.” The state of less—individuality, specialization, choice and consciousness—is redefined by Yanagi to mean more—usage, freedom and spirituality—that is, more social value.

Given the magnanimous nature of Yanagi’s aesthetic and economic principles which place social value above and beyond all other considerations, it seems somewhat ungenerous to reintroduce the divisive questions of who are “we” and who are “they” in the schema above. Nevertheless, the questions must be asked. “Bi to keizai” is quite similar in its rhetoric as well as in its message to Yanagi’s essay on poverty, “Hin to bi,” discussed earlier, and as such participates in similar constructions of authorial identity and audience. “We” remains that of the middle- to upper-class observer, seeking to learn from the strengths of the working classes, constructing their image in a manner which may have little to do with their lived realities.

In Yanagi’s discussion of craft production and repetition, he writes: “With repetition over time, the skillful hand can all but perform miracles (kiseki ni mo hitoshibi koto). First speed is acquired, then accuracy is born, and finally beauty is called forth.”\textsuperscript{34} This aestheticization of a craftsperson’s work clearly reveals Yanagi’s stance as an observer. His depiction of the life of a craftsperson is strictly appreciative. In short, his class position makes this aesthetic stance possible. Never once does Yanagi comment in a subjective

\textsuperscript{32} Yanagi flirts with the concept of mass production in this essay with his repeated references to capitalism, the division of labor, and machines. However, it is clear that the full import of mechanization, automation and the advent of industrialism, has not hit Yanagi. For him, the “machine” remains the potter’s wheel and the weaver’s loom.

\textsuperscript{33} Yanagi, “Bi to keizai,” 67.

\textsuperscript{34} Yanagi, “Bi to keizai,” 66.
fashion, "I find that when I work, its repetitious nature liberates me from my consciousness." Whenever Yanagi does characterize his own work as an advocate for mingei, he is surprisingly partial to the adjectives "new," "fresh" and "original." For instance, he announces his platform for mingeigaku as follows:

[A] new standard for beauty is required. A fresh way of looking at things must be brought forth from pure intuition (chokkan). All customs and conventions must be stripped away. The theories of mingei brandish this flag in pursuit of the reversal of previous values.\(^{35}\)

Moreover, when he touches on his more directly aesthetic endeavors, he describes a highly conscious process of selection and display for a well-defined purpose.\(^{36}\) Tradition and the lack of individualistic choice are touted as paths toward freedom for the craftsman, but the same does not appear to apply to Yanagi's own creative efforts. Although the products of the daily life of the common folk constitute the object of mingeigaku, the mingeigakusha remains just a sympathetic observer.

The distance between the observer and observed is bridged only through the consumption of the product, mingei, even as the very act of consumption reconstitutes the gap. As mentioned earlier, Yanagi seeks to bring about social change through reforms in consumption rather than production. Yanagi's perspective as a consumer in part explains his attribution of many human qualities to things, rather than people. For instance, in "Hin to bi," he writes of having been taught about the values of humbleness and simplicity by the things craftspeople have made.\(^{37}\) Note that he does not say, by the people who have made these things. In "Bi to keizai," Yanagi points out that materiality and spirituality cannot be separated in objects because: "To answer the demands of use, objects must satisfy the material and spiritual needs of humans."\(^{38}\) He then goes on to excoriate the immorality of things which do not provide good service, which are not sturdy, which exhibit too much individuality. Well-made objects invite (sasou) use, while

\(^{35}\) Yanagi, "Bi to keizai," 51.

\(^{36}\) See, for example, Yanagi's "Sashie no toriatsukaikata" (Working with Illustrations) in the Yanagi Sōetsu zenshi, Vol.10, 428-437.

\(^{37}\) Yanagi, "Hin to bi," 316.

\(^{38}\) Yanagi, "Bi to keizai," 56.
poorly-made objects drive the users away.\textsuperscript{39} Mingei objects are finally granted complete animate status when Yanagi paints a picture of the day when mingei objects have become the companions (\textit{hanryo}) of everyone regardless of social standing (\textit{subete no mono}).\textsuperscript{40}

If we view Yanagi as a philosopher for the consumer ethic, then his tendency to talk about things rather than people, even in the midst of advocating social reform, is more understandable. Since the consumer generally meets the producer only through the purchase of objects, it is easy for the consumer to displace the consumer/producer relation into the consumer/product relation. This, in turn, affects the demands the consumer can make. Yanagi's paean to good service in objects would jar the reader if he were praising humbleness and self-sacrifice in "the help." He is not speaking of "the help," of course; nevertheless, it is important to keep track of who is serving whom, who is sacrificing what, and who remains "conscious" or "unconscious" in Yanagi's blueprint for a better future.

The two theoretical texts, "Hin to bi" and "Bi to keizai," I have discussed thus far are quite similar in their rhetoric and basic message. The next work I would like to examine differs from the other two in its personal tone and strong tendency toward narrative, as might be guessed from its title, \textit{Shūshū monogatari} (1956). This work consists in large part of various anecdotes regarding the acquisition of key pieces in the Nihon Mingeikan collection. Its creation of an authorial presence and audience is strikingly different from those of "Hin to bi" and "Bi to keizai." Lack and desire, not a determined contentment with the easily available, are the fundamental mechanisms of his tales of collection. Yanagi finds himself on the other side of the tracks in his quest for Korean pottery and Otsu paintings.

In Yanagi's introduction to \textit{Shūshū monogatari}, he takes great pains to distance himself from ordinary collectors, claiming that: "I don't particularly care to be called a collector...I don't collect for the sake of personal possession. On this point, I feel I am completely different from most collectors."\textsuperscript{41} By placing all his trophies within the hallowed precincts of the Mingeikan, Yanagi feels that he has escaped becoming entangled by desire. However, his anecdotes are filled with scenes of love at first sight and bittersweet partings as well

\textsuperscript{39} Yanagi, "Bi to keizai," 57.

\textsuperscript{40} Yanagi, "Bi to keizai," 61.

\textsuperscript{41} Yanagi, \textit{Shūshū monogatari}, 10.
as joyful reunions with the objects on which he has set his sights, such as the following:

Inside one of the boxes...could it be the cinnabar jar and peach-shaped water dropper lined up right next to each other? Without thinking, I took them firmly in my hands and hugged them to my chest (mune ni idaita). Until I had paid and they were wrapped up in a small parcel safe in my hands, I could not believe that this had really happened.42

The strength with which Yanagi truly loves and desires the objects he collects cannot fail to leave a vivid impression on the reader. Yanagi's convoluted relationship with "desire" is but one of the many complications that his "practice" in Shūshū monogatari poses for his theory.43

The narrative structure of each anecdote is fairly uniform.44 Yanagi's story of his pursuit of an Otsu painting of a demon taking a bath is a typical example. His first encounter with the painting was at an exhibit of a private collection, and he instantly discerned its remarkable, rare qualities. Although he would have purchased it on the spot if he could, it was not for sale. However, the owner died some time after. Yanagi traveled to Osaka to attend the auction of the deceased's effects, resolving to bid as high as 300 yen at a time when that represented a considerable sum. He writes, "I didn't know how it would go for someone like me who is not rich, but passion (netsujō) made me bold."45 Unfortunately, he was outbid, defeat leaving a bitter taste. Time passed, and his rival also departed this world of sorrow. At the subsequent auction, Yanagi left nothing to chance by enlisting the financial support of his millionaire friend Ohara when bidding for the painting. This time, Yanagi succeeded in purchasing the treasured Otsu painting. Yet he had to patiently endure Ohara carrying the fruits of

42 Yanagi, Shūshū monogatari, 16.

43 Of course, the relationship between theory and practice is always thorny. Nevertheless, the theory which emerges from Yanagi's "practice" (which is filtered through his writing) bears close attention.

44 One problem which requires further research is the degree to which Yanagi's stories are dictated by general conventions for a genre we might call "tales of collection" developed in hobby newsletters or diaries of other famous collectors of the period.

45 Yanagi, Shūshū monogatari, 22.
his own labor off to Kurashiki with a promise to bequeath the painting to the Mingeikan in his will. Recalling the long-awaited arrival of the "Demon Taking a Bath" painting at the Mingeikan after Ohara's death, Yanagi comments, "I remember the happiness of that moment even now." Of course, it was a pity about Ohara...

Suspense in each of Yanagi's stories is engineered by separations invariably due to a lack of funding and resolved with a surprising frequency by the death of the owner of the object. The object always speaks to Yanagi the first time he sees it at the auction or store and he is overwhelmed with the need to acquire it. The object is generally superlative in nature, occasionally the only one of its kind in existence. Fate (inga, en) is then invoked for the reunion of Yanagi and the object. When the object is finally in hand, Yanagi rejoices and meditates on the educational role the object may now perform on public display at the Mingeikan.

Yanagi's consumer-oriented stance, which was also present in "Hin to bi" and "Bi to keizai," reveals itself through the very backdrops for his mini-dramas. These are invariably auctions, stores or occasionally sites where an object is in use, but never the site of production. Similarly, Yanagi chronicles rivalries and friendships with fellow collectors, antagonism or indebtedness to store owners, but never a moment alone with a craftsperson. Accordingly, as discussed earlier, these objects take on an animate quality displaced from the producer: "Each object is my close companion and at the same time my teacher." Moreover, Yanagi employs the familiar terms "vigor," "health" and "simplicity" to characterize his various discoveries.

Yet, along with these continuities with Yanagi's theoretical essays, there are also significant departures. In "Hin to bi" and "Bi to keizai," Yanagi carefully develops the notion that a combination of use, abundance and low price produce true value or beauty. His valorization of repetition, tradition, humbleness and unconscious grace further support his general framework. However, the objects in Shūshū monogatari are surprisingly often characterized by singularity, rarity, and high prices. The Korean jar in the first story is distinguished by rare cinnabar markings and printed rather than drawn characters. The Shigaraki pot is the only authentic one of its kind Yanagi ever found, although his discovery inspired later potters to create many reproductions. The Sung Dynasty ink rubbings are the only ones in existence of that particular style. Moreover, even the original tablet

46 Yanagi, Shūshū monogatari, 25.
47 Yanagi, Shūshū monogatari, 10.
has been lost in the mists of time. Value here takes on the very standard meanings of precious, historical and rare. Moreover, if value is generated by desire, and the frustration of desire only heightens its experience, the financial barriers encountered by Yanagi—the high prices of some of the objects—only increase how much they are worth to him.48

In contrast to the "we" of the other essays, the "I" of Shūshū monogatari is identified as "poor," subject to financial restrictions. While he does describe his financial condition as "liberating" to the imagination, he nevertheless vents a considerable amount of resentment against the "them" of the rich amateurs who casually steal treasures out from under Yanagi's nose. In the chapter "Binbōnin no shūshū" (Collections of a Poor Person), Yanagi draws the line between rich collectors and himself by noting that the more money one has, the less likely one is to employ one's own judgment. He muses, "[I]f I had been rich, I, too, would have probably sunk to the level of the commonplace collector."49 While rich people can rely on experts' opinion, binbōnin (poor people) such as Yanagi must find creative ways to satisfy their instinct to collect. This creativity, however, makes their collections the trendsetters that the rich people will later emulate.50

The basis for the quality which accompanies these adventurous collections is the exercise of chokkan, which can be translated as either "intuition" or "direct perception." Taste, as evinced through chokkan, constitutes a major battlefield for Yanagi in his ongoing efforts to reform consumer habits. Yanagi's own particular definition of what comprises good taste—a preference for the simple and unassuming—positions him as intermediary between the monied and working classes.

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One of the central theses in Bourdieu's Distinction is that: "[T]aste [is] one of most vital stakes in the struggles fought in the field of the dominant class and the field of cultural production."51 Precisely because personal taste is generally acquired outside of the classroom, seemingly free from strident ideological overtones, taste can be turned


49 Yanagi, Shūshū monogatari, 212.

50 Note that here creativity and originality are good, not at all anti-social.

51 Bourdieu, 10.
into the quintessential class marker. In this light, to do justice to Yanagi’s program of social reform, one must seriously consider the role that taste plays in his proposals. According to Yanagi, chokkan (the basis or experience of good taste) is available to anyone who can clear their minds of all preconceptions, apparently quite open and even democratic. Yet “[t]he ‘eye’ is a product of history reproduced by education.” Moreover, as Bourdieu notes, one crucial strategy in securing one’s cultural capital is covering one’s tracks, that is, making the exercise of taste a seemingly natural and spontaneous operation. When Yanagi effectively denies education in his discussions of chokkan, he denies the role that his own class played in forming his aesthetic values. As seen with the objects chronicled in Shiishii monogatari, considerations of history and rarity do indeed color his judgment regarding value. What of those who are not in possession of such “incidental” knowledge? In the end, the debate over taste is closed off from those who don’t “instinctively” understand what Yanagi means or see what Yanagi sees.

By claiming that the presumed directness and spontaneity of chokkan provide the foundation for all of his subsequent theorizing, Yanagi thereby seemingly incorporates “non-thinking” into his philosophy. Yet the quality of his own “non-thought” is much closer to the pared-down thought of the (highly educated) Zen priest than that of the never-conscious unconsciousness of the craftsperson mentioned earlier. Moreover, Yanagi’s accounts of his own art in the selecting, framing and display of mingei objects make it clear that, for someone in his position, at least, a highly developed conscious is vitally necessary. Unlike the “unknown craftsman,” there is no careless tossing products off the production line for Yanagi. Thus chokkan can be seen to serve a dual function for Yanagi: naturalizing good taste and laying claim to the “instinctiveness” of the craftsperson without having to sacrifice consciousness.

Naturalizing taste is only one way in which class interests inform aesthetic choices. The educated “eye” to which Bourdieu refers is trained not only to perceive works of art in a particular way, but is also capable of aestheticizing any aspect of everyday life. Art works and kitchen utensils are equally subject to the dictates of taste because taste is essentially a mode of consumption, which is also “a process of

52 Bourdieu, 3.
53 Bourdieu, 68.
While this mode of perception claims a certain degree of objectivity, it bears the clear mark of class privilege:

The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world... The detachment of the pure gaze cannot be dissociated from a general disposition towards the world which is the paradoxical product of conditioning by negative economic necessities—a life of ease—that tends to induce an active distance from necessity.

In contrast, financial and other restraints for the working classes, who have little time to cultivate the experience of aesthetic distance, lead to the development of a taste for the functional and "real." It is precisely this "choice of the necessary" (to borrow Bourdieu's phrasing) demonstrated by the lower classes which Yanagi finds so attractive. In the interpretation of the folk craft tradition on display at his Nihon Mingeikan, excess in the form of festivals and the like receives little attention in comparison with either functional aspects of everyday material life, such as pottery and furniture, or reflective philosophic or religious aspects, such as ink stones, calligraphy and Buddhist wooden images. Indeed, the specter of the orthodox tea taste for a cultivated roughness (shibusa) looms over much of the collection.

Setting aside for the moment the gap between what a lower class person believes his or her taste to be and what an upper class person imagines it to be, the (schematically divided) two levels of taste operate on different principles: one by "choice" and the other by "necessity." Thus, as mentioned earlier, the most intense battles over defining aesthetic taste are not those between the upper and lower classes. Rather, the most bitterly contested are the ones waged among those of proximate status who obtained their educational and cultural capital through different avenues. Yanagi's preoccupation with criticizing the poor taste of the rich can be interpreted as a means of defining his own authority against more orthodox sources. As Bourdieu notes:

54 Bourdieu, 2.
55 Bourdieu, 5.
56 Bourdieu, 5.
[N]othing is more distinctive, more distinguished, than the capacity to confer aesthetic status on objects that are banal or even "common"... or the ability to apply the principles of a "pure" aesthetic to the most everyday choices of everyday life...\(^57\)

By discovering something previously "overlooked," Yanagi is able to demonstrate superior acumen and creativity. His pity, expressed above, for those whose imaginations are shackled by their wealth is far from pure in motive.

The world of tea served as a constant source of competition and reference throughout his activities. Even after the Meiji Restoration, the movers and shakers of society met and made contacts on the tea circuit. By staging and attending teas, these men engaged in a complex set of maneuvers designed to display their wealth and erudition as well as to assess others' claims to such. In the midst of the upheaval of the Restoration, tea offered successful entrepreneurs a means of acquiring social prestige crowned with the halo of tradition. Tea thus provided a means for the old orthodoxy, represented by former dai

\(^{57}\) Bourdieu, 5.

\(^{58}\) This discussion of tea after the Meiji Restoration is drawn from Chapters 3 and 5 in Guth's *Art, Tea and Industry*.

\(^{59}\) It is also important to note that the world of tea during this period was gradually being transformed from a male reserve to one dominated by women, tea thereby becoming art of the *hanayome shūgyō* (training to be a bride). Ironically, or perhaps predictably, middle- to upper-class women are also among the firmest supporters of *mingei* today. Moreover, many modern artist-craftspersons produce both for the tea and *mingei* sets.
If we have good enough hearts, when we see these objects, we will remember the sweat that went into them. We will feel something to make us bow our heads. We will even see something awe-inspiring that we can never exhibit.  

In his attempt to revolutionize consumption, rather than production, Yanagi grasped the potential stakes in the definition of good taste. At the same time, however, he was not able to speak to the concerns of the craftspeople whose products he made the object of his theoretical discussions. Yanagi did forcefully express many of the concerns and ideals of his audience, drawn from the ranks of the well-educated and middle class. While his class position made his aesthetics possible, his aesthetics helped in turn to define his class. 

Without coming to grips with the full scope of the issues associated with industrialization and the development of a modern mass society, Yanagi was not able to do more than offer one more consumer choice among many for modern Japan. The we/they structure which permeates his essays arises from his imagining of a rural crafts-person's self-sufficient lifestyle. Urban slums and factory workers simply did not enter into the picture, despite Yanagi's calls for reform in the design of goods produced by machinery. Contrary to Yanagi's hopes, mingei products tend to be fairly pricey commodities found in specialty shops or department stores rather than in the neighborhood markets. Since no mass market for mingei ever developed, the artist-crafts-person who produces in the mingei style is forced to affix high price tags to the final product.  

Nevertheless, much as with the tea ceremony, consumption of the idea of mingei has permeated modern Japanese society, as seen in the innumerable mingei pubs, coffee shops and even soba chain restaurants. Mingei did not revolutionize Japanese society as Yanagi had thought. Should its evolution as a consumer trend be considered cooptation or a fulfillment of its original promise? In so far as the Mingei Undo is strategically located as a consumer movement to point out the potential of consumer choice to effect changes in society, the degree to which mingei does not and cannot fulfill this function might be termed cooptation. And, on the other hand, to demand engagement with the concerns of the modern masses from the movement which

60 Yanagi, "Hin to bi," 324-325.
Yanagi founded is to demand something which was never actually on the agenda.
The Question of Monsters and Ancestor Worship

Gerald Figal

In his later work, Yanagita Kunio displayed an explicit preoccupation with the articulation and theorization of a concept of "ancestors" (senzo) and ancestor worship as the basis of Japanese social and cultural experience. It is not that concern for the origins and the contemporary practice of spiritual belief was missing in his previous studies; on the contrary, this concern furnished to a large degree the motivation for Japanese folklore studies (minzokugaku) from its inception during the first decades of the twentieth century. What distinguishes, however, a text like Senzo no Hanashi (About Our Ancestors, 1945) from Yanagita's earlier researches on folk beliefs is the overt drive to provide a now theoretically unified subject, "the abiding folk" (jōmin), with a theoretically unified ancestry as object of worship. Yanagita's first attempts at describing the various religious practices of the folk—not yet theorized as jōmin but treated rather as a more heterogeneous body often identified as "yanabito" or "mountain people"—appear more tentative, more piecemeal, more hit-or-miss as he was still groping for a coherent theory of what constituted the object of awe and devotion for the everyday rural Japanese. This characterization of Yanagita's early texts is one common reading of his movement toward the notion of a jōmin whose spiritual worship is centered on ancestors who have metamorphosed into a kind of collective deity (kami). But, this metamorphosis is of a second order. A previous metamorphosis took place, I will argue, within the "hidden world" (yūmeikai or simply yūmei) in Yanagita's writing—the transformation from the "longed-nosed, winged apparition" called tengu to senzo.

What I wish to reconsider in delineating this metamorphosis of the hidden world's inhabitants is the theoretical ground—or more precisely, the space of textual production—of Yanagita's view of spiritual awe and its subsequent social ramifications. The genealogy of tengu to senzo which has gone unrecognized in studies of Yanagita's project brings to the fore the role that the imaginary space of yūmeikai played in enabling his writing of the folk's lore. In fact, the contention can be put forth that from his earliest attempts at a study of folk culture, Yanagita indeed grounded his writing practice in a structurally unchanging theoretical framework and that the agent of spiritual otherness—not the system in which it was deployed—changed shaped.

In addition to explicating the genealogy of senzo I will in this present essay make a case for the assertion that yūmei, operating along with the unlettered sphere of the ordinary rural Japanese as the unsighted site toward which the affects of belief are directed,
presented for Yanagita a "nothingness" from which the beginning of a "poetic" writing of these beliefs issues. This positioning of Yanagita's writing points up the common relationship among theory, belief, and fantastic literature as all of these discursive forms are generally unsupported by an empirical real. It also provides an angle of analysis on the tension apparent in a study of the folk which, while relying largely on perishable sources (oral transmission and memory) and directed toward an intangible object (beliefs and sentiments), constantly appeals to the presence of an experienced empirical reality and strives for academic respectability within an institution of knowledge that prizes empiricism. It is my hypothesis that as Yanagita recognized under the gaze of the institution the suspect character of the fictive "literary" authorization of his writing, he worked to suppress this fissure in the real while still attempting to maintain the space of theoretic production that the "poetic" loss of rationalist knowledge of the real permits.

This formulation of theory, belief, knowledge, and fiction is modeled after Michel de Certeau's characterization of Freud's oscillation between literary and scientific discourses in which "he [Freud] maneuvers between the 'nothing' of writing and the 'authority' that the institution furnishes the text.... The more he perceives a dangerous kinship and a disquieting resemblance between his discourse and the ancient legends, the more he institutes and restores from day to day an institutional place which authorizes this discourse in the eyes of his followers and posterity."¹ It is the scientific institution's unceasing insistence on a referentiality to the real for its legitimizing force in a realist narrative that is at odds with the poetic gesture demanded of both Freud and Yanagita in order for them to access as a serious object of study the intangible realm of "the workings of the heart and mind" (kokoro no hataraki). In both late nineteenth-century Europe and Japan the affects of the human psyche ("human emotions") had been for the most part banished to trivialized fictional, "unreal" forms (literature, folktales, myths, and legends).² Consequently, the

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² Such forms were resuscitated as valid knowledge in Japan only by strands of Nativist (kokugaku) discourse which was preoccupied with Japanese literature, ancient myths, legends, and as in some texts of Hirata Atsutane—stories of strange events and creatures from the hidden world. See H. D. Harootunian, Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
conflict that arises in the formation of knowledge about the psychic realm turns on the source of legitimization of the investigator's discourse: is it in the name of the other (the patient's unconscious in the case of psychoanalysis; the "hidden world" along with the "folk heart" in Yanagita's minzokugaku) or in the name of the real (via the institution)?

It may already seem strange to speak of the "poetic gesture" in one so devoted to the experiential observation and collection of folk material as Yanagita (even though he did begin his writing career as a lyrical poet), so to bring his name in contact with Freud's probably appears outright eccentric. But, it is not my intent to compare Yanagita's writings with Freud's—although that might be interesting—nor to suggest any real relationship between them. Rather, I would like to engage certain of Yanagita's texts that address the issue of the "hidden world" with a model of analysis that de Certeau developed to discuss the intersection of the "poetic" and the "scientific," of the "fictive" and the "real" in Freud's writing on the unconscious. As a similar problematic resides in Yanagita's writing on the hidden world and in his treatment of an unlettered "hidden" countryside, I believe de Certeau's framework of analysis can also be productively applied to the case of Yanagita's project. If this application of an analytical tool used first to explicate the dynamics of Freudian discourse constitutes an implicit comparison between Freud and Yanagita then so be it. I won't repress it.

Tengu as Denizen of the Hidden World

Yanagita began writing on tengu and the hidden world from a lack. The lack to which he was responding gaped from what he otherwise regarded as an admirable albeit biased first attempt at a serious study of strange tales and the beliefs that generated them—namely Hirata Atsutane's miscellaneous texts concerning monsters, goblins, and the "other world." In a 1905 essay entitled "Yūmeidan" ("Talks on the hidden world"), Yanagita specifies the text Honchō yōmikō [sic] (On marvels of this country) as one example in which Hirata focused on the question of tengu but misplaced tengu within native beliefs in the hidden world (yūmeikyō). Despite other of Hirata's texts which would suggest otherwise, Yanagita claims that Hirata placed tengu outside of his discourse on the hidden world and questions the wisdom of this exclusion. Yanagita attributes this
banishment of tengu from native Japanese conceptions of an invisible world that existed coterminus with the visible world to Hirata's strong prejudice against Buddhism. Hirata, noting that the figure of speech "tengu ni naru" commonly means "to be a braggart; to be boastful," traced the genealogy of tengu to evil and boastful Buddhist priests, whom tales of tengu often involved. This interpretation of tengu and yûmei, Yanagita insisted, was born of Hirata's passions toward rather than any theory of the old texts and legends. Developing a different interpretive tack, Yanagita sought to re-enfranchise tengu as the principal denizen of the hidden world in Japan and thus fulfill a lack in theoretical insight that Hirata's blinding passions had introduced. Ironically, what Yanagita seems to have been after in these early attempts at folk studies was, as I shall later discuss, a theory of passions.

What Yanagita did accept from Hirata's school of nativism (kokugaku) was what he identified as the "gist of the discourse on the hidden world" (yûmeiron no kosshi):

Within our world, what is called the phenomenal world (gense) and the hidden world (yûmei)—namely, this world and the other world—has been established. Although this world can be seen and heard from the other world, the other world cannot be seen nor heard from this world. For instance, two persons sitting face-to-face can't recognize the empty space between them as the other world. Since both punishments and rewards derive from the hidden world under this system of beliefs, the result of this invisible surveillance, Yanagita continues, is a fear of committing a social transgression:

Since people who believe in the discourse on the hidden world of the theologists (shingakusha) recognize the fact that there is an other world and fear the other

purposefully focused on stories of evil Buddhists who had turned into tengu after death, but he did not consider such tengu as "true tengu". For a summary of Hirata's view of the hidden world as it pertained to tengu, see Chigiri Kôsai's Tengu-kô vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nami Shobô, 1973), 323–373 and his Tengu no kenkyû (Tokyo: Tairiku Shobô, 1975), 255–261.


5 "Yûmeidan," 247.
world, they, to put it in Confucian terms, restrain and moderate themselves—they abide by morals. 6

Where Yanagita differs from Hirata is in specifying the agent of surveillance existing in the hidden world who metes out these punishments and rewards. While Hirata, according to Yanagita, only saw tengu as corrupted Buddhist priests, Yanagita argues that tengu should be considered one major form in which this agent of surveillance manifests itself in popular tales and legends. Since what interests Yanagita is the moral and social effect that this belief in yūmeikyō instills through a sense of fear and awe, the definition of the agency towards which these feelings are directed becomes important.

In the same movement by which he fills in this lack of tengu in Hirata's discourse on the hidden world, Yanagita produces another by stripping the word tengu of its literality before attempting to define it. In what would become a typical interpretative move in Yanagita's style of ethnological analysis, all reference to the written form of a Japanese word whose origin and meaning is under investigation is denied. Its (Chinese) characters are erased. This methodological imperative shifts the basis of definition of tengu from a literal interpretation of the Chinese characters used to represent it to its generally felt association with a native notion of obake or yōkai (monster and apparitions). 7 Casting off the characters for tengu frees the "substance" (jisshitsu) of tengu, which "has existed from the beginning [in Japan]," from any foreign [Chinese Buddhist] determination of meaning. 8 Given Yanagita's opinion in another essay of this period that the spoken word conveys thought more fully than the written word, this erasure of the written form opens up for Yanagita a space for a hermeneutics of the "spoken" Japanese psyche. 9 This disposition towards the supplantation of meaning based on the written

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6 "Yūmeidan," 248.

7 In its most developed form this shift from the written will typically lead to a consideration of the spoken form(s) of the word or concept being analyzed. In this earliest of Yanagita's ethnological ventures an insistence on a meaning derived from Japanese speech is apparent but the working out of this kind of analysis within a "linguistics of speech" is not yet rigorously refined. It will come later.

8 "Yūmeidan," 242.

9 "Shasei to ronbun," Bunshō sekai (February 1907), 32.
directly engages Yanagita with the Hirata School of nativism, but at the same time he sought to go beyond Hirata's treatment of tengu.

In Yanagita's formulation, tengu becomes theoretically abstracted. It is merely one manifestation of a generic obake, which in turn Yanagita designates as any chance encounter with the other (hidden) world. This definition of obake results from a discussion concerning the division between this world and the other world. As Yanagita relates it, after the separation of a primordial co-mingling between heavenly and earthly beings which existed in ancient legendary times, the dichotomy of this visible human world and the invisible divine world arose. From that time on, from the point of view of this world (the point of view of the other world being unknowable), communication between the two realms could take place in two ways. In the first, only people "pure of heart" and "pure of character" (that is, honest and sincere in their attempts) could continue to communicate with the hidden world on their own volition. The implication here is that ethical impurity or a deviation from a moral way is what created the separation of the two realms in the first place. The second way of trafficking with the hidden world, the way that interests Yanagita as a contemporary phenomenon, is when humans communicate "by chance" and "unexpectedly" with the hidden world. "This [type of communication]," Yanagita maintains, "is the so-called obake."10 In this articulation, obake is understood not so much as a kind of creature as an unforeseen event, an epiphany. Thus it is fundamentally formless but takes on various forms in narrative accounts of strange, unexpected, and inexplicable encounters. Tengu as "long-nosed, winged goblins" as they tend to be narrowly described in pictorial and narrative representations is generalized by Yanagita to include—in theory—obake made manifest in the forms of ordinary people, yamabushi, wandering monks, and so forth.11 The otherness of the other world from whence these forms are believed to come is generated by the inexpicability of their chance appearance from the point of view of this world. In other words, the hidden world consists of everything that lies beyond rational control, comprehension and predictability, but traces (keiseki) of its workings can be glimpsed in accounts of the inexplicable known collectively as "obake."

"Yūmeidan" contains Yanagita's earliest published conceptualization of "the hidden world," its inhabitants, and its social utility. It is a conceptualization that derives fundamentally from the Hirata School of nativism via Yanagita's first literary and nativist

10 "Shasei," 248.

11 "Shasei," 252.
What distinguishes it from Hirata’s formulations is its insistence upon the inclusion of a type of obake called tengu as the chief native administrator of this realm and as at least one of the figures feared and revered by those believing in the existence of the hidden world. This fear and reverence seems due to the common inscription of tengu as messengers of the gods and the semi-divinity that this position implies. In fact, it is probable that it was Yanagita’s acceptance of this notion of tengu (and consequently of obake in general) as an intermediary between kami and humans which led to his well-known but now generally discredited assertion that obake originated as fallen kami. In any case, beginning with this 1905 essay Yanagita had appropriated and refined a paradigm of a popular religious belief in a hidden world in which tengu, a form of obake, figured highly as its most immediate object of fear and respect.

As late as twenty-two years later Yanagita reasserted this paradigm of popular belief during a roundtable discussion with Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Kikuchi Kan, and Osatake Takeki. The topics of discussion included ghost stories, monsters, inexplicable phenomena, and the imaginative powers of the Japanese. In response to an inquiry by Akutagawa regarding the mutability of the physical forms of supernatural beings (especially tengu) as they are depicted over the ages, Yanagita replied:

While the forms depicted in pictures gradually change, the notion that an invisible spirit (meimei no reimotsu) exists here does not [change]. My kokugaku teacher Matsuura Shūhei would say that if it ever happened such that this belief were stripped from our notions of Japan, Japan would be ruined. He said that even when we are speaking together like this and we think that only two people are making conversation—and may say some inappropriate things—an other unseen entity is present. Moreover, because of the belief that this unseen entity is passing judgment on us, we cannot be imprudent. This entity who possesses all the same

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12 *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, (Tokyo: Chikuma, 1964), 23: 389–391 contains a passage in which Yanagita reminisces over this early education. In nearly all his future references to the workings of the hidden world Yanagita prefaces his explanation with an acknowledgment of Matsuura as the source of his knowledge.

13 See, for example, Miyata Noboru’s discussion of Yanagita’s definition of obake or yōkai in *Yōkai no minzokugaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1985), 3–4.
observational powers and the same above-mentioned judgmental powers as humans is invisible to our eye and yet exists here incorporeally. If we think that the hidden world (meikai) and the phenomenal world (gense) adhere closely we cannot do things that are inappropriate. He [Matsuura] would repeatedly say that to put it in Chinese Confucian terms, this would be an example of a person of inner discipline (shindoku). It seems that this notion exists even now in the Japanese view of life.14

I cite Yanagita’s response to Akutagawa in full to display the extreme similarities between this articulation of the hidden world and that which he made in his 1905 essay “Yūmeidan.” In both he recognizes the instruction in Nativist learning that he received from Matsuura Shūhei, schematically describes the workings of the visible/invisible world set-up, relates its moral effect upon believers in Confucian terms, suggests that this belief is still active today, and most importantly introduces this conception in conjunction with an explanation of an abstract notion of tengu (“Tengu and divine kidnappings” being the heading of this subsection of the discussion). Except for the minor differences in phraseology, Yanagita’s summary of Japanese beliefs in the hidden world, its tengu inhabitants, and its social function remained essentially unchanged over the twenty-two year span separating “Yūmeidan” and this discussion with Akutagawa. What this consistency suggests, if nothing else, is that any theory of popular Japanese religious experience in its social context which Yanagita may have entertained did not develop appreciably during this period—a modest point, perhaps, but one that gains significance when one considers the notable change which would occur in Yanagita’s thinking about the hidden world over the next twenty-year span.

Senzo as Denizen of the Hidden World

The next important discussion of the hidden world which appears in Yanagita’s writing occurs in the sixty-fifth section of his 1945 publication Senzo no hanashi, entitled “The other world and this world” (Ano yo to kono yo). In this instance Yanagita initiates his inquiry with the explicit question: “And so, first of all, where is the

other world?"15 He then offers two related views, one "olden" and the other a more modern update of the older idea.

The gist of the difference between the old and the new ideas seems to revolve around the frequency, cause, and sentiments of meetings between this world and the other world. In recent times, Yanagita suggests, the number of spirits in the nearby but invisible other world has increased to the point that they have gotten out of hand and so proper reverential observances have become difficult to maintain. Subsequently, a greater sense of fear developed towards these unappeased spirits as well as towards those who for other reasons had become dislodged and wandering. This enhanced feeling of fear paralleled a heightened sense of invisible surveillance present at all times around the visible world.

What interests me in this passage is not so much the differences that Yanagita hypothesized between old and new ideas concerning beliefs in yūmei, but rather the subtle differences in the uncanny repetition of the now familiar motifs in Yanagita's general account of yūmei. As in "Yūmeidan" of forty years previous, Yanagita once again in Senzo no Hanashi credits Hirata Atsutane with the first scholarly inquiries into the problem of the hidden world. He then similarly ranks his own kokugaku teacher Matsuura Shūhei among those scholars who believed in providing reliable personal accounts of encounters with the denizens of the hidden world and cites his words as follows:

Although invisible to our eyes, even this space between you and me is the hidden world. What we say is heard by an unseen entity. What we do is seen by an unseen entity. Because of this, we cannot do evil.16

This paraphrase of Matsuura's thumbnail sketch of kokugaku theories on yūmei is once again immediately compared to notions of Confucian morality by means of an allusion to the "Four Knows" story in the biography of Yang Chen, which Matsuura apparently cited frequently.17 What is notably absent from this otherwise simple

15 Yanagita, Senzo no hanashi (Tokyo: Chikuma, 1975), 171.

16 Yanagita, Senzo, 172.

17 The "four knows" story tells of how when Yang Chen was offered money clandestinely by a man one dark evening he refused, stating that "Heaven knows this secret, Earth knows it, I know it, and you know it." Like Matsuura's notion of the behavioral effect of belief in the hidden world, the four knows story emphasizes the moral influence of an omnipresent, invisible surveillance.
repetition of Yanagita’s understanding of the workings of the hidden world in popular Japanese religious beliefs is any mention of tengu. Whereas in the previous occasions the hidden world was always brought up in the context of reported encounters with tengu, by this time the context is that of ancestral spirits and the worship of them. Tengu have been evicted from the hidden world, but Yanagita does not yet explicitly say that senzo, or ancestors, have moved into their place. In Senzo no hanashi Yanagita is focused, rather, on sorting out the origins and objects of an assortment of seasonal folk observances and detailing how spirits of ancestors achieve a divine status through these practices. “Yûmeikai” as such is touched on only tangentially—and hesitantly—amid this discussion of ancestor worship, as if Yanagita himself is not quite sure how he would reconcile his earlier work on tengu with his developing theory of senzo.

Part of the problem that generates this uneasiness seems to be the location of the other world in which senzo reside. While the hidden world of tengu has been established as being immediately among the living, the beliefs concerning ancestors that Yanagita details in Senzo no hanashi could suggest that the invisible world from which senzo survey the living is transferred to the mountains as they eventually become ancestral deities. This re-location of ancestors to a more distant other world, one possibly distinct from yûmeikai, does not however in any way preclude the possibility of overlap, confusion, or even an amalgamation in Yanagita’s thinking of the two (if they are indeed two separate) conceptions of an invisible space filled with spirits of one sort or another. Such an overlap would especially be expected during the transition period that Yanagita describes (typically thirty-three years in most regions) when the spirits of the recently dead must be accorded the proper ritual observances in order to “become a ancestor” (Go-senzo ni naru).

Although the personal stakes involved in respecting familial spirits might extend beyond death (i.e., a person would be motivated to carry out rituals for deification not only out of respect for the spirit of a dead relative who might then bestow beneficence to the living family, but also so that these rituals might likewise be performed for oneself after death), the effect of this invisible surveillance in instilling moral conduct during life remains the same as that furnished by tengu. In any case, regardless of whatever conventional view on the location of the abode of ancestral spirits one might solidify from Senzo no hanashi, it is by no means a cut and dry issue with Yanagita as he is writing about it. The mere evocation of his earlier articulation of yûmei attests to a greater fluidity, uncertainty, and complexity in his thinking on senzo; at the very least it indicates that the hidden world of his earlier writings on tengu still lingered wraith-like in his discourse on senzo. The reconciliation of tengu and senzo as moral agents is a problem that would be dealt with at a later date.
Actually, the problem is repressed rather than dealt with. Although Yanagita separately related both tengu and senzo to the notion of a hidden world, he seems to have never discussed the two together. After *Senzo no hanashi*, ancestors clearly preside as tengu are sidelined in Yanagita's thinking about the moral agency that invisibly exerts influence over the Japanese. The clearest statement to this effect occurred during a 1958 interview entitled "Nihonjin no dōtokuishiki" (The Moral Consciousness of the Japanese) in which Kuwabara Takeo asked at one point for Yanagita to provide an example of a meritorious trait that the Japanese in particular possess.

Yanagita: You probably couldn't go so far as to call this is a meritorious trait, but the Japanese have up until now taken punishments to heart. We have thought that if one commits an evil, punishment for it is a natural consequence. We absent-mindedly believed in the existence of something called a kind of "the hidden world" (*yūmeikai*) that existed in olden times, from the early Meiji to late Tokugawa, as it were. Even as I speak to you, there in that corner an unseen entity is listening, and I cannot bear it being said of me "Listen to that! Saying things foreign to his heart."

Kuwabara: In the case of Westerners, is this what is called "conscience" (*ryōshin*)? Is it different from a conscience based on monotheism?

Yanagita: Since God can't go about like that, it's ancestors (*senzo*). What is watching us at hidden places is our ancestors.18

In this exchange the vestiges of Yanagita's previous description of the hidden world remains. The comparison to Confucian terms such as *shindoku* (inner discipline) or *shichi* (the Four Knows) is notably absent and replaced by the more neutral word "seisai" (sanction, punishment). Gone too is any acknowledgment of Yanagita's kokugaku teacher, thus distancing himself from a previous source of authority. Stripped of these elements, the essential component—an invisible mechanism that instills a sense of self-restraint and moral awareness—remains structurally unchanged. It is important to emphasize here that Yanagita still conceives of the moral consciousness of the Japanese as deriving from an unseen entity that is believed to watch over the living. This conception of an invisible moral surveillance appears in

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18 "Nihonjin no dōtoku," in *Yanagita Kunio taidanshū*, 239.
Yanagita’s writing as an *idée fixe*, I would suggest, that demands the kind of theoretical backdrop that yumeikai provided.

What differs within this later statement concerning the source of moral authority among the folk is the subject of action—it is explicitly named as being senzo rather than tengu. As in *Senzo no hanashi*, tengu—previously the acknowledged focus of most past studies of the hidden world, including Yanagita’s—have no place in the discussion. They have been completely displaced by a conception of an ancestral spirit which Yanagita emphasizes “isn’t a single person. It is precisely this part that is difficult to explain. It [senzo] takes a continually accumulating-like shape.” Just as he identified obake, of which tengu was but one of many types, as a shapeless collectivity that is given individual form in the singularity of an emotive, narrative event, Yanagita associates ancestors with a nebulous accumulative collectivity that, as he explains in *Senzo no hanashi*, receives a divine form through the ritual observances punctuating the agricultural calendar. By this move, Yanagita has perhaps chosen to discard his previous ideas about tengu and yumei (which might help explain why he excluded “Yumeidan” from his collected works) or has conveniently forgotten them to avoid the conflict (embarrassment?) they would pose in an ancestor-based theory of Japanese moral consciousness that he evidently espoused in his later years. Or perhaps tengu and senzo did fit together somehow in Yanagita’s theoretical other-world as the one was transformed into the other.

The juxtaposition of the above four articulations of yumei by Yanagita, articulations which span over five decades, produces two immediately interesting observations about his position on the concept of the hidden world: 1) his position radically changed; and 2) his position radically remained the same. Both points—the internal changes and the internal consistency of Yanagita’s view on the form of folk belief known as yumeikyō—deserve extended analysis, but what I wish to focus on in the second half of this paper, perhaps contrary to my penchant for discontinuities, is the structural continuity of the hidden world as a “theoretic fiction” throughout Yanagita’s thinking both within and without discussions of the particular belief called yumeikyō and how it enabled the writing of the text known as minzokugaku. The shift from tengu to senzo will still ultimately remain important in the following discussion since this metamorphosis itself will become a metaphor for the flux and pull characteristic of Yanagita’s desire to make the invisible visible (i.e. “fantasize,” the Greek root of which, phantazein, means to make visible or manifest)

19 *Op cit.*
while at the same time denying flights of fancy in favor of empirical observations grounded in the bedrock of reason.

Minzokugaku as Study of an “Economy of Affects”

There are many indications during the first decades of the 1900s that the invisible object Yanagita fantasized centering a field of study on was the affects, the feelings, of the ordinary Japanese. For example, Yanagita opened his 1908 essay “Jijitsu no kyōmi” (The Interest in Facts) by flatly stating: “I’ve been thinking recently that I’d like to research the feelings of ordinary people of the past (mukashi no bonjin no kokoromochi).”\(^{20}\) Similarly, during the 1927 discussion on the supernatural with Akutagawa, in a subsection concerning “Nihon to sōzōryoku” (The Japanese and Imagination), Yanagita asserted that although Japanese academic knowledge may lose out to its foreign counterparts, the imaginative powers of Japanese common folk is unsurpassed throughout the world. He glossed this power as “the workings of the heart” (kokoro no hataraki) of the commoners and it is clear that his focus of study was this marvelous faculty.\(^{21}\) Finally, in the preface of one of his few essays concerning minzokugaku methodology, Minkandenshōron (1932), Yanagita outlined three parts in the “collection” (shūshū) of knowledge about the folk: 1) collection of the external forms of life (seikatsugaikei), which is done by the eye of the traveler; 2) collection of explanations of life (seikatsuaisetsu), which is done by the eye and ear of the sojourner; and 3) collection of the gist (kosshi), namely life-consciousness (seikatsuishiki) of the folk, which is done only by the heart of those from the same local area.\(^{22}\) Okaya Kōji has I believe rightly pointed out that this enumeration of three parts of the folk conceived of as an object of study was not value-free. In distinguishing his Japanese folklore studies from academic anthropology and ethnology, Yanagita made clear that the latter was limited to the first two levels of observation of the tangible aspects of the folk, whereas his field of study aimed at reaching beyond the surface of the visible and audible to the world of invisible things;

\(^{20}\) “Jijitsu no kyōmi,” Bunshō sekai, (October 1908), 146.

\(^{21}\) “Shōka kidan,” 256.

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namely the "life-consciousness" and "heart" of the folk. Minzokugaku was to be the collection of feelings, not objects.\(^{23}\)

Many commentators before me have properly identified Yanagita's area of interest as "the psychic realm" of the Japanese and have stated as much, as if this object of study were unproblematically given.\(^{24}\) Such characterizations, however, have failed to consider the implications of the intangibility and, strictly speaking, unreal qualities of such an object of inquiry. By emphasizing the supposed scientificity of Yanagita's method of folklore study (reduced to travel, observation, and collection), previous studies have downplayed or outright excised the imaginative—and I would say in some instances fantastic—moment in the construction of minzokugaku. Nothing other than the unreal nature of minzokugaku's object requires this imaginative opening and nothing other than minzokugaku's disciplinary aspirations requires its simultaneous closure.

This uneasy tension is visible in Yanagita's justification for researching tengu in particular and obake in general, where his sensitivity to the ridicule he might receive for giving such fanciful topics serious consideration is exposed. He opens his 1909 essay "Tengu no Hanashi" (which I'll translate as "About Our Tengu" in order to maintain consistency with Fanny Hagin Mayer's rendering of the title Senzo no Hanashi as "About Our Ancestors") in a defensive tone:

> My researching tengu is, of course, of spurious repute. But in order to know the life of past people it's natural that I also took into account to some small extent such an item in considering [their life] from various angles. Accordingly, I don't hold any conclusions concerning tengu. People nowadays attempt to investigate things, all things, with ordinary logic, but since there is no logic in obake they will be discovered even by illogic.\(^{25}\)

The movement of this short passage betrays Yanagita's dilemma in attempting to fashion his focus of study. He acknowledges the reproach he will receive from mainstream academia for studying something as

\(^{23}\) Okaya Kōji, "Shijin Yanagita Kunio no imi," Kokubungaku: kaisetsu to kyōzai no kenkyū, 27: 1 "Ima Yanagita Kunio to wa nani ka," 81.

\(^{24}\) See for example Ronald Morse's summary of Yanagita's object of research in his unpublished dissertation, "Yanagita Kunio and the Folklore Movement: the Search for Japan's National Character" (Princeton, 1975).

\(^{25}\) "Tengu no hanashi," Chinseikai 1: 3 (1909) reprint. in ZKz, 6: 184.
The Question of Monsters

incredulous and fictional as tengu, yet insists on the need to include an investigation of this fabulous being in order to gain knowledge of the life of past Japanese. Even more amazing is Yanagita’s defense for the apparent absurdity of such monsters: they seem inexplicable to modern people because obake do not follow the rules of normal “logic” (he uses the Japanized English word, “rojikku”). Yet the alternative logic of obake does not dissuade Yanagita from carrying out his investigation. In fact, it propels him.

Again in “Yūmeidan,” after generalizing the notion of tengu and making it representative of the chance encounter with that which remains inexplicable within the natural laws of this world—that is, “obake”—he associates the popular traits of tengu with spiritual sensibilities unique to the Japanese:

It seems then in any case that they [tengu] take on various appearances, and that they are by no means limited to having wings and long noses. Yet, as for their personality, they often possess special characteristics the origins of which, to stretch it a bit, are in common with those of Bushidō and do not exist in other countries.26

The exemplary traits Yanagita enumerates echoes several of those that appeared six years before in Nitobe Inazo’s Bushidō (1899): rectitude, correct action, purity, single-mindedness, and revengefulness.27

These traits are also alluded to in “Tengu no Hanashi.” In this piece, written while Yanagita was preparing the manuscript of Tōno monogatari, Yanagita identifies what he dubs “tengudō” with bushidō.28 Explaining that tengu were originally the militia (bujin) among the gods, he points out that by the middle ages they had nearly completely acquired the traits of bushi in response to the changing ethos of the times. This presupposed correspondence of Zeitgeist with the changing depiction of tengu qualifies them as narrative traces of the psyche of the Japanese people, past and, in theory, present. Yanagita further justifies this position when, after pointing out the

26 “Yūmeidan,” 252.

27 Nitobe and Yanagita joined forces to found the Kyodokai in 1910. See Morse, 92ff.

28 “Tengudō” was commonly used, similar to “tengu ni naru”, to refer to the selfish practices of Buddhist priests who out of a desire for personal gain strayed from “the correct path.”
reflection of Celtic character and sense of geography in the stories of Fairies, he similarly relates the Japanese character and the predominantly mountainous geography of Japan to the gloomy mood in tengu stories. Whether or not these traits are actually expressed in tales of tengu is not what is of prime concern here. Instead, it is Yanagita’s move to read tales of tengu and other obake as narrative embodiments of a collective Japanese psyche that is important.

In this respect it becomes clear that for Yanagita marvelous stories about tengu and his own writing about them are not idle amusements. They are in fact crucial in the textualization of an essential knowledge of the “folk heart” in spite of—and, I will argue, because of—their fantastic nature. The more incredible and inexplicable an item of folklore is, the deeper the understanding of the folk mind will be once that item is interpreted: the toughest nut to crack is the tastiest for Yanagita. When dealing with “fushigi na hanashi” (fantastic, supernatural tales) Yanagita frequently begins by highlighting, even exaggerating, the apparently absurd, illogical, and opaque nature of the tale before unraveling its meaning. One of many examples of this rhetorical strategy occurs in his set-up of the problem of meaning of widespread hashi-hime (bridge-princess) tales. In the midst of recounting several versions of the tale, Yanagita states his topic of interest: “What I think I’d like to talk about here is the point that even in stories as foolish and absurd as these there is nevertheless a tradition from former medieval times.” And by relating certain motifs of this cycle of folk tales with motifs from earlier recorded stories in sources such as the Konjaku monogatari, regional fudoki, and even Genji monogatari, he proceeds to crack the nut and extract a kernel of meaning.

This privileging of the fantastic as the deepest material for an investigation of folk sentiment appears as early as 1905 as Yanagita justifies his unorthodox research: “Among the people (kokumin) of whatever country, all have their own special marvels (tokubetsu no fukashigi)” and “special characteristics (tokushoku)” by which “one can probably research the history of the people ... in particular, one can likely study something called the nature of the people (kokumin no seishitsu).” For this reason an increased interest in—rather than

29 “Tengu no hanashi,” 185–186. Yanagita’s knowledge of Celtic legends likely came from his recent reading of W. B. Yeats’ The Celtic Twilight (1893, 1902), which I believe served as his model for Tono monogatari.

30 “Hashi-hime” (1918) in ZKz, 6: 353.

31 “Yümeidan,” 243.
government proscriptions against—yūmeikyō "would be extremely welcomed." In effect, Yanagita qualifies the study of the hidden world as a pragmatic part of the discourse on kokutai (national body) which was at a high pitch following the Russo–Japanese War. He even privileges belief in the hidden world as the locus of a changeless national spirit, as "something that has continued [from ancient times to the present] and should also exist from the present to eternity" despite the historical fluctuations of its expression. Thus, by insisting that tengu belong in an indigenous conception of the hidden world and accepting accounts of them as source material, Yanagita has established a means by which to investigate the motivating psyche, or what I will call the "economy of affects," hidden within the national body of the Japanese.

