Japanese Folklore Studies and History: Pre-War and Post-War Inflections

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Abstract

By exploring the relationship of Yanagita Kunio and folklore studies (minzokugaku) in reverse chronology, I argue that latent political and disciplinary concerns undergird minzokugaku's reputation as a marginalized social science distinct from anthropology and history. The intellectual boundaries among these disciplines were founded on Yanagita's rejection of anthropology's Euro-centric comparative framework and history's concern for elites. Yanagita's double-rejection partially explains minzokugaku's marginality within the academy and its appropriation by activists and intellectuals in the post-war era.

Introduction

"The study of popular traditions is the science of tomorrow. It is a single sapling. It is our decision whether it will grow on mountainsides or be cultivated like bonsai. It follows that those who pray for its success are at the same time prophets of the future."

-Yanagita Kunio, *Minkan Denshou-ron* (1934)

This paper examines the relationship between the folklorist Yanagita Kunio and the discipline of folklore studies in Japan (民俗学, *minzokugaku*, also translated as native ethnology). By exploring selected moments in the history of folklore studies, I hope to probe the history behind two assertions about Japanese folklore studies: first, that Yanagita Kunio founded the indigenous science of Japanese folklore studies during the early 20th century, and second, that folklore studies has always been a marginalized discipline. My aim is not to refute the above assertions, but to move towards an explanation of how historical representations of folklore studies have been selectively constructed and appropriated according to the demands of the moment.

Acting under Pierre Bourdieu's assumption that all explorations of the past are necessarily informed by the doxa of present historical practice, I attempt to trace historiographical threads in the near present back towards a malleable version of the past that informs them (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:89). I begin with a critical discussion of the historical creation of the relationship between Yanagita Kunio and folklore studies by examining the canonization of Yanagita Kunio by public intellectuals, historians, *Nihonjinron* writers, and perhaps most importantly, fellow folklorists. In particular, Seki Keigo's 1958 history of folklore studies demonstrates recurring strategies of representation advantageous to folklorists in the aftermath of World War II. As a whole, the first half of the paper attempts to examine Seki's "The History of Folklore Studies" in relation to postwar appropriations of Yanagita Kunio's work, drawing out the connection between the marginalized status of folklore studies and Yanagita's posthumous popularity.

My discussion then pivots to examine Seki's work in relation to a controversy in folklore studies that occurred in 1927 during the publication of the journal *Minzoku* that, according to Seki, marked an important high point in the history of the discipline of minzokugaku. This particular moment in the history of folklore studies provides a snapshot of the struggle to define the discipline in the 1920s, a point that is often obscured in histories of the discipline produced after the fact. By following the discursive threads leading outwards from a 1927 argument between Yanagita Kunio and Waseda historian Nishimura Shinji, it is possible to see the articulation of contingent boundaries separating Japanese folklore studies and the neighboring disciplines of history and anthropology. These problematic and politically charged boundaries, seemingly unmotivated by theoretical developments in European and American academia, are essential for the representation of minzokugaku as a marginalized discipline in the post-war era. Folklorists such as Seki Keigo who wanted to revitalize their dying discipline in the post-war era were caught between flaunting the outsider status of folklore studies (one source of popular appeal) and forging productive links with neighboring disciplines.

A critique that attacks folklore studies by claiming that Yanagita's methods were unscientific inevitably misses the allure of his work and of folklore studies more generally. The same holds for a critique that sets out to prove that minzokugaku was complicit with Japan's turn towards militarism by pointing to incriminating statements written by Yanagita and other folklorists.[1] Minzokugaku's marginalized status and Yanagita's position as founder of an indigenous discipline cannot be entirely justified on the basis of theoretical assumptions and historical evidence-rather, representations of minzokugaku disclose competing interests for political influence and institutional resources rooted in a semi-autonomous field of academic production (in and outside the

academy) and a larger field of political ideologies. The difference between the disciplines of history and folklore studies cannot be understood without reference to power in the university system, and Yanagita's own place in institutionalized histories as the founder of folklore studies cannot be understood without reference to the ways in which his own work was mobilized by subsequent generations after World War II. Thus what is ultimately at stake in this discussion is our understanding of the complex relationship between academics and politics inside and outside of the academy.