Desiring the Other (World): Yanagita’s Turn around Literature

The assertion of a poetic knowledge founded on the valuation of the affects was one pursuit of Tokugawa Nativism. Yanagita too followed this pursuit in his early kokugaku studies under Matsuura and it is in this context that I believe one can consider his early affection for poetry, his attraction to a "linguistics of speech" and his interest in the creatures of the hidden world. On the other hand, in the interest of founding a credible, modern academic discipline (science) to investigate Japanese passions, Yanagita was compelled to locate minzokugaku at least ostensibly within the discursive parameters of institutionalized forms of contemporary academic knowledge. That academics both then and now have questioned the "scientific" validity of Yanagita's writing is not surprising. That he has not been fully accepted (by neither himself nor the majority of his commentators) as a writer of fiction either is not surprising. It is at this juncture that Yanagita shares the discursive dilemma that Freud too had faced and that

32 "Yumeidan," 244. In the opening paragraph of "Yumeidan" Yanagita acknowledges that since yumeikyo was proscribed against as being "harmful to the public good" his "way of viewing" this popular religious belief differs from that of others. "Others" in this case likely refers to his fellow officials in the Ministry of Agriculture.

33 Carol Gluck's *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), for example, discuses in some detail the debates concerning the definition of kokutai and kokumin which took place both within and without governmental circles in late Meiji Japan.

Michel de Certeau has analyzed as a problem of the "redistribution of epistemological terrain" over the boundaries between the "objective" and the "imaginary" which the positive sciences had established in nineteenth-century Europe. The Meiji academic institution, to the extent that it engaged in this scientific discourse, also necessarily accepted these same distinctions concerning what constituted positive knowledge and its "remainder." As intellectual adventurers, both Yanagita and Freud had in common a willingness to hazard the attempt to reclaim that "remainder" and re-evaluate the foundations of the institution which determined the boundaries of knowledge. Drawing on the major phases of de Certeau's examination of the question of discursive boundaries in "the Freudian novel" I would like now to explore how a similar analysis might be played out in relation to Yanagita's writing on the hidden world in particular and his writing of minzokugaku in general.

De Certeau turns to Freud's development of psychoanalytic discourse in order to demonstrate how its relationship to literature and history brings out the determining configuration between literary and historical discourse. His thesis is straightforward:

I will state my argument without delay: literature is the theoretic discourse of the historical process. It creates the non-topos where the effective operations of a society attain a formalization. Far from envisioning literature as the expression of a referential, it would be necessary to recognize here the analog of that which for a long time mathematics has been for the exact sciences: a "logical" discourse of history, the "fiction" which allows it to be thought.

Freud's science of the mind, as de Certeau then shows, is displaced toward literature for its conception. This displacement gives analytic discourse the form of a "theoretic fiction," a term Freud himself used to define the psychic apparatus of the unconscious in The Interpretation of Dreams. "Indeed, the Freudian discourse is the fiction which comes back to the realm of scientificity, not only insofar as it is the object of analysis, but insofar as it is the form. The novelistic mode becomes theoretic writing." Malcolm Bowie further specifies Freud's use of

35 De Certeau, 17.
36 De Certeau, 18.
37 De Certeau, 19–20.
the term *theoretische Fiktion* "to describe a state of affairs that a given theory seemed to require or predict but for which no supporting evidence could be found." Given Yanagita's similar pull toward literature and push toward scientificity in his attempt at an alternative history of Japanese life, I will suggest here that the writing of minzokugaku falls within a similar problematic and that consequently the "hidden world," like Freud's unconscious, was born of a "poetic gesture" and functioned as the theoretical fiction that allowed the discourse on the affects of the folk to be thought.

In an effort to link Yanagita's early poetry with his later researches of the folk, Okaya Kōji turns to the discussion of the hidden world appearing in "Yūmeidan." The leitmotif, Okaya explains, of nearly all of Yanagita's *shintaishi* is a dissatisfaction with this world and a subsequent longing for the other world to which Yanagita refers in one poem as "the beautiful world of dreams." Likewise, in "Yūmeidan" Yanagita expresses the desire to return to a belief in the hidden world in order to research how such a strange belief relates to the characteristics and the history of the Japanese over the ages: "Recently I too have become a non-believer [in yūmeikyō] so my research won't progress, but some day—and I kid you not—I think I would like very much to try researching [this belief]." As Okaya indicates, if one takes this statement literally it would imply that Yanagita too was formerly a believer in yūmeikyō during his young poetic years under the tutelage of Matsuura. He then goes on to conclude that this early belief in or at least the longing and concern for the hidden world that Yanagita displayed in his younger years was directly related to his much later researches into Japanese views of a distant other world, such as that which appears in *Kaijō no michi* (The Journey Overseas, 1952). In short, Yanagita's "poetic" desire for belief in an other world—hidden and near at hand or distant beyond the horizon—becomes displaced and transferred into a desire for a "scientific" knowledge of such beliefs among other Japanese. I do not disagree with Okaya's interpretation as such, but I would extend and recast it a bit differently.

I would emphasize that in the above statement Yanagita curiously and tautologically establishes belief itself as the basis for knowledge of belief in the hidden world. Thus, if one takes his

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39 Okaya, 80.

40 "Yūmeidan," 258.
declaration literally it would imply that he, through his eventual writing of minzokugaku, had become a "believer." The same logic is at work in Yanagita's characterization of the level of collecting knowledge of the folk which he reserved for his conception of folk studies. Assuming that only people native to a local region could glean the kernel of its "kokoro," its "life-consciousness," one would, in order to legitimate one's claims to knowledge of this "folk heart," literally have to become one of these folk—or at least fantasize being one of them—before returning to the body of the scientific observer. This movement, as I see it, in the formation of a discourse on the folk is precisely where theory, belief, and poetic fantasy intersect to engender the conditions for a hermeneutic knowledge of an "object" (the affects of the folk) that by definition lies beyond the ken of positive science.

De Certeau's examination of the "Freudian novel" reveals that what ultimately authorized Freud's assertions was not rational proofs but the poetic citations that formed his thought. In addition, the "stylistic" in Freud's writing is a "stylistic of affects" in which he "takes care to 'confess,' as he says, his affective reaction to the person or document he analyses.... With this golden rule, every psychoanalytic treatment directly contradicts a first norm, a constituent part of scientific discourse, which argues that the truth of the utterance be independent of the speaking subject."41 In the case of minzokugaku, the affective reaction of the speaking subject to his object is also all-important in accessing the uninscribed material that will become the inscribed knowledge about the motivations of the folk. This affective "non-scientific" relationship between observer and observed, although rhetorically repressed in most of Yanagita's advanced writings, is showcased in at least one of his early major experiments at reporting the psychic reality of the Japanese countryside, Tōno monogatari (1910).

In the famous preface of this work that many commentators view as the founding text of Japanese folk studies (I do not entirely agree with that assessment), Yanagita "confesses" his affective reaction to his material on at least two crucial points. The first is when he introduces the source of the tales of Tōno, his informant and native son of Tōno, Sasaki Kizen (alias Kyōseki):

All of these stories I heard from Mr. Sasaki Kyōseki, a person from Tōno. I have been writing the stories down as they were told to me during his many visits since February 1909. Kyōseki is not good at storytelling but

41 De Certeau, 26.
he is honest and sincere. I have written the stories as I felt them without adding a word or phrase.\textsuperscript{42}

Ronald Morse’s translation of “kanjitaru mama” in the last sentence as “as they were related to me” completely glosses over and neutralizes the radical aspect of Yanagita’s theory and practice of folk studies: access to knowledge about the psychic life of an effectively unseen and unheard rural folk—that is, the collection of their feelings and motivations—is gained by the impression that their speech makes upon one’s own affectivity. The collector’s task is then to find the best means by which to transmit this affective charge in writing to the reader.\textsuperscript{43}

For Yanagita at this time the best means was some kind of adaptation to scholarly writing of so-called “shaseibun” that was being advocated by the shizenshugiha (Naturalists) among Japanese literary circles at the time. In an essay entitled “Shasei to ronbun” written two years after “Yūmeidan” and two years before he began Tōno monogatari, he described this possible style of writing:

Moreover, it is better if one can solely write about the things one saw, heard, thought, and felt only as they existed.\ldots

42 YKz., 4:9.

43 Mizuno Yōshu, the writer who introduced Sasaki to Yanagita, seems to have felt that Yanagita had found an effective means of transmission of emotion in the style of writing employed in both Yanagita’s poetry and in Tōno Monogatari. Of Yanagita’s poetry he said that “it is like the attenuated voice of a song sung softly and solitarily. It is neither a wind trumpeting brute force nor a storm of oratory, but this voice goes from a person’s ear and penetrates into the heart.” Cited by Yamada Kiyoyoshi “Yanagita Kunio to Mizuno Yōshu” part 1, in Fūen (July 1972), 7. Of Tōno monogatari he emphasized the stirring evocative force of the text in its re-creation of the spirit of life in the village: “If there were anyone who, viewing this text, would consider it the work of a dilettante, I think I would flatly say ‘That is an error.’ The reason why is that from this text I could feel the life of the people of this village in the mountains. It is felt by me as if the people living there are speaking about the things they have seen with their eyes and have heard with their ears.” (Mizuno Yōshu, “Tōno monogatari o yomite,” Yomiuri shinbun, Dec. 18, 1910.)
the inner mind and the outer world, I think there is no difference in the meaning of "shasei." 

Whereas the Naturalists espoused a theory of "flat description" (heinen byōsha) of a physical reality perceived by the five senses when they spoke of shaseibun, Yanagita seems to have been groping for a kind of writing that would facilitate a mimesis of psychic, not physical, reality, the kind of object that he had already begun to explore as a topic of research in "Yūmeidan" and would continue to explore in Tōno monogatari. It is for the same reason that Yanagita joined in the on-going literary and linguistic debate over the notion of "genbunitchi" or "the unification of the spoken and written." Yanagita admits the appeal of a genbunitchi style that is closer to the colloquial spoken language, which in turn is more efficient than the written literary style in transmitting one's thoughts and feelings. In other words, the colloquial best externalized one's kokoro and genbunitchi could theoretically transfer traces of that kokoro best. Considering the claims to objectivity that Naturalist theories of shaseibun had originally made, Yanagita's move to include the writing of the thoughts and feelings of the "inner mind" within this theory of writing—to rehabilitate and to reassert unabashedly both subjectivity and the passions into an increasingly "scientificized" (but not scientific) form of writing—circumscribed the conditions for the tense relations between the scientific and literary which would be witnessed throughout Yanagita's writing of minzokugaku.

The second instance in the preface to Tōno monogatari of Yanagita confessing to being affected by his object of inquiry occurs in the account of his "impressions" (inshō) of Tōno. After a vivid description of the unfamiliar geography surrounding the approach to Tōno—complete with a bird of a type unknown to him—Yanagita recounts the scene of an equally exotic (to both the visitor Yanagita and

44 "Shasei to ronbun," 31.

45 Op cit. In another essay concerning the possibilities of genbunitchi ("Genbun no kyorī," Bunshō sekai, October 1909) Yanagita seems to turn back to his previous position on the efficiency of the spoken over the written in expressing one's thoughts when he argues that there is a certain compact economy of expression and capacity for affective impact in writing that a verbatim transcription of speech lacks. But rather than a reversal back to a form of pure literary writing, Yanagita's new articulation attempts to amalgamate the best qualities of both speech and writing: the former's fluidity in expressing thoughts and feelings, its proximity to one's "kokoro" and "kibun," and the latter's precision and rhetorical capabilities.
to the reader) event, the Shishi Odori or "Lion Dance." Mingled with the flutes and singing, the sounds of the villagers participating in the festival—the shouts, the cries, the laughter—have enregistered themselves in Yanagita's memory so that even today they can still evoke in him "the lonely sadness of a traveler" (ryoshō). The combination of this description of unfamiliar territory and the emotional impression that the festive communality of Tōno leaves on the outsider Yanagita further points up the counter-pull of his epistemological positioning: he conjures up the image of the nineteenth-century ethnographer who in theory sees and hears in detail his subject from a detached, objective distance (which corresponds to Yanagita's first two levels of collecting folk material) but then superimposes on that image a film of what can only be called a romantic longing to be a part of the community that he is observing (which corresponds to his third and privileged level of minzokugaku). This configuration is distinguishable, I believe, from notions in early twentieth-century anthropology of the "participant-observer" as it openly suggests a more radically subjective and emotional involvement of the observer with the observed. Institutionalized anthropology, even of the most participatory type, has maintained to this day the pretense of objectivity, for to admit the subjectivity of one's practice would disqualify it from membership in the institution of science. For Yanagita the subjective experience—in particular, the affective impressions—of the researcher would become indispensable to the practice of minzokugaku.

Hard to catalogue as a scientific ethnology or literary text, travelogue or modern collection of myths and legends, Tono monogatari can surely be called fantastic in the same sense that the nineteenth-century European fantasy novel "plays with/undoes the boundary positive sciences established between the real and the imaginary."46 A primary reason that Tono monogatari has been difficult to pin down within traditional disciplinary classifications is that it attempts to chart little-known epistemological territory (the psychic reality of the people of Tono) and consequently forges by plan or by necessity a style of presentation from a mix of narrative modes. The one text that likely served as Yanagita's closest model, W. B. Yeats' Celtic Twilight,

46 De Certeau, 17. This is de Certeau's reading of Tzvetan Todorov's The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre. Although a groundbreaking work to the study of fantastic literature, Todorov's approach is sterile when it comes to the analysis of the cultural, social, and political conditions and implications surrounding "fantastic" texts. Rosemary Jackson in Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion (New York: Methuen, 1981) makes an admirable attempt to fill this lack.
which Yanagita had read just prior to writing *Tōno monogatari*, shares much of the same ambiguities: it is travel-essay, story collection, ethnographic description, poetry, history and fantasy novel all in one. In light of Yanagita’s frequent complaints about contemporary literature and historiography during this time, the disrespect for the conventional boundaries of “scientific” and “literary” discourse that Yanagita’s text displays becomes understandable—it openly plays with and challenges these established boundaries.

On several occasions Yanagita extends this disrespect to established academics in general. One pertinent example of his disdain for conventional methods of study occurs in his 1931 essay “Obake no koe” (The Voice of Monsters). In this short piece Yanagita explores the basis of the common use throughout the countryside of the sound “mōko” and variations of it to signify “obake.” Similar to his rejection of Hirata’s Chinese character-based analysis of “tengu,” he criticizes the idea that “mōko” derives from the homonym of this word which refers to the Mongols, who were “monster-like” in their attempted invasions of Japan in the thirteenth century. He disparagingly labels this form of interpretation as “reeking of the academic” (gakusha kusai) in its failure to consider a survey of this verbal enunciation in the context of everyday spoken language throughout Japan. Yanagita further specifies the importance of such a “linguistics of speech” in the investigation of the folk psyche in the more fleshed-out sequel to “Obake no koe” that he wrote two years later, “Yōkai ko-i: gengo to Minzoku no kankei” (The Original Meaning of Monsters: the relation between speech and the folk).

In this essay he presents a complex case for relating the meaning of the sound “mō” or “mōko” to a peculiar lunar New Year custom of northern Japan called “namahagi,” which involves a child donning a frightening mask and making door-to-door inquiries around the village. Without going into the details of his argument I would stress that it relies first and foremost on a widespread survey of the various regional vocalizations of everyday words used to signify this

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47 On the inadequacies of “great man” historiography, see for example “Jijitsu no kyōmi.” Yanagita’s dissatisfaction with the reigning literary school of the 1905–1910 period, the shizenshugiha, appears in several essays: “Kanri no yomu shōsetsu” (*Bunshō sekai*, October 1907); “Dokusha yori mitaru shizenhashōsetsu” (*Bunshō sekai*, April 1908); “Shinkyuryō-jidai no bungei” (*Mumei tsūshin*, October 1909).

48 ZKz, 6: 61.

49 ZKz, 6: 40–58.
custom and the idea of obake. From this rough comparison, Yanagita then makes linkages among these words and the practices to which they refer. This process of linking he admits is the result of "hypotheses" and "imagination," suggesting that it is highly interpretive, but he never doubts the truth produced since it is his belief/theory that such an analysis of the spoken linguistic material he has collected offers access to true meaning and intent. Common academic explanations miss this level of truth because they are steeped in "the historical knowledge of the second Mongol invasion and the like."50 That Yanagita's type of historical concern is angled differently is made clear in the opening paragraph: taking the word namahagi as a starting point he would like to "consider to what extent do words leave traces of the movements of the human heart (mind) (ningen no kokoro no ugoki) on the world long after." The new field of human science that Yanagita envisions takes a strongly hermeneutical shape—a "hermeneutics of the heart," if you will. And this kind of study, Yanagita implies, does not belong to the work of gakusha.

Hermeneutics of the Heart

But what is Yanagita if not a gakusha himself?51 Yanagita's answer would be—and the distinction must be taken seriously—a minzokugakusha, a gakusha for the folk.52 If the gakusha aligns himself with the enlightened mind that responds to the phenomenal world (gense), the minzokugakusha aligns himself with the folk heart that responds to the hidden world (yūmei). But then if, according to Yanagita's description of the levels of folk collecting, the local folk themselves possess "by heart" the gist of their psychic motivations, why is the minzokugakusha needed? Because, as Yanagita often found out when he asked locals about the origin of a particular word, even

50 ZKz, 6: 45.

51 Even though he did not take a degree in the social sciences proper, which could in fact have everything to do with his defensive attitude toward other disciplines, he could still offer as sanction for his texts on folklore the paratextual prestige of a well-traveled professional in his field of specialization, agricultural policy.

52 The "for" here is purposefully multivalent to suggest the tension of being a scholar of the folk (implying an outside position of observation of the object of study) while at the same time writing on behalf of ("for"), with respect to ("for"), and even in honor of ("for") the folk (implying an inside position of identification with the object of study).
they did not know it. They might possess it by heart (that is, unconsciously), but they do not know it consciously. In other words, they cannot fully articulate it in a discourse of rational, scientific knowledge.

In *Senzo no hanashi* Yanagita actually names his object of research the unwritten “traces” (*konseki*) and “unconscious (habitual, involuntary) tradition” (*muishiki no denshō*) of the folk. The resemblance of this vocabulary to Freud’s notion of the operation of an individual’s psychic apparatus may be entirely coincidental—remember, I do not mean to compare their “ideas”—but there is a real resonance between their respective positions as purveyors of knowledge. As analyst, Freud listens to his patient’s stories and offers hermeneutical hints, often involving a play on linguistic material as well as an affective transference between analyst and analysand, to bring to light the subconscious meanings hidden in them. It is never doubted that the patient possesses “the answer.” It simply requires the interpretive tact of the analyst to facilitate its articulation as fantasies are turned into facts about the patient’s psyche. Similarly, the minzokugakusha, self-positioned between the *minzoku* and the *gakusha*, takes as his task the bringing to light of meanings hidden in the speech acts of its subject. In effect, he too attempts to process what strikes the *gakusha* as formless fantasies (supernatural tales, strange beliefs, unfamiliar rituals) until they acquire the shape of facts which are narratively acceptable within the institution of knowledge. The illogicities of the other—of obake, of the folk—are translated into a form that is meaningful within the logic of the same, of the enlightened modern.

In the case of the formation of minzokugaku, there are thus two “hidden” areas related to each other by synecdoche: 1) the “workings of the folk’s heart,” which are identified with unadorned local speech and are hidden from the writerly mind of the scholar; and 2) the believed-in and felt world of obake and senzo, which is hidden from the folk themselves. The duplicitous (doubled, shifty, and deceptive) subject position of the minzokugakusha forcefully works to defy both levels of hiddenness so that his epistemological position may reign in theory over both the benighted (but sincere and passionate) folk and the enlightened (but blinded) academic. But reigning in theory and reigning in practice are two different things—how does this upstart, the minzokugakusha, legitimate his rule of knowledge about the folk?

Although the minzokugakusha works in name of the other, which in this instance is the hidden world and the feelings of the folk toward it, the other has no power to authorize his knowledge as

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53 *Senzo no hanashi*, 151.
belonging to an accepted discipline since the other itself exists only at
the axis of belief, emotion, fantasy, and theory. Yanagita
metaphorically recognizes this dilemma when he explains in
"Yūmeidan" that there is a "law of silence" in the other world which
prohibits even those people "pure of heart" who have managed to enter
into "the way of the hidden world" from speaking or writing anything
about it. Because of the lack of fully reliable oral or written accounts of
the hidden world (and daily folk beliefs and practices), he continues,
"it has become such that we must skillfully employ our powers of
imagination."54 But this reluctant reliance on imagination in itself is
not a firm enough foundation on which to form a discipline. Yanagita
does end up, after all, advising Sasaki Kizen, a fiction writer turned
folklorist, against the excesses of imagination since they do not become
the collector of folk tales.55 Consequently, Yanagita must make
appeals to the tribunal of the institution for the acceptance of
minzokugaku. It is the institution, as de Certeau demonstrates, that
legitimates claims at stake in the field of knowledge by designating
what is real (and therefore knowable) and what is not. "Real"
knowledge so defined can only be of the disciplined variety. Yanagita's
discursive struggle in the early formation of minzokugaku, similar to
Freud's in the founding of psychoanalysis, thus lies precisely in the re­
definition of what is "real." This is how I believe the defensive and
almost pleading tone of Yanagita's assertion in the preface of Tōno
monogatari—that "this book contains present-day facts"—should be
read. Despite their frightening, fanciful, and unfamiliar character, the
tales of Tōno must be accepted, Yanagita is saying, within an
institutional re-definition of the real.

The difficult work of doing minzokugaku becomes, then, not the
collection of material or even the skilled interpretation of that
material, but rather the presentation of it in a written form that
respects both the integrity of its source and the by-laws of its
destination. In short, the minzokugakusha must be a masterful writer,
using all of the rhetorical tricks at his disposal to persuade and
impress an unbelieving audience while at the same time taking care not
to betray his client. If the tales of Tōno startle and frighten the reader,
the minzokugakusha has succeeded in transmitting the affective

54 "Yūmeidan," 252.

55 In a letter to Sasaki commenting on Sasaki's rendering of oral folk tales into
writing Yanagita advises his young informant that "one should not add
excessive imagination beyond one's observations; that is something for future
scholars. The duty of the collector lies completely elsewhere." This excerpt is
charge around which the core of folk life and belief is constellated. He has brought the experience of obake, the unforeseen encounter with alterity, into the citadel of the same. The problem that follows is whether minzokugaku thus conceived as the study of an often disturbing economy of affects would also, like the monsters who threaten the village, be ritualistically placed at the periphery and thus harmlessly incorporated into the presiding order of things or else accepted as a new resident who could potentially change the makeup of the neighborhood. In other words, would the writing of minzokugaku be admitted by the academy as "real" (i.e. "scientific") knowledge or deprived of this status and abandoned as the bastard offspring of too much feeling, fiction, and imagination?  

Revenant

This question, however, appears irrelevant or at least misconceived when one remembers that it is the very lack/loss of "real" written knowledge that allows the writing of this "unreal" field in the first place. This situation comes about as Yanagita insists upon an interpretive analysis of spoken forms, or if necessary written forms that most resemble the spoken, which for him offered the best "traces" of the folk heart. Moreover, Yanagita was first drawn specifically to fushigi na hanashi, things which, unsupported by a commonsense material reality, existed only in language. This particular relationship between the supernatural and language is neither coincidental nor arbitrary. As Todorov puts it in his study of the literary fantastic:

The supernatural is born of language, it is both its consequence and its proof: not only do the devil and vampires exist only in words, but language alone enables us to conceive what is always absent: the supernatural. The supernatural thereby becomes a symbol of language, just as the figures of rhetoric do,

56 In an apparent effort to dissociate his "serious" work from the world of romantic fiction that he imaginatively created in his youthful poetry, Yanagita purposefully excised his poetry from his collected works, Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū. See Yamada Kiyoyoshi, "Yanagita Kunio to Mizuno Yōshu" part 2, Füen (August 1972), 6.

57 One could make an argument, I believe, that Yanagita's style of minzokugaku boils down in fact to an interpretive analysis of certain modes of linguistic usage.
and the figure is, as we have seen, the purest form of literality.\(^{58}\)

Within these terms, minzokugaku is the study of absence par excellence: of passions absented from academic consideration; of beliefs and practices absented from official discourse; of a hidden world of beings—tengu, senzo, whatever—absent from view; of Japanese absent from written histories. The goal of minzokugaku—its “fantasy”—is to make present these absences, so the hidden world, as absent presence, is the perfect figure or theoretic fiction around which to weave this discourse. This discursive operation properly belongs to a poetic, not referential, function since the scientific inexplicability of *fushigi na hanashi* as such breeds the need for a “poetic” knowledge of them, which involves a tactful linking of “traces” of the folk psyche as they appear in the literality of language, not in the reality of the empirical. In this respect Yanagita again betrays his roots to the kokugaku concern for Japanese poetics.

This process of transformation, of bringing the unknown and unreal into the known and real was itself bound to change the shape of minzokugaku as it worked toward disciplinary status. The absence or lack at the origins of the discourse on the folk cannot be doubted; it also could not be discovered if minzokugaku was to survive as a legitimate form of knowledge within the academy. Here is where I contend that the curious metamorphosis of tengu into senzo within the realm of the hidden world in Yanagita’s writing can be productively read as a sign of the drive that aims to discipline, to “tame” minzokugaku without full attainment of the goal. The very problematics involved in the kind of “empathic” study of the folk that Yanagita theorized demand an undisciplined discipline of the absent presences that the folk evoke. In the pursuit of this (unfulfillable) goal, the economy of affects returns, like an ancestral apparition, in minzokugaku as the economy of yūmei while the figure of yūmei itself repeatedly returns throughout Yanagita’s writing to help and to haunt him. It is very much a return of the repressed that manifests itself uncannily in familiar yet slightly altered forms.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{59}\) Lacan’s distinction between “aim” and “goal”, summarized by Slvoj Zizek, is relevant here: “A goal, once reached, always retreats anew. Can we not recognize in this paradox the very nature of the psychoanalytical notion of drive, or more properly the Lacanian distinction between its aim and goal? The goal is the final destination, while the aim is what we intend to do, i.e., the way
This economy can be imagined as comprising of a circuit of displacements within the theoretic fiction (the hidden world) that had initiated a reproducible writing space for minzokugaku. In “Yumeidan” Yanagita generalized the definition of tengu (under the umbrella of “obake” as chance encounter) to include various liminal human types, most notably wandering monks and yamabushi. In “Tengu no Hanashi” he also identifies stories of tengu with sightings of Ainu and other “mountain people.” The result is that the “other” of the other world, although still unusual, attains a more human form as it becomes more rationalized in Yanagita’s explanations. Yet, rather than continuing this line of rationalization until the hidden world is explained away, Yanagita retains the theoretical framework of the hidden world, which is necessary for his conception of moral consciousness based on an invisible surveillance, and places “our ancestors” in it. By this move he thus achieves a degree of credibility for his object—it acquires a reality to which all, not just “superstitious” rural folk, can respond—without completely abandoning the “unreal” space which (re)produces and supports it in his writing. The first half of the circuit of agents in Yanagita’s hidden world, then, goes like this: monsters (tengu, obake) to strange humans (ijin) to ancestors (senzo).

The complementary half is formed by connecting Yanagita’s view of the respective relations of monsters and ancestors to a fourth term, divinities (kami). Given that he believed that obake had descended from a previous divine status and that ancestors could theoretically “ascend” into divinities, the second half of the circuit appears as: ancestors to divinities to monsters. Together the two sequences of relations form a network of exchange (monsters to strangers to ancestors to divinities to monsters) that accounts for each of these major objects of minzokugaku within the same economy of yūmei. Each can be staged against the same theoretically unified background which in practice may indeed appear piecemeal and disparate, or at best, sutured. In Yanagita’s writing, then, one can see the specific conception of a hidden world originally derived from the Hirata school of nativism broadened to furnish a general theoretical grounding for the entities occupying a “hidden” folk heart.

This theoretical arrangement—itsf “hidden” in Yanagita’s writing as he is aware of the “surveillance” of the academy over itself. Lacan’s point is that the real purpose of the drive is not its goal (full satisfaction) but its aim: the drive’s ultimate aim is simply to reproduce itself as drive, to return to its circular path, to continue its path to and from the goal. The real source of enjoyment is the repetitive movement of this closed circuit.” (Slavoj Zizek, Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, [Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991], 5). It is in this sense of “circuit” that the economy of affects enfigured by yūmei and driving minzokugaku should be understood here.
himself—is a crucial mechanism for the generation of minzokugaku. The theoretic fiction of “the hidden world” sets in place a reproducible space for textual production by means of continual absences and displacements of signification which will always offer themselves for filling and completion; there will always be something hidden among the folk which will require revelation. That this foundation for writing rests on beliefs, fantasies, and theories which are referenced to “nothing” is irrelevant as long as it can appear and be accepted as “real.” This legerdemain is enacted by the second stroke that the circuit of relations within the economy of yūmei enables: the hidden world as a fantastically imaginative realm of tengu returns as a relatively rationalized realm of senzo. This move may (or may not) have been sufficient for minzokugaku’s masquerade as an accepted scientific discipline but at the same time may have ironically paved the way for its ideological co-optation by state apparatuses attached to the very same institution of knowledge from which minzokugaku sought disciplinary acceptance. In this context the shift from tengu to senzo marks important movements in the formation of Yanagita’s mode of minzokugaku: movements between empirical observation and theory, disciplined knowledge and radicalized imagination, science and fiction.
A Fantasy of Ancient Japan:
The Assimilation of Okinawa in Yanagita Kunio’s
Kainan Shoki

Alan S. Christy

Yanagita Kunio claims in Kainan shoki (A Brief Record of the Southern Seas), the text describing his trip to Okinawa in the winter of 1920–1921, that in the commanding view from atop the ruins of Urasoe castle “[o]ne can see 800 years of island history.”¹ But after recounting the mytho-historical significance associated with the inlets and hills he sees in the landscape, Yanagita contrasts the grandeur of the past with the humility of the present, asking, “what else can one see now but trees, the ocean and the sandy beaches?”² Considering that Yanagita was standing on the northern edge of the largest city in Okinawa, on an island which was said to be gravely overpopulated, one might suppose that he could also see many buildings, streets and people living their daily lives in the early twentieth century. Yanagita’s willingness to overlook, or perhaps look beyond, present conditions into a mythic past in Urasoe is typical of his traveler’s vision throughout the text, and invariably calls to mind Lévi-Strauss’s concerns in Tristes Tropiques that, in his search for the lost past, he will be unable to recognize the present.³

In his foreword, Yanagita calls Kainan shoki, merely a “record of admiration,” and not a work of serious scholarship. He also confesses in the postscript that what was meant as a “record of observations” (kansatsuki) for publication in a Tokyo newspaper had slid into a somewhat more indeterminate category which he calls “travelogue-style” (kikōfu). The distinction resides in his contention that in a travelogue “knowledge and impressions are jumbled together so that if you haven’t been there before, you don’t know what, exactly, is being described.”⁴ These characterizations of Kainan shoki stress the personal, interested and experiential sources of the text, in contrast to

²Yanagita, 1: 359.
⁴Yanagita, 1: 522–23.
an ideal of scholarly writing which is understood to be impersonal, disinterested and abstracted. They notify the reader that the text is supposed to record and reflect what Yanagita saw, heard and felt—in short “experienced”—on his trip to Okinawa.

But as the representation of the landscape around Urasoe suggests, experience can have an unstable relationship with writing. Is it Yanagita’s “experience” on that Urasoe hilltop that his text records? Or is it a text which produces the experience? Yanagita gives the reader no idea where he came across the legends of the ancient visitors whose traces he views from Urasoe. Whether he read their tales in books or heard them from his local informants, their presence so long ago is no longer directly legible in the landscape. However, his survey of the terrain mimics the reading of a set of folktales. That is, he describes the landscape as a series of narratives, rather than as a more conventional topography. His experience of viewing the landscape is, in large part, informed, or more precisely produced, by his encounter with the texts of these legends, so that the landscape is “experienced” as a text.

Those, however, are not the only texts which inform his reading of the Urasoe landscape. There is also the text which is still to be written as he stands on that Urasoe hilltop. And that text also involves another narrative besides the straightforward account of his journey which further informs these Urasoe musings. In the introduction, Yanagita tells the reader that he is searching for “the universal natural law (rihō) of life in the many islands of southern Japan,” a law which is not constructed on “the standard of historical discrimination built up in the span of a mere century.” In other words, he is looking for a structuring principle which exceeds historical contingency, an original condition which establishes the parameters of life in the islands. This natural law, in turn, will become the basis for a future production of texts called “Nihon minzokugaku” (Japanese folk ethnography).

The standard assessments of Yanagita in Japan these days appraise Kainan shoki as if Yanagita achieved this goal, with the two-month journey through the southern islands being seen as having “had a decisive influence on Yanagita” and his work. Kainan shoki’s significance within his œuvre is seen as threefold: for its timing within Yanagita’s life (right after he quit the bureaucracy), for its role in the development of a travel methodology for minzokugaku, and for its

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5 Yanagita, 1: 302.

6 Fukuda Ajio, “Kaisetsu,” in YKz, 1: 690.
representation of Okinawa as a (perhaps the) crucial site for research into archaic Japanese culture. Yanagita’s current disciples and critics alike tend to place great weight on Yanagita’s travels and on the image of “Yanagita, the traveler,” reproducing an image Yanagita undoubtedly worked hard to foster for himself. Miyata Noboru, for example, contends that “Yanagita’s travelogues were the main elements from which minzokugaku was developed.” Travel assumes a key methodological importance for minzokugaku as the primary mode for collecting materials, experiencing (reading) local cultures and defining cultural spheres. Kainan shoki’s methodological significance is compounded by its treatment as the “discovery of Okinawa.” In hindsight, Okinawa itself becomes situated at the core of his subsequent work such that minzokugaku is presented as “constructed on a foundation of Okinawan folk customs.” While these assessments articulate the dominant reading of the relations between Yanagita’s experiences and his texts, we should note that they are based on an ideological conception of minzokugaku as a “science of experience” (keiken kagaku).

As a “science of experience,” minzokugaku attempts to establish “experience” as both its object of study and its primary methodology. This formulation of minzokugaku derived much of its impetus from Yanagita’s critique of History. In 1914, when Yanagita attacked the institution of History in Japan for ignoring the history of the masses, the alternative he proposed was a history that not only reversed the emphasis on “great men” but also the inclination toward “significant events.” Yanagita pointed out that histories of the common folk tended to inscribe the masses within the history of power, and that their events—the peasant rebellions, famines and so on—were really only rare moments providing occasional peaks in an otherwise long span of repetitious time. In contrast, he called for a history of the daily lives of the common folk, a history which particularly examined the uneventful, daily repetition that constituted the vast majority of those lives. This domain of daily repetition was not revealed in the texts which constituted the materials of history, but by the experiences of the common folk—their activities in the real world and their

8 Fukuda, 1: 689.
9 In “Kyōdoshi hensansha no yōi.” The discussion of Yanagita’s critique that follows is based on Kitsukawa Toshitada’s analysis of Yanagita’s essay in “Rekishigaku no naka no Minshūzō,” in Rekishigaku Kaidōku no Shīza, Kanagawa Daigaku hyōron sōsho, no. 2 (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 1993), 41–51.
expressions of folk imagination. In other words, this realm of experience would be represented in the "unwritten culture" (moji ni yoranai bunka) created and maintained by the common folk. If History was unable to deal with this aspect of the past, then a new discipline would have to be formed to examine it.

By defining its object of study as this "unwritten culture," minzokugaku also establishes the experience of the researcher as a central methodological tool. In epistemological terms, these materials can only be "read" through experience—hearing, viewing and feeling (in the double sense of tactile and emotional). In practical terms, these "experiences" could not be so easily transported to the home of the ethnologist, thus making travel to the sites of the "common folk" a prerequisite for the field. In this way, the image of Yanagita as a "traveler" is a crucial linchpin in the representation of minzokugaku as a "science of experience." Not only does Yanagita stress his role as a "mere traveler" in the introduction to Kainan shoki, but as late as his mid-70s, for example, he still insisted, "I have spent my life as a traveler." It is undoubtedly true that he left an impressive record of travel, but as the 32 volumes of his recently re-issued collected works attest, he also left a staggering amount of published writings. However, when we see a young scholar today retracing Yanagita's travels hoping to answer, "What did he see? What was he thinking? From what kind of contact with the people he met on his travels were his 'theory of yamabito' and 'theory of the common folk' born?" it becomes clear that the emphasis on minzokugaku as travel threatens to overwhelm an analysis of minzokugaku as writing and reading.

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10 Although that is precisely what happened when Sasaki Kizen went to Yanagita's house to tell him the stories that Yanagita later published as "Tôno Monogatari." Nevertheless, it is significant that after hearing the tales, Yanagita made sure to go to Tôno itself. Likewise, Yanagita's introduction to Tôno Monogatari begins with a description of the landscape of Tôno, signifying to the reader that the author has been to the place. "Tôno Monogatari," in YKz, 4.

11 Besides Yanagita, nearly every single ethnographer of note had a reputation for being a prodigious traveler, including Shibusawa Keizô, Yanagi Sôetsu, Hayakawa Kôtarô and Miyamoto Tsuneichi, to name a few.


Yanagita's own statements on the act of travel might encourage us to reverse those questions and ask: what kind of contact with people resulted from his theories of the *yamabito* and the common folk? In a 1927 lecture on travel, Yanagita described the "greatest significance of travel" as being "the same as reading a book." Just as one must choose good books to get any benefit out of reading, Yanagita states, one must also choose good trips. Likewise, just as there is a method to reading, there is a method to travel. For Satô Kenji, it is no coincidence that Yanagita compares good travel to good reading. Rather, Satô sees it as "the expansion of the category of reading in Yanagita's method." In his view, Yanagita develops his idea of *minzokugaku* from his voluminous reading—not from any particular texts, but from the act itself—and the project he undertakes is to "read the world as one would a book." In this sense, the experience at the root of *minzokugaku* may not be so much the experience of travel as it may be the "experience of reading."

In a way, this "reading model" of travel is another manifestation of a basic conflict within *minzokugaku* between the act of writing and its unwritten objects. At the risk of drastically reducing the process, the ethnologist ideally searches for authentic expressions of folk experience in the folk customs which have been passed down through the generations by word of mouth alone. The very fact that these customs have escaped being fixed in writing becomes a sign of their authenticity. But, having found the authentic in the unwritten, the ethnologist proceeds to write it down. In light of this apparent contradiction, we may ask, following Michel de Certeau's cue, "what does this writing presuppose about orality?" De Certeau suggests a mutually dependent relation. On the one hand, "oral language waits for a writing to circumscribe it and to recognize what it is expressing." On the other, "the scriptural operation which produces, preserves, and cultivates imperishable 'truths' is connected to a rumor of words that

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14 In "Seinen to Gakumon," YKz, 27: 158.


16 Satô, 125.


18 De Certeau, 210.
vanish no sooner than they are uttered." Speech is the "real" activity which guarantees truth, but that truth is not recognized or even produced as such without the act of writing which preserves speech from vanishing.

To a certain extent then, I can agree with those who place heavy emphasis on Yanagita's travelogues in the "development" of minzokugaku, although for quite different reasons. With a struggle between texts and experience at the heart of minzokugaku, the travelogue is an effective strategy for working through this tension. On the one hand, the travelogue form masks the constructedness of experience, making the record appear to be an effect of the trip. On the other, the trip may remain nothing more than a series of "jumbled impressions" if not written. Viewed simply in terms of crude chronology, the text is indeed an effect of the trip. But, by examining what Yanagita's writing presupposes about the nature of experience (both his own and that of the Okinawans he observes), I hope to disrupt that simplified sense of causality and show how texts also produce the experience.

As I will concretely show below, Kainan shoki produces an Okinawa which is for Japan, an Okinawa which is for the emerging field of Nihon minzokugaku, and an authorizing representation of Yanagita as a traveler. But, it is also more than a mask. More to the point, it is the very function of the travelogue to produce this version of Okinawa. First, he uses the experience of travel to disrupt other textual productions of Okinawa. Second, Yanagita uses the journey to develop an experiential methodology which allows him access to an archaic, pre-written history past, a past in which Okinawa signifies Japan. And finally, Yanagita uses the concept of travel to generate specific meanings through a play with tropes of proximity and distance.

Reading the Past in Smoke

Yanagita's 1914 critique of History is replayed throughout Kainan shoki in the way he uses the Southern islands as sites in which the distinction between "the past" (mukashi) and History (as a body of texts) becomes apparent. This distinction is constructed as an extension of the speech/writing dichotomy. That is, he consistently opposes an array of phenomena—from concrete objects to shamanistic speech to dreams—against a restricting order of writing, claiming that the unwritten phenomena provide a more emotive or creative access to the

19De Certeau, 212.
past. Writing in Okinawa becomes fundamentally suspect in his assertions that "whatever has writing [on it] is relatively new," and that "records are the products of the intelligentsia." What Yanagita is looking for are the traces of a past that is much older than writing, from a perspective that is based on the broader outlines of ethnicity, not class. But of course, as De Certeau's observations remind us, Yanagita's disruption of official histories of the Ryūkyūs is not meant to simply return us to an immediacy of speech or experience. Rather, this disruption requires a new space of writing called "minzokugaku" that can recognize and enunciate as "truth" the vanishing rumors of experience.

The past that Yanagita contrasts with History is not simply a lost past which writing cannot reclaim. Rather, it is preserved and read in other ways. Using a metaphor of incense, a central element of Okinawan religious practice, Yanagita proposes that in the islands "historical monuments are all preserved in incense smoke. And that formless past which is not [solidified as] a monument is, like the smoke, now growing thinner." To play with this metaphor, reading a past that is recorded in a book, and reading a past that is cured in incense require different senses (visual vs. olfactory) and different thought processes (rational vs. intuitive). Moreover, they represent quite different forms of preservation. While it only takes one writer to produce a history, the preservation of a historical monument in smoke requires the constant burning of incense (in other words, religious practice) performed over generations. At first glance, the historical text appears to communicate its version of the past more clearly. Yet the continual repetition of religious practice guarantees a more authentic transmission of the past. The reader of the historical text must attempt to reconstruct the context in which it was written in order to reproduce the original meanings of the text. But by repetitively performing the same practice as former generations, the worshipper literally rewrites the original significance.

Yanagita is unable to read the past as the locals do since he does not perform the religious observances himself. Nevertheless, he attempts to enact this different, intuitive reading of the past throughout the text. Moreover, he highlights the significance of these readings by explicitly contrasting them with the possibilities of

20Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 388.
21Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 383.
22Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 359.
written histories. The color of a stone wall remaining from an old castle in Kyūshū, for example, "is more thoroughly suffused with the flavor of old days than any history book." Describing a stone in Nakijin said to have been split by a king who was distraught over the loss of his kingdom, Yanagita is not surprised by the fact that the locals still come to see the stone nearly 500 years after it was split, because people are "drawn to those things [from the past that they] can see and touch." In other words, Yanagita interprets these visits to view and touch the stone as acts of reading history. Much like his description of the landscape around Urasoe, many of the objects he describes are more important for their possible narratives than as empirical evidence of the past. Yanagita's reading of objects is meant to engage the imagination, not an analytic rationality. In turn, these objects are presented as superior to written texts in encouraging this imaginative leap for, as he points out, "our imagination needs some kind of concrete stepping stone." Although objects provide Yanagita with an intuitive, non-linguistic testimony to the past, his most consistent access to the archaic is through Okinawan speech. As a rule, of course, he holds speech to be prior to writing. The one significant exception to the priority of speech to writing, in Kainan shoki, comes when Yanagita notes that some words enter speech from writing, since official documents had to be read aloud to the mostly illiterate audiences of the past. However, since Yanagita discusses this reversal of the usual order of language in order to argue against Chinese influence on Okinawa speech, this exception proves the rule of Yanagita's linguistic analysis that the archaic traces recovered in Okinawan speech are to be identified as "Japanese." This rule, which necessarily organizes the majority of Yanagita's linguistic analyses, is that "the language spoken in Okinawa has had common ground with Yamato from the distant past. . . they have always been of the same language family." His analysis of some ostensibly local phenomenon is almost invariably centered on an analysis of the local word. His subsequent analysis of these words is generally assimilative; passing, in other words, from the outer marks of difference to an identity of meaning. The word first appears unfamiliar, orthographically represented in

23Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 319.
24Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 348.
25Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 350.
26Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 370.
An Okinawan Fantasy

But by interpreting the word through either its sound or its meaning, Yanagita frequently recovers a link to archaic Japanese. In some cases, such as his analysis of the Okinawan use of the word "haji," he manages to retain both the contemporary unfamiliarity and the archaic identity by arguing that the Okinawan use maintains the original meaning of the word, while the Japanese use has strayed. But whether the Okinawan word returns Yanagita to an archaic Japanese word with which it is identical, or opens onto a concept which he similarly identifies as archaic, Okinawan speech is consistently appropriated for a discourse on the past rather than the present.

But as the contemporary discrepancy between Japanese and Okinawan speech suggests, the priority of speech over writing as a trace of the past should be offset by the tendency of speech to change dramatically over time. However, Yanagita claims that, for some reason, Okinawan speech has been particularly resilient to change:

> From our perspective, Okinawa is the storehouse of language. Words from the distant past, before books, have been marked by their era and set aside to remain for the most part. Words which have been lost in Japan (naichi) have preserved their forms in the islands.

The proof of the resiliency of Okinawan speech is found in its resemblances to ancient and medieval Japanese speech. But if those words are now lost to speech in the main islands of Japan, then, ironically, Yanagita confirms the archaism of Okinawan speech primarily from the traces of Japanese speech he can cull mainly from texts.

Nevertheless, just as Yanagita locates the importance of concrete objects in their role as the focus of practice, he also finds the greatest significance of words in their use in imaginative practice. In this sense, he particularly privileges dreams and folk tales as other forms of imaginative history, or folk memory. Folk tales "may not be historical truth, but they convey the sentiment of the past." Being an expression of sentiment, it does not really matter whether their content is historically accurate. Still, he insists that many of these dreams and tales, such as the fantasies of an island of refuge just over the horizon

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27Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 371. "Haji" corresponds to the contemporary Japanese word "hazu," meaning "ought" or "should," among other things.

28Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 371.

29Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 346.
found throughout the Ryūkyūs, "are not entirely dreams." Not surprisingly, he values highly the roles of noro, yuta and guji—shamanesses, storytellers and prophets—in the preservation of social/ethnic memory. For example, the function of the yuta, he claims, had been to tell the ancient dreams (furuku kara no yumegatari), a function which he develops into a kind of local history, or social memory. These women are said to get their power "from the gods" and to be "able to see people that ordinary people cannot." With these powers they are able to illuminate the misty past "like a torch in a dark garden." But Yanagita fears that since the young folks no longer believe their words, these dreams "will gradually harden into history." Mirroring the hard/soft dichotomy of the incense metaphor, Yanagita makes it clear that the loss is not just of some stories, but of an intuitive knowledge of the past. The meaning, or content, of the dreams told by the yuta is the "emotions of the race" (minzoku no kanjō).

These dreams are not just material for an investigation into the past, but also provide a model for Yanagita's own text, one which is frequently written as a recitation of dreams. His reading of the Urasoe landscape is like a daydreaming reverie, as he "thinks only of ancient battles." The tiny, "forgotten" islands along the southeast coast of Kyūshū look like picture postcards and make him think of ancient creation myths. Likewise, the scenery of the area of shallows to the west of the main island of Okinawa is strange enough to make one believe in ancient myths. Visiting a noro in a village in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa on a rainy day, he suggests, somewhat obscurely, that the day "would be even more beautiful if it were a dream." The last one-third of the book, in particular, is primarily about folk tales connected with the various islands in his itinerary. Since Yanagita only rarely inserts himself as a presence in

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31. Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 349.
32. Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 349.
33. Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 350.
34. Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 359.
35. "Nishi ga kono umi ni hashi wo watatsu asa undo ga moshi attara, inademo wareware ha watatsumi no miya no nukashigatari wo shinjita de arou."
36. Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 350.
the islands in these later chapters, it reads as if Yanagita's trip had passed into a time of legends. It is as if he has assumed the yuta's role and, rather than tell the tale of his trip, he tells the ancient tales of the islands. As I mentioned above, these dreams and dream-like descriptions may be integral to a critique of texts, but they are also drawn from other texts themselves. Efforts to read Kainan shoki as purely a record of experience, would have to overlook Yanagita's frequent reference to some two dozen other texts, as well as his admission in the postscript that during his initial two weeks in Naha "there were many days of meeting people and viewing books, and I was unable to travel much." I certainly do not mean to repeat the fundamental contradiction between text and experience that seems to crop up in many Yanagita appraisals. Instead, I would argue for a closer pairing of the two. When Yanagita reads the Urasoe landscape as mythical, he simultaneously textualizes the terrain and topologizes the myths. By extending the reading of the mythical texts on to the real world, the real world confirms the texts, not as actual occurrences, but as sentiments actually rooted in a terrain. His critique of rational, or intelligentsia-based histories depends on this mapping of non-Historical non-reality on a real world which can be experienced, as well as on his ability to read the significance of non-rational experience. The result is not an absolute disavowal of texts, but, as I suggested above, a new space of writing called "minzokugaku," which is both critique and production.

Encountering the Archaic

In contrasting certain memories and monuments of the past to a world of texts called "History," Yanagita also describes a different Subject who maintains that memory. As Kitsukawa Toshitada notes, Yanagita's critique of History opposes the historical records of the intelligentsia to a history of the common folk in which they, themselves, are the Subject (in the dual sense of topic and speaker) of history. If so, who are these subjects in Kainan shoki? The question is

37This is particularly true of chapters 20, 25, 26, and 29. Many of the other chapters have the telling of ancient tales mixed in with brief references to present conditions.

38Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 522.

39Kitsukawa, 42.
important, for if minzokugaku is to be a "science of experience" which is able to produce knowledge about the past, then how is a past which, "like incense smoke, is growing thinner," to be experienced (read) by the ethnographer? Ideally, the ethnographer finds the past through encounters with locals who have maintained the society's memory of itself in its various forms. But of course, in the context of modernity, the ethnographer is faced with a society generally suffering from an amnesia induced by governmental "reform of customs" and what Yanagita calls modern humanity's "big mistake" of believing "that the way to live happily is to forget one's origins." In the midst of this spreading social amnesia, Yanagita still manages to find pockets of memory and traces of the experiences of the past, not coincidentally, among those very groups which tend to be left out of the standard histories: children, women and people in isolated areas.

The alignment of children with the past is slightly ironic, for Yanagita admits that "it is difficult to tell them to maintain something." But rather than associate them with a coming future, Yanagita discusses the lineages of their games, their roles in village festivals as traditional symbols of the reversal of power structures, and their significance in various creation myths. For example, the fact that in Okinawa "the children still enjoy onimochi at New Year's" while the same custom has largely died out in the rest of Japan is used to suggest the resilience of customs in the islands. Yanagita argues that even in a society in which past practices are dissolving, children's activities provide a key to the recovery of that disappearing past, for "when adults lose their beliefs, the ceremonies of festivals become games." In each of these situations, children are presented as unconscious inheritors of the past, a depiction which is neatly in line with his portrayal of the past as dream-like. They may not understand the importance of maintaining old games or customs, but by playing key roles in their repetition, children enact the racial memory of the past.

Like children, women maintain the past in practice, according to Yanagita. Religious practice in the Ryūkyūs relies heavily on women who perform key roles as noro, yuta or even as the washers of family bones. And since Yanagita depicts religious practice, as in his metaphor of the past cured in incense, as indispensable to the reproduction of
social memory, he contends that "the past still remains clearly among the old women." As I mentioned above, Yanagita views the noro as the quintessential historians of his new history:

If we do not rely on the powers of these gentle women who are so sensitive to the sentiments of the race, there is simply no way that writing can communicate to future generations our aspirations and expectations, and even the countless fears and worries which we ourselves soon forget.

Like the noro, the yuta also perform a primarily historical function in Yanagita’s text. As storytellers, yuta are charged with telling the stories of “the origins of the world and the families.” Like the noro, these women, also known as monoshiri (literally, people who know things), use mystical powers to illuminate things “which were unclear until now.” And on the island of Okinoerabu, the women keep alive the memory of Ryūkyūan rule by “still” washing the bones of an Okinawan lord every year at a sacred site on the island.

In Kainan shoki, women also maintain the past in the less mystical realms of the daily life. Admittedly, for Yanagita to associate women with the repetitive, reproductive side of daily life would come as no surprise. But his most explicit statements on women’s preservation of the past do not come in a context of women’s traditional reproductive roles. Instead, he broadens his association of women with the past into the realms of daily speech and production by framing his discussions with the marks of disappearance, particularly with the words “still” and “even now.” For example, to say that the original Okinawan word for the talismanic sekigantō stones, “pijuru,” is “still used by the elderly and women,” is “still used by the elderly and women,” is to mark women and the elderly as hold outs, of sorts, for a disappearing condition. His discussion of

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44 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 332.
45 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 350.
46 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 349.
47 Okinoerabu is located about mid-way between Amami and Okinawa Hontō, but is bureaucratically located in Kagoshima Prefecture.
48 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 388. A sekigantō stone is a stone set at intersections and other sites considered hazardous to travel as amulets against accident or misfortune. I discuss the stones again below in relation to Yanagita’s efforts to distinguish the Okinawan stones from what he sees as false attributions of Chinese origins.
women weaving jōfu cloth on Miyako island is similarly framed within a portrayal of the cruelty of the premodern system of weaving whose "wretched traces can still be found." He acknowledges that the task of weaving is less onerous than in the past, but claims that the weavers "are haunted by Koizumi Yakumo’s so-called ghosts of previous generations." In other words, though the work may no longer be compulsory, Yanagita still associates it with a "quiet suffering" apparent now in the weavers' inability, "even today," to refuse to sell no matter how low the price. What is noteworthy in these accounts is that Yanagita establishes a repetitive condition for women within the very realms—daily speech and production—which are most closely associated with rapid change in Japan. Yanagita uses the assertions that women still use the word "pijuru," or that they still weave under tragic conditions to intuit the past, but those statements simultaneously highlight the fact that such conditions and practices are disappearing elsewhere in Japan.

Finally, as a culmination of this process of reading the past through the mystic speech and daily repetition of women, Yanagita also claims to find traces of the past inscribed on women’s bodies themselves. While bodily decoration proves to be as subject to governmental intervention as such systems of production as weaving, he nevertheless uses female bodily decoration to read the most distant past. Through his interpretation of the hand tattoos found throughout the Ryūkyūs, Yanagita literally views women’s bodies as texts. He first establishes the representative function of tattoos by noting that tattoo patterns differ from island to island, and probably village to village, so that one could tell where a woman came from by her tattoo pattern. But then underlying the minor differences denoting birthplace, Yanagita discerns a common symbol, an arrow shape. He hypothesizes that this arrow shape is "a remnant of that ancient religious belief in the power of women to point at things (mono wo yubisasu chikara)." Yet here Yanagita switches from pointing at things (mono) to

49Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 382.

50Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 384. "Koizumi Yakumo" being the Japanese name taken by Lafcadio Hearn.

51Yanagita’s ability to read the past through such things as hand tattoos and hairpins is endangered by the government’s abolition of the practice of hand tattooing and by the collapse of the Okinawan class system within which hairpins performed important signifying functions.

52Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 334. All the following quotes in the discussion of tattoos are from this page.
directions ( hô ) and writes, "it is now entirely unclear in which direction they were pointing, but it would appear that people just moved from island to island." Having been able to reconstruct this ancient history of migration from the tattoos, Yanagita appraises the tattoos as "the true history of the island people."

According to Yanagita, people living in marginal or isolated areas also tend to maintain, or repeat the past more than their counterparts in the center. For example, after relating mythic tales of life and death in the shallows west of Okinawa, Yanagita claims "it appears that this kind of life continues in the regions around the shallows even today." Similarly, upon relating a series of tales, both mythic and current, about sea turtles in a chapter on Yaeyama, Yanagita notes that a woman also traveling on his boat doubts that a sea turtle has come to see them off, as all the locals appear to believe. Yanagita puts her doubts down to the fact that she comes "from the northern country" and so "has not been able to experience" what was once a common story throughout Japan. Contrasting her disbelief with the belief of the locals, he concludes, "the people of Yaeyama are only now beginning to forget what we forgot long ago."

But why are the people on the margins able to maintain the past much longer than those in the center? Yanagita rarely confronts the question directly in Kainan shoki. In an essay appended to the travelogue, he proposes that cultural development may have taken off rapidly only after the Japanese race entered the large main islands, suggesting that the cramped space of the Ryūkyūs served as a kind of preservative. On the other hand, Fukuda Ajio notes the dominance by the 1930s of a theory of concentric cultural diffusion in which culture was held to continually radiate out from a productive center. The further one traveled from the center, the older the cultural waves one encountered so that by the time one reached the margins of the cultural sphere, one had found the oldest waves of that culture. Fukuda examines some statements by Yanagita in 1935 about the "remarkable unity of conditions in the far north and south" to suggest that Yanagita lent at least tentative credence to this theory of cultural diffusion. Yanagita certainly employs this perspective on occasion in

53 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 381.
54 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, p. 402.
55 Fukuda, YKz, 1: 694.
56 From Yanagita, "Kyōdo Seikatsu no Kenkyūho," quoted in Fukuda, YKz, 1: 696.
Kainan shoki, for example in his discussion of linguistic and literary borrowing from Japan, or in his suggestion that a cedar design on small boats in Okinawa may have derived from “Kumano worship.” But he never systematically develops that view. More often than not, the possibility of maintenance is located in the nature of life in the Ryūkyūs, in the isolation of the “long neglected southern seas”\(^5\) where “because they had no teachers or bureaucrats to teach them the difference between city and country, they have long been able to enjoy the ancient happiness of the gifts of the gods.”\(^5\)

One problem in claiming to have found the past among these various elements in Okinawa is knowing how to recognize these phenomena as archaic. As I mentioned above, Yanagita recognizes these archaic traces as “still” existing; in other words, in contrast to their disappearance elsewhere. This absence, configured as a disappearance, expands the significance of the local phenomena beyond their current location. What currently appear as locally specific cultural differences are recuperated as differing relations to the same past. The various pockets of social memory in Okinawa reveal that within its own terrain, Okinawa is a complex mixture of retained memory and forgetfulness of the past. But in its relation with Japan, Okinawa tends to be represented, as a whole, as the site of memory for a Japan which forgot long ago. That is to say, the past which Yanagita discerns in these reserve pockets in Okinawa is not simply an Okinawan past, but is signified as the past for Japan as well.

About mid-way through Kainan shoki, Yanagita outlines the nature of this “currently different, but originally the same” relationship between Okinawa and Japan. The chapter, called “This Side of the Wild Boar Wall,” is essentially about memory and distinctions.\(^5\) Wild boar walls—stone walls built around fields to keep wild boar from coming down from the mountains to forage in cultivated fields—provide an opening (and later, a key metaphor) for a discussion of names for animals in Okinawa and Japan, through which Yanagita’s conception of the Okinawan–Japanese relationship throughout Kainan shoki can be roughly plotted. Each animal name discussed is marked by two signifiers which might be plotted on a grid (Diagram A). One axis signifies time, running from the past to the present. The other axis

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\(^5\)Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 377.
\(^5\)Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 399.
\(^5\)Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 354–58. All quotes in this and the next paragraph are drawn from this chapter.
represents location, running from Okinawa to Japan. Animal names can be plotted in the quadrants of the grid by their association with either end of both axes. For example, the word "shishi," which he calls "the general name for animal flesh which is eaten," appears in the past as such in both Okinawa and Japan. It continues to be used in Okinawa in the present, in essentially the same meaning, but its meaning has been altered and drastically reduced in Japan because "when meat-eating declined" in Japan, the Japanese "forgot why animals were named for their flesh." Similarly, Yanagita surmises that the Okinawan words
for pig (wa) and boar (wi) probably derived from the sounds they make. This distinction in word use, corresponding to whether the animals are raised or wild, is also said to derive from people having forgotten the common origins of pigs. As the concrete boundary which distinguishes wa from wi, the wild boar wall takes on a metaphorical meaning, signifying a boundary of memory. In the structure of significance of this chapter, the existence of linguistic (and practical) distinctions in the present derives from an amnesia in which society forgets the original meaning of words, so that if the words survive, they are "transmitted without meaning."

However, since archaic Okinawa and Japan are generally equivalent in Yanagita's view, the signifying axis of Okinawa–Japan is itself a product of this "wild boar wall" of forgetfulness (Diagram B). The chapter is pervaded with a structure of "we" Japanese of the interior compared and contrasted with Okinawans (amorphously floating between "we" and "they") in which the distinction is revealed to be an effect of Japanese amnesia. Yanagita dismisses the belief that the centrality of pork to Okinawan New Year's celebrations is an importation from China as a misperception deriving from the Japanese having forgotten the ancient importance of pork in Japan itself. The potential damage of the China association is great, for when the essential chain of significance binding Okinawa and Japan is broken, "ancient Japan gets buried." The chapter ends on a note of contrast. Yanagita claims that pigs have been, and are, a central part of life on Amami Island for at least 300 years, as they were in the capital of Yamato over 1000 years ago. But, he concludes, today "we live an unnatural life on this side of the wild boar wall, not eating meat," implying that Okinawans (whose diet still centers on pork) and Japanese are separated by the wall. In this way, the distinction between Okinawa and Japan is affirmed as existing in the present, and yet simultaneously shown to be based on nothing more than Japanese ignorance of the past.

Distance and Meaning

As I have shown above, the isolation of the islands of Okinawa Prefecture, both from Japan and from each other, is held to be a central condition for the lingering of the past there. This topographical precondition is expressed in Yanagita's frequent trope of "the pains of the isolated islands" (kotōku). What this isolation fails to explain, however, is how the meaning of that past exceeds the natural boundaries of the islands to be broadly defined as Japanese. Yet the
support for Yanagita’s depiction of that past as Japanese is also derived from a topographical representation. The islands may be relatively isolated, but they are laid out in the ocean in a chain, along which washes a north-bound ocean current. This image of a chain supports a trope of island-hopping in which the isolation of life on any one island is compensated for by a naturalized longing for, and an actual history of, travel from island to island. With the very topography of the prefecture as a natural enticement to travel, Yanagita’s journey through those islands becomes less an exploration and more a recapitulation of natural history. In this final section, then, I shall discuss how this topographical mapping of the text, with its play of proximity and distance, is integral to the construction of the Okinawan past as Japanese.

As a travelogue, *Kainan shoki* adheres to the common definition of the genre, depicting the passage of the writer through a specific terrain. The trip which *Kainan shoki* purports to record began on the east coast of Kyūshū in Oita Prefecture, proceeded south along the coast, through Amami, Okinawa Hontō, Miyako-jima and into the Yaeyama islands. Yanagita’s text replicates this passage in structure as well as content. With the exception of a few chapters, each installment is fairly specifically located within this itinerary, and with the author inserted into the text as a solitary traveler. The progression of chapters abides by a topological logic in which each subsequent chapter represents a further progression to the south. However, despite the inclusion of maps with a south-bound line meant to represent his itinerary in the collected works version, Yanagita admits that the order of the chapters does not strictly conform to the order of his trip. In recapping his actual itinerary in the postscript, we see that Yanagita writes authoritatively about some places through which he passed in a hurry or which he simply viewed from a distance. If there is a notable gap between the chronological/spatial experience of Yanagita on the one hand, and the spatio-chronology of the text, then we must examine what function the textual itinerary performs.

There is a tendency to discuss *Kainan shoki* in terms of the map provided at the beginning of the text, with the trip beginning in Kyūshū. But, we should not overlook the fact that the introduction—written for the publication of the travelogue with a number of essays on Okinawa in book form—is set in Geneva, so that the textual journey actually begins in Europe. The effect is jarring on the reader who has opened the book expecting to read about Okinawa only to find it
beginning with "[t]he winter in Geneva was lonely." But while many commentators skip this initial Geneva setting, I see it as crucial to Yanagita’s construction of Okinawa as Japanese, for it is through its various distances (spatial, climatological, cultural) from Europe that he evokes the Ryūkyūan islands. He remembers them on a rare sunny day in an otherwise cloudy, dreary winter, as "the islands of a faraway brilliant rainbow sea." From his perspective in Geneva, the distance from Japan to Okinawa is relatively shortened, but, more importantly, he uses the Geneva setting to also align them nostalgically, as objects of his memory for which he can only long in Europe. Yanagita’s longing for the islands is further tantalized by the presence in Geneva of only one other person who knows about Okinawa, Basil Hall Chamberlain, who is tantalizingly close (in the same neighborhood), yet unavailable due to advanced age and ill health.

The Geneva setting functions as a twist on a common ethnographic theme: the placement “over there” of the site of ethnographic investigation. In his analysis of Jean de Léry’s Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil, Michel de Certeau notes that “a structural (his emphasis) difference between an area ‘over here’ and another ‘over there’” is the “condition of possibility” for the production of meaning in the text. Léry initially establishes a separation between Europe and Brazil through descriptions of distance and travel. This separation becomes “systematic” in the differences claimed to exist between all the physical (terrain, plant and animal life) and metaphysical (Tupi and French cultures) phenomena of Brazil and Europe. However, these differences are assimilated in “the work of returning,” whereby the anthropologist not only returns to Europe with his newly acquired knowledge, but where the Brazilian other is recuperated within the schema of the European same. “A part of the world which appeared to be entirely other,” De Certeau concludes, “is brought back to the same by a displacement that throws alterity out of skew in order to turn it into an exteriority behind which an interiority, the unique definition of man, can be recognized.”

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60 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 299. Both quotes from the introduction in this paragraph come from this page.

61 The rainbow-hued memory of Okinawa is matched by Yanagita’s encounter with “the sun of Japan” through a Japanese language textbook he manages to scrounge in a Geneva bookstore. Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 300.

62 De Certeau, 218.

63 De Certeau, 219.
Geneva, Yanagita establishes a similar structure of signification. But his structure differs from Léry's by situating his entire itinerary on the same end of that structure.

The figure of an unreachable Chamberlain, to whom the book is dedicated, also serves as a link between Japan and Okinawa through the concept of lineage. Chamberlain, although still alive, is now only reachable through the vast number of works he wrote, works that Yanagita claims establish him as a pioneer for the budding field of minzokugaku. Yanagita uses Chamberlain’s work on Okinawa in particular to reconfigure Chamberlain’s role as a forerunner within a genealogical framework. He claims that Chamberlain’s interest in Okinawa derived from the experience of his maternal grandfather, who captained a ship that went to Okinawa in 1812, making Chamberlain’s later study of Okinawa a “family study, a study with lineage (yuisho aru kenkyū).”64 This discussion of Chamberlain’s work on Okinawa as genealogical (both in motivation and content) signals that Yanagita’s own work, in emulation of Chamberlain’s example, will be similarly genealogical. At the same time, Okinawa is produced as a place where one can search for roots (of one kind of another).

Nevertheless, Yanagita recognizes that by arguing for a common lineage between Japanese and Okinawans, he is arguing against the common sense of the widespread social discrimination directed against Okinawans in Japan at the time. The signs of a resistance (or a resistance assumed by Yanagita) on the part of Japanese to the idea of a common ground with Okinawa abound in Kainan shoki. Just after the text has finished its passage through the main island of Okinawa, he inserts a break (which he calls “Slight Misunderstandings”) in the chain of travel sections. The chapter does not tell us of some “slight misunderstandings” on Yanagita’s part, but of several slight misunderstandings that Yanagita feels are likely to occur on the part of the reader. The series of small misunderstandings amount to a tendency in Japan, since the Edo period, to view the Ryūkyūs as a different country. For Yanagita, this mistake indicates another “bigger misunderstanding,” namely “the belief that forgetting one’s origins is the way to live happily.”65 Together, these problems can both be expressed as a problem of conceptual distance. The relation between the two misunderstandings is, of course, that in the distant past Okinawans and Japanese were “compatriots” (dōhō). Hence, forgetting their common origins has contributed to the current sense of estrangement.

64Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 300.
65Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 371.
Here again, as in the metaphor of the wild boar wall, the loss of memory of the past is expressed as the creation of distance. How does Yanagita resolve this gap?

Unlike Léry’s narrative, Kainan shoki recounts no return from abroad. The trip is simply depicted as a one-way journey to the south. At first it would appear that Kainan shoki lacks the return which, in Léry’s text, produces universal meanings. But by arguing that the estrangement between “the two islands” of Japan and Okinawa is a case of amnesia, with Okinawa represented as the site of memory, Yanagita attempts a return with each step further south. By establishing the beginning of the trip, whether it is in northeastern Kyūshū or in Geneva, as already removed from the origin, the line on the map comes to represent only the return. In this sense, the line represents the overcoming of two forms of distance. The first is the series of borders or boundaries, actually or metaphorically spatial, which create (false) distinctions. The second is the temporal distance produced by these borders in which one side has maintained its origins while the other has lost most of the traces of its origins.

First, the line crosses political boundaries (prefectures and ancient kingdoms), cultural boundaries (the heterogeneous appearance of custom from island to island) and natural boundaries (ocean currents, ocean expanse and mountains) to produce a terrain unified by the (cultural) activities of humanity—particularly of the traveler and those whose travels in the past he imaginatively reconstructs. In this narrative, the inclusion of Kyūshū on the map as the starting point reveals that the scattered islands to the south are to be seen as being within the same cultural community as Kyūshū, and not as constituting a cultural unit of their own. Yanagita’s inscription of this terrain as an itinerary becomes, as Michel De Certeau would say, “a labor of suturing,”66 re-connecting areas which he believes have been artificially separated.

Second, while mapping a southern progression in space, Yanagita also inscribes a gradual regression in time. The early chapters in Kyūshū generally maintain themselves in the present with Yanagita describing his modes of travel, landscapes and the people living there. As the narrative proceeds south, however, observation gradually gives way to imagination as Yanagita gives us fewer descriptions of the contemporary scene and longer excursions into fantasies of an archaic or mythic past. In this scheme, the line from Kyūshū to Yaeyama represents the overlay of a reverse chronology on the topology of the

66De Certeau, 218.
islands, suggesting the possibility of a literal journey into the past. Through the combination of the first and second theme, then, Kainan shoki describes a journey into the archaic past, a journey in distance to discover the sources of the Japanese Self, and what that Self has since lost or forgotten. It is not a search for an Other which confirms the unity of the Self, as many ethnographies turn out to be, but a search for the archaic roots of the Self which demonstrate the distance the modern Self has slipped from its essence.

Natural boundaries such as mountains and ocean expanses prove breachable by the ability of humanity to cross them. In fact, such natural boundaries merely seem to increase the desire of people to traverse them. The very distance and isolation of the town of Obi in Kyūshū, for instance, becomes Yanagita’s explanation for the inhabitants’ focus on the center, and their inability to recall their own past. In general, cultural comparison from one island to another is used to demonstrate that the appearance of isolation is, in fact, an illusion. Discussion of the diffusion of material culture—hairpins, tattoos, fishing boats—and spiritual culture—folk tales, children’s games, religious practices—throughout the islands demonstrates the human, not strictly natural, construction of a region.

More important than the deconstruction of natural boundaries, however, is the deconstruction of political boundaries. Political boundaries are destabilized by the dual workings of time and the solidarity of a cultural sphere. The Satsuma invasion of the Ryūkyūan kingdom draws Yanagita’s ire in particular. While other Japanese ideologues argued that the Satsuma invasion was a reunification of sister cultures (an argument that was meant to deflect attention from the military invasion of 1878)67, Yanagita implies that the invasion actually tended to conceal an older, more natural relation between the islands. Thus, the Satsuma invasion resulted in an artificial border between Amami and Okinawa Hontō, with divisive effects on the hierarchy of shamanistic priestesses. Satsuma’s display of Ryūkyūans as “foreign subjects” is also seen as a source of the Edo and later perception of Ryūkyūans as outsiders. And finally, the Satsuma takeover provides merely illusory evidence for those that would argue for the difference of Okinawans: displays of Japanese culture in the islands are taken by proponents of this view as the result of a Satsuma

67This argument was not just current at the time of annexation, but also well into the twentieth century. See for example, Matsuoka Masao, “Sekirara nimita Ryūkyū no genjō,” in Okinawa kyūsa: ronshū, ed. Wakigami Rōnin (Tokyo: Echizandō, 1925).
cultural assimilation policy and not as a sign of an older cultural affinity.

And yet in each of these cases, Yanagita argues for the resiliency of older ties in contrast to the instability of political displays. On crossing the ocean between Amami and Okinawa, Yanagita prepares the reader for his assault on the Satsuma boundaries by stating, "that which was once connected remains so today, thanks to a power invisible to the eye." Thus, despite the ban on intercourse between Amami and Okinawa under Satsuma control, Yanagita insists that this ban was clandestinely evaded in order to continue key religious ties. The "Sinification" of Ryūkyūan envoys to Edo by Satsuma stands in contrast to his claims of an overwhelming dominance of Japanese styles in the arts in the Ryūkyūan kingdom. And the Ryūkyūan court accomplishments in Japanese prose are argued to derive not from Satsuma enforcement but rather as a result of earlier literary practices.

Finally, the most important boundaries to be overcome in the narrative are those apparent cultural barriers—language, mythology, folk customs and so on—which might suggest insurmountable practical cultural differences. If cultural continuities were frequently used to deny the determinacy of natural or political boundaries, then natural and political boundaries are used to explain the development of apparent differences (paths of development necessarily diverging in isolation) whose heterogeneity dissolves under a scrutiny of origins. The destabilizing effects of passing time on political organizations is reversed, in this argument, by a stabilization achieved through regressive time.

The process of overcoming borders between Okinawa and Japan is not simply a process of deconstruction, but also an act of shifting those borders to the west. As the display of "Sinification" forced upon the Ryūkyūans by the Satsuma lords suggests, one of the major obstacles to arguing for the "Japaneseness" of Okinawa was the close association between Okinawa and China. The sheer number of times that Yanagita explicitly argues against a Chinese source in the interpretation of a cultural phenomenon implies the prevalence of that tendency.

Yanagita's exclusion of China from Okinawa begins in the apparently innocuous first chapter which deals with potatoes. He quotes a fifth-grade textbook which purports to trace the historical

68 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 343-44.
69 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 304-07. All quotes in this paragraph are from this chapter.
diffusion of sweet potatoes in the Japanese islands in the way that the name for sweet potatoes in each region of the country suggests their entry from the region immediately to the west. He agrees with the statement: “in Kantō they are called ‘Satsuma imo’ and in Satsuma they are called ‘Ryūkyū imo,’” but then draws the line when the textbook claims that “in Ryūkyū they are called kara imo (Chinese potatoes).” While he is willing to admit that potatoes probably came into the Ryūkyūs from Southern China, Yanagita draws the cultural line in Okinawa linguistically by claiming that in those islands they call sweet potatoes “our potatoes.”

In these and the many other acts of excluding China, Yanagita employs several tactics. First there is the assumption that behind (or beneath) what appears to be a Sinified object may reside an older, native object or practice which has been encrusted with a Chinese appearance during the course of the tributary relationship. In other words, in the face of a Chinese appearance, Yanagita proposes a different interiority. This is clearly the tactic used in his dismissal of the Chinese characters written on many of the amulet stones (sekigantō) in roadways and intersections of the Ryūkyūan islands as a recent encrustation (almost a form of graffiti) on an older, native religious belief. Second, if the object or practice can also be shown to exist, or have existed, in Japan as well, then its cultural significance can be assumed to be within the Japanese frame rather than the Chinese one. This assumes that the Japanese case is not also an effect of Chinese influence and that, even if the phenomena is disseminated throughout Asia, its interior significance can still be discerned as heterogeneous. For example, in recounting the story of “Nanayūfi,” a man who was sold into slavery by his father seven times only to earn his way out again each time, Yanagita interprets the story as being about the evils of the Chinese Confucian concept of absolute filial piety. Despite the dissemination of the concept of filial piety throughout Asia, Yanagita views the story as a sign that “we Japanese” (including the Okinawans here, since it is their story) have an ironic distance on Chinese culture which has fortunately given us “the freedom to question.” In its extreme form, Yanagita even argues that, despite the long-lasting tributary system between Okinawa and China and the importance of Chinese letters in that relationship, Chamberlain’s assumption that

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70Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 365. This tale comes, not coincidentally, immediately before his chapter on the “small misunderstanding” about the cultural alignment of the Ryūkyūs.
Sinified words entered Okinawa and Japan at about the same time is mistaken, and that those words probably entered Okinawa from Japan.

Finally, Okinawa is also brought into the Japanese fold through Yanagita’s imaginative recollection of Japanese visiting the islands in the past. From an early chapter in which he imagines another traveler at another time finding the scene Yanagita gazes upon as beautiful as Yanagita does, Yanagita frequently employs the trope of past visitors crossing the same terrain. These visitors range from ancient warriors such as Momo Anji, to an unknown sailor now buried in Ahacha no Tomori-otake, to a priest such as Nisshū Jōnin. The periodic visits of these people from “Yamato” provide evidence of a continuous intercourse between Okinawa and Japan, and also a significatory precedent for Yanagita’s musings. The visits of these people from Yamato are important for Yanagita’s construction of Okinawa as always already Japanese precisely as evidence of the hidden works by which a cultural unity keeps itself intact. Likening Okinawa’s isolation from the Japanese capital to the isolation of the margins of Kyūshū after the decline of the shōen system, Yanagita places the burden of cultural diffusion on the backs of solitary travelers. “When people stopped going to the capital for service or litigation, there was no other way to transmit culture to the shōen of distant lands than through these itinerant priests, even in the interior (naichi). There will be an effect on lifestyles, when even these individual exchanges continue over a long period.”71 By situating his journey on top of their travels, Yanagita mirrors not just their acts of cultural diffusion, but also cultural suturing.

Death: A Conclusion or an Opening?

As we have seen above, Kainan shoki is two narratives woven into each other. There is the story of Yanagita’s trip from Kyūshū through Okinawa to the Yaeyama islands. There is also the story of the traces of the cultural origins of Japan found still existing in Okinawa. This second narrative is seen as a “discovery,” but what is the nature of this discovery? Writing at a time when Okinawans were subjected to widespread discrimination due to cultural differences which labeled them “non-Japanese,” Yanagita claimed to have found not just a collateral, assimilable culture in the islands, but the original form of Japanese culture. Yanagita did not argue that Okinawans can be easily assimilated into Japanese culture—as a number of bureaucrats

71Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 368.
and social observers insisted must happen—but that Okinawans “already” were Japanese. This view does not necessarily deny a contemporary difference between Okinawans and Japanese, but it does tend to place the onus for that difference on the Japanese side. That which he finds in Okinawa being the origins of Japanese culture, it appears to be the Japanese who have changed—“forgotten” in Yanagita’s parlance—more than the Okinawans.

By arguing for a cultural unity between Okinawans and Japanese, Yanagita’s text could be said to be assimilative. But Yanagita’s assimilation of Okinawa appears to run counter to the assimilation sanctioned by official cultural policy in the islands. That policy operated on the assumption that the political-economic gap between Okinawa and Japan was based on a cultural gap which was seen as developmental. Culture in Okinawa was defined as “backward” and to be rejected, while the prefectural government, with the support of progressive intellectuals, offered a set of alternatives doubly defined as “Japanese” and “modern.” The adoption of these so-called Japanese cultural signifiers was deemed a necessary prerequisite to equal Okinawan participation in other areas of Japanese society. To be sure, the possibility of assimilation was to be guaranteed by the continuity of the cultural developmental line on which Okinawa was backward and Japan progressive. But despite the favorable guarantees of a common cultural heritage, the direction of assimilation was to be a one-way street, from Okinawa to Japan.

Yanagita’s assimilation adopts a similar timeline scheme by which Japan and Okinawa are related. But the terms of value and legitimacy are reversed. As we saw, Okinawa occupies the legitimate position of an original Japan, from which Japan itself has departed. Self-knowledge and cultural distinctiveness for Japan lie in a Japanese move toward Okinawa. By reversing the direction of legitimacy, Yanagita’s construction of the Okinawa–Japan relationship exposes the emptiness of official claims to “respect” Okinawan culture even as their assimilation policies were dismantling it. But if Yanagita’s depiction of the relationship locates the change on the Japanese side, how can I call *Kainan shoki* assimilationist?

In short, I call *Kainan shoki* assimilationist because it constructs an Okinawa which is for Japan. In locating the origins of Japanese culture in the islands, Yanagita scrapes through the encrustations of heterogeneous cultural appearance to find an inevitably “Japanese” cultural origin. While these origins maintain a certain degree of heterogeneity with regard to the modern Japanese State’s monolithic conception of Japanese culture, that relative heterogeneity is produced
at the sacrifice of other, possibly broader heterogeneities. As David Spurr has pointed out, the standard ethnological search for authenticity has usually involved the denial or rejection of cultural influence.\textsuperscript{72} This general trend holds true in \textit{Kainan shoki} as well. In fact, the very use of Okinawa as the site of authenticity for Japan demands the rejection of cultural influence. Thus, Okinawa’s overdetermined relationship with Japan is constructed through the sacrifice of its relations with China, Korea, Micronesia and Southeast Asia.

\textit{Kainan shoki} records (and produces) Yanagita’s search for the “natural laws of life in southern Japan,” which turn out to be about the original state of Japanese culture. But as one may suspect by the use of the word “laws,” this search is meant to lead to something else as well. While humbly disavowing any claims to scholarship himself, Yanagita admits to the hope that someday his suggestions may be developed by “accomplished scholars.” In his dedication to Basil Hall Chamberlain, Yanagita expresses the hope that, like Chamberlain’s work, his text may contribute to a “new \textit{minzokugaku}.” In that sense then, it is not just his experience of Okinawa that is produced by the text, but also an Okinawa itself that can be consumed in future \textit{minzokugaku} texts.

This construction of Okinawa as an object for a new science recalls Michel De Certeau’s analysis of the history of popular studies.\textsuperscript{73} De Certeau argues that studies of popular culture “arrive at the moment a culture has lost its means of self-defense.”\textsuperscript{74} In other words, the study of popular culture requires a fixation, an alienation or a “death” in order to establish that “culture” as a “Culture” about which knowledge can be produced. Notably, the terms by which a popular culture is dissected, analyzed and reorganized as an object of academic research are the terms of academic discourse, not popular. De Certeau notes, “popular culture can only be grasped in the process of vanishing because, whether we like it or not, our knowledge requires us


\textsuperscript{74}De Certeau, “The Beauty of the Dead,” 123.
to cease hearing it, to no longer know how to discuss it," except in terms from an entirely different register. These terms, this register, are linked to positions of power, to an authorizing gaze and a constituting regime of Knowledge. De Certeau follows this regime unrelentingly through its various ideological operations, from censorious to assimilative to contestatory, indicating in each formulation that "the question is not one of ideologies, or of options, but that of the relations of an object and its associated scientific methods to the society that sanctions them." 

Whatever Yanagita’s critical intent, whether Kainan shoki is a critique of Japanese society or an attempt to discipline discourse on Okinawa within the terms of an overdetermined relationship with Japan, the text clearly bears the marks of the operations de Certeau describes for the French scene. The very title of de Certeau’s essay, “The Beauty of the Dead,” seems tailor-made for Kainan shoki, for the travelogue is so littered with the bodies of the dead as to deserve the label of a “necro-romance.” In nearly every chapter, from his description of the gruesome deaths of fishermen in Kyushu to the devastating tidal waves in the Yaeyamas, Yanagita constructs his tale of Okinawa around the tragedy of sudden death. Hasegawa Masaharu takes Yanagita's observation that those who lose loved ones at sea face “a misfortune greater than dying” as a sign that Yanagita “was more concerned with those who remained alive, than for those who had passed on.” I read the constant confrontation with death differently, however, for despite Hasegawa’s claim, the voices of the living are nearly absent from Yanagita’s travelogue. On the one hand, the trail of dead, or gravely threatened, accentuates the descent into the past that the text portrays in so many other ways. And on the other, their death fixes their tales for their reworking in Yanagita’s own narrative. It accentuates Yanagita’s voice as monologic, a condition which de Certeau find generally prevailing in popular studies. And it also represents the discursive violence that Yanagita’s appropriation of Okinawa for minzokugaku enacts on other local discourses.

Yanagita’s monologic use of the tales of the dead might be contrasted with Origuchi Shinobu’s polyphonic exploration of the world of the dead in Shisha no sho, to suggest alternative directions for the field they are both claimed to have invented. But even without

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76 De Certeau, “The Beauty of the Dead,” 121.
77 Hasegawa, 16.
that, we can recall Yanagita's critique of the institution of History and consider whether or not he has managed to establish a different Subject of history after all. If the new Subject he is constructing through a new minzokugaku may be said to exceed the individual named Yanagita Kunio, one might still have to consider the function of its unity. Take Yanagita's praise for a resurgence of thought in the Ryūkyūs about their relationships "with other islands, going back to the distant past." Yanagita contends that the cultural achievements being resurrected there (such as the rediscovery of the Omorosōshi) belong not just to the Okinawans, but to all those living "in the same ocean current," including those with the "same blood in the country of eight islands (ōyashima)." It would appear, then, that in the midst of the universalist qualities sought in the islands, there also runs a strain of "natural" determinants which mark a cultural sphere running along the ocean current which flows from south of Okinawa passing north around Japan. The overlap of natural and cultural terrains operates as a limit on the universalist aspirations espoused in the introduction, so that the search for "universal natural laws" becomes a search for the authentic state of that cultural sphere, with authenticity identified as an original condition. This new Subject of Yanagita's minzokugaku, then, confronts an iron limit in this mixture of authenticity and universality. I believe that any attempt to further develop Yanagita's lines of work must come to grips with this problematic mix.

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78 Yanagita, Kainan Shoki, YKz, 1: 302. Of course, the use of an archaic name to designate Japan, in this early instance, yet again illustrates the particular way in which Yanagita conceives of the relationship between Okinawa and Japan. Next quote also from same page.

79 For another discussion of the "universality" in Yanagita's work, see the "Open Letter to the Fourth Annual Yanagita Kunio Yukari Summit" also included in this volume.
That Which Hermeneutics Cannot Grasp

Yoshikuni Igarashi

Civilization is not by any means an easy thing to attain to. There are only two ways by which man can reach it. One is by being cultured, the other by being corrupt. Country people have no opportunity of being either, so they stagnate.

—Oscar Wilde

Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Yanagita Kunio produced a series of texts which demonstrated his strong intent to establish folk studies as a discipline within the field of the sciences. These texts centered around his criticisms of its rival discipline, Japanese history. Yanagita contrasted folk studies to historiography in order to indicate the lack of scientific rigor in the latter’s methodology; however, what he claimed to be scientific in folk studies paradoxically indicated the non-scientific nature of his approach to cultural and linguistic phenomena. Yanagita maintained that scientific scholarship should encompass the totality of phenomena in its field of study, and it was this position that forced him to explicate precisely what it is that ultimately separated folk studies from empirical epistemology.

Yanagita's stance towards the concept of the totality generates a fundamental question which must first be tackled: how do we attain this totality? The answer should be that there exists no way to capture the totality of human existence, unless it is possible to conceive of a life-sized history or folk studies. (This is obviously a contradiction in terms: if it is truly life-sized, it is not a representation, thus, not a history; if it is a history, it is a representation; thus, it is not life-sized since it lacks lived experience.) Yanagita may have been wishing to reach this fine, contradictory line between the real lived-experience and its representation. Once folk studies captured lived-experience, there would be no necessity for the discipline of folk studies to exist any longer; the lived-experience would become its own representation. The totality of culture and society could only be attained in this paradoxical state, and in order to solve the dilemma, Yanagita sought immediate relations between the observer and the observed through representations of folk customs by the native’s own voice. Only when

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the entire space of everyday life became the field of cultural articulations/folk studies could the totality be recuperated in their representations.

It is within the tension between a hermeneutic circle and a scientific paradigm that Yanagita positions himself. The former diminishes the distance between the observer and the observed to an infinitesimal amount, whereas in the scientific paradigm, that distance is the epistemological foundation of observation. Thus, the location of observer becomes highly problematic in his supposed attempt to recover the totality through his strategy of representation. As a privileged site of representation, the observer is innately exterior to and alienated from the observed; yet, without this distance, representation is utterly inconceivable. Yanagita assesses, for instance, the state of ethnological studies in England as follows:

Many scholars cluster in London, and it is customary for them to go everywhere and collect data [outside of London]. As a result of this, observers and the observed are separated into two different entities. Consequently, it is impossible to see through the nuances behind the words of others. Therefore, they invest in efforts such as overseas expeditions in practicing data collection methods.²

In contrast to this rather regrettable state of ethnology in England, Yanagita privileges the condition of in-betweenness which Japan enjoys along with other countries located in the peripheral areas of European cultural influence. Within countries such as Japan, India, and perhaps the East European regions, new cultures coexist with traditional cultures; this coexistence of the old and the new constituting the enabling condition for the natives to represent their everyday life.³ This coexistence extends as far down as the individual level, on which “even an identical I often resorts to an old way of thinking or to a new perspective depending on time and place.”⁴ In short, there exists a possibility in Japan, as well as in other peripheral cultures, that the observer and the observed could be integrated into one agent.

The gaze of the scientific observer is inherent in the epistemology of the new cultures in Yanagita's dichotomy, and representation is conceivable only within the self-consciousness which the gaze of the exterior introduces into the uniform field of "traditional life." The challenge is to describe the non-self-reflective elements of culture, which Yanagita equates with mentality. Yanagita argues that:

..., as for the primitives, the entire area of their present life falls into the area of the so-called traditional life, and what they possess consists of materials belonging to this [mental] component. In a discussion of this part, the survey method is problematic. Since it is totally impossible for foreigners to conduct research of this component, we can do nothing but wait for them to objectify themselves.5

In the space created by the time lag in modernization, Japan fortuitously possesses the condition to bridge the cleavage between the observer and the observed.6 However, in Yanagita's "trichotomy" of folk cultural forms (yūkei bunka), language art (gengo geijutsu) and mentality (shin'i genshō), the formidable task of representing mentality defies any kind of optimism. The gaze of outside observers could penetrate the first layer of forms with ease, and the second layer of language with some difficulty. In terms of the third element of the trichotomy, however, only natives could ultimately comprehend the realm of mentality since it consists largely of unconscious behavior, which could never be articulated. Once enunciated, the behavior no longer remains unconscious: therefore, the unconscious could only be represented as that which it is not. It is the impossibility involved in representing mentality that Yanagita attempts to gloss over; in fact, the more words he uses to discuss the ways in which mentality should be described, the clearer his articulations inevitably demonstrate the chasm existing between the observer and the observed.

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5 Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 214.

6 Yanagita Kunio's contemporary intellectuals similarly invoked the image of Japan in between the East and West. Japan's supposedly superior quality was often equated with this in-betweenness. See for instance such texts as A Climate: A Philosophical Study (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1961) by Watsuji Tetsuro, and Bushidō: The Soul of Japan (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1969) by Nitobe Inazo.
Yanagita professes that his folk studies ultimately seek to represent the silence found in folk customs. He explicates the significance of this silence in relation with cultural taboos as follows:

This taboo is the most important part in folk studies. In fact, this is the part that I said should rely on studies by natives (kyōdojin). Even within the same country, taboos could never be understood by those who are not from that particular native place. This is because these taboos are never practiced. For example, taboos such as not standing on thresholds or not leaving knives on stoves or well walls are, in general, things not practiced. Therefore, they reach neither the eyes nor the ears of outsiders. Even if they appear as cultural forms, the outsider has no clue to understand the rationale behind them.7

Then Yanagita moves on to stress the pivotal significance of the study of taboos in the field of folk studies:

Thus, sufficient understanding and sympathy are prerequisites for the collection of data [in folk studies]. Although it is possible to manage other areas, it is often impossible to collect taboos (imi) when you come from a remote place. It is even possible to say that the primary purpose of folk studies lies in the study of taboos, as in the case of the third part [studies of mentality].8

Yanagita again privileges the position of natives in the study of taboos. Can natives, however, really know the meanings behind them? Do they not cease to be taboos once they realize the rationale that lies behind them? Yanagita himself implies that once prohibitions are rationally understood, they appear as etiquette only, as in the case of European countries. The more primitive a society is, the more prevalent taboos are. Japan is located in the middle of this spectrum between European societies and primitive societies.

The totality is untotalizable, regardless of Yanagita's aspiration to totalize, not only because it contains an unrepresentable silence, but also because it manifests the polymorphous nature of

8 Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 243.
meaning. That which cannot be named eludes a fixation of meaning, and thus cannot be represented. For example, his discussion of color perceptions suggests the plethora of meaning underlying any process of naming. Before illustrating his point, Yanagita lays the foundation of his argument by delineating three different forms of knowledge. By doing so, he posits the dialectical process of opposing categories of knowledge, to arrive at the final purpose of knowledge. He describes these categories of knowledge as follows:

...there is one form which appears through action or, in other words, that thing which works. Another form is anterior to action, that is, that thing prior to being worked on. This is, so to speak, an idea or something that exists in the head. Then, thirdly, we have purpose, that is, that which comes last. 9

He is elusive at best about the third form of knowledge here and never explicates it in his writings. This is perhaps because the synthesis of the former two forms would mean the recovery of the totality, which ultimately denies the first two, the basis of the dialectic.

The first form of knowledge participates in the naming of colors. In the system of nomenclature, the spectrum of colors is articulated, each segment assigned a certain name. For Yanagita, however, the colors in the "imagination of the Japanese people" have always exceeded the names given to them. There are numerous differentiations even within the category of the color called red, and the color of brown similarly has many different shadings. Yanagita maintains that:

In the mind, the notions of numerous colors were very minutely differentiated. Only with this differentiation could we immediately and freely use such a numerous number of dyes, as if a regimental commander commands many soldiers, when aniline dyes arrived from overseas. Although there were very few names, usually five colors, or seven or eight colors in the past, there were many more layers of colors in the mind. This is why we can deal with tens and hundreds of colors just by numbers. In the past, people did not

9 Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 219.
usually use such colors: therefore, it is simply that there were no names to designate them.\textsuperscript{10}

Correspondingly, there exists also an excess of meaning in the daily usage of language. For example, although there is only one term, “happiness,” the emotions and feelings expressed by this term are greatly differentiated depending on the situation.

Yanagita concedes that his inquiries are ultimately mediated by language. The first part of his trichotomy, cultural forms, corresponds to the realm that is visible to the outside observer, whose distancing relation to cultural phenomena is inherent in what he calls “new cultures.” On the other hand, the third category of mentality equals the old culture, in which an innate immediacy to culture makes enunciation impossible. Between these two realms, language functions for Yanagita as traces of multi-meaning in cultural phenomena. The realm of language, the second part of his trichotomy, constitutes the interface on which articulation takes place, no matter how problematic it may be. Yanagita, with some reticence, explains his methodological approach to mentality through language:

It might sound like a self-contradiction to collect through words what does not appear as words. However, it is not impossible to understand various ideas expressed by one word insofar as we carefully read or listen [to that one word]. So, though meanings do not appear clearly in collections of six or seven examples, I believe they would not fail to emerge if we compare many examples as we did for the first and second parts.\textsuperscript{11}

As incomplete as it is, language is the only medium which will facilitate his inquiries into mentality. Yanagita’s strong interest in language as a medium, in its turn, manifests the tension within language itself; that is, the tension between commonality and individuality. Without assuming the individuality of speaker and listener, it is impossible to conceive of communication, and concurrently communication is inconceivable without a shared ground between the two. The exterior position of observer assumed in the first realm of

\textsuperscript{10} Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 221.

\textsuperscript{11} Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 222.
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culture dissects cultural elements to the individual level, whereas the third realm of mentality exists in an undivided totality.\(^{12}\)

Yanagita attempts to reconstitute this totality through the dilemma of representation manifested in language. Having explained this dilemma thus far, we have now arrived at the point from which to show why Yanagita's folk studies consisted primarily of comparative studies of words, and why he desired to reach a totalizing meaning through the network of signifiers. We might say this is an approach from the exterior (though in the end, the effect equals that from the interior). In his effort to establish folk studies as a scientific discipline by appropriating scientific methodology, he displaced the meaning of the scientific, departing from an empirical method of observation. It is this philosophical intervention by Yanagita that lies behind his tenacious attack on historiography, the rivaling discipline of folk studies.

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Yanagita Kunio severely criticized the discipline of Japanese history (kokushi) at various points in his diverse writings. His attacks centered around Japanese history's fetishization of the origin and reliance on the authority of writing, which he conceived as contributing to a closure of the field of study. As a leverage to critique the problematic (or unproblematic) notion of historical knowledge, Yanagita invoked a hermeneutic relationship between the past and the present: folk studies aspired to answer questions posed by the people living in the present time. For Yanagita, history, or an all-encompassing discipline of folk studies, was not a project to represent the past as it had been, but rather was an act dictated by the necessity of answering contemporary questions. The past does not exist as a separate entity that awaits decipherment; rather, it defies a form of historical knowledge that divides the object of study. Past and present, placed in a diachronic relationality or genealogy, together generate signification. Thus, Yanagita challenged both the privileged position of the present in the discipline of history as the subject position from which a past is contained and organized,\(^{13}\) as well as the unproblematically-assumed transparency of historical writing, which manifested itself as a lack of self-reflexivity.

\(^{12}\) Yanagita, Zenshū, 28: 224.

\(^{13}\) For a discussion of the privileged position of the present, see Michel de Certeau, The Writing of History (New York, 1988), 2–11.
In his struggle to place the notion of the present in relation with the past, Yanagita strove to recover the totality in his descriptions of phenomena. He audaciously proclaimed, furthermore, that the discipline of Japanese folk studies possessed the potential to reconstitute this totality. Until the goal is attained, however, the search for the origins is deferred *ad infinitum*. Thus, Yanagita’s quest would inevitably fail to arrive at the final point (we may call it the end of history) which would close off this circle of questioning and answering. The question of origins is again displaced with the quest for the totality in his inquiries. Yanagita himself hoped that the discipline of folk studies would make a decisive contribution to the recovery of the cultural totality.

A prominent Japanese rural sociologist, Aruga Kizaemon, presents a reading of Yanagita, with the intention of defending his position against the discipline of Japanese history. His evaluation of Yanagita’s scholarship seeks a logical consistency in order to substantiate Yanagita’s anti-historiographical claim. Ultimately this sympathetic reading by Aruga, from a social-scientific position, effectively overlooks the potentially subversive messages that Yanagita embedded in his articulations on history and folk studies.

As one of the disciples of Yanagita, Aruga closely witnessed his struggles to establish Japanese folk studies (*minzokugaku*) as a legitimate discipline in the hostile atmosphere of the established Japanese academia. Aruga speculates that Yanagita’s militant attitude towards the discipline of history nonetheless considerably softened after he published an essay entitled “Mukoirikō” (Studies on Matri-local Marriage) in 1929. In Aruga’s article addressing Yanagita’s shift in his attitude towards the established discipline of Japanese history, he emphasizes the importance of “Mukoirikō,” a work that explicates Yanagita’s provocative stance on the relationship between folk studies and Japanese history (*kokushi*). It is the militancy Yanagita demonstrates in the essay that Aruga values most. Aruga maintains:

“Mukoirikō,” which was included in this collection of essays, was subtitled “Rekishi tai Minzokugaku” (History vs. Folk Studies). The content of this essay was astonishing (*susamajii*), as if he had declared a war against a discipline that bases its inquiries solely on written documents. The subtitle symbolized this. Of course, feelings similar to the ones expressed in this essay were prevalent in all of Yanagita’s writings at the time. This particular essay, nonetheless, starkly
expressed Yanagita’s sentiment as if he were holding a knife against the heart of the document-oriented empire of historiography.\textsuperscript{14}

According to Aruga, Yanagita was somewhat appeased when he was invited to write an article in \textit{Koza Nihon rekishi} (Lectures on Japanese History) in 1935. Aruga provides evidence for this transition in Yanagita’s attitude. When “Mukoirikō” was reprinted in \textit{Kon’in no hanashi} (Stories on Marriage) in 1948, the essay was treated as if it were a mere appendix to the texts and included in the last part of the book simply because it was written prior to the other essays.\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, the subtitle “History vs. Folk Studies” was deleted in the reprinted version.

Aruga laments the unjust treatment of this “epoch-making” essay not only because Yanagita brought it on himself, but also because this treatment was reiterated by the later compilers of \textit{Yanagita teihon} (The Standard Collection of Yanagita). Aruga expresses his extreme frustration as follows:

\begin{quote}
Considering the long path along which Yanagita struggled to gain a higher status for folk studies when it occupied a negligible position in academia makes me realize that every step Yanagita took was stained with his blood and sweat. At worst, he should by no means have treated such an epoch-making essay as “Mukoirikō—rekishi tai minzokugaku” in that manner. Why did Yanagita himself treat it so lightly? I am strongly dissatisfied with Yanagita’s attitude.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Aruga Kizaemon, \textit{Hitotsu no Nihon bunkaron} (Tokyo, 1981), 100.

\textsuperscript{15} Eight of the nine other essays in the book were first published between September 1946 and November 1947. One essay first appeared in 1941. \textit{The Standard Collection of Yanagita Kunio} (Teihon Yanagita Kunio-shū) follows the 1948 version of the text for its compilation and does not include the subtitle. Although \textit{The Complete Collection of Yanagita’s Work}, (Yanagita Kunio zenshū) adopts the same version and deletes the subtitle as well, the short commentary by Torikoshi Hiroyuki in the volume reiterates Aruga’s criticism and the bibliographical note at the end points to the fact that the article “Mukoirikō” had the subtitle “Rekishi tai minzokugaku” when it first appeared in \textit{Miyake Hakase koki shukuga kinen ronshū} (Collected Essays to Commemorate Dr. Miyake’s 70th Birthday).

\textsuperscript{16} Aruga, 103.
In Aruga's reading of *Kokushi to minzokugaku* (National History and Folk Studies), Yanagita stresses the unique complimentary relations between history and ethnology, in order to demonstrate and supplement historiography's shortcoming of solely relying on written documents as historical evidence. This article appears to indicate a shift in Yanagita's attitude toward the discipline of history: a shift from a critical appraisal to a moderate, compromising stance. Aruga interprets the shift as a degenerative move indicating that Yanagita bowed out of his earlier challenge to historical studies in order to have folk studies accepted as a legitimate discipline of scholarship.\(^{17}\) The crucial transition took place, according to Aruga, sometime between "Mukoirika" and *Kokushi to minzokugaku*, or between 1929 and 1935.\(^{18}\)

Yanagita's moderate position on the relationship between history and folk studies in the post World War II years seems to substantiate Aruga's claim: Yanagita was, by the mid-1930s, taken in by the academic establishment. In his lectures at the Japan Folk Studies Lecture Series in October of 1946, Yanagita expressed his regrets about the dissatisfactory quality of his earlier work, *Minkan denshō-ron* (Studies on Folklore), published in 1934. The book was compiled by one of his disciples, Goto Kōzen, on the basis of the twelve lectures Yanagita gave to his close disciples. Yanagita attributed the fault of the book partly to Goto's inadequate note-taking but largely to his own insufficient articulation on what he had conceived to be crucial in the scholarship of folk studies. He stated that:

Folk studies and history are not strangers in Japan [because there are more remnants of folk customs that attest to lived history in Japanese life]. Although in terms of methodology, it is possible to say that folk studies is more recent, they [history and folk studies] often overlap with each other in their areas of inquiries. Rather, there is a strong need to clarify the boundaries between them, though it is not easy to do so because they resemble each other too closely. To think

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17 Aruga, 102-104.