The Canonization of Yanagita Kunio

> "An historian, referring to the history of early-modern philosophy, has noted that, 'all philosophers before Kant flow into him, and all philosophers after Kant flow out of him.' This is similar to Yanagita's relationship to Japanese folklore studies."

> -Seki Keigo, "Minzokugaku no Rekishi" (1958)

Endpoint for Folklore Studies: The Yanagita Craze

In 1964, Yanagita Kunio was featured in an article written by Hashikawa Bunzô in the first volume of a multi-volume series, *People Who Moved the 20th Century*. The first volume was entitled Intellectuals of the World, and it featured such international luminaries as Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Mahatma Gandhi. Aware that Yanagita's inclusion in the list would strike many readers as strange, Hashikawa claimed that Yanagita's contributions to folklore studies in Japan would have been insufficient reason to include him among the ranks of world-class intellectuals. Instead, Hashikawa tried to justify Yanagita's inclusion in the list by claming that Yanagita laid the groundwork for "World Anthropology" (世界人類学) by developing a theoretical, social scientific framework for ethnic research that could be successfully transplanted to all corners of the globe. Hashikawa argued that Yanagita had successfully realized the anthropological dream of a "science of humanity" by jettisoning the Eurocentrism that plagued cultural anthropology in Europe and United States (Hashikawa 2002:8-9). For Hashikawa, Yanagita's work represents a perfect fusion of the particular and the universal.

  Although Yanagita died only two years prior to the article's publication, Hashikawa was already arguing for his inclusion in an elite "canon" of world intellectuals. By the 1970s, articles by Hashikawa Bunso and other intellectuals had created a craze for Yanagita's works, catapulting him posthumously to the status of

celebrity intellectual (Morse 1985:11). Yanagita's scholarly contributions would soon be taught in secondary-school history classes, and excerpts from his essays and travelogues would grace the pages of many official literature textbooks.

Yanagita wrote his travelogues documenting rural beliefs and practices of the Japanese countryside in the midst of rapid industrialization and urbanization following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and World War I. Yanagita believed that these developments threatened local village customs with extinction. During a period that offers some interesting parallels to the early twentieth century in terms of industrial transformation, the new participants in the Yanagita craze of the 1970s were part of a more general "nostalgia boom" prompted by a period of rapid economic growth that occurred during the 1960s (Morse 1985:13). However, the turn towards Yanagita in the postwar era was more than a mere nostalgic longing for an idyllic countryside long vanished; it was, in part, an attempt to find a voice of resistance within Japan against the centrally-administered plans of government bureaucrats from Tokyo, whose developmental excesses had been garnering international attention as a result of the Minamata and Yokkaichi Incidents of the fifties and sixties.[2] In light of these industrial disasters, folklore studies, construed as Japan's only homegrown science, seemed to offer an alternative model of "endogenous development" that would avoid the harmful excesses of bureaucratic centralism (Tsurumi 1975).

As a former bureaucrat in the ministry of agriculture who resigned his post in protest of government policy (The Shrine Merger Act of 1908), Yanagita represented resistance against the center for many Japanese intellectuals during the seventies. In 1974, Ronald Morse, calling Yanagita a "hero for anti-establishment groups in Japan," described this phenomenon:

> People with as diverse a range of interests as Hashikawa Bunzô, Irokawa Daikichi, Kamishima Jiro, and Yoshimoto Takaaki have taken a serious interest in Yanagita. These writers, all interested in different aspects of Yanagita's career, are unified only in their firm denunciation of the pre-war emperor system and their basically anti-establishment attitude." They all found Yanagita's attempt to reconcile the manifest accomplishments of tradition with the requirement that society be made radically different supportive for their own work. Yanagita's term *jomin* which fuses the words for "people" and "folk" proved a useful weapon in the criticism of the ruling elite and the bureaucracy. (1974:187-188)

More recently, Gerald Figal has analyzed how post-war conditions encouraged the positive reappraisal of Yanagita's work:

> The outcome of the Asia-Pacific War ironically nurtured the conditions for the redemption, popularization, and application of Yanagita's work. In the aftermath of a war defeat that shook faith in prewar forms of totalitarian control, there appeared under the banner of a new democracy a new encouragement of learning that at least theoretically sought to decentralize power and knowledge while at the same time reassembling the material and psychic unity of Japan the nation. Although in practical political and economic terms much remained centralized before, during, and after Japan's postwar "economic miracle," a range of local citizens' movements, amateur research groups, and new cultural political discourses have been born of a distrust of the old center and its narratives, modernist and Marxist. The concurrent centripetal and centrifugal forces implicit in such trends are not unlike tensions of alterity and sameness pulling at Yanagita's folk studies. (1999:152)

The tension between alterity and sameness that Figal identifies encouraged the appropriation of his works by post-war thinkers from across the political spectrum. Victor Koschmann has also noted that while his works might have been appropriated by many left-leaning intellectuals, Yanagita himself has been generally regarded as a relatively conservative intellectual: someone whose staunch refusal to engage in Socialist politics enabled his voluminous writings, even those which seemingly originated as a critique of government policy, to evade censorship during the most repressive years of wartime (Koschmann 1985:131). Furthermore, Yanagita's work formed much of the foundation for "Nihonjinron" in post-war Japan, a seemingly never-ending discourse on the supposed uniqueness of the Japanese people.[3]

  The craze for Yanagita's work died down somewhat over the next decade. Following a reassessment of Yanagita's political activities in the 1980s, economic historian Iwamoto Yoshiteru extensively documented Yanagita's adamant refusal to publish ethnographic or historical data that might threaten the imperial system in pre-war Japan, noting that since Yanagita ultimately admitted the imperial household into his concept of "the common folk" (常民), the critical potential of that term became quite limited in Yanagita's own scholarly practice (Iwamoto 1992:3-4). American historians, including Carol Gluck and Harry Harootunian, have also contributed to a critique of Yanagita that accuses him of bolstering an overly homogenous vision of Japanese

community that elides difference and conflict at the local level while remaining beholden to the nation-state (Gluck 1985:186; Harootunian 1988:245).

While Yanagita's writings became the object of intense interest among intellectuals, Yanagita's field of study, folklore studies, was already in decline:

> Folklore studies as such had lost its sense of unity and focus before Yanagita passed away. The growth and expansion of folklore studies throughout the 1950's is evidenced in the journals, dictionaries and folklorist glossaries that were published...The problems, however, soon became evident. Folklore studies was still independent of any university and barely existing on small grants from the Ministry of Education. The post-war boom in social science research had left folklorists feeling that anthropology, psychology, and sociology were encroaching on folklore territory. (Morse 1974:122-123)

Although the field received a boost amidst Yanagita's posthumous surge in popularity, minzokugaku was increasingly equated with the field of "Yanagita studies" (柳田学), while anthropology, sociology and history carved up most of the remains of the discipline. Minzokugaku found itself unable to move past the theoretical paradigm established by Yanagita, while Yanagita-gaku tended to focus on endless elaboration of that theoretical paradigm through detailed exegesis of Yanagita's collected writings.

Despite his attempts to keep the field of folklore studies alive, once Yanagita became recognized as a metonym for folklore studies as a whole, his own death soon stood in for the death of the entire discipline. Indeed, even as he enthusiastically lauded Yanagita's legacy, Hashikawa Bunzô beleived that since cultural anthropology had absorbed Yanagita's anti-Eurocentric critique, it could now carry the banner of developing a more globalized discipline. For Hashikawa, the discipline of minzokugaku itself appears as a mere footnote in the teleological development of a universalist social science. The far-off dream of "World Folklore Studies" (世界民俗学) had been rendered nearly irrelevant, scarcely visible in the shadow of Yanagita's posthumous popularity.