18 Amino Yoshihiko accepts Aruga's interpretation of this shift in Yanagita's attitude. See Amino Yoshihiko and Abe Kinya, *Chūsei no saihakken* (Rediscovery of the Medieval Period) (Tokyo, 1982), 265-66.
about it now, it was a big mistake that I did not try to
cover this point [previously].  

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19 Yanagita Kunio, “Gendai kagaku to iukoto” (About Modern Science) in Zenshū, 26: 569. The text of Minkan denshō-ron raises an interesting question of reading Yanagita Kunio precisely because of the mediated nature of its presentation. Also, the nature of this text is of great interest because of its heterogeneous constitution. The first part of the text, on the one hand, pays particularly close attention to the diversity and heterogeneity of Japanese customs, while on the other hand, it contains some enunciations that could possibly nullify its own sensitivity to diversity. In the second chapter, for example, Yanagita (through the texts compiled here by Goto) strongly denounces any attempt to posit Japan as a homogeneous entity. It reads:

It is a mistake to regard Japanese culture as something static and permanently fixed, as in the case of popular discourse on Japanese uniqueness (Nihonjin no tokuseiron). Even when it is said that there is something constant, it is concerned with a singular phenomenon, such as Bushidō, and moreover it only shows one aspect of it. There was nothing constant in the three hundred years of the Edo period. Social conditions drastically changed from around the time of Keichō [1596–1615] and Genwa [1615–1624] and afterwards. It is rather careless to infer and conclude from only one example. If we traverse the customs of any time period and observe what appears on that surface, we realize that transformations and new creations exist mixed up with the residual customs which continue to exist. This fact forces the established study of history to amend its chronologically-oriented attitude. (Minkan denshō-ron, in Zenshū, 28: 291.)

According to the text’s postscript, written by the compiler, Goto Takayoshi, Yanagita himself wrote the first part of the second chapter. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the part quoted here was a result of Goto’s editing since this is the third of the five sections in the chapter (Minkan Denshō-ron [Tokyo, 1980], 242). Although another disciple of Yanagita, Ohtō Tokihiko, who was present at the lectures, assures that everything in the book was in accordance with Yanagita’s overall scholarship (Minkan, 244), this unequivocal articulation on the heterogeneous construction of history cannot be found in Yanagita’s other theoretical writings. There is a possibility that Yanagita was more candid and forthcoming with his theoretical points during meetings with his close disciples. If this is the case, Yanagita’s own attitudes towards orality and writing might shed new light on his interpretations of the relationships between history and folk studies. However, until we come across definite evidence for Yanagita’s different mode of presentation, we must be satisfied with another kind of reading of the situation, which assumes Goto’s strong reading of the text.

This reading by Goto coincides with recent discussions of Japanese cultures by historians such as Amino Yoshihiko. Amino acknowledges his indebtedness to Yanagita’s folk studies, and Amino’s own concerns about heterogeneous elements in medieval Japanese history present a possible reading of Yanagita’s texts. (For example, see Amino Yoshihiko, Nihon chūsei no
Yanagita’s stance in the immediate postwar period, as demonstrated in this passage, seems close to that which Aruga discerned in *Kokushi to minzokugaku*.

Contrary to Aruga’s thesis and Yanagita’s postwar lecture, however, a close reading of the two texts reveals less a transition and more a consistency in Yanagita’s critical attitude toward history. It is evident that the two essays equally demonstrate, through similar arguments, Yanagita’s attempts to debunk history. Also, his views on the role of folk studies in conjunction with history had remained rather consistent throughout the short period which separated “Mukoirikō”

*hinōgyōmin to Tennō* (Non-agrarian People and the Emperor in Medieval Japan), [Tokyo, 1984], 27–34.) Furthermore, the criticism against historicity in the latter part of Yanagita’s quote cited above is clearly constructed on a spatial metaphor. Yanagita [Goto] uses the term ődan (traversing) in opposition to hennenshi (chronicle) and explicates the constraints of traditional historiography in encompassing the social dimensions of history. Needless to say, such an invocation of spatiality is very common in contemporary critiques of historicity. To demonstrate the critical nature of the text, it should suffice to mention the following: Yanagita [Goto’s] statement that “such a thing as homogeneous genesis (hassei) is inconceivable (Yanagita Kunio zenshū, 28: 316)” found a resonance in Europe a few years later when Walter Benjamin maintained that “History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now (Jetztzeit)” (Walter Benjamin, “Thesis on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations* [New York, 1969], 261)."

The radical nature of the statement notwithstanding, Yanagita [Goto] uncritically reiterates the discourse of Japanese uniqueness, the validity of which is severely contested in other parts of the same collection. He states that: There is no need to lament over the lack of sources. It is even possible to actively collect sources in order to solve problems. This is because in the relations between race and language, in the country called Japan there exists a phenomenon: one nation, one race, and one language. Therein exists the reason why there is a possibility that one-nation folk studies can be established in this country. (*Min'kan*, 385)

It is rather futile to blame Goto for the inconsistency in this text since these conflicting points find resonance with diverse evaluations of Yanagita by his contemporaries as well as by later readers. Goto’s presentations of Yanagita’s teachings demonstrate the discursive nature of Yanagita’s discourses. The discursive elements in Yanagita’s writings are subjected to contemporary as well as later readings and, in the configurations in various readings, Yanagita’s scholarship itself has become a fertile field in which the production of critical discourses takes place.
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and Kokushi to minzokugaku. In many respects, it is possible to read the later text, Kokushi to minzokugaku, as an expansion of the introduction to “Mukoirikō,” which manages only schematically to unfold Yanagita’s critique of Japanese history as an established discipline. (A comparison of the numbers of pages illustrates the point: the introductory part of “Mukoirikō” contains only fourteen pages in the Zenshū version, whereas Kokushi to minzokugaku covers 169 pages.) Moreover, in Kokushi to minzokugaku, Yanagita appears to be more ambitious in presenting his project of constructing an all-encompassing discipline, what he called Nihon minzokugaku (Japanese Folk Studies). This Yanagita attempts to do while preserving the definition he sought in folk studies as a supplementary discipline to history, an arrangement he proposed in “Mukoirikō.”

By situating both texts, “Mukoirikō” and Kokushi to minzokugaku, in relation to other theoretically oriented writings of Yanagita, it is possible to comprehend the constellation of meanings presented in various locations of Yanagita’s discourse on folk studies. Aruga’s strategy of reading Yanagita, on the contrary, posits the text of “Mukoirikō” as an “epoch-making” event (an obvious invocation of war as event). The declaration of the independence of folk studies, according to Aruga’s wishes, should have created a decisive break away from historiography. This reading ironically constitutes a “historical” treatment, or reification, of Yanagita’s critique of historiography. Yanagita’s writings themselves resist the containment Aruga’s position imposes, and necessitate their study in a discursive inter-textual space—a discursive space similar to that in which Yanagita aspired to pursue cultural phenomena in his folk studies.

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In both essays, the privileged position of history is placed under heavy criticism by Yanagita for its non-self-reflective approach to written documents. This criticism, in its turn, reveals Yanagita’s approach in his inquiries into the lives of Japanese people. For example, Yanagita denounces his history-writing contemporaries for their practice of selecting, seemingly arbitrarily, what it is that constitutes historical events. Yanagita maintains in “Mukoirikō”:

In the aspects of language and the literary, historiography has acknowledged its “power of letters” to an extreme extent.... [A]t any rate, the reason written documents have reigned within traditional historiography lies in the fact that they were
recognized as the only method to describe certain historical facts....\textsuperscript{20}

Yanagita delivers his attack on history by contrasting the status of folk studies with the acceptance of archaeological methodology in the field of history. The lives of the majority of people are not something that have been represented in written documents, and it is impossible to comprehend society without regarding the interactions between the literary class and the rest of society. Representations of folk customs through the written language remain an extremely limited form of articulation because the writing system has belonged to the politically powerful and thus constitutes a gaze of the exterior on the folk customs. For this fundamental limitation, Yanagita believes, folk studies could provide a radical remedy. What is at stake here is the question of who has the authority to demarcate the territory of history. For Yanagita, transformations that take place in the life sphere of the people, such as marriage systems, eating habits and clothing, are no less historical than the major historical achievements by great individuals.\textsuperscript{21}

The discipline of history is totally inept in dealing with the practical questions raised in the minds of the people, while the act of questioning occupies a special position in the discipline of folk studies. These essential problems of daily life are non-existent in historical writing insofar as there is a blind belief in written documents.\textsuperscript{22}
Yanagita further details his strategy to critique the reign of written language in *Kokushi to minzokugaku*. Yanagita maintains that historical documents themselves are created in historical configurations and that it is necessary to place these documents back into the historical conditions from which they emerged. Yanagita turns a self-reflective eye to the limitations of historical documents and insists on the superior quality of folk records. He holds that:

...as for historical documents, their existence by itself is the fact for us. What that fact signifies rests on our understanding. There is, so to speak, no guarantee other than our trust that the ancients were kind to us and tried only to transmit something accurate. Viewed from this position [of trusting, regardless of the susceptibility of historical records to falsification], there could be many more traces of vanished facts found in yet-to-be-transcribed folktales and also traces of things that should be recorded and included in our collection list. These things are language and customs, which our people accidentally or unconsciously handed down from the past. At least transmission on this unconscious level involves no falsification.\(^{23}\)

Yanagita describes this “fact” concerning the existence of historical documents itself as a historical product, and he privileges traces in language and customs with the somewhat rhetorical example of the (non-)intentionality of the recorder. The records transmitted “on the unconscious level” are less prone to falsification, he states, though they are not at all free from misunderstandings. He then continues, “As for

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\(^{23}\) Yanagita, *Kokushi to minzokugaku*, p. 502.
misunderstandings, historical documents are too filled with them. That the misunderstandings are preserved and transmitted to this day is another important fact, and it is possible to find many accurate images of life that have now disappeared by ordering and classifying them.\textsuperscript{24} When historical documents were created, he adds, the recorder of the documents could not have anticipated the set of problems that people in the future would be concerned about. Elsewhere in the same text, he states this directly:

The power to choose problems rests with the ancients. Even if their intentions were good, there was no way they could have anticipated the questions of their offspring more than a thousand years later. Furthermore, many recorders even had private interests. As temples valued their own Buddha statues as precious, each household had interests to protect and the honor of an ancestor to venerate. Even when they inadvertently included information about peripheral matters, this information too was motivated by certain interests. The expected readership was small, and thus shared interests were limited.\textsuperscript{25}

Furthermore, what little was recorded could not possibly escape loss or damage. Documentation was thus by definition biased and incomplete. As long as history makes itself dependent upon written documents, their absence will define the boundaries of historical inquiries.

In this sense, Yanagita brings his criticism down to the level of the partiality of literary representation. Yanagita's questioning denies the transparency of written documents by pointing to the ways in which these documents are prefigured. Again as a somewhat rhetorical example, Yanagita postulates a self-referential reading of history. Is conceiving a history of historiography possible if the notion of history is truly dictated by whatever documents are available to the contemporary historians? Yanagita maintains that it is impossible to study a history of historical writings solely on the basis of written documents, simply because no past recorder of such documents could anticipate the problematics involved in writing history in the future time. He explains that:

\textsuperscript{24} Yanagita, Kokushi, 502–03.

\textsuperscript{25} Yanagita, Kokushi, 416.
Needless to say, for many of the new questions that we now desire to answer, it was not possible even to predict their introduction. For example, who would have ever thought that the growth of historiography would become a focus of criticism in the tenth year of the Shōwa period (1935) and would consequently have prepared documents beforehand for this matter? 26

It is necessary to understand historiography itself as discourse in order to construct a history of historiography which could reflect on itself and its own production. The claim of natural affinity to the objects found in positivistic approaches masks the aspect of production involved in historiography as well as historical documents. Yanagita denies the status of nature/non-intentionality for history and historical writing by suggesting the intentionality involved in their production. The presentism found in historiography, which privileges the position of subject in the present over a past, exists to organize and hierarchize the past; yet, at the same time this is a position that denies its own operation under the ideological pretense of naturalness/transparency. By placing historiography in a self-referential circle, Yanagita raises questions with regard to the self-conceptualization of history as the transparent agent, unproblematically mediating between the present and the historical reality. In other words, it is impossible to conceptualize the history of historical writings if history aspires to be a transparent agent. For Yanagita, there can be no representation/history of transparency.

For Yanagita, writing history is a perpetual process recuperating the historical totality, and this could be recovered by the act of questioning. In “Mukoirikō,” he reveals a rather naive understanding of what historical inquiries entail: “History, in short, is just a job to remember the things that we have forgotten. However, the underdeveloped technique in utilizing historical sources indicates the fact that historians are simply reduced to arguing down their opponents through much argumentation and proof, providing the most rewards to those who are better at articulation.” 27 In this essay, history is expressed as a simple process of unearthing historical reality. His belief in the totalizability of a cultural totality constitutes the grounds of his criticism against the practice of historical writing.

26 Yanagita, Kokushigaku, 425.
27 Yanagita, “Mukoirikō,” 213.
However, when he handles the same issue, with greater care, in *Kokushi to minzokugaku*, the act of questioning gains significance as a mediator between the present and the past. It is in the space created by the process of questioning and deferred answers, rather than in the search for knowledge per se, that the studies of history and folk should operate. Yanagita maintains in *Kokushi to minzokugaku* that:

...history cannot necessarily answer [questions], it [simply] gradually becomes clear as time passes. Therefore, just like all the modern sciences, historiography has to proceed with questions.28

He continues his discussion of historiography in conjunction with the discipline of folk studies, a part of which reads:

It is not easy to decide which problem is minor and which is major even in recent times. Needless to say, even without the inclusion of future cases, we have already had enough encounters with such examples that used be minor, but later became more important than anything else.... There is no such standard for us to weigh problems. But at any rate, I do not think that a form of study can reach completion unless it is able to answer every possible question that people might ask concerning past human living, that which is supposed to be the realm of present historical studies. The only way to arrive at completion is through a discipline which is recently emerging under the tentative name of *Nihon minzokugaku* (Japanese folk study).29

In this later essay, Yanagita openly expresses his pride and optimism for the future of folk studies. Nonetheless, the immediacy of historical knowledge is radically denied, because for him the past could only be evoked by the act of questioning.

It is this totality which Yanagita claims the discipline of folk studies could potentially recover, by its act of questioning and answering; against this notion he constructs a critique of both the partiality and the complaisance of historical vision. Yet, his sense of mission and optimism is deflected when he admits an infinite

29 Yanagita, *Kokushi*, 432.
deferment in attaining his goal of totality. For instance, he comments on
the nature of folk studies as follows:

Folk studies, which we have been advocating, originally started from questions. And such studies will
always be filled with postulations and further
questions, since questions are gradually interpreted
with the knowledge of the various agreements and
differences in one ethnic group, knowledge which is to
be acquired through nomenclature and comparison with
new forms of knowledge in folk studies. 30

Totality is the ultimate object of folk studies; yet, it exists only as an
object impossible to attain. The relationship between the acts of
questioning and answering constitutes a dialectical process (except that
the final synthesis is always deferred) toward this insurmountable
goal.

Addressing the relationship between the acts of questioning
and answering, Yanagita makes a distinction between shigokoro
(historical mind) and shiryoku (historical power), terms which
correspond, respectively, to the curiosity that instills questions in
people’s minds and to the power which answers the questions. Though
the terms usually correspond, there are cases in which one steps ahead
of the other for a short duration of time. Yanagita argues that
historical power equals historical curiosity in the minds of the
members of primitive societies, whereas in Japan, historical power has
thus far surpassed historical curiosity—historical power has, in fact,
functioned to stimulate the historical mind of the people. This
condition, in which historical power has answered questions
immediately, has contributed to the prestige of historiography, and
perhaps to its complaisance as well. 31 Knowledge, in Yanagita’s mind,
is understood in a dialectical form, and is by no means a final object of
fetishization. Questions necessitate answers, and the answers in turn
invoke a new set of questions. Historiography, unconcerned as it is with
the questions, disrupts this rather intimate process, thus effectively
annihilating the desire for a reconstitution of the cultural totality.

In the last half of the excerpt quoted above, Yanagita shifts
his focus from the dialectical form of knowledge to the relationality of
knowledge. He points to this comparative aspect of folk studies in his

30 Yanagita, Kokushi, 493.
31 Yanagita, Kokushi, 420–21.
statement that, no matter how peculiar a phenomenon might be, it has no power to compliment a lack of historical evidence by itself in isolation. This criticism addresses the trend in history to cherish the one-time-ness (ikkaisei) of events: events are treated as unalterable and unrecoverable objects from the past. Historiography finds a radical fissure between a past and a present and claims it is only “historical” knowledge that, due to its professed transparency/scientificity, could bridge the two separate worlds. History in this case poses as a heterology, or a discourse on the other, that seeks identity in the events of history. Concomitantly, because of this impulse to find the status of “historical” events as the other to the present, the singularity and identity of these events is of absolute necessity. Through this operation of turning events into the ultimate other, historiography controls and organizes them as objects of empirical knowledge.

In light of Yanagita’s claim of cultural totality, the importance of historical events simply diminishes when opposed to the repetitious events of everyday life. In the all-encompassing model of historical reality, “one-time historical events” exist merely as particular examples. The one-time-ness of historical events, when contrasted to repetitious daily phenomena, demarcates the traditional boundaries of historiography. This emphasis on one-time-ness is rather arbitrary, of course, and the notion itself is a construct. Historical records in isolation, unable to provide evidence for historical changes, define the nature of history precisely in their own image, as collections of isolated historical events. Written documents highlight only moments of history, while Yanagita demands that historians capture historical trends. Historical events, as signifiers, do not possess meaning in themselves, but rather generate signification only in their network, or genealogy. The kind of history with which Yanagita declares he is concerned is the history of repetitious phenomena. He is not, however, proposing a simple dichotomy between one-time-ness and repetition. He states that “There is no one-time-ness in the history we would like to know. The life of people in the past is a collective phenomenon; thus, it is a collective force that changes history. It is rather unreliable for it to be represented by only one piece of correct evidence. If there is no old record found, we have to look into the facts left in the present.”

Although Yanagita criticizes the premises underlying the contemporary practice of historical writing for its over-emphasis on

33 Yanagita, Kokushi, 43.
great individuals and deeds, he does not completely dismiss eventfulness or one-time-ness in the historical process. One-time-ness does not exist in itself; rather, it resides in any of the changes that take place in human life. This constitutes the denial of a bifurcation and the redefinition of the relationship between historical events (one-time-ness) and non-historical events (repetition). Yanagita reaches it simply by claiming that repetitious events also change,34 and that it is historiography that valorizes history into events, or into the history of identity.

Yanagita’s notion of repetition again frustrates his aspiration to recover the totality of culture in folk studies. Although events repeat themselves, they do not appear as the identical copies of an original. Concomitantly, though they transform themselves in the process of repetition, they share a commonality that makes each event a repetition of another. As in a language system, each articulation or repetition always appears as difference, or as an excess which the commonality in the network of signifiers cannot grasp. These events are simply signs that indicate the non-articulatable spheres of the everyday life of the folk. On the other hand, only by denying their individuality as signs can these signs or events join the network of signifiers.

* * *

The comparative approach of folk studies functions for Yanagita as another spearhead of attack on the partiality of historical representations. However, his much-publicized diffusionist theory of the transmission of cultures in the end denies the critical position from which he constructs criticisms against historiography. By assuming this supposedly “scientific” approach, he ends up engaging in some of the very practices he has warned against in the writing of history. The invocation of ethnic unity is Yanagita’s attempt to bring closure to the hermeneutic circle of questioner and answerer in the name of scientificity.

Yanagita finds an analogous relationship between the natural sciences and history. Yanagita writes in the introduction to “Mukoirikō” as follows:

It seems to be a rare case that a piece of scholarship is left at the level of each individual’s study without any integration, as is the case with the field of history. One of the big reasons for this might be the fact that

34 Yanagita, Kokushi, 37.
chronology has given the appearance of an order to history and has assured people that history is a well organized arrangement. Or, since the nation of Japan possesses the most closely formed communal life, there were many who misunderstood that even fragmentary discoveries naturally unite into a form of scholarship as long as they belong to this boundary of historical knowledge. Or, maybe it is due to the fact that there has existed an atmosphere that takes the completion of historical textbooks as an integration of scholarship.

No sooner did we take any example from the various disciplines of the natural sciences than we realized that such complacency [that of the historical project] has no basis at all. No discipline can claim that it is engaging in scholastic inquiries unless it looks into every corner of every phenomenon, all the stars for astronomy and every possible lichen for plant biology, and furthermore unless it discovers consistent rules.\(^{35}\)

In his analogy to natural science, Yanagita posits in the everyday life of people a potential historical nature. What nature constitutes for natural scientists, historical reality constitutes for historians.

Yanagita seems to be drawn towards a positivistic notion of science. When he assumes an analogous relation between nature and culture, Yanagita is trapped in his own metaphor, in an objectivism that posits the past as an independent object. In “Mukoirikō,” the emphasis on scientific approaches to history appears more straightforward probably because of the limited space in which he had to articulate his notion of history. Yanagita deploys metaphoric analogies to natural science, which serve to define the ramifications of his arguments. Folk studies in Yanagita's mind, however, focus on present customs, and the past could only be presented through the present practice of customs. No matter how he aspires to reconstitute the past as it was, it is an impossible task without the will to know, which is in itself defined by the historical formation. There is an assumption that there exists an intimate relation between the questioner and the past, and a dialectical relation between the questioner and the past, which denounces a static form of the knowledge of history.

Aruga Kizaemon values “Mukoirikō” more than Kokushi to minzokugaku probably because of Yanagita's seeming proximity to a

\(^{35}\) Yanagita, “Mukoirikō,” 207-08.
natural scientific approach in his efforts to criticize history. In the conclusion to his essay, Aruga emphasizes the importance of historical perspective, or what he calls the working hypothesis, on the basis of which social science disciplines should be built. He maintains that:

The contemporary society in which researchers are active in their research possesses basic importance in defining a particular working hypothesis in the humanities and social sciences. For example, to take the examples of economic theorists such as Adam Smith, Marx, and Keynes, they all created their unique theories on the basis of political, economic and social conditions.³⁶

Aruga argues that Yanagita came close to creating a working hypothesis for the studies of Japanese culture out of the particularities of Japanese people’s living. Nonetheless, Aruga’s position is that since Yanagita was not conscious of the locus of the problem, he never reached a point where he could actually produce one.

As much as Aruga denies the universalistic notion and Eurocentric foundations of social science and recognizes that the subject matter in the social sciences is far more complicated than that of the natural sciences, he nevertheless appears to maintain a natural scientific model for the social sciences. Thus the relationship between the past and the present are causal and therefore unproblematic for Aruga. For him, constructing working hypotheses simply means assuring a position of observer in social scientific studies, an act of questioning which, Yanagita stresses, has little to do with social scientific research.

However, Yanagita went to great lengths to introduce scientific methodology to the field of folk studies. A diffusionist (hōgen shūkenron) approach to the study of regional variations of words, which he proposed in 1930, supposedly provided a basis of comparative studies in history. This method constitutes Yanagita’s attempt to translate the temporality of history into a synchronic dimension of folk studies. On this point, he maintains:

Yet, it’s just that its [human science’s] methodology needs to be established from now on. In the studies I, along with others, am attempting to practice, history is

³⁶ Aruga, 106.
not considered to be something like a long thin vertical strip. Rather my study regards history as a horizontal surface (ōdanmen). This surface is cut and exposed by the time [synchronicity] to which the observers belong. Historical facts that poke their heads onto this surface, or the traces of facts that seem to have existed in the past, actually reveal themselves in various stages of this process [of history].

Yanagita’s base assumption is that new cultural forms spread from urban centers, particularly from Kyoto, to the peripheral rural areas. Physical distance from the centers becomes equated with temporal distance to the present, or temporal proximity to the original forms of cultures. Yanagita resorts to this Hegelian conversion of the diachronic into geographical distribution, in order to invert a presentism of historiography and at the same time privilege the peripheral areas for their supposed contiguity to the origin. Because of its complicated geographical configurations, he claims that patterns of diffusion demonstrate a myriad of different shadings over the land of Japan. This is a strategy to read cultural topography as a mapping of historical development. The chart on page 115 illustrates Yanagita’s move to collapse the temporal dimension onto contemporary space. The relationality of contemporaneous space implies the existence of a genealogy that fills the vast chasm separating an origin from a present. The genealogy intricately connects the origin with the present, and it simultaneously debunks the origin’s privileged position by rendering it just another stage of the “various stages” in the historical process.

However, by fixing a genealogy on the absolute point of origin, Yanagita’s diffusionist theory denies heterogeneous elements in history as well as a potentially genealogical reading of it. It is only in a shared space that Yanagita’s professed methodology actively seeks for heterogeneity. Once this space is homogenized through identical repetitions of the origin, difference ultimately becomes a representation of sameness. Yanagita argues the existence, at Japan’s origin, of an integral race and one language, as he states the following:

37 Yanagita, Kokushi, 504.

38 For more on the Hegelian spatialization of temporality, which privileges the center, see Hegel, The Philosophy of History (New York, 1956), tr. J. Sibree, 79–102.
One of the characteristics of our country, more prominent than anything else, is the existence of numerous islands. There are more than four hundred islands on which people reside. From the northern islands of Rishiri and Rebun in the sea of Ezo, to the islands of the far south such as Aokashima, south of Hachijō Island, and the southern tip of the Ryūkyū Islands, Hateruma Island and Yonaguni Island as well, the same original ethnic group constitutes the villages and, with some individual modifications, speaks one same language.39

This statement sounds like any other nightmarish articulation on the mythical uniqueness of the Japanese people. Yet, the importance of the statement lies not so much in the content itself as in the fact that it is enunciated in opposition to Yanagita’s own methodology of folk studies.

39 Yanagita, Kokushi, 505.
There is danger inherent in his methodology. Once he ceases the movement of his imagination and fixes it on an object (origin), his method of association can create only the space of sameness. Scientific pretense, or a flirtation with the natural scientific approach, only contributes to objectifying the object of Yanagita's imagination. In the section immediately following the above passage, he provides an example of a diffusionist reading of folk customs. Yanagita explains:

The wood that we Japanese people collected in the mountain at the beginning of the year is called toshigi. The purpose of toshigi appears to be contained within the activity of burning, at the beginning of the year, for the symbolic warmth of the coming spring, and it is possible to say that there are no regions [of Japan] in which this fire ritual is not practiced in January, though there are some variations in date and time. 40

On this point, Yanagita fully utilizes his own fluid writing style in order to convey two conflicting trains of thought within himself. He begins with a statement implying that the custom of toshigi is shared by the entire population of Japanese. In the following sentences, however, he slightly shifts his emphasis and claims that the widespread meaning of the custom, as practiced by the Japanese, is located specifically in its status as a ritual of fire (the signified) and not necessarily in the name toshigi itself (the signifier). The initial point of this shift is located in his second sentence. This operation of shifting the focus from the unity of name to that of meaning, signifies an effort to gloss over a fundamental incongruity existing between Yanagita's intention to grasp the object of his study, and his practice that slides over the representations of that object. What follows these two sentences is a familiar morphological chain of association of different folk customs. His second sentence has already laid out the basis of argument on the level of meaning rather than phonetics; therefore, the argument indicates that underneath the morphology of customs lies his interpretation of meanings/significance. Associations by meaning bring two separate classes of phonetic associations onto the same plane by introducing the ruptures and cleavages that exist between them. In order to override their semantic association (or dissociation), Yanagita in this case uses the first sentence to attempt to establish a homogeneous space over the

40 Yanagita, Kokushi, 505.
discursive space of folk customs which the following sentences imply. This first sentence simply proclaims the existence of a phonetically homogeneous space within the boundaries of Japan. The examples belonging to different phonetic planes are turned into mere signs of similitude, both through Yanagita’s placing of this first sentence, and through his creation of a phonetically homogeneous space.

Although the associations he subsequently presents are based on the level of morphology/meaning and demonstrate separate phonetic origins of local customs, Yanagita’s assertion of homogeneity freezes and fixes the movement of association onto one and only one sound/meaning. His associations, for example, provide a common origin for a variety of local customs: the kayuzue/kayukakibō (gruel stick), which is used for the purpose of divining the year’s crops; as well as the mochibana (rice cake ornament), the inenohana (rice ornament), and the awabo and hiebo (ear of millet, ear of barn grass), all of which are branches decorated with grain cakes, displayed as ritual ornaments. There is no assurance of a common origin for these different customs in themselves, aside from Yanagita’s act of prefiguring their commonality.

This example of Yanagita’s strong desire to close off the hermeneutic circle and create a space of similitude is not used here as an attempt to discern a conservative Yanagita from a radical Yanagita. It is, however, this desire for the origin and the space of similitude that drives his association of words, which in its turn discloses the differences found in folk customs. Without this desire, Yanagita’s inquiries into folk customs are inconceivable. These conflicting elements exist in the space of his discourse and testify to the discursiveness of this space. Ultimately it is impossible to conceive a clean space in his discourse, and only in the paradoxical state between absolute similitude and radical difference could he articulate the folk.
Shades of Nothingness:
The Hiatus of Rationality in the Early Thought of Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime

Robert W. Adams

The litany of changes that took place in Japan after the Meiji Restoration is well known. The need for Japanese to compensate for the many changes in their lifestyles with the progress of industrialization can also be readily imagined. Some changes were as simple as learning how to ride a street car; others involved new occupations requiring new skills and correspondingly new schedules of life and work. All such changes were premised upon the application in Japanese society of imported forms of knowledge. Simply put, the Japanese national strategy was to utilize the rationality, the science, and the technology of the West, as it was understood in the late nineteenth century, in order to transform the country and better compete with the Great Powers.

Still, it is no easy matter to control the application of rationality. Even when the aims for employing reason are as clear as was the case in modernizing Japan—often summed up in the slogan “Western technology and Eastern morals” (wakon-yōsai) coined during early Meiji—rationality tends to expand its purview, whether in the guise of political, economic, natural scientific, sociological, or philosophical theories. One might even say that this tendency, aiming toward universality, is inherent in the rationality of the Western tradition. At a fundamental level, this is the case because of logic’s aversion to contradiction. One thing cannot be both “A” and “non-A” at the same time. If the law of non-contradiction holds for any single entity, it also strives to be true of all things coming under the scrutiny of rational thought. There is no reason why “A” should be rationally explicable, while “non-A” remains a mystery. In sum, rationality does not recognize contradictions within its field, nor does it easily recognize limits to its applicability. The question would naturally arise, then, of why technology should belong to the domain of the rational while

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morals, or any other not explicitly scientific field, should escape its injunctions.

Thus, the intellectual problems facing Japan as it tried to use Western rationality without becoming itself a clone of the West were indeed quite perplexing. Philosophically stated, the problems converged on the question of defining the limits of reason. It may seem ironic, though I do not think it is, that Japanese philosophers should search the Western tradition for ways of escaping the vice-like grip of rationality. They needed to find the limits of knowledge, and this quest was immediately connected to the question of how knowledge is constituted. Because the epistemological questions facing Japan so resembled those addressed by Kant, the critical formulation of a limit to the rational attracted aspiring Japanese philosophers from the first, even before the question of the limits of knowledge came to full flowering with the widespread introduction of German critical philosophy in the late 1900s and early 1910s. During the early twentieth century, however, German critical philosophy took hold in Japan and captured the imagination of the Japanese intelligentsia by providing intellectuals with a means of grasping philosophically the nature of the structural changes taking place in their society. In the early years of the twentieth century, Japanese philosophers were able, through Kantian philosophy, to conceptualize the conditions of existence brought about by modernization and industrialization.

Contemporary Kantian philosophy was represented by two schools of neo-Kantianism—the Southwest German School and the Marburg School. While both schools claimed Kantianism as their intellectual inheritance, their respective conceptualizations of knowledge and its limits—what from the perspective of rationality appears as nothing or nothingness—differed radically. The members of the Southwest German School aimed to establish sciences of human condition, including especially history and the social sciences, and they

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2 Even before the "German invasion," the few Japanese who concentrated on European philosophy were attracted to Kant's critical philosophy—especially the Critique of Pure Reason’s doctrine of the Ding an sich. This was read as postulating an existence capable of withstanding the inclusiveness of reason. See Nakajima Rikizō, Kanto-shū no hihan tetsugaku (n.p.: 1892). This book was an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation, which he completed in 1889. The dissertation was entitled, "Kant's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself."


4 For a detailed description of the distinctions between the two schools, see Thomas Wiley, Back to Kant (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978).
located nothingness at the frontier of knowledge, in the terra incognita where rationality had not yet entered. The members of the Marburg School, on the other hand, for the most part interested themselves in the exact sciences and, in so far as it dealt with the creation of knowledge, in psychology; they located nothingness at the very site of the production of knowledge, in the activity of the epistemological subject that occasions knowledge but which cannot itself be known.

These two epistemological orientations, prevalent throughout the 1910s, had far-reaching consequences for the ways in which Japanese conceived of themselves and their country vis-à-vis the West. The Kantian philosophical systems provided Japanese intellectuals with epistemological models by which to understand the structures of rationality being applied in their country; the two Kantian perspectives also included distinct methods of delimiting rationality, which, in turn, had implications for the manners in which Japanese conceived of themselves as using Western forms of rationality without surrendering completely to the West.

Among the philosophers during the first decades of the twentieth century, from the late Meiji period to the early Taishō period, who began to take up the difficulties stemming from the inclusion of Western reason into Japanese society were Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) and Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962). This paper contrasts their two attempts to describe the limits of knowledge and explores the consequences of their conclusions. It describes two attempts to place limits on the totalizing tendencies of rationality in such a way that the individual and, by extension, Japan might maintain their integrity by exercising control over the scope allowed to knowledge.

While their conceptions of the non-rational differed, their general approaches remained quite similar. Tanabe and Nishida both reacted against the seamless objectivisms of scientific theories by seeking a hiatus of rationality, a realm contiguous with but other than science. They sought to protect human beings, most immediately in Japan, from complete capitulation to the powers of reason. Concurrently, they sought to develop models of subjectivity by which to explicate the confluence of the rational and the non-rational in everyday experience.

Neither Nishida nor Tanabe thought that philosophy should be limited to defining merely technical relations within constituted knowledge; rather, they called on it to emphasize the immediacy of human life in its inevitable relations with the rationalized structures and institutions bequeathed to modern society by the normative objectivities of science. However much Tanabe or Nishida might have
acknowledged the grandeur of scientific structures, epitomized at the
time by neo-Kantian epistemologies, they were not willing to accede to
demands that science be recognized as universal. Instead, they judged
the claims of science and rationality from the perspective of real-life
activities. Both perceived neo-Kantian claims of the necessity and
universality of constituted knowledge as, conversely, having little
basis in reality. They saw the philosophical injunctions to universality
as purely abstract attempts to free science of its necessary links to
human existence.

Nishida, particularly, required that even highly abstract and
logical theories maintain unbroken links with human producers. For
Nishida the self inhabited center stage, because apart from the self no
participation in the world was possible. Writing to Tanabe, he
communicated this guiding conviction early in 1914.

It goes without saying that there are many
[philosophical] issues that have yet to be completely
worked out, and I earnestly hope that you will continue
to research such problems deeply and fully. Philosopher must do their best profoundly, precisely,
and studiously to solve the problem of the self. We must
give ourselves wholly—blood and muscle—to this task.
The discovery of truth, as Newton said, is constant
reflection (das stete Nachdenken). I, too, though I have
meager talents and am approaching decrepitude,
continue to strive as much as I can [in this regard].

In place of the theoretical universality proposed by the neo-
Kantians, Nishida and Tanabe found genuine universality in that
which preceded scientific knowledge, in its hiatus. This paper will
characterize the non-rational hiatus and examine how both Nishida
and Tanabe included in their deliberations that which could not be
presumed by science—non-rationality, nothingness, the hiatus of
rationality. This will entail distinguishing Tanabe and Nishida's
views of immediate and non-rational experience, and illuminating
what for both may be called the ground of knowledge—the contours of
the self's most basic relationship with the external world. In this way,
their perspectives on the basic duality between rationality and the

5 Nishida Kitarō, “Shinho-i,” in Nishida Kitarō zenshū, ed. by Shimomura
Toratarō et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1965), 19: 511, letter #2367. The Zenshū will
hereinafter be cited as NKz.
non-rational, upon which each found his place within modern Japanese society, will become evident.\footnote{The importance Nishida himself placed upon clarifying just such fundamental orientations in philosophy is evident from advice he gave to Tanabe in one of their early letters, dated August 28, 1914. He said, “I think that for such arguments you should first delineate the fundamental issues and then go ahead and elaborate them, but the fundamental issues are most important.” Nishida, NKz, 19: 517, #2370.}

Of course, Nishida and Tanabe were not alone in this distrust of the seamless objectivity espoused by the sciences; nor were Japanese alone in calling for a revaluation of everyday life vis-à-vis science. The whole of that movement known as “vitalism” cast similar charges against contemporary scientific theories. With the exception of Henri Bergson, however, most vitalist philosophers had already been discarded in Japan as philosophical issues turned more technical in response to the Kantianism that reached that country during the early Taishō period. Still, contrasting Bergson and Nishida’s attitudes toward science yields a telling difference in their posture toward the modern world. Bergson’s radical rejection of the authenticity of reason does not find a direct counterpart in Nishida.

**Henri Bergson: Generic Similarities and Fundamental Differences**

Nishida began his study of philosophy with the premise that there was an active unity, which he termed “pure experience,” prior to and more immediate than the separation of the subjective and objective moments in consciousness. He wrote his first and most widely read work, *Zen no kenkyū,* as an apology for postulating this pure experience as the fundamental ground of all conceptual systematizing endeavors, including philosophy, artistic creation (creativity of all types), religion, and even the natural sciences.

In the prioritization of the immediately non-rational, Nishida shared with Henri Bergson a viewpoint critical of the totalizing impulses of rational inquiry. Bergson, in his *An introduction to Metaphysics* (1903), had pointed out the distinction between intuition and representational analysis. He declared that the true reality of a thing can be understood only through intuition, and not by any recombination of derived symbolic elements as found in scientific analysis. He characterized intuition as capable of entering the ceaseless flow (*durée*) of life and perceiving its objects without rigidifying their quintessential instability. Conceptual analysis, on
the other hand, he regarded as a grasping at the meaning of things, which symbolically abstracts and freezes them in the moment of understanding. Bergson explained that, "Analysis operates always on the immobile, whilst intuition places itself in mobility, or what comes to the same thing, in duration."  

Bergson saw a stark dichotomy between the genuinely real, the absolutely non-rational, and its representation, which was "a translation made with certain symbols." Representations, he asserted, would always remain incomplete, imperfect and relative when compared to what it sought to express or symbolize. Opposite this, the object itself, "the original and not its translation," he considered perfect because it was simply and perfectly what it was. In so far as the object itself could not remain itself while being represented, it could also not participate in knowledge, which necessarily rendered its objects into conceptual form and generalized them. "The concept can only symbolize a particular property by making it common to an infinity of things. It therefore always more or less deforms the property by the extension it gives to it."  

Truth and genuineness for Bergson did not reside in universal abstractions, no matter how much they could explain, but were only to be found in the full concreteness and individuality of each thing. Rather than knowledge, Bergson advocated intuition as the means of becoming aware of the true and changing properties of genuine objects. The realm of philosophy, the study of the truth of human existence, he made the province of intuition, which aimed at placing itself "within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible." This he termed intellectual sympathy. 

The sympathetic relation enabled by intuition was incompatible with the exploitation of objects by ideas. Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) had divided the treatment of objects into two categories of für sich and für Anderes and believed that objects only became interesting to people when some use (Leistung) could be made of them. Bergson such termed intellectual profiteering through analysis.

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8 Bergson, 23.
9 Bergson, 28.
10 Bergson, 23.
"practical knowledge," and dissociated it from philosophy. Only in the intuition, which showed no inclination toward practical effects, did he hold philosophy to be possible: "Either there is no philosophy possible, and all knowledge of things is a practical knowledge aimed at the profit to be drawn from them, or else philosophy consists in placing oneself within the object itself by an effort of intuition."\(^{12}\)

Philosophy, in this sense, Bergson named metaphysics. Located at the summit of human awareness, metaphysics relinquished practical interests "aimed at a profit to be drawn from [knowledge of things]."\(^{13}\) Uninterested in practical application, metaphysics was capable of not reducing the plenitude of things into general concepts and could include every object that it came across, enveloping each in its own individuality. With this metaphysics, this true philosophy, Bergson believed it was possible to discover the qualitatively essential, unique attributes of all objects.

Nishida also stressed the importance of metaphysics, writing in clear appreciation of Bergson's efforts, "I cannot be satisfied with the theory of knowledge; I require metaphysics."\(^{14}\) Nishida also held that some sort of direct experience lay at the core of the self's actions, prior to all scientific or rational endeavors. Like Bergson, Nishida utilized the primacy of direct experience to delimit the logical edifices of rationalistic thought. Unlike Bergson, who radically detached concept and pure actuality, however, Nishida sought to integrate the two opposing moments, while preserving their heterogeneity, from a position firmly grounded in lived experience. In a short, retrospective article published in 1920 Nishida described his central insight in attempting the integration of rationality and pure experience:

If we take [the Kantian thing-in-itself] to belong to the world of intuition beyond knowledge, then it becomes like Bergson's Durée. Looked at in this way, Kant's epistemological thought—considered as flow—can combine and act in concert with (teikei suru) Bergson's philosophy of intuition. Nevertheless, since knowledge is constructed on the basis of hypothesis, it still cannot of itself grasp genuine reality but is limited to perceiving reality via some form. Genuine reality,

\(^{12}\) Bergson, 39.

\(^{13}\) Bergson, 39.

\(^{14}\) Nishida Kitarō, Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei, in NKz, 2 : 6.
however, transcends form and is beyond knowledge. This means we cannot know it. It can only be known by reduction to a [form].

In this world there is only lived experience \( (\text{taiken, Erlebnis}) \).\(^{15} \)

Bergson perceived metaphysics as being able to draw near to the chaotic movements, the ebb and flows, the duration of life, with its sympathy. This view still always remained perspectival, however, watching or intuiting the pure activities of the world but refusing to make use of them. Meanwhile, Nishida wanted both to watch and to participate, and so intuited reality had to be made use of. His view of true reality might be characterized as a working perspective. That is, all activity entailed the self-development of creation instead of limiting true reality to the immediate object of intuition, preeminent and absolute as opposed to its imperfect representation. Nishida continued to see intuition as the condition of the self’s access to the pre-theoretical world, but only within the context of creative activity, the self’s process of differentiating development. In the creative process Nishida envisaged a necessary though contradictory unity of the self’s activity—incapable of being grasped by analysis—and its knowledge—gathered from the static expression of activity and used to guide succeeding actions. Each moment in turn constantly escapes the confines of the other, but each also depends on the other. In development action followed a plan, and in differentiation it inevitably escaped the generalized and idealized conceptuality through which the will to act had been given direction. Nishida’s definition of actuality would have been seen by Bergson as an admixture of true, intuited reality and untrue representation.

Tanabe Hajime, like Nishida, portrayed reality as at ground dualistic, as a whole comprised of constituted knowledge and intuition. As shown by his approval of the arguments of the realist philosopher Max Frischeisen-Köhler (1878–1923), Tanabe’s model of the basic structure of reality posited an immediate intuition antedating the formation of consciously constructed models of knowledge, i.e., science. Tanabe gave priority to the reality that was intuited, that existed prior to the objectifying reductions of scientific judgment:

\(^{15}\) Nishida Kitarō, “Genkon no ronrishugi ni tsuite,” in Chino Yoshio and Ohhashi Yoshiaki, eds., \textit{Nishida tetsugaku: shin-shiryō to kenkyū no tebiki} (Tokyo: Minerva Press, 1987), 18. This essay was originally published in \textit{Chiyama cakuhō} 6 (July 1920). German appears in the original.
It is self-evident that direct experience can be found prior to judgment. According to Frischeisen-Köhler:
“Regardless of whether the ‘I’ (ware) judges a thing to have been made conscious or to be self-evident, the ‘I’ is always conscious of some thing. This is why a condition or an experience can be seen as self-evident.” Self-evidence in consciousness precedes all judgment and contains no conceptual determination.\(^{16}\)

Nishida and Tanabe both agreed that directly intuited experience preceded the structures of knowledge generated through judgment; they both held that the self’s intuition was immediately grasped. But it is not clear that agreement at this level of generality will result in agreement about the specific qualities of non-rational intuition. Actually, once analysis reaches beyond this simple opposition to describe in detail the relationship between intuition and knowledge, between nothingness and being, it quickly becomes apparent that Tanabe and Nishida conceived of immediate non-rationality quite differently. This difference is closely related to their attitudes toward the two schools of neo-Kantian thought, the Southwest German School and the Marburg School, which were flourishing in Japan during the early 1910s. Therefore, the question of how the immediacy of experience was conceived in relation to rationality will be addressed via the two neo-Kantian views of non-rationality, what was termed the *hiatus irrationalis*. This approach will serve to clarify the issues at stake in the different conceptualizations of the primacy of immediate experience. It will also delineate how and why Nishida and Tanabe differed in their understanding of the immediacy by which we are connected to the world.

**Emil Lask and the Hiatus Irrationalis**

Emil Lask (1875–1915) lucidly enunciated the position taken by the Southwest German School with regard to the ground of judgment in his 1902 publication, *Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte*. Lask detailed the relationship between scientific knowledge and the

empirical world as he presented a conceptual overview of the development of Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s (1762–1814) philosophy from the viewpoint of his neo-Kantianism. He followed Kant’s distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge, but then equated the two with what he termed the rational and the non-rational: the rational denoting a priori transcendental knowledge devoid of empirical content; and the non-rational denoting the empirical realm of direct experience.\(^{17}\) When combined, these two heterogeneous realms form scientific knowledge, with the logical apparatus of the sciences organizing the empirical material into the shape of knowledge. In this conception, Lask valued the forms of scientific knowledge much more highly than the meaningless and hence non-rational contents. Still, the Southwest German School did not completely neglect the non-rationality found in the empirical world, for its members sought to broaden the scientific model beyond the natural sciences to include unique events such as those treated by history and sociology.\(^{18}\)

Intent on explaining the relationship between direct experience and the formulae of thought, Lask coined the phrase *hiatus irrationalis* and revived Fichte’s conception of a hiatus of rationality. Fichte had first proposed this idea to emphasize the dissimilarity between his philosophy and that of Hegel, the emanationist consequences of which derived from his refusal to allow for the existence of non-rational elements. Though critical of Kant in many respects, Fichte did share with Kantians a rejection of Hegel’s confinement of all possible being within the realm of thought.\(^{19}\) Unlike Hegel, the neo-Kantians were careful to restrict their use of the technical appellation of being to the products of constituted knowledge such as those found within the logic the sciences. The result of this scruple was that they preserved an important yet technically unknowable realm, the *hiatus irrationalis*, as


\(^{18}\) What the neo-Kantians of the Southwest German school deemed a scientific approach was not limited to the natural sciences. Unlike much of contemporary Marxist theory which followed Friederich Engels and took positivistic natural science as its paradigm, the Southwest German School—including Max Weber, Georg Simmel and Edmund Husserl—were one of the birthplaces of the modern social sciences. For a treatment of the effects of positivistic science on the development of Marxist theory, see Stanley Aronowitz, *Science as Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 35–120.

\(^{19}\) Lask, 78.
a source of potential objects of knowledge. With this dualism neo-Kantians recognized that human knowledge and rationality were products of consciousness—and, thus, artifices produced by man to derive, recalling Rickert's earlier statement, some use of the world.\(^{20}\) According to the neo-Kantians, scientific constructs gave systematic order to the chaotic manifold found in the empirical world. This order was not apparent in the world at large; it had to be placed there.

In general, the neo-Kantian movement arose out of opposition to the stifling Hegelian influence (particularly) on the natural sciences.\(^{21}\) Rendering this opposition to Hegel into its simplest terms, Lask posed the question lying at the basis of the choice between Hegelian universalism and Kantian critical dualism: Should one require, as the dialectic does, that everything, whether rational or empirical, be conceived of as the same (gleichmässig)? Or, should one hold instead that the Hegelian dialectic "is only at home in the sphere of the concept and that, [therefore,] it once again authorizes a dualism between the concept and empirical reality." Lask, confining a priori conceptuality to the sphere of a thoroughgoing rationalism, envisaged the empirical as completely other than pure rationality, separated "by an abyss of irrationality" such that "in spite of every deduction there is left a non-deducible remainder."\(^{22}\) This remainder he termed the hiatus irrationalis—that which is not included in rational analysis, a nothing that will not go away.

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\(^{20}\) Rickert, 233–34. Ernst Cassirer explained the rationale behind maintaining a duality of knowledge and sensible-intuition in the following terms: "The pure concepts of the understanding are in themselves nothing but logical functions of judgment. If these functions are to pass from mere concepts into knowledge, they must be filled with intuition." Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant and Goethe*, translated by James Gutmann, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 95.


\(^{22}\) Lask, 81. Robert Hahn explains the inevitability of the incompleteness of rational explanation in Kant from a somewhat different perspective, but the result is the same. "The validity of a theoretical principle for Kant consists in its adequacy to harmonize appearances, by revealing the conditions of their possibility. Its necessity is extrinsic, for their validity rests upon the presumption of a human, sensible experience alone, and thus are valid only ex hypothesi." Robert Hahn, *Kant's Newtonian Revolution in Philosophy* (Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 5.
Accepting this dualism, the members of the Southwest German School supposed a stable structure of knowledge and non-rational objects. Apropos of their critique of Hegel, they conceived of non-rationality as heterogeneous to the rational forms of knowledge. From non-rationality they gathered the raw materials of knowledge, which were to be shaped according to the demands of the sciences. The hiatus that separated the rational and non-rational, then, resulted from an a priori definition: objects in the world lack the rationality that defines scientific judgment.

Tanabe Hajime and Thetic Judgment

This conception of non-rationality was possible only because of a technical understanding of the rationality of scientific judgment. That is, the definition of rationality so construed that only the pure, formal logic of epistemological judgments qualified. This definition required that other, less formal types of judgment be considered non-rational. Even at such a fundamental level of judgment, then, there is already anticipated the categories by which the world as a whole will be organized. In this technical sense, the categories of epistemology determine being—i.e., the appropriateness of inclusion within the structure of scientific reasoning. The conclusion is that objects within the purview of science have being, while those yet to be included do not exist, are nothing. In other words, both the rational and the non-rational can be objects of judgment, so long as the non-rational objects have not been judged according to scientific standards.

An example of how a form of judgment can be seen as non-rational is provided in an early essay by Tanabe Hajime, "Sōtei Handan ni tsuite." Here he argues that thetic or positing judgment (sōtei handan, thetisches oder setzendes Urteil), rather than the pure experience then in vogue, is essential to an understanding of the basic activities of living. The essay was Tanabe’s earliest publication, but


24 For a contemporary neo-Kantian evaluation of theories of the fundamental nature of pure experience, see Leopold Ziegler, “Ueber einige Begriffe der Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung,” Logos 3 (1912): 316–49
he did not change his basic standpoint for some years. When seen in connection with his concern to protect the non-rational character of direct experience, it yields an example of how judgments can be differentiated by the technical appellation of "rationality."