Seki Keigo: Writing the History of a Marginalized Discipline

The Yanagita craze tended to obscure the conflict-ridden history of folklore studies by positing the field as Yanagita's creation ex nihilo. However, as folklorist Seki Keigo's comparison of Yanagita Kunio with Immanuel Kant suggests, Yanagita wielded enormous influence over the field of Japanese folklore studies years before he became

the darling of *Nihonjinron* writers and populist historians (Seki 1958:82). Yanagita's earliest canonization occurred in histories of folklore studies written during the last stages of his career. That being said, while Yanagita looms large in Seki's account of minzokugaku history, Seki's intention is to produce a disciplinary history of folklore studies, not a biography of Yanagita Kunio. Though Seki may imply that folklore studies only realizes its full potential with Yanagita at the helm, Yanagita still appears as only one individual in a folklorist genealogy that stretches back to Europe. Furthermore, unlike Hashikawa Bunso and other Yanagita devotees in the sixties and seventies, Seki never refers to Yanagita as "founder" (創始者) of folklore studies in his version of disciplinary history. In short, Seki attempts position Yanagita as an archetypal folklorist worthy of emulation without reducing the field of minzokugaku as a whole to Yanagita's writings.

      Seki Keigo (1899-1990) was a student of Yanagita's who is credited with devising a categorization scheme for systematically classifying folktales. While teaching at Toyo University and Tokyo Gakugei University, he became well known for exploring the theoretical connections between minzokugaku and folklore studies disciplines in Europe and the United States. Unlike Yanagita, Seki aggressively pursued a comparative approach to folklore and advocated a closer relationship between folklore studies and ethnology.

      Seki Keigo's article "The History of Japanese Folklore Studies" ("Nihon Minzokugaku no Rekishi") was published in 1958 in the second volume of the *Nihon minzokugaku taikei*, a series of scholarly articles aimed at folklore specialists. As mentioned earlier, by the late 1950s folklore studies was already facing an uncertain future, and it appears as though one mission of the editors of the *Nihon minzokugaku taikei* was to stave off further encroachment from neighboring disciplines by proposing ways to enlarge the field of folklore research through interdisciplinary work. The first volume is almost entirely devoted to articles emphasizing the interconnections between folklore studies and linguistics, archaeology, anthropology, and history.

      Seki lays out a possible guide for the discipline's future development by mining minzokugaku's past for models worthy of imitation (Yanagita Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu) and moments of inter-disciplinary brilliance that had enlarged the scope of folklore studies (most notably, the "flowering" of the short-lived journal *Minzoku* in the mid-twenties). In his postscript to the article, Seki exhorts folklorists to absorb the accomplishments of neighboring disciplines (sociology and cultural anthropology/ethnology) and avoid the stagnating effects of sectarianism (セクト化). In short, Seki's representation of minzokugaku's history as a heterogeneous and dynamic field, in implicit contrast to its present marginalization and stagnation, is neither a

fabrication nor a purely disinterested assertion. Instead, Seki actively searches the past for models to inform disciplinary practice in the present and future.

The opening of Seki's article stresses the uniqueness and marginality of minzokugaku in relation to other sciences, properties that he claims have characterized the discipline since before the war. Of prime importance is Seki's claim that folklore studies, unlike other disciplines, developed outside the embrace of the all-powerful state bureaucracy:

> Most of the modern sciences of Japan were imported from Europe already fully   formed. From their arrival in Japan up to the present day, these sciences have been nurtured in national universities under the state's protection. In contrast, in the case of folklore studies, it was none other than the researchers themselves who developed its domain, establishing a new discipline by virtue of their own efforts.
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> Furthermore, unlike "scholars"[4] in other disciplines, most folklore researchers active today did not enter into their chosen field of study by taking formal survey courses at a university. Instead, in an effort to solve problems they confronted in their own research, many researchers entered folklore studies from other specialized fields of inquiry...[having] villagers as teachers and the field as a classroom. (Seki 1958:81)

Seki characterizes folklore studies as a marginalized, independent voice in the state-administered world of Japanese academia. According to his account, the discipline has been marginalized both in terms of access to institutional resources (no national university departments) and in terms of intellectual prestige (other academics claim that folklore studies is not a real science).