Written after Tanabe completed his graduate studies at Tokyo Imperial University, this essay indicates that Tanabe had already taken a position critical of the notion of "pure experience." It was claimed that pure experience preceded the construction of technically defined scientific knowledge, but Tanabe challenged the importance of the concept. He saw little actual or practical value in pure experience and began the essay on thetic judgment with the following picturesque description of the purity of pure experience:

There is a condition wherein we sometimes forget the difference between things and ourselves and follow instead the so-called flow of consciousness. An example would be when on a spring day we lie on our backs in the grass and begin absent-mindedly gazing at the clear blue sky. We forget that there is an "I" who, separate from the sky, is perceiving [this scene]. The distinction between things and oneself disappears, and only the azure sky remains in one's consciousness. This sky cannot be called an object.... In this case, there exists only a unity that lacks all such differentiation. Many scholars call this [condition] pure experience.

Tanabe did not repudiate this pure experience completely, but he did not agree that it should have a central significance for philosophy. Pure experience described a state in which no distinctions were made; Tanabe gave it priority only within a description of the progression of logic from non-differentiation to the refined classifications of the sciences. Perhaps because of his familiarity with the natural sciences, Tanabe's hope was to establish a solid


26 Tanabe, THz, 1: 3.

27 Tanabe Hajime was born in Tokyo to Tanabe Shinnosuke on February 3, 1885. In 1904 he graduated from the First Higher School, in Tokyo, and matriculated to Tokyo Imperial University. In 1908 he graduated from the college of literature (he had started in the Mathematics department but later
connection between intuitive experience and the sciences. The qualities that Tanabe emphasized in direct experience, a notion distinct from pure experience, resonated more closely with the *hiatus irrationalis* of the Southwest German School than it did with Bergson's isolation of intuition from analysis.

Rather than an ineffective notion of pure experience, Tanabe preferred to focus his attention on searching for a more pragmatic ground of existence. He characterized the stages of the return from idyllic pure experience in the following manner: One emerges from the languor of pure experience and begins to act, first by paying attention (*chūi no sayō*) to the surrounding reality and then by making images (*shashō*) of it.28 The basic mental operations by which the external world is recognized derive from the most elementary form of judgment: thetic judgment. Tanabe, following Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), equated the images produced by consciousness with that which is directly given in consciousness (*das Gegebene*), and he emphasized that the images are given in consciousness in such a way that they are neither produced nor freely changed by the will. Thetic judgment directly and objectively yields the particulars of the outside world to consciousness. It is the primary link, one that is constantly being reforged, to the objective existence of the external world.

Thetic judgment is so fundamental that one should not expect to be clearly aware of the process; it is nearly instantaneous. For this reason there are many who do not acknowledge [the existence of] this kind of judgment, but I think that it is the foundation of knowledge.29

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29 Tanabe, *THz*, 1: 5.
Instead of pure experience, then, Tanabe used thetic judgment to found that direct experience by which one is objectively and actively linked to the world of common experience. Thetic judgment served Tanabe as the foundation of objective knowledge of the world.

Thetic judgment arises as an internal demand to objectively separate the ego’s will, feelings, and imagination from the given. It precedes reflective thought and functions to posit the given perception-image as an object (taishō) and as objective (kyakkan-teki). For this reason, Tanabe restricted positing judgments to affirmation: That is a ball. Thetic judgment thus remains distinct from more developed forms of judgment, which, based on the assumption of an objective world, determine relations of truth and falsity, affirmation and negation. Thetic judgment, nevertheless, is related to other forms of judgment because all forms of judgment, including thetic, require the existence of a subject and a predicate: the subject being the image (shashō) or the perception (chikaku) in consciousness, and the predicate being both the subject’s meaning in consciousness and the object’s (taishō) existence independent of the ego (jiga). In thetic judgment, the subjective and objective moments are determined instantaneously and remain somewhat unclear, though they do become distinct through analysis. By comparison, in the highest form of judgment, reflection, there can be found pre-formed, non-contradictory systems of knowledge, according to which truth and falsity (affirmation and negation) are determined. In reflective judgment, a proposition is true when it complies with a system of knowledge, and false when it does not.

Thetic judgment served three purposes for Tanabe. It functioned as the primary guarantor that there in fact did exist an objective external world; it made it possible to assume that all systems of knowledge, no matter how theoretical, were based in that objective world. Thetic judgment grounded but was not privy to the ideal systems of knowledge through which judgments of truth and falsity, affirmation and negation were made. This fact enabled Tanabe to argue further against pure experience in favor of thetic judgment.

Regardless of how abstract the thought, so long as it relates to some objective object (kyakkan-teki taishō) its existence has to be presumed (yosō). And the existence of that object is brought about precisely by thetic

30 Tanabe, THz, 1: 4, 7.
31 Tanabe, THz, 1: 7.
judgment. From the standpoint of empiricism, in the final analysis, existence means simply that something "can be known." Retracing our steps from pure experience, it means that a thing gains existence (seiritsu suri) through thetic judgment. In this sense, the adage "Esse est percipi" is correct. 32

The Southwest German School’s concept of a hiatus of rationality and Tanabe’s direct experience do not correspond in all respects, but the similarity is unmistakable. This neo-Kantian epistemology structured formal knowledge according to strict logical definitions in order to supply valid scientific findings. Then, to protect the logical purity of scientific knowledge, they removed as yet untreated objects from science with the Hiatus Irrationalis, by which they defined non-scientific knowledge as non-rational. Tanabe described a world of direct experience that was objectively present to the ego and was the ground of all higher forms of judgment, including scientific. In the same manner as the Southwest German neo-Kantians, Tanabe separated direct experience and scientific knowledge in a continuum of rationality that began with thetic judgment and ended in reflective judgments like science. Both models provided stable perspectives with which to map an objectively given world and to understand the ego’s relation to that world.

From Nishida’s perspective, however, the question remained of whether the relation between the self and the production of knowledge can be explained from these perspectives. How can the act of judgment itself be taken into account? Nishida and the Marburg school insisted that any conception of the non-rational should include the possibility of its being truly distinct from knowledge. The Marburg school of neo-Kantianism, especially Hermann Cohen, raised this critique against the Southwest German School at the level of the production of knowledge in the exact sciences. Nishida extrapolated from the logical system of the Marburg School and brought the question beyond the confines of the exact sciences and within the subjectivity of the self.

Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, and Active Meaning

Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) disagreed with Lask not in thinking that there existed a non-rational hiatus from formal knowledge, but in the characteristics he attributed to the hiatus. 32

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32 Tanabe, THz, 1: 9.
Cohen did not view the empirical content of experience as being outside the realm of thought (denkfremd) or as non-logical. He conceived, instead, of the given (das Gegebene) as something required by thought itself: Thought did not simply receive something given from the outside; everything that entered into thought was already shaped according to the requirements of thinking. Cohen held that the given in itself could contain no non-logical attributes, since the every object is infinitesimally conditioned by thought.

Concerned solely with the exact sciences rather than the empirical or historical sciences, Cohen refused to consider even the content of scientific intuition as non-rational. Intuition in the exact sciences was said to coincide not with a naive or subjective intuition but with the “pure intuition” of the mathematical categories of space and time. On this point he agreed with Kant’s description of pure intuition (reine Anschauung) in the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant had conceived of pure intuition as that through which one “constructively generated” relations of objectivity. Intuition in this sense, then, has nothing to do with the sensation of relations among objects but is what makes possible the construction of mathematical equations that describe physical movement. Cohen’s pure intuition supported knowledge not by supplying formless and non-rational content which could be described with scientific objectivity but in that it formed a definite “method of objectification.”

Pure intuition in the Kantian sense was intended to be the groundwork of objective, empirical knowledge. It was seen as providing the supersensible and transcendental forms of space and time into which knowledge marshaled the non-rational contents of empirical intuition. Cohen’s distinction lay in the fact that through the infinitesimal method he gave overarching authority in knowledge to pure epistemological categories. Likening the incompleteness of perception for science with that of naive, empirical intuition, Cohen wrote:

Whoever claims to be directly aware of a natural law, some unmediated certainty, or the absolute source of


actuality stands outside of the teaching of the theory of knowledge.35

In questions concerning the possibility of objectivity, Cohen restricted epistemological investigations to two essential considerations: the infinitesimal method, which by infinitesimally formatting physical objects allowed for their mathematical description; and the Prinzip des Ursprungs, which addresses the question of how scientific knowledge is possible.

The infinitesimal method resulted in a perfect continuum, inclusive from the infinitesimally small to infinitely extended—there were no restrictions on what the system could include. Because of the perfection of the continuum, however, Cohen had no choice but to place the hiatus of rationality elsewhere than in the world of experience. Unlike the Southwest German School, Cohen did not have the option of positing the non-rational in any type of intuitive or empirical object; all existing or potentially existing real objects had already been reduced to phenomena capable of mathematical treatment. The totality of being was thus supported by the fundamental lawfulness of thought.

Still, with his neo-Kantian critical perspective he could afford to look outside the phenomenal world for the hiatus of rationality. Cohen located his conception of the hiatus irrationalis at the limit of knowledge, at its origin. The transcendental continuity of knowledge, Cohen reasoned, still existed in consciousness. It was transcendental but it was still not self-sufficient; it had to be generated. The fact of the generation of knowledge also explained how objects within the field of mathematical analysis were created. Cohen found the hiatus the non-psychological36 act that produced the continuum of knowledge: "By virtue of continuity, all elements of thought insofar as they may qualify as elements of knowledge, are generated from an origin."37


In this conception of origin continuity, founded in the unity of consciousness, is found not fundamentally in the infinite expanse of space but in temporality. These infinite expanses are the result of the unity of consciousness, and particularly insofar as consciousness is self-productive. Cohen discovered the limit of the continuum of knowledge precisely at its origin, in its production. The infinite extension of the scientific system of the real, based on the unity of the infinite series of numbers, Cohen termed the positive direction of the continuum. But the negative direction, based on the conception of limit, was fundamental.38

Not effecting the infinity of the continuum of knowledge, Limit served only one purpose: to allow for the generation of the continuum. Paul Natorp (1854–1924), Cohen’s main collaborator at Marburg University, described the origin as lying absolutely outside of the scope of the continuum. He defined it as the activity of thinking itself: "The unity of thought [the continuum] is a unity of mutually connected elements (Zusammenhangs) whose connections must be capable both of infinite development and of self-containment. Because, only as such can thought be taken as a unity; thinking means to bring to unity."39

The unity of knowledge coincides with the result of judgment and is therefore objective; the limit of the continuity of knowledge, on the other hand, denotes an act of synthetic judgment, in which "a certain content and, through it, all certainty of thought is originally produced."40 Because thinking continues, producing certainty of thought anew, however, knowledge is less a fixed structure than a continuous development. The unity of knowledge is possible because of the incursion at the limit of knowledge by something other than knowledge, but this activity of knowing disturbs the fixed character of knowledge. Hence the objective realm of knowledge is constantly being redefined by the production of knowledge, and knowledge cannot be understood as a finished product: Knowledge should instead be viewed as constant development, as an endless task (unendliche Aufgabe).41

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38 Hermann Cohen, “Das Prinzip,” 42.
40 Natorp, 40.
41 Natorp, 18. See also Nishida, NKz, 2: 124.
Thus, the dual character of the origin remains, but not as a relation between elements that have both been determined: \[A = B\] (which logically, in fact, makes no sense); rather, a yet to be determined \(x\) becomes determined as \(A\) and then as \(B\), etc... In this way is included what has been missing in expositions up till now: the processional character of thought.\(^{42}\)

Concerning the nature of knowledge, then, the Marburg School differed radically from the Southwest German School. The latter held for a stable system of scientific knowledge flanked by another stable realm containing non-rational objects to be experienced. By contrast, the members of the Marburg School held thought to be a continuing creative process, in which knowledge of objects becomes possible only when the objects are infinitesimally reduced to mathematical relations. The applicability of this process, however, was strictly limited to the exact sciences. Any extension beyond science to the process of consciousness was rejected outright. Knowledge, the unity of rational and non-rational, Cohen argued, was merely formal, and any attempt to include existential considerations would be “mistaken and [make of Kant] a Germanized Descartes.”\(^{43}\)

Nishida and Incorporation within the Self

During the early 1910s Nishida Kitarō showed great interested in the Marburg School’s approach to the process of the creation of knowledge. Unlike the Marburgers, however, Nishida never intended to restrict his concerns to the production of knowledge in the exact sciences. Instead, he applied the production of knowledge in the sciences to the self’s demand for unity, for identity. Within the compass of the sciences, identity, i.e., having the qualities of existence, implied the ability to be exactly repeated any number of times.\(^{44}\) Did not this, he reasoned, resemble the problem that the self faces as it continues to reassert its own identity through time?

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\(^{42}\) Natorp, 41.


\(^{44}\) Nishida, *NKz*, 2: 34.
Nishida expanded the Marburg epistemology of science into the very arena that they had explicitly warned against: he made of Kant a "Germanified Descartes." Interpreted the Prinzip des Ursprungs as a vehicle by which to bring the hiatus, the productive limit of reason, and the objectivity generated by reason together within the self, Nishida found the limit of reason limit within the creative activity of thinking. The self's own creative activity formed the limit of reason. Extrapolating from the Marburg School's precise arguments for epistemology in the exact sciences, Nishida forged an analogous line of reasoning for the identity of the self (jiko).

Transposing the abstract speculations about scientific knowledge to concern for the self's existence, Nishida rested his argument upon the activity of what he called the genuine self. One generally, he wrote, separates that which is known from the knower and conceptualizes them with the respective appellations of universal and individual. In the process, however, both the known and the knower become objectified and lose their capacity to act: "The individual (kojin) taken in this way is not a genuine subject (shin no shukan). It is simply a subject that has already been made into an object (kyakkanka sareta), already thought."45 The pure activity (Tätigkeit schlechthin) of the genuine subject, he likened to Kant's synthetic act of pure apperception: something that supports the existence of the objective world and is, at the same time, its center.

This genuine subject was not for Nishida the ego, which he defined as a product of identity. He pointed instead to a subtle but telling distinction when he wrote, "One's most direct and concrete immediate experiences (taiken) are personal (jinkakaku-teki)."46 The fundamental ground of objectivity and of identity, from Nishida's point of view, lay within the self; not as something perceived, nor as something thought, but as a single, indeterminable center of activity that creatively develops as the self—something uniquely personal.

Like the Marburg School, Nishida positioned the ground of judgment beyond the reach of the psychological self, or ego, beyond the objectivity established by thetic judgment, and within creative

45 Nishida, NKz, 2: 141.
46 Nishida, NKz, 2: 290.
activity.\textsuperscript{47} Having perceived an analogy between the production of knowledge in the sciences and the, for him, much more important concern of the constitution of the self's identity, he needed a way to extend the reach of epistemology beyond the exact sciences.\textsuperscript{48}

Nishida broadened the scope of epistemology at the level of the basic mechanism that Cohen had used to describe the establishment of knowledge. While Cohen held that “the origin of something [e.g., knowledge] is not to be found in that something itself,”\textsuperscript{49} Nishida used this same logic in a different context: He asserted that in the case of the self the origin of identity—a form of knowledge—is not to be found within the identity itself.\textsuperscript{50} All knowledge is founded on hypotheses, and all hypotheses are necessarily produced by something that is not a hypothesis. Identity is like a system of knowledge in that it subsumes into a unified whole the different actions of the self. Hence, it is necessarily grounded in something outside its system, something that, from the perspective of the system of meaning, does not exist, is nothing (Nichts, \textit{mu}).

No hypothesis, however, can be established on the basis of mere vacuousness (\textit{kyōmu}), which has no connection to the system of identity. Nishida again cites Cohen in contending that the “nothing” found at the ground of all hypotheses is not ouch on, or vacuous

\textsuperscript{47} In finding the basis of the self's incorporation of the non-rational and the rational at the very site, the very act of the creation of structured thought, Nishida shared much with Fichte. Throughout \textit{Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei} Nishida praises Fichte's use of “Act” (\textit{Tathandlung}) to depict the fundamental reality of the self, a reality which at once is the hiatus of rationality and contains reflected thought. Here, too, is apparent how much Nishida differed from the Southwest German School of neo-Kantianism. See, for example: “One's self is a limit point which cannot be finally attained through reflection. Against this, even if one takes the position that each act of reflection can somehow be reflected upon by [further] reflection, each would be a continuity of real acts, like rational numbers. Accordingly, self-consciousness (the self as reflective act)—that is, Fichte's \textit{Tathandlung}—would be ‘Ideal+Real.'” Nishida, \textit{NKz}, 2: 166.

\textsuperscript{48} Kadowaki, 92. Kadowaki distinguishes two main currents in the Japanese importation of European philosophy, each based on a different conception of facets of self-consciousness. The first stream coincides with the critique of knowledge (\textit{ninshiki hihan}) and is founded on self-consciousness understood as \textit{jiko ishiki}; the second stream coincides with existential concerns (\textit{sonzai-ron}) and is founded on self-consciousness understood as \textit{jikaku}. Kadowaki, 75–76.


\textsuperscript{50} Nishida, \textit{NKz}, 2: 105–06.
nothingness, but must be mē on, a nothingness that actually is genuine reality, which is non-existent at the level of meaning—i.e., at the level of phenomena—but is ultimately responsible for the constitution of meaning and identity.51

Nishida had his reasons for redirecting the Marburg epistemology of science. He was, in fact, critical of all rationalist thinkers for their too narrow concentration on issues related to knowledge. They allowed nothing else to enter their considerations. For such intellectuals being and thought comprised a simple equivalence (Denken=Sein, Sein=Denken). Nishida, however, dissented from this perspective, writing "I do not want to start [my speculations] from the perspective of thought, as rationalists have always done. I want to start from the perspective of something akin to given experience."52 Cohen had argued that because the given was required by thought it was merely a product of thought itself. Nishida disagreed, interpreting instead that experience was required by thought because all thought, even purely abstract thought itself, is still a form of experience; and, as such, it could not completely separate from itself. For Nishida, being and existence were not categories of thought. Instead, thought was necessarily completely integrated with experience (shii-soku-keiken).

In a manner similar to the characterization of knowledge as endless development, Nishida concluded that identity should not be seen as static but as constantly developing. The heterothetical aspects found in the self—identity and action, being and a nothingness relative to but not correlative with being—constantly interact, if only in opposition, with each other. To describe this condition, he postulated a model of differentiating development. Against the stasis of identity,

51 Cohen, Logik, 77. Cohen wrote, "Being itself receives its origin from non-being. Non-being is not in any way a concept correlative [or reciprocal] to being; instead, this nothingness relative [to being] denotes only the springboard upon which the leap through continuity is executed. But belying this artificial, adventurous image it carries out the separation. And thus there proves to be, at the same time, a union.

"[This condition holds] because the nothing relative [to being] fixes itself entirely and without remainder onto the 'T' to which it is correlative. In the relationship between these two directionalities is performed and comes into existence the unity, which posits infinite judgment as the judgment of origin." Cohen, Logik, 77.

52 Nishida, NKz, 2: 181.
he characterized the nothingness relative to it, the *mê on*, as the activity of experience.

The requirement [for the given] does not appear merely from being (*on*) but from the totality of being and the nothingness relative to being (*on* + *mê on*). If it were able to come solely from being, then perhaps one could say with equal justification that it could also come solely from the non-rational. But what is actually required is not simply the rational or the non-rational; it is the rational-*sive*-non-rational.53

What this conjunction of the rational and the non-rational signified for Nishida was that true reality could not be divided into a Kantian critical dualism. Nishida adamantly maintained that "genuine, concrete reality" was singular; its singularity was guaranteed not by knowledge but, conversely, by the hiatus, by the genuine self, which cannot be objectified.54 He differed from the Kantians in so far as they took rationality, the basis of science, as the telos of philosophy. Rationalists fostered a dualistic view of existence that devalued all that was not scientific. Nishida, on the other hand, sought to demonstrate that the unity of the genuine self and its identity was of the nature of an endless task: It was unstable and self-contradictory, not based on once-and-for-all demarcations of the rational but on the productive activity of the non-rational. If this was true of scientific knowledge, he argued, how much more so of the self.

* * *

The distinctions between Nishida’s and Tanabe’s conceptions of the non-rational hiatus reveal much. In these distinctions can be found their fundamental stances toward the world in which they lived in Japan in the early twentieth century. For, their elucidations of the non-rational are made as a result of their respective evaluations of the rational. Put differently, they solidify their notions of the non-rational by outlining the limits of perhaps the most characteristic feature of modern Western rationality—its scientific world-view.

Tanabe Hajime defined direct experience as non-rational, because thetic judgment, the basis of one’s objective relation to the world, lacked many of the characteristics of the higher forms of judgment. For Tanabe in his realism, the appellation non-rational did


54 Nishida, *NKz*, 2: 298.
not connote something that would never be made rational, but only something that had not yet come within the purview of scientific investigation. Aside from the trance-like aberration of "pure" experience, then, Tanabe viewed the world as inherently rational, though occupying a hierarchical spectrum of rationality starting withthetic judgment and building toward the theoretical sciences.

While Tanabe came down squarely in favor of recognizing the universal nature of modern systems of rationality, Nishida’s relationship to the modern was much more problematic. Nishida characterized the non-rational hiatus as active, productive, creative, and essentially alien to structurations of thought. His view of the concept of natural law serves as a good example of his ambivalence concerning the naturalness of the “natural” laws; he accepted them but only to a certain degree. Nishida was, and it seems to me always remained, firstly concerned with existence at a level that, he maintained, was essentially free of the constraints imposed by science. Adopting a perspective of a critical philosophy that emphasized the role of the human intellect in constructing such scientific systems, Nishida accounted natural law to be, in a significant sense, artificial. Discussing the question of the compatibility of freedom and natural law, his ambivalence is apparent:

Of course, I am not saying that one’s will is able to act freely in violation of the laws of nature. It goes without saying that the will, made into an object as an event of the natural world, follows the laws of nature. [I am saying that] one’s will belongs, at its root, to the world of immediate experience, which is one step deeper, belongs as Kant said to the intelligible world. In this world, the totality is one at the same time that each one is free.55

These shades of difference between Nishida’s and Tanabe’s perceptions of the non-rational evince something of their fundamental relationship to the structures of twentieth-century, modernized Japanese civilization. For Nishida the self, untouched even by the physical laws of nature, contained the freedom to create its own world apart from the constraints of modern civilization. The self was preserved from the ubiquity of modern European science and institutions by the otherness implicit in creativity. Was this a case of mere denial?

55 Nishida, NKz, 2: 297–98.
Not if one takes seriously the Fichtean moment of self-consciousness, which combined the rational and the non-rational in action. Yet there is no question that Nishida's priorities were different: from those of Fichte, Kant, or Cohen. Certain knowledge was not the purpose of philosophy for Nishida. The certainty of intuited personality was.

Tanabe, on the other hand, was a realist in the classical sense: he found objectivity already real in the world. It needed only to be recognized by thetic judgment, the self's most basic form of action. He did preserve the notion of a hiatus of rationality, but his definition of the non-rational was founded on a technical distinction similar to that of the Southwest German School's. Tanabe recognized only one objective world, which was shared by all. His world did not allow for an escape, except by way of a mystical, trance-like pure experience. He was, it might be said, completely at home in a world rationally ordered, a world being rationally structured.
Locating Tokugawa Power:  
The Place of the Nō in Early Modern Japan

Tom Looser

Our country over other peoples’ countries  
Our people rather than others  
—Yumiyawata

Nogami Toyoichirō sees in such early fifteenth-century nō plays as Yumiyawata the precursory elements of a “Japaneseness” (Nihonshugi), an ideology centered around a divine country defined over and against others. The idea of a “country”, though, did not in the fifteenth century have any of the territorial breadth or the integrity of the early modern Japanese state, and the nō itself was a dispersed and widely varying set of practices; as Nogami himself says,¹ it was not until the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) that the nō became rigidly codified. It is the form of this codification, the material practices of the nō in its position as official ceremonial (shikigaku) of the bakufu, that I will look at in this paper.

In 1848, the shogunate commemorated the success of a spectacular “once-in-a-generation” fifteen-day program of nō performances by declaring the start of the new era of Kaei (“Celebration of Eternity”). It was as if the shogunate were using the nō for what Louis Marin has called, in connection with utopic representation, the unfolding of an architecture of perfection through such representation’s freeing itself from historical ties.² Although the shogunate built little in the way of the monumental architecture or commemorative statuary that Marin sees in comparable periods in the


² Louis Marin, Utopics: Spatial Play, translated by Robert A. Vollbracht (Atlantic Heights, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984), xix. That this in fact has more to do with institutional power than with what might be more truly considered utopic representation, both for Marin and for the way in which I am using the term “utopia,” should become evident in the discussions below.
I think it is worthwhile to consider the shogunate's use of the no in a similar vein. The no can be seen as symbolically architecting through a varied set of cyclical ritualistic practices, an eternal order for, and of, the shogun—and to that extent it might also be considered utopian: "Utopia," writes Marin, "knows nothing of time, and the only time it knows is the rhythmic cycle of rituals, celebrations and accomplishments. These are immobile times and temporal images of eternity." The Celebration of Eternity performance was ironically the last such spectacle of the no in the Tokugawa era. However in this paper my interest is in the formal practices of no that were stipulated by the early shoguns, and sedimented by the early eighteenth century. From the first moments of unification of the early modern Tokugawa state, the no was integral to the military leaders' attempts to organize new contours of community. Under Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, the no was used to represent new spaces of power, as for example between daimyo and shogun, shogun and commoner. The no, therefore, can in this sense be considered a representation of space. Yet the practices of no also helped to create the very spaces for—the conditions of—representation; the no was thus also integral to the creation of a space of representation.

The no was accordingly a practice interested in the political issue of control over all of everyday culture—the structures and rhythms that give form to everyday life as well as political power. And as such it was eminently ideological. Provisionally defining the ideological as the way in which one's relationship to the world is imagined—that is, one's imaginary and practical relationship to the real—the no can be understood as ideological insofar as it offered a way of understanding the temporalities and spatial relations of social life, and was a prominent material practice of these.

I am claiming, therefore, that in the Tokugawa era the no was a media, a technique, that was part of a social transformation—a


4 By “architecting,” I mean to include the ideas of planning and constructing a figure and, just as a building would, appropriating and giving form to a space.

5 Marin, Utopics, xxiv.

6 I am referring here in particular to Benjamin's notion of “technique” in “The Author as Producer.” Thus I am not asking whether the content of the no, for
reorganization and an appropriation of a wider social space. It imposed a form of narrative, of repetitions and cycles, on a wider landscape of relations that can be understood as discursive, but also geographical.

This refashioning again raises the issue of utopia—not merely because the no was a part of an order founded on an image of a utopically eternal consistency, but because the very ability to envision a social order that does not yet have a place of existence, the ability to recast existing relations, can itself be considered a utopic praxis. As Mary Ann Doane puts it, "A utopia is the sighting (in terms of the gaze) and the siting (in terms of emplacement) of another possibility. The chance of escaping the same." However, if the shogunate's use of the no can be viewed as giving rise to new forms of imagination and collectivity, and hence as to some extent utopic, this paper focuses more simply on the no as a closed, centered and legitimate form of representation. And this was the principal role of the no under the Tokugawa bakufu: to give a fully realized image, a wholly institutionalized representation, of an ideal order (risōkyō—"utopia" in the sense of "an ideal land," "an earthly instance, is in its attitude critical of (or accepting of) the social relations of production of the historical moment. Rather, I am simply looking at the no's position in the social relations of production of the time. The no's function, or technique, can then allow one to look at the no as part of the wider social relations of production, and yet also look at these relations as literary; "the concept of technique provides the dialectical starting point from which the unfruitful antithesis of form and content can be surpassed." Reflections, translated by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 222.

"Discursive" especially insofar as I am less interested in the ritual events, in positions and institutions of power, etc. as empirical objects in their own right than I am interested in the constitution of these social forms as objects—in the constitution of events as events, for example, or of the shogun's position as a position of power in the way that it was.


As opposed to the neutral no-place that lies between and beyond historical situations, and which offers a place of vision beyond the limits of existing social and cultural forms—i.e. a critique of existing ideology.
paradise"\textsuperscript{10}). As a determined image of ideal society, the no was therefore contrary to the sort of utopic praxis which allows for the imagining of new possibilities.

Still, institutionalized ways of imagining the world are also dependent on fantasies; the ideal risōkyō order of the no also had a musōteki ("dream-like," and "utopic" in the sense of a "vision," "fantasy") aspect. Accordingly I cannot survey the scope of Tokugawa no without looking at the "dream" places with which it was associated.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus this paper is concerned with the formation of Tokugawa no as part of a strategic effort to locate the grounds of a recast social space—a legitimate space, the image of the center. My principal focus is on the places of overtly political usages of no in Tokugawa life: the sites and moments, as well as the genres, of official no. The effects, however, reveal a broader political culture that comprised a new mode of the social.

I. Origins

What centrality of power there had been in the middle ages of Japan was by the sixteenth century fragmented. This splintering, made palpable in the local wars that dominated the terrain from the mid-1400s through the mid-1500s, is commonly referred to by the defining term of the era, gekokujo (literally, something like "the lower conquers the upper")—a term which suggests the constant overthrow of governing authority, but also, it seems, the appropriation and transformation of classic art forms by groups outside of the imperial center. In this very concrete sense, it might be thought of as a moment of openings: a time of new conditions, and therefore new possibilities, of sociocultural and political form in general.

By the middle of the sixteenth century the wars were to some extent subsiding, but power was dispersed among the feudal domains, and allegiances were divided and crossed between military leaders, religious centers, and the imperial throne. A new form of centralization


\textsuperscript{11} I am, therefore, interested in the place of fantasy operative within the Tokugawa image of power. I hope that it is clear that I do not mean to imply a cataloging of place types.
Locating Tokugawa Power

appeared with Hideyoshi. Achieved by violence, and often represented in the terms of imperial or religious filiation, the field of this centralization was nevertheless increasingly one of secular politics.

So Hideyoshi was attempting to give shape to a new central power. His own place of power, increasingly absolutist, was dependent on a dispersal of all contingencies of its founding into a pure representation of power. Yet it was precisely his status as founder that in a sense gave his position legitimate authority. There was, therefore, a contradiction in the character of Hideyoshi's power. Furthermore, as much as this was a contradiction within the dynamics of the representation of power, the contradiction can also be seen as historical—defining the specific conditions of Hideyoshi's power, and prefiguring the conditions of the Tokugawa period.

Insofar as Hideyoshi's use of the no was part of the reconfiguration and representation of his power, it may be worthwhile to consider briefly some of the more well known examples of Hideyoshi's no, before turning to the practices of no under what might more properly be considered the founders of the Tokugawa state.

The reorganization of no undertaken by Hideyoshi, as later with Tokugawa Ieyasu, can be seen as giving shape to the new figure of centrality, at the same time that it was part of the production of Hideyoshi's expanding political space. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the affiliations of the various troupes and schools of no were scattered among local lords, shrines, temples, and the emperor, and few of these ties had any real quality of permanence. Hideyoshi's first important effort to assume these affiliations for himself was through the Konparu school of no. The Konparu school was headquartered in the religious center of Nara and tied to several shrines and temples there; to a lesser extent, it was also associated with the imperial court in Kyoto. Hideyoshi paid the head of the Konparu school to relinquish his post in Nara and move to Hideyoshi's military base in Osaka. By 1593, Hideyoshi had assigned full stipends to all of the four principal no troupes. In doing so, Hideyoshi was formulating the no's formerly dispersed allegiances to religion, emperor, and military into an image of centralized and fixed obligation to his own political authority.

These consolidations were acted out—literally—within the no as well: Hideyoshi's greatest potential enemies/allies, the regional lords Tokugawa Ieyasu, Maeda Toshiie, and Oda Nobukatsu, all at various times took to the no stage with, or in front of, Hideyoshi—and Hideyoshi then paid them for doing so. In 1592, for instance, Hideyoshi
had Tokugawa Ieyasu and Maeda Toshiie perform onstage along with him, at the imperial palace, in celebration of the birth of Hideyoshi's son and heir, Hidetada.12

In his own practices of the no, Hideyoshi used the no to produce an effect of inaugurating, or defining, a legitimate space of action for his political will. Thus before each of his military efforts, Hideyoshi held no performances. The first of his expansionist projects, for example, was the conquest of Kyushu, and before departing for the battle he had the heads of all four no troupes come and perform before him in Osaka. During his 1593 invasion of Korea he went further, taking no lessons during the campaign so that he could himself perform on stage; before the invasion began, he even had a portable no stage built, and brought this stage with him for performances on the grounds of the battlefield.13

The no, therefore, can be seen as a means of opening, and giving composition to, the extension of Hideyoshi's space of power. Also at issue in Hideyoshi's tactics of the no was the appearance of being the creator, the source of legitimacy of—but also the legitimate ruler within—the broadening spaces of power he was appropriating. Inasmuch as Hideyoshi was to represent himself as occupying the place of power, which is to say the locus of authority defined as legitimate from within the broader order of relations, this could only be achieved by forgetting the contingent origins of his power. One of the traditional means that Hideyoshi used for this was genealogy. Hideyoshi was still trying to accrue to himself the legitimacy of imperial power, first assuming the classical aristocratic name of Taira,
and then maneuvering to have himself appointed Dajō Daijin (the highest post in the hierarchy of patrician offices). Then, in 1585, he managed to become the first member of the military ever to accede to the ninth-century office of Kanpaku—a position which, as regent to the emperor, originally comprised hegemony over the government and a hereditary preservation of this hegemony through the maintenance of hereditary ties to the emperor. It should be noted, however, that Hideyoshi did not follow the traditional tactic of entry, by adoptive kinship, into one of the five classical noble houses related to the imperial throne. Hideyoshi (himself of low birth), did not take on one of these houses’ family names. Instead, he created an entirely new name for himself—essentially establishing his own house (this point will become important to my argument shortly).

Viewed in terms of effects, genealogy thus put Hideyoshi in a position of power ascribed by the imperial structure. In a similar way, he also sought a position of ascribed authority in the realm of military relations. This was evident in 1588 when, having “pacified” all of Japan (at least the area situated west of the Kantō), the emperor honored him with a visit. All important domain lords attended the celebratory banquet as well, and Hideyoshi had each of them sign an oath of allegiance to him; even a brief glance at the list of twenty-nine signatories shows that all but five of them gave their family name as Toyotomi, Hideyoshi’s own surname. By doing this, Hideyoshi created an essentializing allegiance (i.e. genealogy) among all the major military leaders to himself. It erased the contingency of his relations assumed by military power, and furthermore gave them the name of imperial legitimacy.

In these ways Hideyoshi managed to represent his own power as defined within, and by, authorized relations of legitimacy. As hegemon, in other words, from this standpoint he was defined as

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15 Beginning in the ninth century, the Fujiwara family continued as virtual rulers for over two centuries. They perpetuated their position by providing wives and consorts to the majority of emperors, and, when sons were born of these marriages, emperors were induced to abdicate in favor of the young heir, and the Fujiwara family then had the right to excercise political authority on his behalf.

16 See Elison and Smith, Warlords, Artists and Commoners, 237.
simply an object of a preexisting structure of power; Hideyoshi represented himself as coequal with the legitimate place of power.

As a problem of representation, Hideyoshi's power can also be considered by looking at his own no plays. Along with learning to play the roles of a number of classical plays, Hideyoshi took the unique step of having new no plays written, depicting not traditional themes, but rather his own colonizing exploits. These included plays that portrayed him as a great warrior who is nonetheless also a god, victor in Japan but over Korea and China as well; as a filial son and the source of his mother's attainment of bodhisattva-hood; and, posthumously, as the benevolent god Toyokuni, worshipped in China as well as Japan. By depicting himself as godly, and his actions as of divine provenance, Hideyoshi was dispersing the origin of his historically contingent claims to power into a representation of himself.

These representations, it seems, were "appreciated:" when Hideyoshi bound the various domain lords into allegiance to his imperial genealogy, they "burst into spontaneous tears at the display of so much generosity;" and, no doubt in part because Hideyoshi himself assigned the critics of his performances, he always drew praise for his no. And insofar as these representations were indeed thus appreciated, Hideyoshi's authority derived from and was sustained by them. For this reason, perhaps, Hideyoshi went a step further in identifying himself with his own iconic representation: not only did he have plays written about and deifying himself, he himself later performed those roles, on stage. Hideyoshi's own bodily figure thereby provided a sort of closure to his represented image—he literally became one with his represented self, a self of ahistorical, noncontingent powers. Even the godly image of Hideyoshi represented within his no plays made no reference to external structures of divinity or imperial lineage. In the discourse of Hideyoshi's representation of power, the discursive referent (Hideyoshi as the object/place of power) becomes—poses as—its own referent, and Hideyoshi is defined as an object by, and entirely within, that discourse. Thus too, even though Hideyoshi was the subject, that is to say the creator, of his genealogical position of power over the country's other daimyo, the genealogy (and its closure effected by the daimyos' praise) displaced

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17 In this as well as other respects there are some similarities to British Renaissance court masques, by which the ruler redefined himself from court hero to god of universal power. See Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) 52, passim.

18 Elison and Smith, *Warlords, Artisans and Commoners*, 238.
Hideyoshi’s position as subject and placed him in the role of object of power.

By this measure, Hideyoshi’s representation of himself through the no created the image of an authoritative form of rule for him, but extending beyond him. It is a type of power which, to quote from Claude Lefort’s discussion of a similar problem of ideological representation (what Lefort terms “bourgeois ideology”), “must owe nothing to the movement which makes it appear. To be true to its image, the rule must be abstracted from any question concerning its origin...”19 Dispelling the question of origins served to impart on the figure of Hideyoshi the right to act in the name of legitimate rule.

Nevertheless, Hideyoshi’s no plays did of course refer to his own historical exploits. If the representation of Hideyoshi’s power had only its own discourse as referent, and if the legitimacy of his power was dependent on being defined as an object within this discourse, as the founder of this power Hideyoshi yet stood in a position outside of the discourse. So there is a contradiction: Hideyoshi was legitimately powerful insofar as he referred to himself as such within his discursive representations; but as archiactor of what was a new form of power, having the power to define it (in other words to be the subject, or narrator of it), he had to be transcendent to it, and hence place himself in the position of a clearly revealed origin.

Indeed Hideyoshi did make it conspicuously manifest that he was the creator of his discourses of power. We have already seen that although he contrived to be appointed to the imperial office of kanpaku, he chose to invent a new name for himself rather than take on one of the five classical family names—thus distinctly placing himself in the position of origin. So too, when Hideyoshi then tied the country’s leading daimyo in allegiance to this same self-assumed lineage: if the daimyos’ show of gratitude in a sense created a closure, making Hideyoshi simply the object of a genealogical structure of power, it was clear that this show of gratitude was in fact by no means either spontaneous or derived from the daimyo themselves at all. Rather, the oath which Hideyoshi ordered all the daimyos to sign using his family name began with the written statement that, “The measures ordained [by the Kanpaku]...move us to tears of gratitude.”20 Even their apparently emotional investment in authorizing Hideyoshi’s


20 Quoted in Elison and Smith, Warlords, Artisans and Commoners, 236.
power, the tearful thanks which would seem to have created the conditions of an ahistorical, originless genealogy, was openly legislated by Hideyoshi himself.

In the figure of Hideyoshi the ruler, therefore, can be seen a contradiction. Asserting his discursive power—authority derived from his identification with the discursively defined place of power—Hideyoshi at the same time displayed himself as the condition, or source, of these relations of power; thus making visible the contingency of these discursively noncontingent relations of power.

I would argue that it was in this contradiction that Hideyoshi's power, as well as the power of the early modern Tokugawa state, originated. As I suggested earlier, I view this as a contradiction of the historical moment—indicating general possibilities of the era. It was visible not only in the discrepancy between Hideyoshi's need for a noncontingent representation of himself as powerful and the increasingly secular, political position of ruler which could never be equal with this representation, but also in the continuing references made to a divine, mythical Other World, as if this somehow would bring the two positions of rule together. This last point in particular was, I think, pretypified in Hideyoshi's use of the no, but will I hope become clearer in the discussion of Tokugawa no that follows.

II. The Space of Tokugawa No

In the strictly codified form instituted by the Tokugawa regime, no became a formalized political ritual practice, the effect of which was the production of, as well as the attempted maintenance of control over, social space. This involved the staging of a mastery over a geography, and over change and time.

The first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu, came to power in a moment of new possibilities and openings similar to Hideyoshi's time. Hideyoshi had died in 1598, while his heir was still a child, and the consolidation of power he had achieved quickly began to disintegrate. Also, although the regional, particularized areas of earlier feudalistic sovereignty had already been destabilized by Hideyoshi, under Hideyoshi no real centralizing power, either governmental (imperial or, for that matter, military)—the office of shogun had in fact been

21 In this sense I suppose that I am therefore subscribing to Hideyoshi's legendary status as founder of the early modern Japanese state.
allowed to lapse prior to Hideyoshi's time) or economic (such as capitalism) had been installed. Then, in 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged victorious from the battle of Sekigahara—a contest joined by nearly every domain lord. With this victory, he achieved a new and even greater unity than had been available to Hideyoshi.

Under these conditions, Ieyasu proceeded to architect and regiment wide-reaching social and political reforms in ways comparable to Francoise Choay's description of a utopist planner.22 For Choay, the planner wants to impose a material institution upon a human collectivity—to augment its well-being, perhaps, but according to a (fully idealized) plan (Choay refers to Le Corbusier and to Thomas More's *Utopia*). The plan is not designed to address the needs, desires, etcetera of the existing life forms of the community—it does not take its legitimacy from the structures of local customs and history (a role Choay ascribes to the "builder" as opposed to the idealist planner). Rather, it is devised in the name of an aesthetic that is transcendent of historical forms. Ieyasu and the early Tokugawa shoguns worked to materialize their reforms as if according to this sort of an ideal plan—not just of an edifice or a city, as with Choay's utopist, though I will discuss the construction of the city of Edo in these terms, but of the larger framework of the Japanese state. If this "plan" was a real source of social creativity, in its material institutionalization it was made to seem eternal, unchangeable. Furthermore, if the rule instituted by Ieyasu can in this way be considered utopian, it was also authoritarian; if this was a moment of openings, it was also an authoritarian era.23

The Tokugawa shogunate sought, then, to create a totally administered world and, in corporealizing it in the concrete historical present, to shape a closed world the spaces of which were bounded off from any possibility of transformation, utopic or otherwise. I will try to show that this can be understood in terms of temporality as much as in

22 I am following here the short analysis of Choay in Alexander Gelley, "City Texts," 243-244, although I am not directly following Gelley's argument (which, for instance, seems on the pages cited to ignore the creative role of utopian theory).

23 I am at least implicitly raising the possibility that this point in history was utopic—not only for the reason of its authoritarian conditions of rule, but for the interplay between feudalistic and more central, perhaps precapitalist relations (for somewhat similar claims for a roughly comparable period in the west, see Marin, *Utopics*, xiv, passim, and Samuel Weber, "Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt," in *Diacritics* 22 (1992), 8, n. 2). I do not mean to pursue this argument directly, but I will return to the issue of utopic discourse as itself historical in the conclusion of this paper.
terms of spaces of alteration; the shogunate tried to institutionalize a time of social representation that was premised on a denial of time, as if it could consider and enact time in all its essential wholeness, from beginning to end. Both perspectives can be viewed as part of the shogunate's production of a wider social space.

Accordingly, by social "space" I mean here a temporal as well as a territorial orientation. Space is actualized through interaction with places, "places" being the order in which elements are positioned and configured. Space is the result of operations or practices which orient it, situate it, and materialize it, but, rather than simply an effect, it exists in—it goes on in—these practices. Space is therefore also a historical form and a form of history; it is also a mode of the social. While I am thus associating space with process, place on the other hand is linked more with the accomplishment of a process, with an indication of stability and, consequently, with the production of a law. Finally, space, to quote Kristin Ross, "as a social fact, as a social factor and as an instance of society, is always political and strategic." These are of course generalizations, not universal concepts, and hopefully the forms of space, place and event more specific to Tokugawa Japan will be exemplified in the following analysis of Tokugawa nō.

24 See Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117; "In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers..."


27 Kristin Ross, The Emergence of Social Space (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 9.

28 I hope it is clear that the idea of social space I am employing does not imply (simply) a formalist semiotic code of the geography of the Japanese state. Part of the continuing interest in Lefebvre's notion of social space lies in its apparent promise of providing a position inclusive of both objective structural, institutional forms and subjective phenomenological experience, but defined by neither alone. It is the specific way in which this idea of social space can be applied to early modern Japan that I am leading toward, though I cannot hope to accomplish that in this article alone.
Thus the no was a spatializing practice, and as such, it was part of the political act of reimagining Japanese social space that was constituted by the founding of the city of Edo.

Placing Edo

One of Ieyasu's first important acts was to create a new city as the base of his power—a move which, though not entirely outside of previous practices of power-making, normalized the country into a new society. Edo became the place from which the Tokugawa shogunate could articulate and master the places that would make up the topography of the early modern Japanese state. In this sense, borrowing loosely from de Certeau, the founding of Edo was a "strategic" move. It constituted an attempt to create an autonomous place from which the shogunate could transform the uncertainties of geography and history into readable spaces.\(^{29}\) The no played an essential role in the making of this place.

Ieyasu ordered the construction of Edo even before he took the office of shogun. At this point he was still using his authority and position as an imperial court official in the Kyoto castle of Fushimi, and was also still ostensibly faithful to the loose organization of daimyo (the kōgi)\(^{30}\) originally set in place by Hideyoshi. Ieyasu made it clear, though, that he was planning a substantive change, not only in the pattern of vassalage, but in the overall power structure, including the centrality of the court. Even the way he had the city built was a material sign of the relations he was forming: he ordered that the labor as well as the materials for the city come from all daimyo, throughout the state. And once Ieyasu became shogun, he in the same way ordered all daimyo to build his castle. Ieyasu was erecting a place—and in doing so constituting the relations of subservience—from which he increasingly would stand out as a national hegemon.

\(^{29}\) Cf. de Certeau, "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life," in Social Text (1980); and The Practice of Everyday Life, 29 ff. For de Certeau, a strategic circumscription of place was a Cartesian gesture of modernism—the postulation of a totalizing, knowing self, distinguished from the Other. While it may be possible in many ways to conceive the Tokugawa state as a modernist space along these lines, I think that would be only a partial understanding of more conflicting conditions—as I hope will become clear by the end of this paper.

\(^{30}\) The kōgi was an organization based on a pledge Hideyoshi had elicited from a large proportion of important daimyo to guarantee the lands not only of their fellow daimyo, but of the imperial nobility as well.
The construction of Edo accordingly constituted a reorganization of social and cultural relations, but of course it was also a reorganization of social and cultural relations that constituted Edo, as a new seat of power. At the same time that Ieyasu was establishing Edo, he was reconstructing the no as a means of ceremonially representing the new order. In the newly codified form that Ieyasu gave it, the theater described the same totalizing and centralizing gestures that he had used to build Edo; but it was also these very gestures that contributed to the disposition of Edo, and Ieyasu, as the place of power.

While Hideyoshi had already centralized no’s allegiances by assigning most of the country’s actors to four “Yamato” schools of no and then providing stipends to all four schools, Ieyasu took this further. He commanded that the heads of all four schools (including those actors who had been living in Osaka, Hideyoshi’s castle town) be brought together and made to live in Sunpu,31 where his headquarters had been located, and from there they were all often brought to Edo; by 1609 (under Ieyasu’s heir, Hidetada) all principal actors were given land to live permanently on within the confines of Edo castle’s grounds.32 The actors’ stipends that had continued to come from Hideyoshi’s heirs were cut off from all who remained in Osaka, and when land was provided in Edo, the actors were funded only if they agreed to relocate to Edo. In 1615 the no was declared the official state ceremonial (shikigaku).

The positioning and funding of no actors thus manifested early on an image of unification, and of central allegiance (or at very least, of control by the center). So too did the enforced movements of no actors define what might be thought of as relations of extension and control between Edo and outlying domains. The no school headmasters (iemoto), for example, were required to leave their hometown provinces only part of the time: the Tokugawas set up a cycle, whereby each of the four iemoto would live for one year in the castle, and then be allowed to return to their home province, the next time returning to Edo for six months and then going home for one year. Each was on a different one year/six month cycle, so that none were together at the castle for the

31 Ieyasu had maintained a castle at Sunpu as his headquarters during the time of Hideyoshi’s reign of power. Hideyoshi had relocated Ieyasu to the area that would become Edo as part of an overall redistribution of domain lands, and so Ieyasu’s decision to build a city there was to this extent working within Hideyoshi’s territorial organization. What I am describing here, however, is a complete reorientation of that space, focusing on Edo.

32 See No kyogen, I:91.
same one-year period each time; the cycle in this way alternated no actors’ allegiances to their own domains and to the castle, and privileged none of the domains in relation to the other—their ties went equally and solely from their own domains to the shogun in Edo. This strategy was hence effectively nearly identical to Ieyasu’s sankinkotai system, which required every daimyo to maintain a residence in Edo, and live there on alternate years. The physical presence in Edo of actors and daimyo, and their travels between domain and castle, thus inscribed a geography of allegiance and obeisance to the shogun.

A similar structure of relations was staged both by the actor-audience relationship of the performances, and the locations of performances. All major ceremonial performances in Edo required the attendance of the country’s principal daimyo. For the first service in memorium of Ieyasu, for example, at the shrine dedicated to him at Nikkō, the heads of all the four schools of nō, plus the new Kita “style” (ryū, they were not allowed the full status of a school, or ha), performed, and every daimyo of importance was called to attend. Even senior ministers within the central shogunate were at times ordered to see nō performances such as those given by the child heirs of the shogun on stages within the castle.

Daimyo were, furthermore, at times ordered to present nō performances in their own domains, and would take it on their own initiative to offer performances in honor of the shogun (for occasions such as shogunal visits, or as memorial services for Ieyasu in particular). So too, whenever the shogun visited the daimyo at the mansions they maintained in Edo, it was expected that a nō performance would be presented. These performances were particularly important for relations with “outside” (tozama) daimyo.

The term tozama, along with kamon (“one’s family”, “clan”), and fudai (literally, “successive generations”), had been in common use by the sixteenth century. Each domainal ruler conceived of his own vassals in a permanent relation to himself, either as direct kin (kamon) or as hereditary vassals (fudai); tozama referred to lords entirely outside of the ruler’s familial and political sphere of influence. With

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33 For details on the calendar of service, see Ikeuchi Nobuyoshi, Nōgaku seisuiiki (Tokyo: Nō Gakkai, 1925), I:126-127. (Nōgaku seisuiiki will hereafter be abbreviated as NS). In practice the shoguns always privileged one of the nō schools—for most of the era it was the Kanze family—and required that the iemoto of that school dance in most of the important ceremonies. For this reason, the Kanze iemoto often remained in the castle while the remaining three schools alternated (more on this below). Also, the iemoto were allowed to remain in Edo during their “off duty” cycles, and often did.
Tokugawa Ieyasu's accomplishment of a unified state, these terms were extended state-wide, to define the place of each domainal lord vis-à-vis their relation to the Tokugawas: three ruling families (headed by Ieyasu's sons) were ranked and privileged as primary branches (the Gosanke) of the Tokugawa family, and lesser cadet branches of "kin" (the kamon) were later authorized; then lords who had been aligned with Ieyasu since the time of Hideyoshi's death were considered fudai "hereditary" vassals, while those lords who by and large did not submit to Ieyasu until after the decisive battle of Sekigahara were regarded as "other" or "outer" tozama lords.

Because the tozama daimyo therefore had no genealogical or hereditary allegiance to the Tokugawas, and yet in some cases had well-developed histories as loci of oppositional power, relations with them were of particular importance to the shogun. Allegiances with these daimyo, and ties of submission and authority, were in part shaped through the nō in ways described above. The shogunate went to great lengths to invite tozama daimyo for nō performances—to the extent that it at times risked angering fudai daimyo in its generosity and favoritism towards the tozama daimyos—and the tozama were reportedly "excessive" in their use of nō as a form of flattery and homage toward the shogunate.34

The Maeda family of the domain (han) of Kaga was the largest and strongest of the tozama daimyo, and had been one of Hideyoshi's most powerful allies. The relationship between the Maedas and the Tokugawas was therefore one of the most critical for the shogunate, and so provides an important example. The Maeda family records are replete with records of nō performances. The family heads sponsored nō performances for the shoguns frequently, both in Kanazawa (the principal town of Kaga domain) and in Edo, and they themselves performed occasionally. The Tokugawas returned these presentations with their own performances, and most were accompanied by exchanges of symbolic gifts (horses and cranes, both symbols of longevity, were typical). These exchanges were fixed in other social registers as well, including marriages, which were themselves often accompanied by nō performances.35

In 1691, to give just one example, Tsunanori, the head of the Maeda clan, visited Edo castle. Upon his arrival he was told that the shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, would be performing a nō play the

34 NS, I:5.
following week, and so he should attend; but it was also then conveyed to him that the shogun wished him to perform as well (at a later date). Tsunanori had in fact never performed nō, but since it was the shogun's command, he began to practice immediately. At the shogun's performance, in addition to Maeda Tsunanori (tozama), the most important branch families—the "three Tokugawa houses"—were in attendance, along with the lord of Kōfu and other fudai daimyo. Some time afterward they were told that they were all to perform, along with Tsunanori, for the shogun, and were given a little over a month's time to prepare.

On the day of the daimyos' performance the preparations were fairly elaborate. A dressing room was set up with a number of attendants, including two priests. The performers arrived several hours before they were to begin and were visited by one of the shogunal administration's Junior Councillors (Wakadoshiyori), who brought offerings of cakes from the shogun. Forty minutes after the shogun arrived, the performance began—the audience also included the shogun's council of elders, and the head priest of Ieyasu's shrine at Nikkō. Afterward, the Tokugawa kin and fudai families left directly, but Tsunanori stayed on and was greeted personally by each of the shogun's council of elders.

Thus by agreeing to perform in the program of nō plays, Maeda Tsunanori and the three Tokugawa house daimyo were equally enacting their fidelity to the Tokugawa order. But Tsunanori's privileged meeting with the council of elders underscored his status as a tozama daimyo even while the performance established ties that supplanted the lack of genealogical relationship or hereditary tie. The nō here both marked Tsunanori as an "outsider," reinforcing the Tokugawa genealogical organization of space, and yet also overcame the lack of central allegiance that this implied. The Maeda family continued to support and attend performances throughout the Tokugawa era, and figured importantly in the final public nō performance of 1848.

36 The sanka: Mito, Owari, and Kii. These were part of the six Tokugawa collateral houses, the other three being the "three lords" (sankyō—Tayasu, Hitotsubashi, and Shimizu). The sanka were established by Ieyasu, whereas the sankyō were founded by later shoguns; and unlike the sanka, the sankyō did not have fixed land holdings or castles, they did not have large fixed followings of vassals, and their retainers did not have titles and were not fixed by heredity (these positions were simply bestowed by the current living lord).

As the nō became an accepted mode of representation of Tokugawa power, it also constituted a means of contesting the Tokugawas. This was the situation when, in 1641, a long-awaited male heir to the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, was born. As was appropriate for such an event, the heads of the major nō schools gathered to celebrate, along with, not surprisingly, the daimyo of the important tozama domain of Kaga, Maeda Toshitsune; to the assembled actors and the three Tokugawa house daimyo, Toshitsune offered his sincere congratulations. Toshitsune then arranged for a congratulatory program of nō plays, to be held in a few days' time. But included in the program was a taiko (drum) player from the Ishii school; at the time of Ieyasu's consolidation of power, when he had ordered all nō actors to leave Hideyoshi's castle in Osaka and report to his own castle in Sunpu, the Ishiis had refused—instead going to the Emperor in Kyoto. Accordingly, on the day of performance the kotsusumi (small drum) player who was to play with Ishii, and who was affiliated with a school located in Edo, claimed he was ill and refused to play. Maeda Toshitsune became furious and ordered that the Edo player be brought to him. The Edo player, however, 'fortuitously' experienced a quick recovery and did perform, but not before Maeda Toshitsune had given strong verbal defense of the Ishii school, including exclaiming something to the effect of, "Who the hell is Tokugawa, anyway?" (Tokugawa nani mono zo).38 Yet if this was a contestatory action, it was so only within a mode of representation that was created by, and that defined, the Tokugawa regime.

The above incident reflects a more general division of geography, politics, and style that was part of the Tokugawa reign. Geographically, the "western" area of Japan centering around Kyoto was opposed to the eastern area centering around Edo. As the site of the imperial capitol, Kyoto had traditionally been referred to in terms of an "upward" direction (as in kami, or jōkyō—"going up to the capitol"). But an indication of the transformation accomplished by the Tokugawa shoguns was that going "up" now referred to travel to Edo. Although the leaders of all four principal nō troupes theoretically were affiliated with Edo, only the two schools with closest traditional ties to the Tokugawa family (the Kanze and Hōshō troupes) actually maintained their headquarters in Edo. The Konparu and Kongō troupes kept their headquarters in the western region. The same division, and valorization, of geographical and political "upper" and "lower" was applied to the division of nō schools: the style of the Kanze and

38 Quoted in Kanazawa no nōgaku, 45.
Hōshō schools was named *kamigakari* (meaning "upper", but also metropolitan), while the Konparu and Kongō schools were known as *shimogakari* ("lower", and regional).

In this hierarchy of geography and of style, the *nō* was, again, both an expression and a mode of political spacing—as it apparently was in the Hōsai festival of the Toyokuni Shrine. This festival was held annually, and all four *nō* school head masters were expected to gather and offer performances of *nō* that were considered "godly rites" (*shinji no gi*; this could also refer to Shinto ceremonies), held for the country's "divine protection". The shrine was located in Kyoto, and the festival had originally been meant to honor Hideyoshi. But in 1610, Kanze, the troupe with closest ties to Ieyasu, failed to attend. This was apparently an important step in breaking the appearance of an equal unity of the four *nō* schools, and of Hideyoshi as the progenitor of that unity. Although the state-wide unified order of *nō* was maintained, the Kanze school's move marked the ascendance of the Kanze school over the others, and a shift from the western region of Japan to Edo as the "*kamigakari*" place of governance and metropole—as well as toward the Tokugawa family as occupant of that place. After this incident the Hōsai festival quickly died out, though it was revived some time after the Tokugawa era had ended.

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The *nō*, as I have been describing it thus far, identified determinate relations and places of hierarchy and power, and was a mode of performing these relations, giving them a material geography. In the required circulation of *nō* actors between local provinces and the castle, and in the performances demanded of and offered by local lords, the *nō*, I have said, outlined a new form of unity, with Edo as its base.

Edo was not, however, a simple, absolute center within this geography. By the latter years of the seventeenth century, nearly all of the country's daimyo had followed the Tokugawa lead and become patrons of *nō*, and sponsored a number of actors and students. Not all of the *nō* actors, though, were affiliated with the four official *nō* families, and so not all were affiliated with the official Tokugawa *shikigaku* order. And in some cases, daimyo used the *nō* to give form to their own local bases of power. It should be kept in mind, though, that they were patterning this usage after the Tokugawas, and in doing so gave legitimacy to the Tokugawa state's principal mode of ceremonial representation.
The Maeda family of the powerful tozama domain of Kaga is again an important instance. In 1617 Tokugawa Hidetada (the third shogun) made the Maeda mansion in Edo the first stop on his visits to the various daimyo, presumably because an heir to the daimyo of Kaga han, Maeda Toshitsune, had recently been born. Toshitsune offered a program of no plays that day in honor of the shogun's visit, and the following day sponsored a performance by all four no troupes; but from that time he apparently felt the need to sponsor his own no family headmaster—his own representative, in other words, with his own style and expressing his position as a leader separate from and in many ways as powerful as the Tokugawa rulers. Accordingly, in 1628 Toshitsune formally became a sponsor of an actor who had on occasion danced with all four of the main schools, but, though a son of the Konparu family, was not affiliated with any of the schools. Thereafter the Maedas became the principal sponsors of first the Konparu troupe, and later the Hōshō, thereby taking an important place within the Tokugawa order of no, yet distinctly apart from the Tokugawa-sponsored Kanze family. Hence when Maeda Tsunanori switched Kaga han's allegiance from the Konparu to the Hōshō school, he ordered the principal no actors in his domain who had been dancing under the Kanze and Konparu names to switch and become "Hōshō" actors. By doing this he constructed a place, and an era, known as "the time of Kaga Hōshō." The Maedas also continued to support non-shikigaku families, such as the Ishii troupe mentioned above, increasingly setting up a sphere of influence (jiban) separate from the Kanze-oriented Tokugawa capital.

Maeda Toshitsune's actions after he retired, too, illustrate a very nearly parallel model of what I have described Ieyasu's construction of the city of Edo as being: the founding of a place from which to institutionalize an ideal plan. Toshitsune had shown an interest in urban reorganization throughout much of his reign as daimyo of Kaga han. Encouraged by destructive fires in 1631 and 1635, he had attempted to restructure most of the long-standing capital city of Kanazawa, imposing on it the social reforms he also sought: discrete residential quarters were set up separating each status group within the warrior hierarchy, and the position of these statuses was expressed by making the distance of each samurai's residence from the castle proportionate (theoretically, at least) to their status within the social

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40 Omote and Amano, *Nōgaku no rekishi Nō Kyōgen*, 308.
41 *Kanazawa no nōgaku*, 53.
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hierarchy. Merchant and artisan groups were also each given their own proper, geographically separated positions. Along with materializing an ideal hierarchical organization of social categories, this also removed low ranking warriors from their masters' residences; one of the intended effects of this was to loosen personal ties and so to subject all samurai to a more direct daimyo rule. As did the shogun's required circulation of no actors and of daimyo in the sankinkōtai system, this resulted in a more absolute, and abstract, center of power.

Upon retirement, however, Toshitsune decided to truly construct a place of his own. On empty marshland some distance from Kanazawa, he built a new castle (Komatsu), and with it an entire town, completing them in 1651. He imported the full population, and laid out places for vassals and commoners in a structure more fully planned than he had done in Kanazawa. As with Edo, its completion was celebrated with a no performance in the castle grounds to which all the townspeople were invited. Public performances within the castle were repeated annually, and, as at Edo, their success was considered an important means of ensuring peaceful rule over the population at large. So here too, at the local level of a tozama domain ruler, we find the utopic and authoritarian projection of an ideal order, including the location of a legitimate place of power, onto a material territory.

That each domain in the Japanese state was to some extent still a realm separate from Tokugawa authority is also evident in the ceremonies of investiture for provincial daimyo. From the time of the fourth daimyo of Kaga (1639), the investiture of a new daimyo was celebrated with a five day performance of no called "country entering ro" (more literally, "congratulatory entering-the-country ritual no"—nyūkoku shukuga no gishiki no). The term "country entering" (nyūkoku can also refer to immigration) may have been used in part because daimyo spent much of their time in Edo rather than in their own domains, but it also served to indicate the strong sense of boundaries—

42 Along with the fact that Toshitsune was also creating a new army corps, these changes worried the Tokugawa shogunate; redirecting a canal, for example, spurred rumors that there might be military reasons for doing so, and that the head of construction had been put to death by the shogunate for keeping the exact course of the canal a secret. For a cursory discussion of urban planning under Toshitsune, see James L. McClain, Kanazawa (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 74-84.

43 Kanazawa no nōgaku, 51-52.

44 So say Kajii and Mitsuda, Kanazawa no nōgaku, 46.
the crossing of borders—and of independent rule, that defined their domains as apart from Edo jurisdiction. In the seventeenth century, taking the office of daimyo still meant entering a relatively autonomous space.

Within these local domains, any person of social or political importance was given a special place at the celebratory investiture no rites as well as the annual public no presentations, and was expected to attend. So as with the equivalent performances at Edo, these programs authorized the place, and person, of (local) sovereignty.

But if these local celebrations were recognized at all by the Edo shogunate, it was usually at most only by a shogunal visit to the daimyo's mansion in Edo. Shogunal celebrations on the other hand, as already noted, were always recognized by full attendance at Edo by the country's major daimyo. So the shogun, and Edo, are figured in all of this as something like the head of a pyramid: Each local domain daimyo is a center onto himself, yet each is ultimately defined in terms of their relation to, and each authorizes, the Edo shogunate as the center of legitimacy above all others. In a limited sense this is in accord with earlier studies of political economy in the Tokugawa state, which describe the seventeenth-century local han as no longer being an entity for private governance. Though still acting as a military organ, these arguments go, the han depended on the shogun as their source of ideological legitimacy; the success they had in showing deference to the shogun in turn provided them with authorization.45

But I am not simply trying to point out that, as a seat of power, Edo figured at the head of a hierarchy of domains which themselves nevertheless preserved a degree of independence. Even when powerful daimyo sought to further materialize their own separate realms of authority, as with the Maeda family of Kaga han, and even when these actions were potentially contestatory to the centrality of the shogun, I would emphasize that the daimyo were nevertheless using the same ceremonial mode of self representation that had been created and put into effect by the Tokugawa shoguns. In fact a similar argument could even be made with regard to the imperial enthronement ceremony. In the Tokugawa era the no became an important part of even the emperor's enthronement.46 All actors related to the Edo shogunate


46 See NS 1:422-426.
were expressly forbidden from taking part in these ceremonial no plays, while actors connected with tozama domains such as Kaga were encouraged to take part, so that at least superficially the imperial family was encouraging an expression of power that was contestatory to the shogun—but again, the mode of power was the shogun’s rather than the classic imperial forms. The same conditions of allegiance, the same mode of organizing space, and, as I will soon turn to, of time, by the late seventeenth century came increasingly to define all of the Japanese state. To the extent that this held true (and I would reiterate here that at this point I am discussing only what I have called the image of the center), Japan had become a space of the Same.

In part the sovereignty of Edo as center of a bounded state was given the coherence of genealogical and hereditary relationships. This would suggest neither the universal homogeneity of a modern nation nor the loosely unified form of a state made up of independent feudatories. Local ties of kinship no longer demarcated wholly autonomous realms (and the shogun reserved the right to transfer daimyo from one domain to another at any time, discouraging the development of independent identities of difference), and personal ties of allegiance were being discouraged even within the domains in favor of more abstract, universal ties to a central ruler (see Maeda Toshitsune’s reorientation of the city structure of Kanazawa). Yet as described above, the Tokugawas’ set of vassal relations, predicated on conceptions of genealogy and heredity, were extended to the state as a whole—thus, rather than a relatively homogeneous arrangement of equal provinces under a central ruler, the political space of the state was in this sense organized more like an almost organic unity of different elements, including domains of direct kin, hereditary vassals (the fudai), and “others” (the tozama daimyo). (Land and political office were then redistributed by the early Tokugawa rulers according to those distinctions: the three principal branch houses of the Tokugawas were allotted domains of large, productive landholdings, and were expected to guard the main entries into the Kanto region where the bakufu was located, but were given little political power of their own;47 fudai daimyo by and large held smaller lands—though some were strategic militarily for protection of the shogunate—but were given the bulk of the responsibilities in the bakufu’s administration; and tozama daimyo were allowed to retain what in several cases were very large areas of

land, though some had their lands reduced, but they were given no real positions of importance either military or governmental.) And we have seen that the official Tokugawa order of no, itself organized by fixed genealogical distinctions (it was not until the Tokugawa regime mandated it that no actors maintained hereditarily fixed families), imposed a set of genealogical allegiances of "lower" and "upper" no onto the geography of the Japanese state. As the Kanze school came into a position of preeminence in conjunction with the Tokugawa shoguns as its sponsors, nearly all the six Tokugawa-related fudai families also chose to sponsor branches of the Kanze family as their representatives. Tozama daimyo such as the Maedas, on the other hand, sponsored other, often shimogakari, families. In these ways, even if the political was less and less tied into the kinship relations of local places, the place of Edo within the overall Japanese state was still given the grounding, continuity and composition of fixed hereditary and genealogical relationships.

But only in part. The circulation of no actors between their allotted residences in Edo and their home provinces brought all under theoretically equal relationship to the shogun, defining lines of allegiance abstracted from the ties of kinship. So too, by the time of Hidetada (the third Tokugawa shogun), red-seal certificates of investiture were issued by the shogun to all daimyo uniformly, and he thereby "asserted his authority over all daimyo without distinction between fudai and tozama." On one hand the terms of genealogy continued to be applied at the level of representations of the state, lending an image of a fixed order of non-homogenous, hierarchical relations, but on the other, the genealogy of the state became itself a more abstract idea. Thus as Asao and Jansen note, at the same time that the seals of investiture were in fact being distributed to all daimyo equally, the tozama : fudai relations were retained but gradually became ritualized—taking the form of "a fictive battle in which the shogun, as military commander, rewarded and penalized his subordinates." In this sense too, Edo was becoming not just the head of

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48 In a number of cases in which tozama daimyo were entirely removed from their domains, the stated reason was disciplining for infractions of 'the ancestor's regulations'—see, for example, "Shogun and Tennō", in John Whitney hall et al, Japan Before Tokugawa, 267.

49 John Whitney Hall et al, Japan Before Tokugawa, 266.

50 John Whitney Hall et al, Japan Before Tokugawa, 277.
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a pyramid of relatively independent domains, but was rather the center of a single and increasingly uniform political space.

The place of religion was also reorganized within the practices of the no. Parallel to transformations seen in kin-oriented groups of power, the ties of sovereignty to local places of difference based on religion were broken; so there were fewer and fewer places of difference in the Tokugawa state in terms of religion, too.

Religion is then reinscribed as a grounding at the level of the state. Prior to the Tokugawa era, there had been fairly powerful, relatively autonomous provinces under rule by religious sects of Buddhism in particular, some with comparatively independent economic systems and their own standing armies. There were as well a number of Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple centers without clearly defined ties either to the emperor alone, or to any one of the military leaders. The no had been in the middle ages patronized to varying degrees by the shoguns (the Ashikagas), but until the Tokugawas came to power most troupes remained independent, and many were affiliated with, and hence representatives of, local shrines and temples. By the sixteenth century, most shrines and temples had retained dengaku and sarugaku (what might be glossed as early forms of no) troupes to perform their rites and memorial services; gakuto regulations not only gave these no troupes the right to carry out the ceremonies of the shrine or temple, but in return for these services also gave the head of the troupe exclusive rights to tour his troupe throughout the area under the jurisdiction of the shrine or temple to which the troupe was attached.51 The re-creation of no as the official state ceremonial broke these ties of no as representative of local religious realms. Because these no troupes nevertheless maintained their affiliation with these shrines and temples, by bringing them under the control of the shogun the dominion of the shrines and temples was also brought into a relationship of connection to and control under the shogun. Local sites of religious difference were, then, reoriented to the center of a larger political space.

Nara, for example, was one of the oldest extant imperial cities (the capital of the eighth-century "Yamato" state), and one of the most important centers of both Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Connected with these were two of the oldest forms of no: the Yamato sarugaku of the Kōfukuji temple, and the no performed as part of the annual Wakamiya festival of the Kasuga shrine. The Tokugawa

shogunate not only recognized both of these, but increasingly coopted them. Accordingly, as with most other official Tokugawa no performances, licensed approval to hold them had to come from the shogunate. It was furthermore mandated that the representatives of each no school who acted in these annual performances (all four schools were required to perform) must be head actors based in Edo—direct representatives, in other words, of the shogun. The ties, and allegiances, of the Kōfukuji and the Kasuga shrine to the Tokugawa shoguns were also accomplished by the shogunate’s sponsorship of these rites with annual allotments of rice.

Local rites of religion, in particular those associated with the no, were thus not suppressed in the Tokugawa shoguns’ elaboration of political power. Many of these were in fact encouraged by the shogunate. The Yamato sarugaku no of the Kōfukuji itself became a fixed annual rite, performed “by rule of solemnity”, only after the Tokugawa government made it so. But the reorientation of these rites carried out by their subjection to the Edo shogunate meant a loss of local, religious-based difference (again we see the construction of a geography of the Same) and, as part of this process, a reorientation of religion—now brought into the service of a central, political seat of power.

It is therefore not surprising that, as Tokugawa rule developed, even the local rites sponsored by the shogunate were demoted in importance. This was the case with the Kōfukuji’s sarugaku no: while the shogunate had declared that all four troupes were to send their Edo actors to perform there, the Kanze school was very early on exempted from this rule, and by a 1663 command, all Edo troupes were expected to have at least one actor remain in Edo during the annual Nara rites. The new place of religion in the Tokugawa order was, rather, exemplified by the construction of the Tokugawa shrine complex at Nikkō, just outside of Edo.

52 Initially the Kōfukuji’s sarugaku was more popular and so was given greater attention, and as this declined importance shifted to the Wakamiya ritual no.

53 See NS, I:276-296, 429-430.

54 NS I:70.

55 This pattern too, though, was duplicated at the level of local domain politics: the Maeda family, for example, sponsored the revival of temples in Kaga han which had been destroyed in the earlier warring years, and the no rites performed in these temples, as a “politically astute measure” (see Kanazawa no nōgaku, 43-44).
The divinity of Ieyasu as eternal founder, and Edo as foundation, of the Tokugawa state was set up with the shrine of Nikkō. Ieyasu stipulated on his deathbed that a shrine/temple be built at Nikkō to memorialize and deify him, and, according to some accounts, that his body should be moved there after one year. He was first buried in Sunpu (site of Ieyasu’s first castle residence, and the post of power he returned to upon retirement from the Edo shogunate), and one year later, in 1617, his body was transferred to the new Tōshōgu shrine in Nikkō. The shrine was then rebuilt and greatly enlarged by the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu.

Though power-creating exchanges continued to involve the imperial court with Hideyoshi, the reconstruction of Nikkō as a Tokugawa shrine signified a move to recenter and redefine both imperial and religious power. That the Tokugawa shogunate was in a sense attempting to accrue imperial forms of power was evident in the shrines’ general construction blueprint. As Herman Ooms (largely following Asao Naohiro), Yūichiro Kōjiro, and others have pointed out, it was, in fact, apparently modeled directly after the relation between the imperial capitol of Kyoto and the principal places of imperial religious affiliation: the Tendai Buddhist temple on Mount Hiei just outside of Kyoto, and the shinto shrine at Ise. Ieyasu first issued an edict which split the Enryakuji temple of Mt. Hiei into two and located one in Edo, and his son Hidetada then built the Kaneiji temple on the Edo site, to become the “Eastern Mount Hiei”—a Tokugawa family temple that would “protect the shogunal palace as Mount Hiei protected the imperial palace.” Then Tenkai, a Tendai monk in the service of the Tokugawa shogunate who helped initiate the new Tōshōgu shrine at Nikkō, justified its construction by the pattern of worship at Ise: Ise, he wrote, had been built to focus worship on the goddess Amaterasu, to whom the imperial lineage traced its ancestry. So, he argued, should the various places worshipping the now deceased Ieyasu be concentrated in one place. Nikkō was furthermore an appropriate site because it was located approximately the same distance from Edo as the imperial shrine of Ise was from Kyoto and, perhaps to complete the parallel religious geography, was planted

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with the same cypress trees that were considered divine surroundings at Ise.

At the same time, the imperial family was for its part taking on characteristics of the shogunal rule, even in its ritual—I have noted above, for instance, that early on in the Tokugawa era the no became an integral part of its enthronement ceremonies. But the Tokugawa shrine at Nikkō (and the Kaneiji temple with which it was affiliated), was neither simply parallel to the imperial city nor a mere borrowing of imperial/religious elements. It was, rather, a clear attempt to displace the ceremonial importance of Ise.

In 1645 the emperor granted Nikkō the highest shrine rank of gu, commanding that the shrine be worshipped, and reinstituted the practice of sending annual imperial envoys—now not only to Ise, but to Nikkō as well. And while the imperial envoys continued their annual visits to Nikkō throughout the Tokugawa era, the bakufu did not send emissaries to the imperial shrine at Ise. By 1647, the Tokugawa shogunate managed to have the emperor’s brother appointed monseki (priest prince) of Nikkō, in a joint abbotship over both Nikkō and the “Eastern Mount Hiei”. In this fashion the emperor’s brother was enlisted as the principal ritualist in the service of the shogun’s new political regime, and the religious powers of the imperial court were recentered, and redefined, as part of the political power of the shogun.

I might note that the shogunate expressed its hegemony over the imperial court in other ways as well. The bakufu’s regulations for the court and nobles (Kinchu narabini kugeshohatto) issued in 1615, for example, removed the right of the court to make appointments of military men to court titles, and require services of them. Samurai could still take court titles and ranks, but from the shogun, and with no obligations to the court. The same regulations took for the shogun the right to define the way era names would be given—formerly the sole

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58 One could in this sense draw some limited comparisons with the exchanges of sacerdotal and secular state insignia, titles, etc. in the formation of early modern absolutism in the west. See Ernst Kantorowicz, “Mysteries of State,” in Harvard Theological Review 48 (1955), 65-91.

59 At the start of the Tokugawa era the imperial envoys were sent to all major temples, but very quickly these visits were reduced to just Ise and Nikkō; it does therefore seem fair to view these as perhaps the two most politically important centers of religion in the Tokugawa era. Cf. Asao, Nihon no rekishi, 276.

60 Ooms, Tokugawa Ideology, 186.
dominion of the emperor—and when Ieyasu ordered a state-wide land survey, which included having all daimyo turn in their village registers and territorial maps to Ieyasu, he did so without using the imperial authority that had been previously required for such an undertaking. Definition of time and knowledge of space were taken into the purview of Ieyasu’s own authority.

As the edifice which memorialized and deified Ieyasu as the progenitor of this new authority, Nikkō (along with Edo castle) was perhaps the most important political monument of the Tokugawa era. Nor was it simply a means of expressing Ieyasu’s already accomplished appropriation of power, or just an edifice expressing the legitimacy of his new state; with the construction of Nikkō the Tokugawa shoguns were architecting themselves, and constructing the new space of power as in effect a new space of themselves.

I mean this in a literal as well as a figurative sense. Again a comparison with a similar moment in the west is apt, as in Marin’s discussion of Versailles: “one must analyse the palace of the King,” Marin writes, “as the architectural device whereby the body of the King appropriates geographic-urban space. Through the palace, space is transubstantiated into a monarchic body, as original principle and unique or absolute power.”61 After Ieyasu’s body was interred in the Tōshō shrine built for him, he was himself then referred to as Tōshō daigongen, the Great Incarnation Shining over the East,” a first step in transforming both Ieyasu and the space of power he had attempted to define. The shrine further edified Ieyasu with elements from the imperial court (the Yomeimon gate to his shrine was built with a special pillar taken from one of twelve at the imperial palace in Kyoto), and both Shinto and Buddhist signs of divinity (including statues of Ieyasu as the avatar of the healing god Nyorai; and even Ieyasu’s divine name included clear reference both to Nyorai and, through use of the same character for “shining” used in writing Amaterasu, to the Sun Goddess worshipped at the imperial shrine at Ise). And through the divine cypresses planted in Ieyasu’s name around the shrine complex it physically marked off a boundary to capital city, and, with the hundreds of cypresses lining the principal thoroughfare into the city, appropriated this space as Ieyasu’s own; a space of, in a sense, Ieyasu. If Nikkō thus located a representation of Ieyasu as the divine body of Edo, and in fact of all Japan (Yashima) and beyond, it also was meant to constitute the entire period of the Tokugawa reign as somehow

defined by and as the identity of Tokugawa Ieyasu (a point I will return to on the section on temporality, below). Accordingly, generations of shoguns visited the Tōshōgū (or sent a proxy) every month, on the anniversary date of Ieyasu's death. Tokugawa Yoshimune, according to one account, would refuse to sleep on the night before these visits, staying up all night by telling his associates tales of Ieyasu, supposedly out of fear that if he did fall asleep and had a bad dream in connection with Ieyasu, it would be polluting to their reign. The third shogun, Iemitsu, revered the "Tōshō Gongen" as his source of divine protection, and had portraits of Ieyasu painted which he kept either at Nikkō or on his own person, along with an amulet case containing a piece of paper describing himself as the "Second Gongen." Yoshimune, too, believed that simply constructing an atmosphere of recollection of Ieyasu would itself be enough to bring out the authority of the contemporary shogun's own person. As Tsuji Tatsuya notes, these anecdotes illustrate that along with the veneration of Ieyasu as a god, there was a certain "familiarity" with Ieyasu, "as if Ieyasu himself continued to be there."62

Setting aside for the moment the issue of whether the succeeding shoguns might be conceived of as incarnations of Ieyasu, my argument here is that Nikkō constructed a presence and a memory which defined the Tokugawa dominion. The mimetic presence of Ieyasu (as the Tōshō Daigongen), through the reign of successive Tokugawa shoguns, was indicated, for instance, in Iemitsu's portraits of Ieyasu and his amulet papers identifying him with Ieyasu, and in Yoshimune's "atmosphere of recollection" of Ieyasu. This identity was given presence throughout Japan, too, as in the "Tōshō Gongen" talismans affixed in castle towers, and the small shrines to Ieyasu which were worshiped by generations of heads of castles even in non-Tokugawa related domains.63

The form of this presence, and memory, then, was that of an eschaton—experience is deferred in the direction of an origin, in Susan Stewart's words 64 (and away from the present; more on this in the

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63 See Asao, Nihon no rekishi, 278.
64 Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), x.
Because this origin is unshifting, it effects a closure over the space of power. The place of the origin and its fixity are therefore crucial; it may have been for this reason that great care was exercised to maintain control over where and by whom these memorials to Ieyasu were erected. There were apparently fairly numerous requests made for permission to build local Tōshō shrines, but in the early Tokugawa period most of these seem to have been limited to the domains of the three Tokugawa branch houses; Asao lists an example of the bakufu initially refusing a request even from the daimyo of Okayama, who was a brother-in-law of the shogun Iemitsu. So in this way too—by controlling the form and place of memory—care seems to have been exercised to secure Edo (and Ieyasu's identification with Edo) as the origin of Tokugawa rule and, as permanent origin, that which enacted a closure over the structure of Tokugawa rule.

Ieyasu, then, became the founding center of a new territorial organization and a new regime of power, instituted in his city of Edo and his shrine at Nikkō. Here too, the nō was part of this redefinition of power. Rather than the antique rites of gagaku and bugaku that continued to serve at the imperial shrine at Ise, the nō became the privileged form at Nikkō. Even the "God" nō at the more traditional religious site of Nara was gradually demoted in favor of the God nō of the annual ceremonies at Nikkō. Furthermore, when the Tokugawa shoguns were inaugurated they would visit Nikkō, but not before a three day public performance of nō; the employment of nō as a rite of investiture for all shoguns in this way effected something like an enthronement ceremony (the term used—tairei—can mean either "state

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65 It may be evident that there is a specific historical form of desire here too, but that is outside the compass of the argument I am trying to make here.

66 Asao, Nihon no rekishi, 276; Ooms, Tokugawa Ideology, 184.

67 It may be of some relevance that even well before the Tokugawas the temples of the Nikkō complex were renowned for the collection of nō masks held in their treasure houses.
ceremony” or “enthronement”), separate from and arguably supplanting the imperial rites and seat of power.  

The effect of this was the installation of a place which, if political, was nevertheless divinely ordained, and focused on a divine architect. The construction of the Kaneiji and the Tōshō-gū at Nikkō were an attempt to define Ieyasu as the legitimate origin and therefore to identify Edo as the “proper” place, a point of absolute certainty for the shogunal representations of power. Located on the edge of the shogun’s capital, Nikkō literally appropriated and bounded off the space for the Tokugawas’ seat of power; by memorializing Ieyasu as a figure of absolute and ever-present origin, it also closed or completed the Tokugawas’ discourse of power. Part of the expansion and transformation of Ieyasu and the Tokugawa shoguns in general, the building of Nikkō therefore also contributed both to the totalization of the ideal Tokugawa plan of power and to the locating, or realizing, of this ideal plan.

In sum, if the configuration of no was in some ways homologous to the image of power emerging in the Tokugawa state, it was also a practice that was constitutive of this image. As I’ve tried to describe it thus far, Tokugawa no can be understood as a process of spatialization. The no was used to make (or mark) certain gestures and movements, be they active, such as the cyclical tours to Edo castle made by each no school head, or inactive, such as the establishment of Nikkō (because of the presence of the memorialized and deified body of Ieyasu, Nikkō served as an anchoring place for the Tokugawa regime. Nevertheless through such architectural statements as the cypress-lined gateways, it also expressed a gesture of extension and appropriation of the space of Edo). The result was a figure of space—a figure of the Tokugawa order of power, but it was also a figuring—a transformation and extension of Ieyasu and of all the Tokugawa shoguns as bodies of power.

The construction of a new metropole (Edo) was a result of Ieyasu’s need to construct his own place (and to construct himself as the proper place), a place from which he could legitimately create and articulate his order of power. The controlled circulation of no actors and performances, involving both command by and flattery of the shogun;

68 Although it did not precisely construct a divine connection for the shogun in the way the enthronement ritual of a divine emperor or a king might, something like such a relation was constituted through the no—including, for example, the association between the shoguns (and the heads of no schools) with the God play “Okina”—which itself stood in a divine monarchical relation to the main categories of no play types.
the “enthronement” and deification of the shogun by Nikkō; the establishment of controlled knowledge—these helped to accomplish the seat of the shogun as a proper place.

But all of this was itself theatrical. It was a performance of the conditions of power, including both the overall structure of the Tokugawa dominion and the appearance of the shogun as the eternally legitimate author of it, which substituted for the conditions of its production. Thus at Nikkō, the memorializing of Ieyasu as divine, and therefore the legitimate author and authority of the Tokugawa space of power, also involved a forgetting of Ieyasu’s prior genealogies (such as his earlier position as head of just one of many warrior factions with equal claims to power and beholden to Hideyoshi, to imperial power, and so on).

This neat diagram of power I have been describing is of course an ideal image, perhaps akin to what Foucault calls a “figure of political technology.” But, partly through the no, it was given a specific material reality as well—and to the degree that it was, it created an absolutist order, the obverse of a utopian plan.

The no, one might say, helped to conventionalize a certain political form onto the expanding geography of Japan. It instituted a single space of sameness, with the place of authority and authorship being the shogun—thus the title given to the retired shogun, who, though retired, was considered the most important political person: ōgosho, or, “Great Honorable Place.” To the degree that it was successful, it created a closed hierarchy of relations, cut off from any appearance of transformative potential in society. The geography of these fixed relations also, then, had much to do with temporality.

Nō Time

From the start of his reign Tokugawa Ieyasu acted to organize an absolutist state, one that would be “governed in perpetuity by the Tokugawas.” Hence from the start the shogunate legislated against change; at least as indicated by the terms used in a fundamental document known as the Buke sho hatto (Rules for Military Houses), which was reaffirmed on the accession of each new shogun, “change”

69 In this sense it is fictional—see de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, Part II (and especially chapter 6).

70 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, Translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 205.
meant “revolt”. This, then, was also the role of no: the maintenance of political control over change and time. I therefore turn here to the no’s organization of gestures of temporality.

I should point out that I am primarily concerned with “official” no. Nearly all shoguns held private, unofficial performances for entertainment, often at impromptu moments, and sometimes with great frequency—the ninth shogun Ieshige, for instance, would at times go from one banquet to another in different sections of the castle, and have a no performance at each; in some months he was said to hold forty-five or more performances. These were considered informal, generally were held on the stage located in the “inner” castle (nakaoku), and only for very private audiences. A number of Tokugawa shoguns attempted to restrict or cease altogether these private performances, but all were insistent on the importance of maintaining formal, official no.

First, a brief description of what seem to have been the principal genres of official no—Machi iri; Shogun senge iwai; Utaizome; Matsubayashi; Kanjin; and Takigi no; these categories were relatively unfixed, however, and there is a great deal of overlap between them.

_Machi iri no_, or “Town-entering no”, was so called because it was held within the precincts of the shogun’s (or daimyo’s) castle, and was the single circumstance when townspeople were allowed into the castle grounds to see performances. It would appear that these occasions were in large part connected with the life cycles of upper officials: the promotion of a high official; the birth or coming of age ceremony of one of these officials’ sons; and at the highest level, the investiture of a new shogun, or the death or birth of a new emperor. These performances for the most part lasted from one to five days, the longer performances being given for the more important occasions. At these latter times, the first day was considered the most formal, and the most important persons (members of the imperial court; high level fudai daimyo) attended on this day. It was also, however, the day on which commoners were always invited.

_Shogun senge iwai no_ (“Shogunal Proclamation Nō”) was in effect a specific form of the above. It was a congratulatory/celebratory performance given at the start of the reign of a new shogun, and so

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72 NS, I:176.
marked a larger time segment than most of the above. These performances were almost always five days long.

*Kanjin* ("subscription") no was, prior to the Tokugawa period, a means of gathering funds for the building or rebuilding of temples, shrines, and bridges; patronizing such performances had then held religious undertones of accruing good karma for the afterlife. By the Tokugawa era, however, these were primarily either fairly insignificant, single-day performances held by a no school simply to gain needed cash, or, of far greater importance, to mark the pinnacle of the career of the principal no family's *iemoto*. The latter were called "once in a generation" no, and there were only four allowed in the whole of the 250 year Tokugawa reign. The Kaei performance of 1848, which was the source of the era name "Kaei", was one of these. Public performances, these *kanjin* no were all held just outside the grounds of Edo castle. The last three of the Tokugawa era were given fifteen clear-weather days of no, spaced out over a period of weeks or even months.

*Utaizome* ("First Singing") and *matsubayashi* ("Pine Dancing") both referred to the annual New Year's ceremonial no, held on the third day of the first month. This was one of the most important of all the annual rites, and was attended by all important daimyos as well as representatives of the imperial court. It began with the shogun entering and commanding a view of the Grand Hall of the main castle, and then greeting the heads of the three Tokugawa branch families (those from Kii, Owari, and Mito domains). After commanding the principal no *iemoto* to begin the performance, which centered on the "auspicious God" play Takasago, gifts were distributed first to the actors, and later to the daimyos—an exchange which confirmed both the shogun's right to mark the new year, and the daimyos' accession to this calendar.74

*Takigi* (bonfire) no was the name generally reserved for an annual outdoor ritual associated both with the Kofuku temple and the Kasuga shrine in Nara. That the shogunate allowed this to continue shows a slight willingness to give room to the still strong religious center of Nara, but even so, no actors had to have permission to leave Edo to perform in it, and actors "on duty" in Edo were not given leave.

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73 Or "Pine Singing", depending on which characters were used. The pine tree is a symbol of longevity.

74 With this power to define time, too, the relationship with *tozamma* daimyo was important. Accordingly, at these ceremonies gifts to the Maeda family from Kaga were said to pile up especially high. NS I:177.
The first point I would draw from this outline is that in the Tokugawa regime, the no served to identify a calendar of sorts, mapping the coordinates (or events) of a stable order of time within which social action would take place—a “time of social representing”, as Castoriadis defines it. Insofar as events are moments of change, or potential change, this is what the no marked: the moments of change that were significant to the shogunal order. Nearly all such moments were marked, too: the construction of new buildings, such as a mansion or castle (including in the various domains, as in the case of Maeda Toshitsune’s castle, mentioned earlier); the birth of a shogun’s heir (as in the birth of Iemitsu’s son); the death of a shogun or an emperor; the embarkation of a shogun on a trip (when the shogun was traveling to Nikkô, for example, his palanquin was first blessed with a “longevity” (hoide) no), or even the promotion in office of a bakufu administrator—all such moments of transition and change were typically observed with a performance of no. The resulting delineation of official moments was in addition hierarchical: generally, the least significant was accorded the least number of no plays. Thus the promotion of a bakufu official might be given a fairly short performance, while the program of plays celebrating the investiture of a shogun, or the death of an emperor, would last for four or five days. So the no delineated a hierarchical organization of acts, moments, events, in which the most significant was generally the most official (i.e. closest to the shogun), and the least significant was not indicated by the no at all (i.e. did not figure into the time of representation at all).

This was also an increasingly national, homogenizing order of time. For example, prior to leyasu and the Tokugawa state, the rites which marked the official start of the new year (the utaizome and the matsubayashi) were not yet unified: the matsubayashi consisted of no troupes traveling from villa to villa and performing, but only for a select group of daimyo within the Ashikaga realm of power and on dates varying from one region to the next; Tokugawa Ieyasu, by integrating the matsubayashi into the annual New Year’s First Singing (utaizome) rites in Edo—which, as mentioned above, was acknowledged by the attendance of important figures from throughout the country—brought that local calendar under the compass of his time. The entire country now celebrated one official calendar, the defining moment of


76 See NS, 1:178-179.
which was situated in the shogun's castle. In this way, as in others, the
nō was an extension through time of Tokugawa Ieyasu's political
sphere.\textsuperscript{77}

However, at issue here is not just the employment of significant
moments of change, but also, as stated at the outset of this section, the
surmounting of any real change; the nō, I would argue, at critical
moments of change, enacted a transcendence of change. This is of course
in part a problem of political rule. For a regime that was meant to be
eternal, "governed in perpetuity" by the Tokugawas, a paradox arises
at transitional moments such as the transfer of rule from one shogun to
the next: there is a clear need for a change of identities (otherwise rule
would end with the existing shogun's death), yet this rule must be
represented as a regime of one unchanging identity. Just as the nō
contributed to the expansion of Ieyasu's own identity across the
physical geography of Japan, so too it configured a temporal order
through which one single Tokugawa identity extended.

What I am describing here is essentially a mimetic order of rule
(or at least the appearance of such an order). There were historical
precedents for this, as in the use of mirrors by fourth century monarchs
for distribution to leaders within their sphere of influence. The mirror
in this case was a concrete expression that the political authority being
extended out by the monarch was identical to, though separate from,
himself. This also fit the image not only of the transfer of authority,
but of temporal change, suggested by the reconstructions of the shrine at
Ise. Every twenty years, the shrine housing the sacred mirror (said to
embody the sun goddess Amaterasu, or her power) is rebuilt, but in a
precise mirror image on a plot directly facing that of the shrine which
is taken down; change and the transfer of rule, though indicated by an
inversion, only institute an exact continuance of the same.

The Tokugawas drew on these precedents, as again in the
construction of Nikkō. Nikkō was, first of all, renowned not only for its
nō masks, but also for its collection of early Japanese mirrors.\textsuperscript{78} Also,

\textsuperscript{77} Here too, though, there were still some expressions of local indepen-dence.
Many lords continued to hold their own utaiizome celebrations in addition to
attending the shogun's, and in the case of Kaga han, they did not rename their
own matsubayashi rite an "utaiizome" until 1830, nearly the end of the Tokugawa
period. Nevertheless, even those daimyo who did hold their own utaiizome
often held them at their mansions in Edo. See, for example, Kanazawa no
nōgaku, 42-43, 167, 338.

\textsuperscript{78} Okuda Yuzuru et al, eds, Nikkō sono bijutsu (Kyoto: Tanko-shinsha, 1962), 143-
144.
when the third shogun Iemitsu in 1636 ordered the reconstruction of Ieyasu’s shrine, part of the rationale for doing so was that it had been twenty years since Ieyasu’s first shrine had been built, and so a new one should be built following just the same cycle as at Ise (although the new Tōshōgu was not built as a mirror image of its predecessor at all, but was rather a much grander construct). Iemitsu himself, we have seen, not only revered Ieyasu’s image, but carried a sheet of paper describing himself as the “second Gongen,” a mimetic incarnation of his grandfather.

As a memorial, Nikkō took the form of a monument which can be understood as “a transcendental permanence founding all presence.” Ieyasu’s entombed and deified body legitimated the presence of the present; the present was defined by an eternal origin, which was of course the deified Ieyasu. Thus Yoshimune’s belief that the simple presence of memory of Ieyasu was enough to confirm each shogun’s own authority.

In the nō itself this overcoming of difference and change by the renewal and re-presenting of the same is perhaps easiest to see in the annual new year’s “ritual” nō (shiki nō) of the utaiizome. The auspicious shūgen plays typically performed at this time were believed ritually to reinitiate a world of eternal good. The simple utterance of these plays’ lines was said to reinstitute an unchanging “wise rule” and give it divine sanction. Each performance, therefore, denoted the year’s change with a reinstatement of the same order of the good.

With the utaiizome, as with the presence of Ieyasu’s body at Nikkō, it was always the shogun (or domain lord) who legitimated the time being ritually enacted. A true utaiizome, in fact, was limited not only to the occasion of the New Year, but also to those celebrations during which the lord himself was at very least within the borders of his province. The ruler, in other words, was the initiator, or source, of this time, and the identity of time, throughout the realm, was that of the ruler. The expanding jurisdiction of the utaiizome, covering all of the new Japanese state, was therefore part of the expanding legitimacy of Tokugawa identity.

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79 Ooms, Tokugawa Ideology, 183.
81 Kanazawa no nōgaku, 92.
82 Thus it was always the lord’s own actor who performed first in the utaiizome.
Locating Tokugawa Power

Finally, the progression of time organized by the *utaizome*, and by the no in general, was non-linear. All aspects of the no were believed to follow the principle of *jo-ha-kyū* "introduction," "break," and "speed"), an aesthetic which describes an endless series of cycles moving from the first to the last term and then back to the first. This was considered to apply to the New Year's rites as well (and in fact to everything: it was "a universal organizational principle for all things existing in time"). Hence the ritual calendar of the shogunate's no was based on the cyclical renewal of a closed order of time, the origins of which were located in a non-contingent, transcendent past—one (utopically) free of history, and eternal. With every renewal, the originary past was rendered immanent in the present, and rendered the present order incontestably correct. It allowed for a temporal progression, but only in terms of a cycle which, at the start of each new year, would return to the same place. Consequently, if performances of the no were used to recognize those moments that would be "events," the no constituted these moments as part of an unchanging repetitive cycle. "Event" here took the paradoxical form of the eruption of the same.

The temporal cycles of no thus created an official state-wide order of time, but at the same time this order was given the integrity of being a mode of the cosmic, or of cosmic change. The calendar that the Tokugawa shogun instituted with each year's *utaizome* therefore governed not just the state, but the universe. According to Zeami, heaven established the world according to the rhythms of five "modes of cosmic change". These modes of cosmic change define all life, Zeami wrote, including the four seasons. They are of heavenly provenance—they were brought to earth through the dance of angels—and as principles extend to the bodies of all sentient beings (the five modes correspond to "five storages" in all sentient beings: the heart, lungs, spleen, liver and kidneys). These five modes, furthermore, were said to be activated as the body moves in the dance of the no. Perhaps because the no in this way realized proper cosmic order, practicing the no was thought to both keep one physically healthy and be a cure for one's illnesses. Here too, cosmic "change" seems to imply the transcendence of any real alteration, in part by marking off any moments of possible change in the status quo. For instance, when the


84 Thus the ritual objects used were given names such as the "Isle of Eternal Youth," a dipper for the ritual sake.

85 Cf. Rimer and Yamazaki, *On the Art of the No Drama*, 77-78.
shogun Iemitsu fell ill, nō was offered both at the moment of his illness and at the time of his recovery; so too, nō was offered when the shogun had an inauspicious dream, an occurrence which possibly boded ill for the future.

Cosmic, this was indeed nonetheless an order of the state: the eighteenth-century geographer Hayashi Shihei wrote in *Fukeikun* that to detest the nō was "like rebelling against the entire order of Japan." And not only an order of state, but furthermore natural and divine: "The musical instruments of nō," Hayashi said, form "the brilliant sounds of Japanese nature," and in nō music, "divine will and human will are together fulfilled."86 The resulting image is one in which there is a comprehensive law of similarity, a law of natural correspondences ruling both state and nature.87 Thus in this image the acting out of nō, and the recitation of felicitous words, physically resuscitated the good, natural order (good health, a good reign, and so on). It may be for this reason, for example, that the only words spoken by the lord of Kaga at his *utaizome* were that the weather is good, and so would the course of events (throughout his reign) be good.88

As with the choreography of power delineated by nō, nō's temporality in these ways constituted a closed order of continuity, a hierarchical realm centered on a non-contingent originary source—the place of the Tokugawa shogun, in Edo.

The nō created an image of Ieyasu, and Edo, as an autochthonous place of sorts—a place of Ieyasu's own, not located by ties to earlier or other structures of power, and a place from which, as the only legitimate source, he appeared to exercise absolute closure. That is the case with the time of nō. The present, or "now", is found in Ieyasu himself (or his ever-present memory), and each of the Tokugawa shoguns. This place of the now does not shift or unfold in a linear representation of time, but rather is cyclically reestablished in and by the place of the shogun (as in the examples of the shogun's annual *utaizome*, in the main hall of Edo castle, or his deified presence in Nikkō). It is in this sense that I would say that, borrowing from de

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86 In *Nō kyōgen* II:70-73.

87 On the idea of a comprehensive law of similarity, see Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty," in *Reflections*, 333-336.

88 Quoted in *Kanazawa no nōgaku*, 107.
Certeau, the shogunate used the nō to create an absolute mastery over time through the founding of an autonomous place.89

Edo Castle and the Dream of Nikkō

It may be apparent from what I have tried to sketch out thus far that in the establishment of Edo as the shogun’s capitol city, the place of the shogun was in fact two: Edo castle, in the center of the city, and Nikkō shrine at its boundaries. In part this might be simply read as emblematic of the opposition between and combination of the shogun’s military/political and religious/spiritual forms of power. Yet beyond a simple opposition, I am interested in the split that they create within a single body, or polity, and the sort of body of power and experience of power that this split engenders.

I have argued that the founding of Edo, in part through the construction of Nikkō and Edo castle, was part of an attempt to situate an entirely new space of power. Insofar as this space of power was given the cast of a perfectly ordered system, and based on a point of origin that was in a way outside of time altogether, it was utopic: a new place, not yet located in any other conceived order of power. Similar moves were evident before Tokugawa Ieyasu—as in the case of Hideyoshi’s military predecessor, Oda Nobunaga (typically thought of as the first to attempt a centralization of the Japanese state), and Nobunaga’s construction of Azuchi castle.

Azuchi castle was apparently meant to be the base and centerpiece of his regime. A building of great magnificence, at the highest level of the castle, just above a floor devoted entirely to Buddhist themes,90 Nobunaga commissioned a room without any precedent. Perfectly squared (apparently a construct of moral rectitude) and entirely covered in black lacquer, the room’s walls were filled with paintings, to quote Carolyn Wheelwright’s description, “following a chronological progression from the sage-kings of the mythical past through historical paragons of virtue to Confucius, the codifier of a political system based on the integrity of a wise ruler.” This accomplished “a spatial transformation. The theme of a Utopia decreed by a prince sublimely confident of his mission to reunite and

89 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 36.

90 There was also on the third floor, at the point of transition between public and private space, a nō stage.
revivify the Japanese realm—that is to say establish his own new order, the Tenka [empire, state].”91

Wheelwright goes on to state that this room, and castle, heralded the start of a new age of (monumental) architecture. Nikkō would seem to fit the architecture of this new age, but there was a fundamental difference: although Nikkō might be considered the utopic or fantastic place relative to Edo castle that the top floor room was to Azuchi castle, unlike the Azuchi room, Nikkō is separated from Edo castle. As I will try to explain, I see this to be part of a new, spectacular form of power (I am using “spectacle” both in the sense of an extraordinary display, and something which initiates a division, as between viewer and viewed).