At the same time Seki attempts to address doubts surrounding folklore studies' legitimacy by constructing an intellectual genealogy of minzokugaku and explicating the theory behind folkloric research methodology as constructed over time, he also wants to preserve the field's outsider status in his historical representation of the discipline. Seki's rhetorical double-break with institutionalized academia grants folklore studies scientific legitimacy while distancing the discipline from other fields of study (history in particular) that have been implicated in Japan's disastrous turn towards militarism.[5] It follows that if Yanagita declared minzokugaku the science (lit: 学問) of tomorrow in his 1934 treatise *Minkan Denshou-ron* (*Treatise on Popular Tradition*), the de-legitimization of historical studies in the immediate aftermath of the war led folklorists like Seki Keigo to imply that "tomorrow" had finally arrived and that folklore studies

should be promoted as the representative science of New Japan. Yanagita himself expresses a similar view in a 1951 essay attacking wartime history education entitled "Rekishi kyouiku ni tsuite" ("On History Education"). From the preceding discussion of Yanagita's appropriation by intellectuals in the 1960s, we might surmise that this particular emphasis produced results in terms of bolstering minzokugaku's relative academic prestige, albeit prestige that did not necessarily translate into greater access to institutional resources for the discipline as a whole.

　　　While Seki may have had ample reason to emphasize minzokugaku's institutionally marginalized status in the postwar era, I do not mean to imply that his representation of folklore studies as marginal dates from after the war. Indeed, in Yanagita's writings the narrativized marginality of the discipline has consistently paralleled the trumpeted marginality of its central research object, the illiterate folk, since at least the 1920s (Yanagita 1927). The fact that the central figure in the discipline, Yanagita Kunio, had renounced his bureaucratic position in the Ministry of Agriculture could only bolster claims that folklorists represented resistance to the center, although it may have more closely resembled the conservative agrarian (農本主義) movement than the socialist movement. That being said, the marginalized status of minzokugaku gained new importance for intellectuals disillusioned with the master narratives of modernization and Marxism in the sixties. The primary difference is that participants of the *Yanagita-gaku* phenomenon, many of whom were not folklorists, found no reason to partially de-center the narrative of minzokugaku from the discipline's most influential practitioner, since they had little interest in perpetuating the organized discipline as a science distinct from history and anthropology.

Marginalized Science versus Legitimate Science

According to Seki Keigo, the assertion that most folklorists are taught by humble villagers does not necessarily contradict the claim that folklore studies has an extensive intellectual genealogy, for this constitutes the very double-break with institutionalized academia that endows minzokugaku with added legitimacy in the postwar era. Seki's genealogy stretches back to Europe to cover both British and German intellectual traditions in folklore and ethnology, encompassing the work of Herder (ironically perhaps, given that Yanagita is compared to Kant), Riehl, Grimm, Tylor, and Frazer (Seki 1958:83).[6] It then shifts over to Japan with Morse's importation of anthropology into Japan in 1887 and the establishment of the Japanese Anthropological Society in 1888. Seki claims that around this time, Suzuki Kentarou laid the groundwork for what is commonly referred to as minzokugaku by translating Edward Tylor's theory of

"survivals" (旧化生存) which claimed, contrary to linear developmentalism, that traditional practices left over from earlier ages were not useless superstitions (盲信) but constituted an inheritance (遺信) from the past adapted to present-day conditions (Seki 1958:87). Seki also notes that the state had already unearthed valuable materials for the study of survivals by authorizing an early survey of village customs in 1880 (民事慣行類集).[7]

Seki indicates in the introduction that the emergence of Yanagita Kunio constituted the great Kantian dividing line in folklore studies (Seki 1958:82). Seki contextualizes this emergence with reference to a surge of interest in myths and legends following Kume Kunitake's controversial 1892 statement that Shinto was a remnant form of ancient sky-worshipping practices (1958:89). After publishing his influential work *Tales of Tono* in 1910, Yanagita Kunio teamed up with mythologist Takagi Toshio to found the journal *Kyôdo Kenkyû* (郷土研究 *Native Place Research*) in 1913. Seki asserts that Yanagita and Takagi borrowed heavily from the German folklore tradition when they asserted that the purpose of the journal was to "ground the organic unity of the folk in its foundation in nature and folk customs" (quoted in Seki 1958:92). Research was focused upon the examination of "remnants" found in everyday life within the rural regions of Japan.