The temples and shrines at Nikkō are replete with utopian symbols and metaphors of a harmonious realm and uncharted otherness. The gates to Ieyasu’s Tōshō shrine are carved with some of the same Chinese sage rulers seen in Nobunaga’s castle, as well as Chinese ‘otherworldly’ persons (sennin). They also contain a “phantasmagoric profusion” of lion- and elephant-like creatures, peonies, etc.92 Colors at Nikkō are baroque in their brightness: “intensified, heightened, deployed to the full, ‘monumentalized,’ simply because, if imagination is something which goes beyond reality, the embodiment of its images must go beyond the norms of visual experience.”93 Now taken to be simple gaudiness (and hence dismissed by art historians as unworthy of study), it was perhaps precisely the point that Nikkō’s ostentatious color scheme was hitherto unheard of.

Architecturally, some of the buildings were designed in a “Chinese”-like style (karayō), but in a form that was considered unlike any previous seen or known Chinese style. And though the structures were in some ways patterned after other shrines and temples, these were a new, “altogether different” mode of religious architecture.94 Nikkō in these ways drew on received images of otherworldliness—the worlds of China, mythology, and religion—but even these were cast in a new, unprecedented vision.

91 In Elison and Smith, Warlords, Artists, and Commoners, 110.
As a place of fantasy, Nikkō bears comparison to Foucault's discussion of utopias and heterotopias. Foucault describes utopias in much the same terms that have been raised in this paper: utopias present society in a perfected form (or, Foucault says, in an inverted, upside down way), but they are fundamentally unreal places, sites without any real place. Nikkō did present images of a perfectly harmonious rule, as in the motifs of eternally good and wise governance represented by the Chinese sages, and in Nikkō's very explicitly unique constructions of otherworldly themes, it did envision a placeless place. For these reasons Nikkō might be considered to be utopic. It was of course also a very real place, though, and in this sense fits Foucault's idea of a heterotopia: an "effectively enacted utopia," a "counter-site" which is somehow other to the sets of social relations it designates, but while outside of all other places, is yet linked to them and has a specific location in reality.

The experience which unites the utopia and the heterotopia, for Foucault, is that of a mirror. The mirror opens up a placeless place (in a mirror, one is able to see oneself in a place where one is not), and so is utopic; but the mirror does exist in reality, and that is where one's image is seen. One therefore only begins to reconstitute oneself (there where one actually stands) through the redirection of one's gaze back toward oneself from this virtual image on the other side of the glass.

By these terms, Nikkō was both a utopic and a heterotopic place. Outside the capital and separated from the shogun's seat of power at the castle, it was the place of fantasy which visualized the image of perfect rule. Thus after the public machi-iri nō ceremonies in the castle, celebrating a shogun's official investiture, the country's rulers would proceed to Nikkō to worship the perfect, deified form of the first shogun (and, by extension, all Tokugawa shoguns). Furthermore, the painted images of Ieyasu enshrined at Nikkō were not portraits drawn after his living person, but rather depictions of an image of Ieyasu seen by his grandson Iemitsu in a dream. In this sense, the figure enshrined at the Tōshō Daigongen is not the worldly Ieyasu, nor simply his deified being (the Tōshō Daigongen), but rather what the headings on each of the portraits define as the "Muso" ("dream", but

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95 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," in Diacritics 16 (1986) 22-27.

96 Ibid, 24. This of course might raise the issue of the constitution of subjectivity, a matter which I will set aside. I am instead here limiting my comments to a discussion of the relation between types of sites in the Tokugawa geography of power, even while acknowledging that the question of subjectivity and its constitution is not an unrelated problem.
also “fantastic”, “utopic”) Tōshō Daigongen.97 Within the order of Tokugawa rule, Nikkō itself takes on the aspect of a dream world, a place outside the everyday through which a vision of the Tokugawas is returned as not only political, but as also divine, perfect rulers. There was thus still, in the Tokugawa era, a place of sacrality which, like Hideyoshi’s self-deifications, seemed to effect a closure of the larger order of power.

But this still does not fully explain the split between the castle and Nikkō. In part, this division is a question of spectatorship. Originally, although commoners were allowed into Edo castle at least for the machi-iri no performances, they were ostensibly to be excluded from entering “to offer and pray” at Nikkō’s new Tōshōgu. Only the highest officials and rulers of the country were to be permitted in to worship at Nikkō, not only after the public nō rites at the castle, but at all other times as well. Yet within less than twenty years after its reconstruction, the bakufu was in fact encouraging common people to come, in order to “display [Nikkō’s] magnificent splendor.”98 It seems that there was, however, a critical difference: while upper class persons’ visits were still known as “Nikkō mairi” (the verb mairi indicates a visit to a shrine or temple for worship or other religious purposes), the commoners’ visits were officially called “kenbutsu” (sightseeing, or spectating; it can also be used when referring to attending the theater). There is therefore a division, not just between Edo castle and Nikkō, but within the structure of experience of Nikkō itself.

Two further characteristics of Foucault’s heterotopia now are relevant.99 Heterotopias (1) are capable of juxtaposing several spaces which are themselves incompatible; and (2) presuppose a system of opening and closing in which entry may be an illusion; “we are excluded, by the very fact that we enter.”100 If the ruling class could enter into worshipful communion with their founder, the commoners

97 Photos of these are reproduced in Tokugawa Iemitsu kōden (Tokyo: Akiyoshi Insatsu, 1962), starting on 168. It is probably significant, too, that another common motif is the baku, a beast apparently modeled after a tapir and said to consume bad dreams.

98 Nikkō tōshōgu, 32.

99 I am not, though, interested in establishing or verifying categories; again, I am simply interested in the way in which Foucault looks at space and the arrangement of places.

100 Nikkō tōshōgu, 26.
could not (they were encouraged to visit Nikkō only as spectators, and they were not allowed past the entry gate of Ieyasu's Tōshō shrine). It is important to keep in mind, too, that despite the official language of deification that was typically used to name Tokugawa Ieyasu, and despite the official image of Nikkō described in the pages above, a widespread popular cult never did form around Ieyasu as the Tōshō Daigongen. Was the Tokugawa discourse of power then dependent on the closure of deification and a place of the divine, or not?

Although apparently incompatible, at Nikkō both experiences were, logically, going on at the same time, on the same stage, as it were. As the ruling class worshipped, the commoners did their sightseeing, so that commoners, it would seem, were spectators of the rulers' worship. While the upper-class worship of Ieyasu may have produced an image of the Tokugawas as godly, the commoners' lack of belief presumably would have the opposite effect. But of course by their very curiosity and willingness to be spectators, the commoners may have been acknowledging those rulers as being the rightful occupants of the place of power—godly or not. More importantly, it is in the nature of the spectacle, and of spectating, that the spectator is separated from the object of the spectacle. In other words, within the commoners' mode of experience of the Tōshōgu, they were constituting themselves as separated from the rulers' communion with power. Their entry into Nikkō, in this early species of tourism, in fact excluded them (or, in other terms, alienated them).101

The same contradictions can be seen within the context of the machi-iri nō performances in Edo castle as well. As at Nikkō, commoners were only allowed in at select moments, in most cases a machi-iri held for the investiture of a shogun. The castle too, therefore, was a heterotopia of sorts vis-à-vis the commoners. During the machi-iri performances, while the shogun and other officials watched the performance from a raised platform opposite the stage, commoners were made to sit in a fenced-in section of gravel, in between and below the shogun and the stage. Though they apparently knew little about what was going on (another, intentional form of exclusion maintained by the shogunate), they enjoyed the spectacle, and reports say they appreciated the chance to see the shogun as much as the nō.102

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101 It should be clear that I do not agree with Ooms' basic premise that Nikkō formulated legitimacy for the bakufu by evoking an experience of religious awe among the people—see his Tokugawa Ideology, 178.

102 See NS, I:196-199, passim.
case too, then, the scene is at once a rite (for the shogun) and a spectacle (for the commoners). The appreciation of the spectacle by the commoners, rather than providing them an opportunity to partake of power, excludes and disempowers them, renders them "illegitimate people" (a literal translation of the term used for commoners—shonin). In their moment of entry, commoners realize (and thereby constitute) their position as excluded from knowledge, and as excluded subjects of power.

These spectacles and the boundaries of social form they produced are, then, dependent on a theatrical representation of the divine and of ritual. Ritual and the divine must be presented, but, in part, staged as theater. The no, and the official Tokugawa heterotopias, did produce representations of the Tokugawas as divine, and thereby as figures of absolute closure over a totalized ahistorical plan. Nevertheless these were not the rites of an absolute divine monarchy. By making a spectacle or theater of their own divinity, the shoguns instituted a mode of social representation which included the commoners only in such a way that commoners might acknowledge their own exclusion, even as worshippers. It is therefore in the division of the theatrical from the divine, and in the juxtaposition of these apparently incompatible modes of experience, that this social form has its origins—not, that is to say, in the simple representation of the shogun as a deity. Thus the term shikigaku—shiki meaning ritual, and gaku being typically reserved for non-religious entertainments—itself embodies the originary contradictions of the Tokugawa order.

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In these ways, the no was a figure of, and a figuring process of, a new space of political culture. The geographical relations set up by the material practices of no (organized around the shogun in Edo as the top and founding center of a fixed totality), and the temporal cycles (organized around the shogun as the eternal, unchanging source) that were part of this geography—these centered and gave coherence to the official image of a new Japanese state. The no became, in the rigidly structured form enforced by the shogunate, a critical symbolic practice in the articulation of a new capital, around which a new set of social positions and relations could be defined.

This was not, though, a matter of new social forms being ‘inscribed’ into a pre-existing space; to the contrary (following Lefebvre’s well-known dictum) space itself was produced by these new configurations. Rather than a form of society being imposed on an already constituted space, space can be understood as itself a form of the social, so that the reconfiguration of space is a reconfiguration of
the social. Moreover, as Castoriadis has explained, the social does not exist 'in' time, but instead is a mode of time, or history:

The social is this very thing—self-alteration, and it is nothing if it is not this. The social makes itself and can make itself only as history; the social makes itself as temporality; and it makes itself in every instance as a specific mode of actual temporality, it is instituted implicitly as a singular quality of temporality.

The reverse then is also the case—history does not occur 'in' or 'to' a society, it is a form of society:

it is not that history "presupposes" a society....The historical is this very thing—the self-alteration of this specific mode of "coexistence" that is the social as such; outside of this, it is nothing.\footnote{103}

Space is thus a mode of the social, and the social also then comprises a form of time and of history.

The form of nō's time, and hence the nō's social form, as we have seen, was at least on the one hand utopically complete and eternal: "utopia's a-temporality," to quote again from Marin, "signifies constant space, a perpetual now, a permanence of the identical;"\footnote{104} "the only time it knows is the rhythmic cycle of rituals, celebrations and accomplishments."\footnote{105} The fixed cycles of nō, as I have tried to show, served to reenact, reaccomplish, an order which always remains the same, always is fully "accomplished" (it is in this sense that I would interpret the meaning of the frequently used translation of "nō" as "accomplishment"). In doing so, the nō enacted a constancy across the Japanese state. The circulations of nō actors and performances between the provinces and Edo, and even the very fact of nō's emergence as a medium for representing power in differing sectors throughout the Japanese state, served to bring previous sites of political and religious difference into the single sphere of the Tokugawa reign. Similarly, rites such as the utaizome, which performed a calendar defined as the Tokugawas' own throughout the various domains, extended a temporal 'permanence of the identical' across the boundaries of the state. And

\footnote{103} \textit{The Imaginary Institution of Society}, 215.

\footnote{104} Marin, \textit{Utopics}, xxvi.

\footnote{105} Marin, \textit{Utopics}, xxiv.
the repetition of rites such as the *utaizome* and the *machi-iri no* created an image of a mimetic transfer of rule, unfolding the Tokugawa reign as a permanent identity of history as well—a space of permanence in which, as we have seen, the no was apparently used to place all important moments of change, all events, into an unchanging official order of society.

The temporality configured by the no thus composed a form of society based on the shutting down of history. And insofar as the historical is "the self-alteration of the specific mode of coexistence that is the social," as Castoriadis said, this amplification of the geography of Tokugawa identity was a denial not only of historical change, but of places of sociopolitical difference. The denial of places of social and political alterity was thus at the same time a denial of places for the emergence of temporal difference (and therefore of places for the emergence of history in this society) and vice versa. Here, the political effect is an order which in fact forecloses the productive potential of society to transform itself.

But we have also seen that even within the discursive relations of the no, in the arrangement of its moments and places of performance, Tokugawa power was not absolutist. Although having reference to the world of the divine, the seat of power nonetheless existed in a divided and contradictory relation to the divine (as in the division of Edo castle from Nikkō), just as the social appreciation of Tokugawa rule consisted of a divided and contradictory relation to divine authority (as in the concurrent worship and spectatorship of the shoguns in the *machi-iri no* performances). What social closure the no did institute, then, was not founded simply on the uninterrupted centrality and eternity of a purely theological image.

Moreover, the very presence of Nikkō did constitute a certain heterogeneity—one predicated on fantasy and dreams—within the official order. Fantasy, and dreams in particular, within theories of utopic praxis are often thought of as moments or places of irrationality and negation. As such, these moments and places are viewed as useful for reconfiguring the everyday order of things—and therefore for effecting social change. Yet insofar as the dream image of Tokugawa Ieyasu became the collective dream, which in this case is to say the collective image of power of the Tokugawa era, Nikkō's relation to the

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106 This has a genealogy in western thought running from early utopian-ism, and including, for example, arguably Freud; surrealism; and more recent readings of Walter Benjamin as well as some of the attempts to merge Freud and Lacan with Marxism.
Tokugawa geography was in effect one of closure rather than transformation. Viewing Nikkō's fantastic image of Ieyasu from a standpoint of secular (yet interested) spectatorship, commoners engendered their own position as essentially separated from the ritual production of power within the Tōshōgu (or the machi-iri no), which in itself confirmed the permanent position of rule, and perhaps even the eschatological vision, of the Tokugawas. Not an absolutist ideology of power, this instituted a closure of social form nonetheless.

As a place of fantasy and difference, Nikkō (and for the commoners, Edo castle during the machi-iri no performances) was also accordingly not a mere superstructural reflection of other, more real material forces or places of power. The relation of Nikkō to Edo castle (and the experience of this relation), like the larger geography of places laid out by the no, can be looked at as itself a mode of production, of social and historical form.107

I should add, in conclusion, one final qualification. By confining my discussion to the no (and only official no), I risk the appearance that the no might in some way stand for a wider, neat organic whole that could be called Tokugawa society, and therefore that an analysis of the no might unveil the means by which Tokugawa power continued in a constant and uniform process of reproduction. The implications of such an approach would be consistent with what has typically emerged from the project of the New Historians: an analysis of a dominant discourse of power which, though sensitive to and revelatory of social contestation and subversion, nevertheless shows these to be always recuperated into the dominant system itself, prefigured by it and inexorably recontained within it. The resulting picture is of a hermetic, ahistorical, functional systematicity. In consequence, in the New Historicist representation of power (and the later Foucault as read by the New Historians), there is no position external to that representation; there is hence no real alterity possible for the system under analysis (nor for the observer's own position vis-à-vis that system), even while it does still pose a framework dependent on an opposition of dominant and contestatory identities.

I do not mean to represent the no as a metonym for Tokugawa power in those terms. I am not claiming that there was a thoroughly

107 Although I do not have space to pursue the argument here, if Nikkō was thus not a utopic dream-place of creative alterity, it was also not the purely imaginary dream of ideology depicted in Marx's The German Ideology. Rather than an hallucinatory illusion of real power, the dream image of Ieyasu in its placement and mode of appreciation was the real—it contained the relations productive of Tokugawa power.
unified totality, an identified whole that might be called Tokugawa society, and which the no could then completely represent. Certainly I am not pretending to represent the no fully and mimetically, uncovering and describing everything that the thing itself was. What I have attempted to do is to see how the no permits us to glimpse at least the outline of an arrangement of places—which is also a relation of practices, and experience—which indicates something of the conditions that were determinant to the social and historical form of the Tokugawa period. And while this arrangement can, I think, be identified with the Tokugawa period, this “identity” can only be taken as an open relation of differences, a conjuncture ultimately consisting of multiple, mixed, and discordant geographies.\(^{108}\)

The constitution of a unified and permanently grounded identity was, however, part of the problem and conditions of constructing a new order for the Tokugawa shoguns. This, as we have seen, is what the shogunate’s use of the no presents us with; an attempt to reconfigure space, and to locate a bounded identity in so doing, according to a form of space conceived of as closeable, finite, and completely territorializeable, and in which there might be a permanent and essentially grounded place for everything. In this sense—because these conditions are evident in the no—I do think it possible to claim that the no manifests something of a larger historical nexus, beyond an understanding of simply the no itself (even if it does not reveal the impossible totality of that historical and cultural moment).

And so, finally, the no can be viewed as a gesture of history: a gesture of history in the sense that it was part of the laying out of a specific form of society and history onto and as a newly formed state

\(^{108}\) In addition to the tensions within the discourse of the no (which should be understood as dynamic, not statically functional), there were other places within Tokugawa society where the possibility for the production of alterity—of history and of social difference—emerged: in particular, the other “dream world” of the Tokugawa period, the pleasure quarters and the world of kabuki. Though bounded off by the shogunate, and so created from within the official geography, the contents of this area of the city of Edo remained in many ways outside the purview of the shogunate’s representations.

This is not, though, just a question of pointing out that there were differences within the identity of Tokugawa culture and society. These are issues which extend beyond this paper, but the main point here is that there is no single identity describable for the Tokugawa period. Tokugawa power accordingly cannot be characterized as wholly centered, possessed and controlled (and the question of alterity cannot therefore be understood within the framework of a binary, discrete categorical identity-versus-difference approach).
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geography—a utopic attempt to organize and situate a perfect society; and also a gesture of history in the sense that the specific discursive conditions of this attempt were themselves historical. This last point raises the question of whether the problem of utopias is not itself really historical. In other words, not only the question of whether or how a truly new social form can be "sited," as Doane put it, but the very opposition between identified places and truly Other, new (and presumably in some sense emancipating) utopic non-places may itself be part of the discursive economy of an early modern historical formation. And this then returns us to what is perhaps a larger question of our own time—how to locate a place from which to argue for something, from within a space which (unlike the no's) no longer is conceived of as finite, and in which things no longer can be placed with permanent foundations.
Historiography in the Margins of Modernity: The Cultural Production of History in Orikuchi Folk Studies

Kentaro Tomio

Foreword

In the writings of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the widely acknowledged "founding father" of Japanese folk studies (minzoku-gaku), the critical transformation that signaled the modern "closure" of national culture, and hence history, occurred in the mid-1920's. In concrete terms this closure was effected by a shift in the subject matter of his research, from a focus on the "distant" people dwelling in the far-off mountains to a concern for the agricultural population living on the "nearby" plains. In contrast to those "others" of the mountains (san-jo), these "people on the plains" (heichi-min) are "us," the cultivators of rice, who have founded their lives not only upon agriculture per se but also on the entire system of beliefs, rites and social organization that enabled and made meaningful the actual tilling of the soil. It is this agrarian community of "our fathers and forefathers"—defined not in geographical terms but by reference to the cultural difference it denotes in opposition to urban space, the epicenter of modernization—that provided the figure of past totality upon which national culture and history was written by Yanagita.

1 This paper is based upon two earlier papers delivered at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs in November 1990 and September 1991. The first paper was "The Moment of Truth in the Unveiling of Cultural Forms: Our Illusions of Origuchi Shinobu" and the second, "Historiographical Operations at the Margins: Nation and Culture in Early Twentieth Century Japan." [Although minor changes have been made for the present publication, this paper was written in the winter of 1991. I would like to thank Harry Harootunian, Tetsuo Najita, Gregory Schrempp, and Stephan Vlastos as well as Susan Burns and the other contributors to this volume who kindly read and offered comments on the earlier versions, or the portions thereof, of this paper. I also must mention, with regret, that the paper was not able to benefit from Robert Adams' scrupulous editorial work. I thank James St. André instead for carefully editing the text. All footnotes in square brackets were added for this publication.]

2 (For a full treatment of Yanagita's historiography, see my unpublished manuscript, "Towards a Spatial History of the Nation: the Historiographical Operations in Yanagita Folk Studies," (1993).]
The shift that defined Yanagita’s conception of national culture was articulated in an article called “Yukiguni no haru” [Spring in the Snow Country], originally published in 1925 and included in a book by the same title that appeared three years later. In this work, Yanagita expressed great surprise at the fact that the New Year’s rites celebrated in the northernmost regions of Honshū, where the climate is too cold for rice to be planted, are nonetheless related to the cultivation of this crop. From this fact he projected the image of the agrarian community encompassing the society that can now properly be called Japan. The bearer of this communal culture would eventually be called the jōmin or the “enduring common folk,” a category in Yanagita’s writing that would come to include all of the Japanese, even the members of the Imperial household. Thus, discovery of the agrarian community provided the closure that was the condition for the construction of national culture and history.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the similar transformation that took place within the writings of Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1952), who considered himself to be a disciple of Yanagita, but whose originality has led many to regard him as an important contributor to Japanese folk studies rivaling Yanagita in stature. Interestingly, on the surface of his writings, there seems to be no thematic shift comparable to that which occurred within Yanagita’s text. Indeed, a far more complex transformation seems to take place within Orikuchi’s texts that also effects a closure, a closure that coincides with that in Yanagita’s writings. Yet the status of this closure is far more complex in nature than in Yanagita’s case, for it seems that Orikuchi seriously entertained the possibility of heterogeneity in culture despite the limits imposed by his own discourse.

In this paper, then, I will try to unveil the complex transition that is made in Orikuchi’s writing. As I shall show, this transition was effected when Orikuchi attempted to resolve the issue of spatial alterity (ikyō) by establishing the religious and cultural paradigm known as the theory of the “visiting-god” (marebito). In this celebrated paradigm of native Japanese culture, the otherness of space is no longer maintained, because the paradigm itself, in fact, constituted a spatial closure that negated any possibility of alterity. This closure became


the metaphor that enabled the construction of a national culture, albeit in a way very different from that of Yanagita. With the elevation of the "visiting god" theory to the master paradigm of the formation of Japanese culture throughout history, there emerged for Orikuchi a foundation upon which to erect the entire cultural edifice.

The unveiling of such a transition in Orikuchi necessarily involves a critique of the contemporary cultural discourse in Japan. In fact this critique is a prerequisite to this task since the understanding of Orikuchi I present in this paper goes against the received wisdom of Orikuchi Studies (Orikuchi-gaku), a field firmly established since the late seventies and which has become a booming intellectual industry in the past ten years or so. Unlike Yanagita, Orikuchi has become a representative of "anti-modernity" for many contemporary Japanese readers, an understanding that positions him as the embodiment of an authentic Japanese culture tout court. It is necessary to break through this mythopoetic interpretation to understand Orikuchi’s significance within the discursive space of the 1920’s. To do so, an ideological critique is a necessary first step to the interrogation of his more substantive argument. I will therefore start with a "symptomatic" reading of the contemporary work on Orikuchi.

This reading is motivated by a search to unveil an ideological blindness towards what is "other." My aim is to discover a "point of breakdown," or a limit, indexed by Orikuchi in the current ideological field. This will then allow for a critique of the closure, exceptionalist or otherwise, of the discursive space within which the production of culture takes place. In other words, Orikuchi’s texts will not be seen as a repository of signs that can only be deciphered by the apparatus of the current ideological field in Japan. The deconstruction of the meaning that Orikuchi signifies in contemporary Japan will make possible a re-reading of a number of key texts written in the early part

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5 [As the original draft of this paper was written in 1990, the “contemporary” situation alluded to here refers to the decade, or more specifically the second half, of 1980s. See footnote 1.]


7 Here I follow de Certeau in my use of the notion of a place of production in the making of history. I see the basic premise for the writing of culture to be the same, save for the difference culture has in relation to history. See Michel de Certeau, "Première partie: Productions du lieu" in L’Écriture de l’histoire, (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 27-120.
of this century, from around 1910 to the mid-1920’s. This will allow us not only to trace the development that led to the closure of national culture in the 1920’s but also to reveal the contours of the alterity that confronts a certain group of contemporary Japanese thinkers in their attempt to deal with their past. If there is a significance to this practice of “heterology,” it is in the act of intervening in the chorus of voices that proclaim a new-found identity steeped in tradition—a tradition which in reality only has a history of some twenty years in late twentieth-century Japan. This intervention will be made with a different understanding of the past, the past that is the textual space of the pre-war period.

In the Margins of Modernity

In the contemporary Japanese cultural discourse, Orikuchi Shinobu is considered to be one of the most influential students of Japanese folk studies (minzoku-gakusha) of this century. He is credited with over fifty volumes of published and unpublished historical monographs, articles, and notes on Japanese culture. It is said that he established, along with Yanagita Kunio, the regulating principles of the cultural discourse that spilled over into the broader field of what would now be call the human sciences. In contrast to Yanagita, who focused on the daily life of his contemporary “folk,” Orikuchi is said to have claimed as the field of his research the “literary” and “archaic” texts. He has also been described as the single most important figure in the establishment of a history of the performative folk arts.

These then are the attributes of this author according to the modern discourse of folk studies. It seems worthwhile, first of all, to confirm the historical depth of this image of Orikuchi in order to discern the nature of the symptom he presents. It is worth noting in this regard that, despite Orikuchi’s status in post-war scholarship, Gotô Sōichirō, one of the better known Yanagita scholars, was able to say, no more than twenty years ago in 1974, that Orikuchi’s work had not yet

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8 These “writings,” I should note, were in fact dictations by Orikuchi that were written down by his students. The issue of dictation was taken up for the first time, to my knowledge, by Sasaki Jūjirō, but the implications of speech in the writing of Orikuchi’s text have yet to be fully explored. See Sasaki Jūjirō, “Kōjitsu hikki-ron” [“On Dictation”], Orikuchi Shinobu no tororoji [The Topology of Orikuchi Shinobu], (Tokyo: Kayō-sha, 1985), 121-27.
entered the realm of intellectual history. This was in contrast to Yanagita, who had by then acquired his legitimate place in intellectual history as something more than a student of folk studies; that is, as a "social thinker." For a long time Orikuchi was perhaps better known as Shaku Chōkū, his *nom de plume* as a poet. A year before Gotō made this comment, one of Orikuchi's leading disciples, Ikeda Yasaburō, was claiming, "I don't want anybody commenting on Orikuchi's body of work, *Orikuchi-gaku*, without reading Chōkū's poetry." Indeed Orikuchi was a poet. Immediately after World War II, he responded to the devastating Japanese defeat by writing a poem entitled "Ah, the gods have lost," which, at least on the surface, seemed to be in stark contrast to Yanagita, who responded to the same catastrophe by trying to redefine the Japanese family as the new building block of the post-war nation.

A well-known "non-aligned" Orikuchi scholar, Sasaki Jūjirō, suggests that it was this poetic side to Orikuchi, along with the

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9 There is a statement by Okano Hirohiko, one of Orikuchi's student, that reflects Orikuchi's thoughts about being regarded as a philosopher or a creator of a body of "thought." Orikuchi's elder brother commented upon *Shisha no sho* [*The Book of the Dead*] shortly after its publication in 1943 by saying, "your novel doesn't have any thought [shisō]." The author, extremely angered, retorted, "if there is no thought in this book, show me one that does." Cited. in Sasaki Jūjirō, "Orikuchi Shinobu to shisō-shi," *Op cit*, 207.

10 This statement was made in the course of a discussion with Tanigawa Kenichi in "Tōron - Orikuchi Shinobu no gakumon to shisō" ["Debate - Orikuchi Shinobu's Discipline and Thought"] in Tanigawa Kenichi (ed.), *Hito to shisō—Orikuchi Shinobu [Man and His Thought—Orikuchi Shinobu]*, (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobō, 1977). Also quoted in Sasaki, *Op cit*, 208.


12 The poem, "Ah, the gods have lost," is in the anthology *Kindai hishō-shū* [Modern Laments] in Orikuchi Shinobu, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū [Collected Works of Orikuchi Shinobu]*, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron-sha, 1955-1958), vol. 23, 181-336. One of the stanza is as follows:

Ah, the gods have been stricken with defeat
Even Susano and even Okuninushi
Are at a loss, nowhere to go
Having left behind the palace of the land
surrounded by the blue mountains.

"emotive" excess it entailed, that made it difficult for him to be accepted as a major figure in "intellectual(ist)" history. However, the poem described above was part of a larger response made by Orikuchi in order to radically criticize and transform Japanese religious practices and, in fact, his work was directed towards a wide range of cultural productions, both verbal and kinetic throughout Japanese history. Thus, it was probably not the "poetic side" of Orikuchi per se that troubled the post-war Japanese intellectual historians. Most likely their reluctance was a reaction to the traces in his work of the operations employed by him in order to produce cultural history. These traces suggested to his readers the workings of an "unmediated understanding"—a contradictory term—that seemed to attempt to transcend the structure of the epistemic space of modernity. I shall return to this issue later when I analyze Orikuchi's notion of language, but what needs to be interrogated is the view of the rationalist historians and social thinkers of post-war Japan who view Orikuchi, unlike Yanagita, as occupying a place remote from the problematics of the modern qua modernization.

Even the aforementioned Sasaki claimed, in this case in relation to Orikuchi's linguistic theory, that it seems strange to "us who have been baptized by modern rationalism" and "whose framework of thought has become monosemic" to come across the "polysemic linguistic space" that is asserted by Orikuchi as defining "archaic forms of thought," a space in which "multiple forms of thought occur simultaneously and without mediation." Perhaps one need only to make note of the poverty of the notion of modernity that operates in Sasaki's work, but it is in this kind of context that Orikuchi is defined as an irrational anti-modernist. The assignment of this peculiar place to Orikuchi is in fact a symptom of the ideological field of post-war Japan to which I have alluded above. But this symptom, which primarily takes the form of silence, or of silencing Orikuchi,

13 See Sasaki, Op cit, 209. Sasaki has been by far one of the best "non-aligned" Orikuchi scholar for some time.

14 This and other poetry of the anthology marks the start of Orikuchi's attempt in the years immediately after the war to radically transform Japanese religion, Shintō, into a monotheistic religion. Therefore, it is difficult to dismiss the intellectual import of Orikuchi's move.

15 See Sasaki, Op cit, 104. The title of the essay is "Yagokoro-omoshikane no kami" ["The God of Eight Minds and Thoughts"], ibid., (1985), 101-120. Orikuchi's quote is from his "Shintō ni arawareta minzoku ronri" ["Ethnic Logic that Manifests in Shintō"].
within the ideology of modernization, is only one aspect of the ideological field that addresses Orikuchi’s work.

The other aspect, which becomes apparent in the wake of this silence, is signaled by the loquacity with which Orikuchi has been celebrated increasingly in the past ten years. He is no longer a remote figure in the margins of contemporary thought. Yet he retains some sense of this misconstrued “poetics” of marginality, and this in fact has been transformed into a new power of knowledge. Orikuchi has come to be regarded as a sort of a genius, a master of intuitive thinking who was so gifted as to be able to live the archaic past or the native belief of “true Japan” in himself, rather than to think it by the means of conceptual systems. For instance, Kajiki Gō, whose statements allow us to situate him within the genealogy of the modern “nativists”—i.e., those thinkers committed to ideological Japanism—extols Orikuchi’s approach to the developmental history of Japanese literature in which he explained lyric poetry as a derivation from epic poetry in the archaic past. Kajiki says:

This is not a mere matter of acute analysis by a brilliant mind but is a result of a profound delving into the heart of things that is made possible by the repeated operation of an intuition of the body. Here Orikuchi seems to advance his analysis not by seeing the ancient past with concepts but by living it in its totality. There must be things that can only be revealed in that way and Orikuchi, when he does so, is a master of his own place where no one else can dare venture forth.17

What is significant about such a claim is that it is the mirror image, in reverse, of the silence accorded to Orikuchi by the ideological discourse of modernization. Posited as the guarantor of the access to the past, Orikuchi has become a symptom of the inability to historicize or to see the past as radically other.

There is another modality to this inability, which is a blindness to the “others” of Japanese culture. Isoya Takashi, a linguist who is well-versed in the turn-of-the-century Russian writings—the source according to some of many significant strands in twentieth-

16 [That is, the 1980s. See footnote 1.]
17 Kajiki Gō, Orikuchi Shinobu no sekai [The World of Orikuchi Shinobu], (Tokyo: Sunagoya Shobō, 1982), 85.
century European thought—voiced what many others also wanted to say: namely that Orikuchi provided unadulterated Japanese “thought” in relation, moreover, to a pure Japanese object. Isoya says:

Orikuchi Shinobu is a very Japanese thinker. We can not find traces of confrontation with the West (seiō) in his formative years nor in his work as is the case with [Nishida Kitarō, Kuki Shūzō, Natsume Sōseki, and Mori Ōgai]. It is because the object of research for Orikuchi belongs to a quintessentially Japanese realm and this object cannot be dealt with by merely applying mechanically the rational methodology prefabricated and imported from the West.18

In all fairness to Isoya, I must say that he immediately qualifies this statement by adding, “but Orikuchi, too, developed his creative theory of language based upon his encounter with the human sciences and concepts imported from the West.”19 Even so, Isoya nonetheless frames Orikuchi as a metonym of a culture defined by its quintessential identity. The fact that this blatant contradiction is not sensed as such renders it even more problematic and points to the nature of the desire that is operating in this form of discourse.

As an expression of such a desire, Orikuchi’s text functions as an index of the inability of certain forms of contemporary cultural discourse in Japan to imagine historical and cultural “others.” It points to a limit heterogeneous to the current ideological field. In this way Orikuchi has become an object of intellectual history at the same time as his texts have become the site of production for contemporary discourse on culture. It is at this site of production that I will try to trace the contours of the other that is the “other” to the contemporary Japanese cultural discourse. As we shall see next, Orikuchi’s work is more rigorously modern in its struggles with the issue of alterity, than the discussions of the post-war critics who approach this issue by “misreading” his texts.


19 ibid.
The Language of “Resemblance Effect”

I have indicated above that the traces of the operations employed by Orikuchi in order to write cultural history seem to have suggested to his readers a transcendence of the structure of the modern epistemic space. I will try to show that such an assumption is unwarranted, but that is not the whole story. In Orikuchi’s work, these traces point to what the author himself called the problem of the “resemblance effect” (ruika sayō), or the function, both willed and natural, in language to overcome its fundamental nature of “mediated-ness.” The question then is the theoretical status of the notion of the “resemblance effect”; that is, in what kind of poetics does it operate and in what kind of epistemic space is it constrained? In trying to answer this question we shall also see what Orikuchi meant by the “mediated-ness” of language.

In order to gain a provisional sense of what Orikuchi meant by the “resemblance effect,” I will turn to one of his very early essays. It is entitled Gengo jōchō ron [A Theory of Linguistic Sentiments] and was originally a graduation thesis on poetics submitted to Kokugakuin University in 1910. My purpose in turning to this text is not to find a point of origin for Orikuchi’s work, but to delineate the nature of the problematic that he brought to the fore in his writing. This text was constituted at the juncture of two intersecting discourses, one on poetics and the other on epistemology or theory of consciousness. It begins by developing an epistemic space within which language operates. While the nature of this space itself is a problem to which I must return, the operation of language within it is, for Orikuchi, basically a function of poetic language as the subject matter of the major portion of this text indicates. In this text, Orikuchi incorporated three earlier essays entitled “Waka hihan no hanchū” [“Categories of Waka Criticism”] I, II and III as the last three chapters of his thesis. Thus, it is clear that the text was the product of theory on waka poetics erected on the border of the disciplines that we would now call prosody and psycho-linguistics. At issue, however, was the nature not of “sound symbolism” but of what may be translated as “sound sentimentalism” (onkaku jōchō); that is, the question of how sound and prosodic elements relate not to meaning but to individuated sentiments.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{20}\) For the study on the relation of the texts and the notion of jōchō, see the two essays by Takahashi Naoji, “Orikuchi Shinobu no Gengo jōchō ron” [Orikuchi Shinobu’s On Linguistic Sentiment] and “Orikuchi Shinobu no Jōchō” [Orikuchi Shinobu’s ‘Sentiment’] in Takahashi Hiromitsu, Yanagita Kunio to Orikuchi Shinobu—gakumon to sōsaku no aida [Yanagita Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu—Between Discipline and Artistic Creation], (Tokyo: Yūseidō Shuppan, 1989), 121-150.
Without going into the details of Orikuchi’s prosody, I can point to the fact that the problematic behind the technicalities of his sound theory was the possibility and the desire of language to transcend its mediated nature in relation to consciousness and attain “immediacy.” This possibility itself presupposed a conception of language as “a process of generating representations by the mediation of speech forms” in the consciousness. This process was defined along two axes: one, in relation to the “universal,” without which there would be no common understanding among individual subjects, and two, in relation to “referentiality,” i.e., the relationship with the exterior world (taikyō), without which there would be no individuation. According to this theory of language, “speech form” produces a “representation” (hyōshō) accompanied by a sense of certitude in the consciousness. But this representation is a “pseudo-representation” (kashō) until either the universal is grasped by some form of “eidetic” intuition or its effect of “pseudo-certitude/sense” (kakan) is transformed into an “actual certitude/sense” (jikkan) by a “resemblance effect” (ruika sayō). The “effect” that takes place in the consciousness is synonymous to the “association” of “actual senses” founded upon experience. Orikuchi claims that the subject and language have the desire to fulfill this intuition and/or to activate the association in order to attain immediacy. Thus, Orikuchi’s sound theory in poetics was one delimited case, albeit the most developed argument presented by him, of theorizing both the possibility and desire of language for immediacy.21

A brief comparison of Orikuchi’s poetics with that of the Russian Formalists is in order in that it helps to assess the general thrust made in his writings. Apparently, the desire for immediacy in Orikuchi’s theory places it in diametric opposition to that of the Formalists, who were his contemporaries. One recalls that Sklovskij’s argument for poetic experimentation found its full formalist expression in Jakobson when he stated in 1933 that:

The function of poetry is to point out that the sign is not identical with its referent, because along with the awareness of the identity of the sign and the referent (A is A1), we need the consciousness of the inadequacy

21 In historical terms, the psychology behind Orikuchi’s argument was most likely that of Th. Ziehen whose theory was introduced by Matsumoto Kōjirō as Ziehen-shi shinrigaku kaisetsu [A Commentary on Mr. Ziehen’s Psychology] published by Ikusei-Kai in 1900. For this, see Takahashi Naoji, “Orikuchi Shinobu no Gengo jōchō ron” [Orikuchi Shinobu’s On Linguistic Sentiment].
of this identity (A is not A1); this antimony is essential, since without it the connection between the sign and the object becomes automatized and the perception of reality withers away.  

This function of poetic language to "defamiliarize" in order to counter the effects of the automatization of everyday and bureaucratized speech was a strategy to put the referential function of sign in jeopardy so that the "reality" could be recovered. As can readily be seen, Orikuchi's poetics is curiously both a parallel to and a contestation of the Formalists' theory.

The formalist strategy to destabilize the referential identity of a sign is countered, in Orikuchi, by a strategy to recover the experiential certitude of representations. For Orikuchi, the function of poetry is, in a sense, to point out that the representation can be identical with its referent. The difference then is in the underlying assumptions concerning the automatization of speech for the Formalists and the mediateness of language for Orikuchi, neither of which can immediately be made commensurate to the other. What must be noted, however, is that the epistemic space Orikuchi's theory posits is the same as that of the Formalists. They both operate, resisting it is true but nonetheless, within the modern horizon articulated by the subject-object opposition as the fundamental constraints of knowledge, poetic or otherwise. The issue of immediacy itself is predicated upon this epistemological rupture produced by the subject-object schema.

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23 Skloveskij's phrase for defamiliarization was "making it strange."

24 From a general theory of poetics, it would be interesting to compare and contrast more rigorously Orikuchi's theory of poetic language with the contemporary development in Russian Formalism, its notion of poetic language, its dalliance with the emotive coloring of phonetic elements, and its increasing opposition to the Symbolist assumption of sound symbolism. Orikuchi ends up presenting to us a notion of poetic language that is diametrically opposed to that of his European contemporaries. Moreover, he was anti-Symbolist and therefore against the Tokugawa Nativist's ongi setsu. One attempt at comparing Orikuchi's theory of poetic language and Russian Formalism is that of Isoya who perceives the opposition in their respective views, and attributes it to the difference in Japanese waka poetry and Western/Chinese poetry. See Isoya Takashi, "Orikuchi Shinobu no 'Shiteki gengo-ron' ni okeru sonzai no bijyon" ["The Vision of Being in Orikuchi Shinobu's 'Theory of Poetic Language'""] in Sasaki Jujiro et. al, *Op cit*, 7-27.
One sees then that Orikuchi's notion of "resemblance effect" is subsumed within a poetics of immediacy and operates within a modern epistemic space articulated by a distancing of the subject-object relation. It is an effect that functions in the consciousness of the subject to produce "actual sense/certitude" based upon experience. The functioning of the effect is essentially associationalist or in the form of metaphor and metonymy, to adopt a more semiological expression. Orikuchi elevated this "resemblance effect" to the methodological "competence" of the subject engaged in folk studies twenty-one years later, in an "Afterword" to the third volume of Kodai kenkyū [Archaic Studies]. Called the "faculty of association" (ruika seinō), it, along with its counterpart termed the "faculty of differentiation" (bekka seinō), becomes indispensable to the comparative method, which has as its principal goal to establish relations among cultural forms. "The former is the tendency to intuitively grasp similarity and the latter is that which allows the sudden perception of difference," says Orikuchi.25 Thus nothing in these two decades suggests that Orikuchi has moved beyond the epistemic space he delineated in his early essay on linguistic sentiments. And that space was, in the classic sense of the term, fundamentally modern in nature.

Discourse on the Alterity of Space

Having confirmed the nature of the epistemic space and the "technologies" of the operations in which Orikuchi was engaged, I will now turn to the main issue of how a discursive closure was effected in the concrete instances of his textual production. As I have already noted in the beginning of this paper, Orikuchi's single most important and controversial contribution to the study of Japanese cultural forms was the "visiting-god" (marebito) theory. Indeed, this theory is unparalleled in providing a systematic understanding of the multifarious forms of Japanese cultural productions. From the emergence of literary and artistic forms to the content of those forms themselves, this was a theory that was capable of explication, imparting to the reader a sense of aesthetic satisfaction that seems to arise from none other than its totalizing effects.26 But what is this "visiting-god?"


26 Harry Harootunian says of Orikuchi's "visiting-god": "When Origuchi Shinobu proposed his theory of the 'gods who rarely come' (marebito) as the irreducible source of difference and otherness, he seems to have gotten no further than Yanagita, even though it was his intention to displace the source of creativity to the place of the Other. For, he ended up specifying the Other in
"The visiting-god (marebito) is a word that, in the past, referred to a god who was thought to come to visit periodically from the eternal land (tokoyo) ..." to bring blessings to the villagers, so says Orikuchi in the celebrated third version of an essay titled "Kokubungaku no hassei" [The Genesis of Native Literature] published in 1929.27 The "visiting-god" paradigm consists of a system of concepts that can be read as a description of a ritual, a problem to which I shall return in the next section.

For our immediate purpose, I must stress the fact that the paradigm can also be situated in, and seen as the culminating point of, the discourse on spatial alterity, the ikyō (the place of the "other"), that preoccupied Orikuchi in the ten years before he wrote "The Emergence of National Literature." The original title of this article, "Tokoyo oyobi marebito" [The Eternal Land and the Visiting God]—which juxtaposes the two problems of spatial alterity and the ritual paradigm—anticipates even on the level of thematics the culmination of the issue of spatial alterity in the form of the theory of the "visiting-god."28 Tracing the development of this discourse will provide a test case for understanding the way in which spatial alterity is theoretically figured in Orikuchi's discourse. In anticipation of the outcome, one notices immediately that the competing paradigms of Romanticism, Diffusionism, and Evolutionism are mobilized in order to come to terms with the problem of spatial alterity as it is articulated in the classic texts in relation to with Orikuchi constructs his argument.29

In an often quoted passage found in almost identical forms in both the 1916 article titled "Ikyō ishiki no shinten" [The Development

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27 One needs to note that the first full exposition of this "visiting-god" is given in the paper with this title, the significance of which will become clear below. Furthermore, this article happens to be the very first article of the first volume of the 32-volume Collected Works of Orikuchi. It was originally published as "Tokoyo oyobi marebito" [The Eternal Land and the Visiting-God] in the journal called Minzoku [Ethnos] vol. 4-2 in 1929.

28 See footnote 27.

29 For a more substantive treatment of the thematics of the spatial alterity in Orikuchi's text, see Susan Burns, "The Place of the Other—Ikyō in the Discourse of Origuchi Shinobu," (unpublished manuscript).
of Consciousness of the Other Land] and the 1920 article called “Hahagakuni he, Tokoyo he” [Towards the Motherland, the Eternal Land], Orikuchi reveals the nature of the discourse in which he initially placed the problem of the alterity of space. He says in a moving, poetic statement:

I went to Kumano several years ago and at high noon, when I stood on the edge of Cape Daiō-ga-saki where it jutted out into the sea, I felt, with an emotion so strong I could hardly endure it, that, at the end of the path of waves, there may lie the home of my soul. I do not want others to think that this is merely a poet’s sentiment. I believe it is a nostalgia born of atavism.30

This “nostalgia born of atavism” is the longing for the homeland of the folk, the memories of which flow in one’s own blood.31 Orikuchi appeals to the “community of fate” in order to legitimate his “poet’s sentiment.” The nostalgia for the past of the folk, therefore, emerges in the Romantic space in which poetic sentiment reigns.32

The problem of spatial alterity is formulated within this space of Romanticism. And it is regulated by the artistic imagination that aspires to freedom from and transcendence of human constraints and the “sorrows of life.” This was so, according to Orikuchi, not only for the “men of Meiji and Taishō,” his contemporaries, but also for those ancients who fantasized about the otherness of space. They were motivated by the same desire to be free from the restrictions of the “here and now.”33 Clearly it was Orikuchi’s modernist sentiment for “anti-modernism” that was projected into the far past. Thus, despite

30 Orikuchi Shinobu, Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 20, 87.

31 Momokawa suggests in a recent article that the notion “atavism” occupied the topos of social imagination, both in literature and thought, in early twentieth-century in Japan as well as Europe. For examples in Japan, Lafcadio Hearn and Natsume Soseki wrote of “atavism of love,” a repetition of ancestors’ love in their descendants, as a “scientifically recognized fact.” See Momokawa Takahito, “Hajime ni ikai ariki” [In the Beginning There Was the Other World], Monogatari [Narrative], (Tokyo: Sunagoya-shobō, 1990), vol. 1, 51-52.

32 Fittingly this article was first published in a literary journal Araragi, vol. 9-11, (1916) which was started by the poets of Negishi-kai, the followers of Masaoka Shiki, after Shiki’s death. It was devoted to poetic composition and criticism.

33 Above quotes are from Orikuchi Shinobu, Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 20, 87.
Orikuchi’s poetic sentiment, this discourse becomes less plausible when it attempts to deal with the heterogeneity of the otherness of space of the ancients. The places of otherness that appear in the handful of ancient texts, such as the Kojiki [Records of Ancient Matters], the Nihonshoki [Chronicles of Japan], the Manyōshū [Anthology of Ten Thousand Leaves], and the Fudoki [Records from the Provinces], are scattered references that suggest uncertain relationships to the “here and now” of the texts. They are, for instance, the yomi (“nether world”) and the takamagahara (“heavens”) of the cosmogonic myth; the “mother land” that the mythic brother of the diarchic Siblings, Susanoo, aspired to go to; and also the tokoyo, variously referring to the land of “eternal night,” “eternal life,” “bountiful riches” and so forth. The otherness of space in these texts appears as something polymorphous and heterogeneous.34

It is in relation to such spatial alterity that Orikuchi tried to weave a meaningful narrative, a narrative of interpretation that brings together the scattered fragments of spatial otherness and accounts for their relationships to the “here and now” of the text. Yet try as he may, a careful reading reveals that Orikuchi was only successful in creating a reductionist narrative when he provided interpretation by

34 More recent analysis, either inspired by or strictly semiotic/symbolic, is not successful in mapping out the cosmic geography of the ancient texts. See Saigō Nobutsuna, Kojiki no sekai [The World of the Record of Ancient Matters], (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967) and also Arakawa Hiroshi, Kodai Nihonjin no uchi-kan [The Cosmology of the Ancient Japanese], (Tokyo: Kaimei-sha, 1981), which is a development of Saigō’s work.

If we were to perform a semiotic/symbolic analysis of cosmic geography encoded in these eighth-century texts, we would conclude that there were two cosmic axes, one horizontal and the other vertical that articulated the world of archaic Japanese. The vertical axis created a tripartite space, the heavens (Takanagahara), the middle land (Ashihara-no-nakatsukuni), and the subterranean world (Yonii-no-kuni). This axis intersected with the horizontal axis running east and west at the center of Yamato, a valley where the first emperor was enthroned. East, towards Tokoyo, was the “positive” direction in relation to Yamato, corresponding to the direction of the province of Ise where the shrine for the ancestral goddess of the ruling “clan” was located. West was the “negative” direction, corresponding to the province of Izumo where the shrine for the subjugated land god of the mythical time was located. This east-west axis also connected the two sacred mountains at the east and west boundary of the Yamato valley. This boundary expanded with history, but the realm outside of it was considered to be the “other world” in opposition to the inside which was “this world” where men dwelled. The otherness of space no doubt referred to the realm outside the world of men, but beyond that it seems impossible to give a systematic explication to the concrete figurations of these heterotopes in the texts.
means of plot structures ultimately derived from Romanticism, Diffusionism or Evolutionism. The intuition that, according to some like Kajiki Gō whom I have quoted above, enabled Orikuchi to live the archaic past in himself is revealed to be an utter illusion. What we see instead are the strategies of an early twentieth-century intellectual who is trying to appropriate this alterity by means of the conceptual systems available to him.

In the initial article of 1916 entitled “The Development of Consciousness of the Other Land” Orikuchi resorted to a narrative of Diffusionism, in which a situation of competing cultural groups, each with their own spatial alterity, was postulated, in order to explain the concrete heterogeneity expressed in the texts. We see another attempt in the 1920 article, “Towards the Motherland, the Eternal Land,” which opens once again with a moving poetic appeal to the imaginary traditions of the folk. Yet, one immediately notices the Evolutionist story-line at work. The major portion of this article attempts to explain the heterogeneous notions of spatial alterity by imposing a developmental scheme upon the polymorphous notion of the “eternal land” (tokoyo): that one notion of the word gradually evolved into another, and then another, etc. These were sincere attempts to come to terms with the alterity of space in the ancient texts, but were nonetheless futile because the otherness always remains beyond Orikuchi’s discourse.

Orikuchi’s struggle to come to grips with the issue of spatial alterity took a dramatic turn in a third essay published six years later in 1926, called “Kodaiseikatsu no kenkyū - tokoyono kuni” [Studies on Archaic Life - the Eternal Land]. In this essay the problematics of the artistic imagination recedes and the Evolutionary framework is dropped. Close attention is paid to the customs of daily life both in and outside classic texts of the folk. In this new regime the spatial alterity of the tokoyo is defined in relation to the necessity of two ritual systems, first, that of purification and, second, that of the “visiting-god” (marebito). Within the purification rite tokoyo becomes the place where impurities are sent and, in the ritual of “visiting-god,” it becomes the place from which the god comes. In either case, the heterotopes are now described in their spatial dimensions as existing as a “function” of ritual.

We know that, in the article Orikuchi published four years later in 1929, the problem of this “visiting-god” became the major concern, and the issue of spatial alterity was subsumed within the “visiting-god” paradigm. This was also the time when the discourse that would henceforth enable Orikuchi to talk not only about ritual but
also about national literature and performative arts of Japan was completed. We are witnessing a major development, if not a fundamental transformation, in the discursive space in the second half of the 1920s. This corresponds, in a very different way, it is true, but nonetheless to the transformation that signaled the modern "closure" of national culture in Yanagita’s practice of writing.

But where does this shift in the discourse come from? We are able to pose this question here because we know the place the Ryukyus occupied in the discourse of culture in the early decades of this century. We know that Orikuchi, following the example of Yanagita, traveled to these islands twice, first in 1921 and second, in 1923.35 There Orikuchi confirmed what Yanagita “saw”: many elements of traditional Japanese culture in their authentic state. Note the surprise and the joy of discovering living tradition that Orikuchi expresses when he wrote about his visit:36

In the daily life of the Ryukyus in the present we can see directly the lives of the people of the Manyō period. Moreover, in not a few instances one can even catch glimpses of the traces of the pre-Manyō period. There are many occasions when more that just a hint for our study of archaic life is given. We find that life itself.37

35 Orikuchi’s two visits to Okinawa have been carefully traced by Nishimura Ryoichi and others. See Hosaka Tatsuo, “Orikuchi no Okinawa saihō” [“Orikuchi’s Field Visit to Okinawa”] in Takahashi Hiromitsu, Op cit, 172-81.

36 Both Yanagita and Orikuchi would have seen, one is tempted to say, perhaps to a lesser extent, it is true, but seen nonetheless, the same living traditions even if they had gone further, beyond the Ryukyus, to Southeast Asia and out into Melanesia, past New Guinea, as far as the Island of Duke, the home of the Duk-Duks. There on the Island of Duke, they would probably have been struck by the similarity of the costumes worn by participants in the rites. Yet, in all fairness to Orikuchi, I must point out that he became convinced that the Okinawan language was further apart from Japanese than was understood by contemporary linguists to such an extent that he expressed danger in claiming common ancestry for the Japanese and the Ryukyuans based upon purely linguistic grounds. This was a voice of protest against the assimilationist ideology of common ancestry and an index of how Orikuchi held onto the possibility of heterogeneity. See Orikuchi, “Afterward” to vol. 3 of the Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 3, 504.

37 Orikuchi Shinobu, Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 2, 29.
The identity Orikuchi perceived between archaic Japan and the Ryukyus is the determining factor of the so-called "significance of the Ryukyus" in relation to formulation of the discourse of Japanese folk studies.38

The irony of this situation, which not many have realized even today, is that the alterity of cultural forms in the folk society of the Ryukyus was transformed into a productive paradigm of contemporary and historical Japanese cultural forms. As a result, the Ryukyus as the "other" to the Japanese became a co-opted other. In this scheme a relation emerges in which one sees an attempt to establish an "affinity" rather than "dissemblance" under the hegemony of one's power and knowledge as is normally the case with the Western encounter with the other. It seems that in the classic European case, from the 16th and the 17th centuries, upon which the posterior form of a knowledge of the other was modeled, the desire of the subject was to write about the other by first establishing a radical rupture with the self, whereas, in the Japanese case, the similar desire was to write about the self by first confirming a continuity with the other. One should not, however, forget that these two determinations are basically similar, two sides of a coin as it were, in the modern discourse on culture. In either case the alterity of the other is obliterated through its appropriation.39

This co-optation of the Ryukyus was decisive. The problem of the otherness of space was given a fateful resolution. It became an element of the ritual paradigm of the "visiting-god" (marebito). In this instant all possibility of preserving the problematic of spatial alterity was lost. The otherness of space lost even the feeble status of a residue that refused to be incorporated by Diffusionism or Evolutionism in the discursive regime founded on the "artistic imagination" of Romanticism. Since this was the residue that pointed to absolute alterity, the above resolution marks the final completion of a "closure." Indeed the "visiting-god" theory totally undermined the alterity of space.

38 One recent example in English is Ōta Yoshinobu, "Otherness of Ryukyu Culture in Japanese Folklore Studies" (paper presented at the 42nd AAS Meeting, 1990).

39 Yet there does seem to be a difference between the two positions, which I cannot elaborate here. For the European case in the 16th and the 17th centuries see the two articles, "L'Oralité, ou l'espace de l'autre: Léry" and "Le langage altéré, la parole de la possédée" in Michel de Certeau, L'Écriture de l'histoire, (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
Perhaps this was inevitable. Historically speaking, the problematic of spatial alterity had lost its efficacy in the social imaginary, except for pockets here and there, as early as the end of middle ages (Chūsei) in Japan. At least this is what is strongly suggested by the works of medieval historians, such as Amino Yoshihiko and others, on the problem of symbolic boundaries. A contemporary intellectual historian Momokawa Takahito suggests that "macroscopically speaking, the notion of the other world shifted from a spatial alterity to a temporal alterity in the middle ages . . . " Interestingly, even Momokawa, who declares that he is trying to radically rethink the problem as an issue of human sociality in cultural, but primarily literary, history, ends up giving a functionalist determination to the problematic. In a passage that can only be a thin disguise of the "scapegoat theory" of ritual that was popularized some years ago by René Girard, a literary critic, and then by Imamura Hitoshi, an economic historian in Japan, he defines the "other topos" (ikai) as follows: "ikai is what is exterior to the community that appears concomitantly with the formation of this community when men shelve their ambivalent differences." This is actually no different from Orikuchi's scheme based upon the purification rite. The "ambivalent differences" that need to be suspended are probably strife between men. And strife suggests violence that must be expelled in order to maintain the identity, i.e., the purity, of the community. This is a

40 This judgment is based upon reading, sometimes between the lines, the works of Amino Yoshihiko, Nihon chūsei no hi-nōgyō-min to Tennō [Non-agrarian Groups and the Emperor in the Japanese Middle Ages], (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984) and Zōho Muen Kugai Raku—Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa [Muen, Kugai, Raku—Freedom and Peace in the Japanese Middle Ages], (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1987), Kuroda Hideo, Kyōkai no chūsei, Shōchō no chūsei [Medieval Age as Boundaries, Medieval Age as Symbols], (Tokyo: Tokyo Univ. Press, 1986), and other researchers of medieval history.

41 The notions of the "other topos" expressed in the works from Meiji period to this day — deployed by such authors as Kitamura Tokoku at the turn-of-the-century and Yoshimoto Takaaki after World War II — need to be carefully examined, but it can be said that this problematic is basically subsumed in the paradigm of identity in Japanese modernity. See Momokawa Takahito, "Monogatari" to shite no ikai [The Other World in the Form of Narrative], (Tokyo: Sunagoya Shobo, 1990), 54.

42 Momokawa, ibid., 53. The particular chapter is titled "Ikai to kyōkō" ["The Other Topos and Fiction"].
further regression from Orikuchi as we shall see more clearly in the next section.43

The Place of Cultural Production

I have mentioned above that the “visiting-god” theory may be read as a paradigm of ritual. As such, this theory depicts a ritual of reception consisting of the visit of a god (marebito) who brings blessings to the community and the holding of a feast in response by a host from among the community. The ritual consists of a dyadic relationship of god-man in terms of acting subjects and an exchange of feast and blessing between the two in terms of action. This structure constitutes the defining invariance of such a ritual although there is some difference in what Orikuchi wrote depending upon the particular text, for he wrote again and again on this subject.

In the expanded version of this ritual, the “visiting-god” not only gives blessings but also performs a rite that subjugates and pacifies (chinbun) the local autochthon spirit, the “owner” of the land, that threatens the community. The spirit, in turn, pledges submission to the “visiting-god” and, consequently, that it will bring no harm to the community. The host responds by holding a feast for the god. Thus, in this version of the ritual, the underlying structure of action, or exchange, basically remains dyadic in nature, while the dyadic relationship of acting subjects is transformed into a triadic relationship of god, man, and the spirit.

We can readily see here that the “visiting-god” (marebito) theory has the structure of a ritual as its major constituting element. Yet, nowhere does Orikuchi use the word or the concept of “ritual.” This is not simply a question of whether the modern and technical term for ritual, girei, that Orikuchi did not, in fact, use was in currency when he started writing about the “visiting-god” or not. Nor is it a question of whether the term matsuri used by him and most often translated as “festival” nowadays had the same connotation as the concept of “ritual.” Rather it is a question that goes beyond the issue of terminology. It has to do with the nature of the discursive space within which the text was written.

43 It is to be noted that Momokawa goes on to say that “the other topos must exist as something other in order for the community to exist as a self-enclosed system....By losing the opposition of interiority and exteriority, a community will lose the most fundamental opposition that provides the basis of dualism which is necessary for its continuity”, ibid., 58. This is a happy marriage of functionalism and structuralism.
To the foremost adherents of this concept, i.e., the anthropologists among others, a ritual is something that "you know when you see it" even though you may not always be able to define it. But what anthropologists call "ritual" is not always recognizable as such by the observing subject. What this means is the ritual does not escape historical determination. The notion of ritual as a "symbolic behavior"—like other notions such as "rule governed behavior" and "repetition that establishes a functional identity"—is a product of a modern understanding. What is important above all is that this notion of symbolism is a corollary of a discursive development that required that the symbols be decoded. This new formation allowed for the emergence of an authoritative subject that searches for the hidden meaning by interpreting the surface signs, which he himself has posited. If we bracket the relative sophistication of the theories of interpretation that were employed, it can be said that this formation was in place by the time Tylor, Frazer, and Robertson Smith, to name a few anthropological theorists, were writing about ritual. The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* published in 1910 reflects this situation.44

Orikuchi was certainly aware of this turn-of-the-century discourse in anthropology, because he was an avid reader of Frazer and the pre-war Manchester school, i.e., the "myth and ritual school." So we must acknowledge that he was trying to construct something other than an anthropological theory of ritual in the "visiting god" theory. What was it that he was trying to attain? The title of the essay in which the concept of the "visiting-god" appeared for the first time provides a hint. This is the essay titled "Tokoyo oyobi marebito" [The Eternal Land and the Visiting-God] mentioned above, which was published in 1929 in a journal called *Minzoku* [Ethnos]. Significantly, this paper was renamed the "Emergence of National Literature" and placed, moreover, in the very beginning of a three-volume study of archaic cultural forms entitled *Kodai kenkyū* [Archaic Studies]. The "visiting-god" theory was formulated at first to explain the emergence of "national" literature and then many other cultural forms. As such, the ritual depicted in this theory is not a symbolic behavior to be decoded but a paradigm or a mode of production, a relation of subject positions and other things, including language, that enter into

44 See Asad, Talal, "Towards a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual," in *Economy and Society*, 16-2 (1987), 73-87. Asad assumes a "change in the institutional structure and organization of the self" in order for this shift to take place.
exchange, the outcome of which was the production of various Japanese cultural forms, as we shall see below.

What should be noted at this juncture, before I take up the issue of "emergence" implied in the above formulation is, however, that the "visiting-god" theory is not the only conceivable way to retrieve the ritual structure pertinent to the production of cultural forms in Japan. Although this structure seems to find its objective referents in the traditional cultures of the Ryukyus and certain areas along the coast of the Sea of Japan, the majority of Japanese rites exhibited a different structure in the past. Orikuchi himself suggested a vastly different ritual structure, which seems to be more in accord with the widespread form of Japanese rites, in his very first essay on an "ethnological" subject, "Higeko no hanashi" [On Higeko], in 1915. The significance of a higeko will become apparent below but, physically, it is a basket-like object attached to the tip of a very long pole erected in festivals and is spherical in shape with long strands of bamboo, of which it is made, streaming in all directions.

I believe this essay is the first and the most penetrating work on the "shamanistic" nature of Japanese rites ever to appear. Orikuchi's hypothesis is that this higeko represents a god, and because it represents the god, the god takes "possession" of the higeko and thereby materializes. The import of this hypothesis is that the stable structures of acting subjects and exchanges between them is seriously called into question precisely because one of the subject positions, i.e., the god, can never be identified until it materializes in the form of a "possession" (hyōi) in this type of rites. Moreover, even when the possession takes place, the apparition of the god itself destroys the stable subject relations because, as in many cases, the object in which the god appears is another subject. The same agent of action becomes a place where two different and indeterminate subjectivities reside. There cannot be a stable field of subjectivity in this kind of relation, which, for lack of a better term, I will provisionally call a case of "possession" theory in contrast to the "visiting-god" theory.

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45 A reference to the distribution is also in Komatsu Kazuhiko, "Shiten, bunkjinruigaku—marebito" [Perspective from Cultural Anthropology—Marebito], in Kokubungaku [Japanese Literature], (1985), vol. 30-1.

46 So long as the notion of "possession" theory is used descriptively to account for the religious practices and beliefs that refer to a materialization of a god in objects and humans, it already has a wide currency, especially in Komatsu Kazuhiko's work. See Komatsu Kazuhiko, Hyōrei shinkō ron [On Spirit Possession], (Tokyo: Dentō-to-Gendai-sha, 1982).
One recalls that in the latter case a structure was provided, in which well-defined subjects related to one another in terms of the roles they play within the ritual. Not unlike the scheme of communication between two subjects that Orikuchi set up in this theory on poetic language, this theory assumes the existence of a particular space of subjectivity that enables actors to be agents of their own actions and speech in a stable relationship. There is no question as to the nature of the subjectivity we encounter in the “visiting-god” theory. Strange as it may seem, it is a modern subjectivity, and this is what forms the grounds for the possibility of the emergence of Japanese literature and performative arts.

As can readily be seen, there is a fundamental difference in the structures of subjectivity of the “possession” theory and the “visiting-god” theory. This, however, is not the received wisdom. Nor is there a recognition that there is a radical rupture in Origuchi’s discourse between the essays on gods that “take possession” and those that “visit,” i.e., the “visiting-god” (marebito). Just as blind eyes are turned to the fundamental shift in Orikuchi’s argument on the spatial alterity, the corresponding transformation in the understanding of the ritual structure remains unseen. In study after study on Orikuchi, only continuity is perceived in his discourse. Perhaps this is inevitable. Aside from the modernist constraints that govern the contemporary ideological field of Japan, the “possession” theory is the “other” of Orikuchi’s systemic edifice. Moreover, it was repressed by Orikuchi’s subsequent theoretical development and, perhaps, also by the rationalist moments of the ideology of the pre-war Emperorship. Those who embraced the imperial ideology could not have been well disposed to an image of the emperor as a half-crazed shaman, the kind that they thought they saw in the Japanese colonies in Asia. This of course

47 See the section above on the subject of communication in “The Theory of Linguistic Sentiments.” The structure of communication Orikuchi sets up is essentially the same as the Bühler-Jakobsonian communication model. See Orikuchi’s Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 28, S40-S44.

48 Yet this statement is not entirely correct. While I believe this is generally the case with literature, the performative arts exhibit a stronger resistance to this regime of subjectivity in Orikuchi’s writing. I presume this is due to the problematic of the “body” that cannot be avoided in the performative arts.

is the rationalist image provided by the center of the colonial "empire."\textsuperscript{50}

Yet, one needs only to glance at Orikuchi's "Daijōsai no hongi" [The True Meaning of the Great Enthronement Ceremony] published in 1930 to see this repressed "other" return and haunt the text. This "Great Enthronement Ceremony," at least in the eighth century for the line of Emperor Temmu and Empress Jito, was a complex rite that functioned as the common link by which multiple cycles of ritual were organized. Each cycle of rites in turn constituted the political space of the kingdom through the enactment of harvest rites; the temporality that structured the agricultural calendar; and the kingship proper, its succession, its genealogy, and its history. In the ground-breaking essay on this, the most complicated of all Japanese rituals, Orikuchi gives an astonishing comment, entirely out of place, it seems, after laboriously going over the elements that constitutes the ritual one by one, towards the very end:

I do not know what kind of god it is that appears in the Great Enthronement Ceremony ... The emperor is the visiting-god as well as the priest. So, in the final analysis I do not understand it well. In the end, it is as though the emperor is playing two roles in one person.\textsuperscript{51}

For the emperor to "play two roles" assumes a ritual in which the emperor is taken possession of by a god. It has to do with a god that takes "possession" and not with a god that "visits." This god, moreover, should be the "Imperial Spirit" (tennō rei) that was defined as one and sole existence earlier in this text in order, of course, to guarantee the identity of the emperor.\textsuperscript{52} Yet Orikuchi admits, in the passage above, that he is unsure of the nature of this god. He does not know because nowhere do the ancient texts indicate what the god was and because the "possession" theory that haunts the above passage and elsewhere

\textsuperscript{50} Sakurai notes in the Preface (Hashigaki) to his monumental work on Japanese shamanism published after the war that the study of shamanistic beliefs and practices were suppressed in the pre-war days. See Sakurai Tokutarō, Nihon no shamanizumu [Shamanism in Japan], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbun-kan, 1974), 1-4.

\textsuperscript{51} Orikuchi Shinobu, Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū, vol. 3, 236-7.

\textsuperscript{52} ibid., 194.
in the essay does not require knowledge of the identity of the god.\(^5^3\) The “two roles” that the emperor seems to play can only appear as such because the emperor is in a state of “possession.” This is an example of a different kind of subjectivity, the subjectivity that is indeterminate, unstable and in a state of oscillation.

One can readily see, in contrast, that the site of the “visiting-god” ritual which became the locus of cultural production in Orikuchi is inevitably modern in its formation. It is a modernist construct, as its stable structure of agents and exchange testifies. Orikuchi’s work is located in this modern space. Thus, the archaic and folkloric forms are modern forms that are produced as the “authentic” forms from the putative “reality” of the past or the “genuine” folk society of the Ryukyus or Japan when the transparent link of tradition is established in the production process of culture and history. In actuality these forms always remain the “other” to us. Yet, it is also true that any cultural or historical writing is an attempt to appropriate alterity by rendering it into a knowable other. This is the condition, it seems, that enables “cultural production” to take place.

**The Historiography of “Emergence”**

The “visiting-god” paradigm is one such example of cultural production that takes the form of historiography in Orikuchi’s writing. As already suggested above, when this paradigm becomes the master paradigm for the emergence of national culture, it accounts for all the historical forms of Japanese literary genres and performative arts. Understandably, however, this paradigm is not necessarily regarded as exemplifying a historical practice in the discourse of present-day folk studies. In order to show that it is historiographical, albeit in a very different sense from other forms of history practiced contemporaneously by academic historians, I will intentionally take up Orikuchi’s “literary” texts rather than those that can more “properly” be regarded as historical studies. For this purpose I will refer to a text called *Shintoku-maru*. This text is generally regarded as *shōsetsu* or a form of “narrative fiction” telling a story of a young performer by the

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\(^5^3\) The claim that the ancestress goddess Amaterasu is this god is a posterior rationalization that cannot be found in the eighth-century texts nor in the commentaries immediately following this period. For other examples of the “possession” theory haunting the text in question, see the contradiction in the way Orikuchi explains the “winter” rite (*fuyumatsuri*), the rite of the “invigoration of the soul” (*mitama-furi*) and the “palace” rite (*photono-hokahi*) in the essay.
same name who belongs to a Dengaku troupe of Sumiyoshi. Thus it may seem that I am guilty of confusing a "literary" text with a "historical" text, transgressing the convention of "genre" as it were. Yet, my contention is that this, as well as other, "literary" texts written by Ori kuchi will, upon interrogation, evidence an alternative mode of historiography that differs from that practiced at the (state) centers of academic learning. Indeed the text seems precisely to problematize the distinction of literature and history, and consequently the positivist notion of history expressed, for instance, in textual

54 In volume 17 of the Ori kuchi Shinobu Zenshū, pp. 514-529. The date of publication, originally assumed to be 1914, was convincingly repudiated by Takahashi Naoji, Ori kuchi Shinobu no Gakumon Keisei (Tokyo: Yüsei-dō, 1991), 217-226. Following is a summary of the story based upon Kenkichirō Iwamatsu's summary in Bessatsu Kokubungaku, Hirohiko Okano and Ryō Nishimura, eds. (Tokyo: Gakuto-sha, 1987), 137.

Shintokumaru is handsome and narcissistic at seventeen. Yet he has an "accursed disease" in his blood, which is revealed to him by his father who had been a master performer in a similar troupe in his own time. The revelation takes place one night when Shintokumaru is nine, when his father, already showing signs of disfiguration, disappears for good leaving him an orphan. His father's advice is to forsake this world and eventually enter into the priesthood so that this hereditary disease will come to an end with him.

Shintokumaru is brought up by his father's former disciple, Gennai-hōshi, who is the leader of the aforementioned troupe. Gennai-hōshi leaves Shintokumaru's hair long, in the form of waka-sha, out of his obsession for Shintokumaru's beauty, even though the latter has reached the age to shorten it in the adult male style. When the troupe tours the countryside in the spring to give performances during the rice transplanting season, Shintokumaru attracts the attention, as he is prone to do, of the daughter of a wealthy villager who is providing lodging for the troupe. Gennai-hōshi, his master, flies into rage when he finds this out, beats Shintokumaru, and shaves his head.

Later that year, during the harvest season, Shintokumaru lets his mind drift for an instant when he is singing in a performance of nenbutsu-odori. He falters because he remembers his desire for the woman. Gennai-hōshi, enraged again, demands of Shintokumaru that, for the sake of "art and Buddha," he copy the sutras with his own blood until the traces of writing will no longer reveal the desires of the heart. Yet even though he has said so, Gennai-hōshi himself is tormented by his desire for Shintokumaru. He can not drive out of his mind the image of Shintokumaru's soft, white upper arm from which the latter is drawing blood to copy the sūtra, nor the image of himself sucking Shintokumaru's accursed blood.

In the spring that follows, when the troupe is touring the countryside again, Shintokumaru has a quarrel with the other troupe members at a village house where they are being put up. The morning after, his nose starts bleeding and he must take a rest. While resting he falls asleep and dreams of seeing his father on a mountain trail. He wakes up with a strong urge not to remain idle, and this is where the story ends abruptly.
positivism (*bunken jissei-shugi*) and in the grand narrative of progress.55

In the favorable conditions of *our* contemporary historiography, we see in Orikuchi’s “literary” texts signs that suggest a fundamental shift and restructuring of the discursive space of historiography. The notion of temporality, the relation of the text to “reality,” the mode of interpretation and/or explanation, the positioning of subjectivity, in short all those elements that constitute historicity were beginning to show a radical transformation. This is evidenced in a short commentary attached to the text of *Shintokumaru*. In it Orikuchi suggests a number of intertextual relations in which the “narrative fiction” can be placed and read. First there is the field of relations, both comparative and historical, that is constituted of tales and legends embodied in the “literary” forms. Stressing that this story was written “after removing religio-ethical elements from the legend of ‘Takayasu-chōja’ and returning it to the most archaic narrative form,” Orikuchi establishes the intertextual relations constituted of similar but different narratives such as “Yorobōshi” in *Yōkyoku*, “Shuntokumaru” in *Sekkyōbushi*, and “Sesshūgappōtsuji” in *Jōruri* that are placed along the chronology of Japanese history and their relations explained genealogically.56 This is basically no different from the intertextual space constituted by the historiography practiced at the centers of academic learning in the form most prevalently seen, for instance, in political history.

However, for those who inhabit the space of “modernist” history and who “wish to read literature as a form of historical knowledge, as a particular mode of access to the past,”57 Orikuchi’s claim above to have returned the story to its most “archaic form” poses a considerable problem. For the homoerotic theme prevalent in the text, for example, it seems to be at odds with the “past reality” that this text may allow the reader to access. This question raises an issue pertinent to another intertextual space in which this text participates. To be sure, there is nothing in homoeroticism that precludes its identification with the archaic form of the narrative or with “past

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55 This is not to imply that positivist history is necessarily a narrative of progress nor that a narrative of progress is necessarily positivist.

56 Orikuchi, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*, vol. 17, 530. “Yorobōshi,” etc. are representative titles in respective traditional “literary” genres such as *Yōkyoku*, etc.

reality." Yet if the reader knows it to be a "fact" of Orikuchi's biography, he is led to question the arbitrary nature of Orikuchi's *Shintokumaru* as Kawamura Jirō, a student of German literature, has done in an otherwise extremely insightful essay. He says:

Therefore, the problem is how *Shintokumaru* can become a 'form of expression (hyōgen-hō) for the study of legends' when [Orikuchi's] propensity to love himself and those who are of his gender is revealed in the text, just as it is in *Kuchibue* [his earlier "autobiographical" narrative]? To begin with, the story line departs from that of *Shintokumaru*, the legend. Moreover, if the hero is clearly stamped with the personality of the author, one's suspicion becomes stronger: "is the text not an arbitrary fiction that merely borrows the title from a legend?" 58

One needs to note that Kawamura's objection is raised at the juncture of the issue of "historical objectivity" and the "authorship" of the text whether he admits to it or not. This juncture is located within the space of "modernist" history, but not in the new space of historiography that Orikuchi is trying to open up. The question of the "objectivity" of homoeroticism, one must stress, has no place in the new field of intertextuality that Orikuchi is trying to articulate. 59

Yet this issue of "objectivity" does have a subtext in Orikuchi's commentary that points to the third field, which is a new field of intertextual relations. This field has to do with the text itself and its outside, that is the historical "real" understood, however, in relation to the intelligibility of the subjects. In a crucial passage Orikuchi says:

> We cannot think of placing a very clear demarcation between history and legend. We especially question the possibility of historiography and the form of


59 Of course this does not mean that homoeroticism is not an issue in Orikuchi's texts. It can legitimately be so, but not as a symptom of "objectivity." It is something that should be dealt with in relation to a different theoretical concern, for instance that of sexuality, which, however, is not the immediate concern of this short paper. Moreover, one suspects that if the issue was heterosexual love, it probably would not even have become an issue. There seems to be an ideological bias against homoeroticism.
expression (kōgen-hō) employed in it by the contemporary historians. We think that the effect of historiography must appear in a concrete form, and that it should take the form of "narrative fiction" (shōsetsu) or even that of a drama. That is why I tried using shōsetsu form as the form of expression for the study of legends. What I would like to ask of the readers of this story [i.e., Shintokumaru] is to grant me a position of a raconteur of an archaic form of a legend... We may expand and add new elements but only to the extent that it is necessary to the story. We will never deliberately attempt to tamper with the story line [emphasis mine].

As one can see Orikuchi is proposing a new field of intertextual relations constituted of history and legends; historiography, "narrative fiction" and drama; and the historian, the raconteur and the readers. The question is the principle of articulation that orders this heterogeneity.

In this new field of intertextual relations, Orikuchi completely re-articulates the discursive space of historiography. When a series of rapprochements is made for the reader, first between history as a "real" process and legend as positivistically unsubstantiated narrative, second between historiography as "objectively real" writing and shōsetsu/drama as "subjective" and "fictional," and third between the historian who writes under the "canon of science" and the raconteur who recites in order to "persuade and entertain," all the terms of the binary opposition that constitutes a stable space for the "reality" of history become suspect for the reader. In such a way, the space is destabilized and re-articulated. History now becomes a question of "intelligibility" and historiography a problem of "poetics" of concrete effect for both the historian and the reader. Such seems to be the principle that articulates this field.

Yet, to understand the limits of this intelligibility and the space within which Orikuchi's poetics operates, one needs to see the kind of relationship he articulated between the modern subject and the past. This should also dispel any mystification Orikuchi underwent at

60 Orikuchi, Orikuchi Shinozuki zenshū, vol. 17, 530.

61 This is not, however, a move to aestheticize history, because the "effect of historiography" with an aim to persuade is a very real problem in this discourse.
the hands of his disciples and critics due to the misunderstanding of the *rapprochement* of the historian and the raconteur.\(^{\text{62}}\) In a self-reflexive passage on "historical novels" found in what may be a commentary to his prose text *Shisha no sho* [Book of the Dead] of 1943, Orikuchi defines the relationship that determines the present and the past.\(^{\text{63}}\) He says:

... the things I wrote may seem to have something to do with history but are really modern "narrative fictions" (*kindai* shōsetsu). But they are not modern "narrative fictions" that happen to be set in history. They are about the archaic life of a historical period that appeared as such in modern consciousness/ modernity (*kindaikan*).\(^{\text{64}}\)

The meaning of the word "history" is not stable and the statement is made somewhat cryptic, but the main thrust of the argument is clear. The relation of the past and the present is articulated as that between the "archaic life of a historical period" (*aru jiki no kodaiseikatsu*) and "modernity." Moreover, it is modernity that defines the "archaic life" and not, as those who would mystify Orikuchi may suggest, the other way around. Thus when history is presented in the form of *shōsetsu*, that *shōsetsu* is history as reflected in the modern "eye/I." There can be no question about this in the case of Orikuchi. This does not mean, however, that he was endorsing "Whiggish" history. Far from it, as the notion of "archaic life" will partly reveal. For Orikuchi, "archaic life" did not just mean antiquity, as others have already indicated, but also what was "authentic" in the "life of a[ny] historical period."\(^{\text{65}}\) This issue of authenticity takes us to the heart of Orikuchi's historiography.

*Poetics of History in the Margins*

\(^{\text{62}}\) As I have mentioned above, this mystification has to do with the claim that Orikuchi was a genius who was able to intuitively live the archaic past.

\(^{\text{63}}\) *Shisha no sho* appeared first in a serialized form in *Nihon hyōron* (January through March) in 1939 with a significant difference in the ordering of some of its chapters.

\(^{\text{64}}\) Orikuchi, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*, vol. 27, 182. The title of the short commentary is "Yamakoshi no Amida-zō no gain" [The Motif of the Amida Buddha Seen Over the Mountain].

\(^{\text{65}}\) See for one of the more recent expressions Nishimura Tōru, ed., *Orikuchi Shinobu jiten* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1988), 314-316.
In trying to theorize Orikuchi’s historiographical operation, I must return to the text of Shintokumaru. The question that needs to be asked is, what kind of effect is the narrative producing? In answering this question, the theoretical nature of what the narrative describes becomes an issue, and this will allow us to clarify the notion of authenticity. The function of the narrative, first of all, is to describe a life, a particular kind of life, in medieval Japan. This is the life of Dengaku performers. Dengaku, an antecedent to later day No, is a performative form that resulted from the evolution of Ta’asobi incorporating along the way Sarugaku and elements of Nenbutsu-odori. This Dengaku was the province of specialized “entertainers,” such as the troupe of Sumiyoshi in the narrative, who performed their songs and dances at shrines, temples and in the villages. The main performance of this Dengaku was, like the Ta’asobi, the re-enactment of what may be called an “anticipatory” rite of a bountiful harvest which involved a god from afar and the autochthonous deity. This god is the “visiting-god” (marebito) in Orikuchi’s terminology. Thus the life that the narrative describes is the life of those who perform the “secularized” version of “visiting-god” ritual in medieval Japan.  

One recalls that the “visiting-god” paradigm occupies a special place in Orikuchi’s discourse. As I have suggested above, it is not a ritual, the symbols of which are an object of interpretation, but a mode of production of culture that Orikuchi has formulated. According to Orikuchi, it is in the acting out of the reception of “visiting-god” that the origin of all traditional performative arts is located. And, it is within the structure of the ritual (matsuri) of “visiting-god” that the verbal art forms arise: the most primordial of the verbal forms are the magical blessings (jugon) pronounced by the visiting-god, to which, in the ritual structure, prayers of adoration (yogoto) are given in response by the spirits. This gives rise to epic poetry, which in turn produces lyric poetry, and then to all the historical forms of Japanese literary genres from the various monogatari to sōshi to shōsetsu, etc. This ritual structure produces not only the folk lore but also the folk custom that is

66 This is not to mean that there necessarily was a religious version of marebito rites being performed. By “secularized” I am referring to the accretion of elements of show and entertainment brought about by Sarugaku to the Ta’asobi proper.

67 For the history and ethnology of performative folk arts, see volumes 17 and 18 of Orikuchi’s Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū.
situated as the origin, ultimately, of all forms of literary and artistic genres in Japanese history.68

Orikuchi then is describing this “visiting-god” paradigm through the narrativization of the life of the performers. This life becomes the “archaic form of a historical period,” medieval Japan in this case, not only because this life is an instantiation of a mode of cultural production but also because, by this very definition, it is a site, if not the single most important site, of cultural authenticity. The text, through narrativization, presents to the reader in an effective story form a legend that is history, a meaningful history, in Orikuchi’s eyes. This history, as can readily be seen, is not a verifiable object of positivism but an object of “intelligibility” for the “modern consciousness” (kindaikan).

The history thus constituted emerges before the reader through description, but this description is no ordinary description, for it is embedded in Orikuchi’s textual strategy to establish an intertextual relation with the very “visiting-god” paradigm that is the object of that description. This is the material effect produced by Orikuchi’s writing and this is where his “modernity” (kindaikan) is slightly different from that of most others. Just as Bakhtin has exploded the boundary of a text and succeeded in establishing intertextual relations with the “carnivalesque” instead of merely describing it as an object in the work on Rabelais, Orikuchi also has succeeded in doing the same with the ritual of receiving the “visiting-god.”69 It is within this intertextual space that Orikuchi realizes a re-enactment of a life of Dengaku performers, a re-enactment that in itself encapsulates another re-enactment, the re-enactment by the performers of the “visiting-god’s” doings. It was Orikuchi’s understanding that, in the history of medieval performative arts, the itinerant performers established a

68 See the “Genealogical Chart of Literary Genres” appended to volume 31 of Orikuchi’s Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū.

69 To elaborate my point I should give a poetic analysis of both Bakhtin’s and Orikuchi’s texts, but this cannot be accomplished within the confines of this paper. I will merely point out here that Orikuchi’s poetics is analogous to the method employed by Bakhtin when he brought diverse elements into an intertextual field in his Rabelais as an example of “sociological poetics” put into practice. The term I prefer to use in the case of Orikuchi is “historical poetics” rather than “sociological poetics” but the basic properties are the same. For Bakhtin’s poetics, see Bakhtin, Mikhail, Rabelais and His World (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) and Medvedev, P. N. Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: a Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
strong sense of identification with the hero(ine)s of the songs and dances that they performed. Thus Orikuchi establishes a series of identities forming, moreover, a continuum in this intertextual space.

This brings us to the issue of “emergence” (hassei) and the kind of temporality the defines it. In contrast to a chronology of events, in the new space of intertextual relations that Orikuchi has opened, temporality takes the form of repeated “emergence” and production. He says, in a statement with Zen overtones:

A generative cause that has emerged [hassei] once does not disappear after a certain condition has been generated [hassei]. It isn’t that “genesis” [hassei] has a goal to “generate” [hassei] something and then to be done with it but it continues on generating by maintaining for itself a tendency to do so. Therefore, just because a certain condition has been generated [hassei], the generative power does not lose its efficacy or migrate somewhere else . . . the same cause remains and maintains the already existing condition.70

We can see that, for Orikuchi, history becomes a problem of repetition rather than a series or developmental stages of events unique or otherwise. The repetition is, moreover, a repetition of the staging of ritual production, which becomes a place of production of history, the history of cultural authenticity.

Thus in Orikuchi folk studies the “visiting-god” (marebito) theory was about the “emergence” (hassei) of Japanese “national culture” in history, specifically in relation to literature and performative arts. This term “emergence” had a complex connotation for Orikuchi, for it entailed the problematics of the relation of “origin” and history as making, on the one hand, and of literature and history as writing, on the other.71 In pointing out a number of relevant issues in this problematic, I need to confirm the fact that Orikuchi saw “literature” and “history” as basically similar in nature. In concrete terms, they both have their “origin” in the “ritual incantation” (jushi) that the “storytellers” (kataribe) chant at the occasion of a ritual. This similarity is at the foundation of the conception of history in the


"visiting-god" theory. This means, first of all, that history for Orikuchi was a problem of meaning rather than a repository of "facts" to be revealed. It was a problem of meaning, moreover, placed in the site of its production. Thus there was a persistent effort on his part to establish this site and define the space in which the historical discourse was deployed. Secondly, it means that history was a problem of repetition rather than a series or developmental stages, although he did write on the stages of Japanese literature. These writings were, for the most part, of the nature of textbooks and were meant for enlightenment of a popular audience. The repetition for Orikuchi was, moreover, a repetition of the staging of ritual production, which became a place of production of history. History was not conceived of as a series of events unique or otherwise. Rather, it was posited first and foremost as a place of production and it was this place that was narrated as modern "literature" (shōsetsu). Such a historical enterprise was necessarily marginal in relation to the mainstream Japanese historiography of the early twentieth century.

Modernist Critique of History in Folk Studies

In order to highlight how different this notion of history was in the setting contemporary to Orikuchi in the 1920's, I will return to Yanagita's historiography, with which I started this paper. In Yanagita's practice of folk studies, when he tries to account for, for instance, folktales, whether "fantastic" in nature or not, he transfers them to the space of rational possibility within the historical real. The tales are placed in a series defined by a notion of linear temporality, along which an initial point, or origin, is sought. This origin provides the originary form and the meaning of the tales, which are considered to change over time along the series thus constructed. Yanagita's historiographical operation, therefore, provided a conception of history in the form of temporality that underpins a

72 See Miura Osamu, "Moji no yokuatsu-gengo-onsei-kan to Orikuchi gakusetsu" ["Suppressing Writing—Theory of Speech and Orikuchi's Theory"] in Sasaki et. al., Op cit, 83.

73 This is the source of the unsettling effect produced by the strange combination of an esoteric and archaic theme and a thoroughly modern voice in Orikuchi's "literature."
succession of forms with a beginning. This was very close to the notion of temporality in the historiography practiced at the academic center, say, in the form of political or cultural history. The major difference was in the way Yanagita “spatialized” this temporality and the objection to the reliance upon the use of written documents. Historical documents also existed in the life of the folk, inscribed in the national space and the body of the individual by the process of repetition from the bygone days. Thus there was a significant difference in the historiographical operation of the two closely related founders of folk studies.

Yanagita was and still is more accessible than Orikuchi to the post-war historians of Japan. These are the historians who inherited the “modernist historiography” (kindai-teki shigaku) that evolved through the Meiji years and flowered in the twenties in the so-called “liberal bourgeois historiography,” expressed most memorably in the works of Tsuda Sōkichi and to a far lesser extent in that of the now almost forgotten cultural history of Nishida Naojirō, for instance. Yet it is essentially those who inherited this past that view Yanagita’s folk studies as exhibiting a “limiting case” of historiography. This view is set forth by an academic historian for the very first time, almost a quarter-century later, in the not unfavorably disposed critique given by Ienaga Saburō in 1950. According to this view of the establishment, Yanagita’s folk studies provides an invaluable supplement to Japanese history, both in the use of non-written sources and the consequent construction of a new subject, the jōmin, that exists outside pre-existing (“modernist”) historiography. The point that is stressed, however, is that his discourse nonetheless assumes and must presuppose the history of the “modernist” historiography. Yanagita’s folk studies is said to be an auxiliary science or a body of knowledge.


75 [For a fuller treatment of Yanagita’s “spatialization” of history and the concomitant establishment of the “enduring common folk” (jōmin) as the subject of the hermeneutics of the “spatial history” of the nation, see my unpublished manuscript, “Towards a Spatial History of the Nation: the Historiographical Operations in Yanagita Folk Studies” (1993).]

76 Ienaga Saburō, “Yanagita shigaku-ron,” Nihon no kindai-shigaku (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoron-sha, 1957), 93-135. This paper was originally published in 1953 in Gendai shigaku hihan but was written in 1950 according to the author’s “Afterword.” See p. 135.
whose structuration is regulated in the last instance by the hegemony of this history. The spatialization of history is here conveniently ignored.

If Yanagita’s discourse was considered as a limiting case of historical practice, then Orikuchi’s historiography seemed to be guaranteed marginality. Thus it is not surprising to find a noted ancient historian of Marxist persuasion, Kitayama Shigeo, criticizing in the heydays of post-war modernism, in the early sixties, the marginality of Orikuchi. Kitayama wrote:

He [i.e., Orikuchi], unlike Yanagita, had a very strong anti-modernist tendency and immersed himself in the research of the emergence and the essence of archaic or pre-archaic religious customs and various folk arts. In his hands the facts/matters pertaining to archaic emperorship and the court were mystified to an unbelievable extent. And one can understand the intellectual nature (shisōshi-teki seikaku) of this side branch of [Japanese] folk studies (minzokugaku) merely from the fact that his work has become one of the sources for the group that arose in the era of [Japanese] fascism claiming an anti-modernist and anti-communist position.77

This criticism, neatly summarized by the phrase “anti-modernist tendency,” can be reduced to two interrelated accusations of ideological mystification and conspiracy with fascism, which, in this case, is an accusation pertaining to the problem of the emperorship in particular and of (Japanese national) culture in general. 78


78 Although the author does not specify, the so-called “intellectual” nature of Orikuchi’s work surely refers to that of the Nihon roman-ha, most excessively represented by Yasuda Yojūrō. One recalls the virulent criticism leveled at Yasuda by the acerbic marxist critic Sugiura Minpei after the war in which Orikuchi is named as the source of Yasuda’s pilferage. (Sugiura’s criticism is also quoted by Hashikawa Bunzō, Takeuchi Yoshimi and many others). Thus there is a complex problem between Orikuchi and the Nihon roman-ha that needs to be elucidated. The problem at hand has to do with that of intertextuality and hence of cultural production, if we are not to reduce it to an issue of who influenced or did not really influence whom.
I take up this criticism, not purely from an antiquarian curiosity but from a historical interest in a problem that is still very much with us both theoretically and practically. It seems that accusations in this mode of modernist criticism exhibit a lack of an understanding of the processes of cultural production. This lack is the limit that has plagued the Japanese "rationalist" discourse, of which "modernist historiography" (kindaiteki shigaku) is but one example, and it appears, in the case at hand, in the form of blindness to a possibly heterological operation of historiography. Interestingly, its own ideological obfuscation is exposed in its critique of the so-called "ideological mystification" in Orikuchi's discourse. The conditions of this obfuscation shed light upon the kind of distance that separates the "modernist" historiography that Kitayama and others embody and that practiced by Orikuchi.

Afterword

To be sure, no one reiterates Kitayama's criticism anymore. Yet, given the nature of Orikuchi's historiographical operations, it is nothing but ironic to realize that his "visiting-god" theory has somehow come to be regarded as an authentic and originary Japanese cultural form, at least among the followers of Orikuchi. Or to know that, even while acknowledging the hypothetical nature of this theory, many others treat it as if it were a part and parcel of the real historical culture reconstructed by the genius of Orikuchi's intuition from the sources in folk culture and classic texts. There is also something more than an irony in the more recent modernist's critique of this theory. These modernists insist upon imposing scientific rigor and refuse to see in this theory anything but an analytical concept or an explanatory "model," thereby reducing it to another tool in the social science of Japanese culture. This seems to be even more problematic a view of the "visiting-god" theory, even as the others are unacceptable and erroneous. Not only does it merely provide a "reductive"

79 This "rationalist" discourse can be traced back to the discourse of certain Tokugawa Confucian schools on the "intellectual" genealogy of modern Japan. See Koyasu Nobukuni, Jiken to shiteno Soraigaku (Tokyo: Seido-sha, 1990).

80 See the underlying assertion in one of the most recent works on Orikuchi that takes an authoritative form of a dictionary. Nishimura Toru Op cit.

81 See for instance Suzuki Mitsuo, "Marebito no kōzō—Orikuchi gaku ni okeru shinwa to rekishi no ronri" ["The Structure of Marebito—the Logic of Myth and History in Orikuchi's Theory"], in Marebito no kōzō [The Structure of Marebito] (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobō, 1974), Murai, Op cit., Komatsu, Op cit, etc.
reproduction of concrete knowledge, but also obliterates the very conditions of modernity that made the theory possible. This is highly symptomatic of the ideological field of contemporary Japan.\textsuperscript{82}

In the end, the nature of this symptom is, perhaps, well expressed in the very unfolding of Japanese folk studies. Its discourse emerged counter to the power centers of the modern Japanese state in the early twentieth century. It at first valorized the unwritten life of the folk and the heterogeneity of cultural forms. Yet as this discourse constituted the positivities of this folk life in the act of writing and speech, it was co-opted into an important cultural “apparatus” of modernity that produced the unified cultural landscape of the modern Japanese nation. And once it had fulfilled its mission, the discourse as a generative space was discarded to stagnate. Only the products of its past production are valuable and are still mobilized and, at that, ever increasingly to produce the new cultural commodities of today. This is the historical fate that has befallen this discourse. Yet, as I have tried to show, this discourse is still a fertile ground to develop a “counter-discourse,” for Orikuchi’s text does seem to allow a re-reading that points to a limit found in multiple sites within the current ideological field in Japan.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{82} [See footnote 5.]

\textsuperscript{83} [See footnote 5.]
Open Letter to the Fourth Annual
Yanagita Kunio Yukari Summit, 24-25 May 1990

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views about Yanagita Kunio’s scholarly project. We would first like to mention our reservations concerning the title of this year’s summit, “The Internationalism of Yanagita Kunio.” We feel that it would be more appropriate if “internationalism” were changed to “universality.” Even though the word “internationalism” was used to show opposition to such ideologies as “ultranationalism” or “nationalism,” it seems to us that it is actually trapped within the same discourse. It contains certain of the implications that led to ultranationalism in the first place. Even more important, however, is the fact that Yanagita’s scholarship was oriented more toward “universality” than toward “internationalism.”

Yanagita developed his scholarly methodology while Japanese society was in the process of modernization, a process that is often called “Westernization.” He was deeply concerned with the production in Japan of “another reality,” or “other multiple realities” resulting from modernization. As modern regimes of knowledge gained hegemony in economics, the natural sciences, education, and politics, Japanese society as a whole began to change dramatically, in the same manner as had happened in Western societies. Fighting against the totalizing momentum of modern rationality, Yanagita Kunio opposed the reductive activities of this “ratio-centrism” and attempted to provide a narrative record of the *kojisei* and multiplicity found in Japanese culture. These efforts have relevance—regardless of time or place—for people throughout the world who are concerned with the ill effects of an unquestioning acceptance of modernization. Thus we feel that Yanagita’s scholarship contains, in an especially concrete way, a universal character.

In saying this, however, one needs to bear in mind that the “Western rationality” that enabled social modernization is in no way confined to a single voice; nor is it truly capable of reducing the multiplicity of the histories of the various indigenous cultures in the world to a simple, one dimensional historical reality. Hence, these relations should not be conceived in terms of simple binary oppositions, such as rational vs. non-rational, modern vs. non-modern, or Western vs. non-Western.

Yanagita’s scholarship aimed at denying the ideology that claims there is a closure to rationality and thereby attempts to conceal those parts of society that did not conform. Given this perspective, we believe that Yanagita’s methodology shares an approach with certain European scholars, such as those in the Annales school, and American cultural anthropologists, who seek out the historical and cultural “other” rather than the conformed mainstream. In this symposium, Professor Kazuko Tsurumi has already pointed out the agreement between Yanagita and
the Annales school, so we need not discuss them further here. In terms of Yanagita’s relation with America cultural anthropology, it is well known that he was aware of the technical terms used in cultural anthropology by Boaz, Benedict of *Chrysanthemum and Sword* fame, and Geertz in his “drama theory of nationality.” Compared with the method of understanding culture intensively, in which the story is told “from the perspective of the native or aboriginal peoples,” the perspective that Yanagita espoused from the end of the Taishō Era to the beginning of the Shōwa Era was quite radical. He called his perspective “Collections by someone of the same country,” and in it he described how peoples’ “consciousness of their own lives”—narration that comprehends the culture—could not arise from within the nation or tribe. He recognized the absolute otherness of the other, the subject (ethnographer) studying an object.

On the other hand, this standpoint seems to end up closing off the possibility of understanding by the other; that is, the other (the outsider) may not be able to understand the countryman (the we). Extending this, there is a danger that it might lead to the conclusion that foreigners are not be able to understand Japan (or the Japanese). There is the danger of placing overriding emphasis on the homogeneity of the “we,” as opposed to outsiders, and thereby of treating ethnicity, language, and national borders as equal. If accurate, this would signify a serious weakness in the universal quality of Yanagita’s scholarship.

It is very interesting, though, that the series of methodological writings in which he criticized “collection by someone of the same country” were developed in complete opposition to current opinions. Hence, we cannot agree with the opinion that in Yanagita there is to be found a particularly “Japanese-style” of scholarship. The first requirement of anything that aspires to scholarship is “that it contain universality.” In this regard, Yanagita thought that his own research in *Tales of Tōno (Tōno Monogatari)* established the parameters of good methodology, a methodology that did not require him to be a native of the area. There was no grand plan for the construction of a typically Japanese-style scholarship in opposition to those found in the West. There were in Japan many “others,” with their own native cultures, whose lifestyles Yanagita dedicated himself to narrating and understanding.

We are of the opinion that it is possible to find in Yanagita attempts to methodologically negate the absolute distinction between “the seer” and “the seen.” In his scholarship, the ethnographer-subject is “the seer” and at the same time also “the seen.” In so far as the ethnological subject is “the seen,” it can be said to have internalized “the other.” And to the extent that the “other” continues to be an “other” even as it is also “the seer,” Yanagita has established a methodological structure that makes the existence of “the heterogeneous” possible within
the self. It is in this way, in fact, that he recognized the multiplicity opposed to the ideological, single-dimension of "ratio-centrism."

This orientation appears most strongly in Yanagita's early works, where he concentrated on the heterogeneity and multiplicity found in the margins and boundaries. On the whole, he sought out such places in the countryside, but his establishment of such an "other" may be said to express a universal desire for an ideal space within which to oppose the legitimacy of governmental control by marking the distinctive features of an "excess" that cannot be contained by modern objectivities. Later, Yanagita calls this ideal space the "pmin" and recognizes it within the people. For example, in his discussion of the "Yumeikai", he suggests that the social structure of agricultural society is not based upon Confucian rationality but is to be found in the "movements of the heart" of village people, or, to put it more broadly, in their "imagination." This imagination is opposed to the order espoused by the government and suggests the possibility of another social reality. We should perhaps note that the imagination is also found at the position from which Yanagita narrates. Ethnology may normally be thought of as the objective description of a subject matter, but in reality a great and fresh imagination necessarily lies at the foundation of this science and interposes itself between the act of writing and the subject that is being written about. On this point, we evaluate Yanagita's scholarship highly.

However, in the same way that in Yanagita there is a real danger of equating "that which is seen" and "that which sees," in the realm of the imagination, there is also the possibility of his being coopted by the "realm of reason" and losing the "alterity and otherness" which is found at the root of his critical efficacy. In this case, the realm of the imagination would become nothing more than a one-dimensional "place" that has the special privilege of penetrating the logic of social control. This is not a phenomenon unique to Japan, however. As indicated by the relationship between Irish ethnologists and W. B. Yeats, it can be regarded as a universal facet of modernization. Hence, while the realm of the imagination makes possible creative and invasive acts that oppose ideology, it also finds itself dangerously balanced between the role of critique and that of reproduction of the governing ideologies.

Yanagita's scholarship is of great interest in a world that has developed in the interstices between these two extremes. It is one example of the attempt to maintain traditional culture within modernity. Whether the "ethnological imagination" pointed to by Yanagita can serve as the basis for a critique of modern society or whether it can serve as a stimulus for new cultural creations is deeply connected with the problem of how one now "reads" Yanagita.
Signed by the members of the Modern Intellectual History Reading Group at the University of Chicago (in alphabetical order).

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