However, from the relatively narrow scope of *Kyôdo Kenkyû*, folklore studies as a whole soon broadened into a relatively wide-ranging interaction with neighboring disciplines in the journal *Minzoku* (民族 *Ethnos*). Seki refers to this journal repeatedly as representing a highpoint in the development of folklore studies, a moment worthy of imitation in the present. A tension clearly exists in Seki's work insofar as he emphasizes minzokugaku's marginality and anti-academicism at the same time that he glorifies this moment of academic eclecticism. A closer look at this moment in Seki's history seems to disclose some possible reasons for folklore's rise and fall. In light of minzokugaku's constructed marginalization and Yanagita's popularity in the sixties and seventies, we must continue to ask the following question in the midst of inter-disciplinary fluidity: what made folklore studies unique?

Folklore versus History/Ethnology: Yanagita Kunio and Nishimura Shinji

"It may be stated as a general rule that history and folklore are not considered complementary studies. Historians deny the validity of folklore as evidence of history, and folklorists ignore the essence of history which exists in folklore."

-George Laurence Gomme, Folklore as an Historical Science (1908)

The Inter-Disciplinary Moment: Background to Minzoku

According to Seki Keigo, the bi-monthly journal *Minzoku* began near the end of the Taisho era (1912-1926) and ceased publication just three and a half years later (1925-1928). The journal was founded nine years after the first journal retrospectively associated with the creation of minzokugaku, *Kyôdo kenkyû*, ceased publication in 1917. During the 9-year interval between the publication of *Kyôdo kenkyû* and *Minzoku*, two other small journals, *Dozoku to densetsu* (土俗と伝説 Custom and Legend) and *Minzoku to rekishi* (民族と歴史 *Ethnos and History*) appeared and disappeared in rapid succession (Seki 1958:92).

　　Seki offers financial difficulties and/or interpersonal discord as possible explanations for the journals' instability, a situation that he claims reflects quite poorly on Japanese folklorists in comparison with Europe, where folklore societies had a much longer and more stable history (Seki 1958:104). In the case of *Minzoku*, my own guess is that its dissolution had something to do with the deteriorating relationship between Yanagita Kunio and the journal's head editor cum Yanagita disciple, Oka Masao. With the financial backing of Yanagita's colleague/rival Shibusawa Keizô, Oka Masao left to study ethnology in Vienna shortly after *Minzoku* ceased publication.

　　Regular contributors to these journals were loosely united by a sense of collective scholarly purpose, in part originating from the earlier mission of the Kyôdo kenkyûkai ('Native Place Research Association,' publisher of *Kyôdo kenkyû*) to explore issues related to rural life. However, Seki Keigo claims that by the time *Minzoku* began publication, a tripartite division had emerged already among these associates due to differences of methodological approach and research interest.

　　According to Seki, this division would eventuate in the formation of three separate "camps" of folklorists: one centered upon Yanagita Kunio and the inductive, comparative ethnographic method he ultimately used in an attempt to reconstruct a

transhistorical figure of the "common folk" (常民); one centered upon Orikuchi Shinobu and the deductive, textualist method he used to reconstruct a transhistorical concept of "ancient times" (古代) that existed within the hearts of the folk; and one centered on Shibusawa Keizou and his attempt to reconstruct the material culture of the folk by establishing the Attic Museum in 1921 (1958:101). Out of these three groups, Seki considers *Minzoku* to have been under the control of Yanagita, who was anonymously on the editorial board of the journal, and his small coterie of researchers (Oka Masao, Ishida Kannosuke, Tanabe Toshio, Okuhira Takehiko, and Ariga Kizaemon). Yanagita's aforementioned disciple Oka Masao assumed the official position of head editor.

When publication of *Minzoku* began in 1925, the scholarly definition of the term minzokugaku was still fluid. Yanagita, who was still decades away from postwar canonization, had not yet formulated a programmatic outline for the discipline. Although European theorists of folklore and ethnology such as Rivers, Frazer, and Gomme had already influenced the field of folklore studies to some degree for both Yanagita and researchers outside his particular circle of colleagues (especially anthropologists), minzokugaku's relationship to other disciplines was still a matter of contention among former members of the *Kyôdo kenkyû* group. If we combine this unstable state of affairs existent in the midst of a surge of interest in ethnological topics in the aftermath of World War I with the aforementioned fact that separate research agendas had emerged among Yanagita, Orikuchi, and Shibukawa; it should come as no surprise that the articles published in *Minzoku* display a remarkable degree of diversity. While Yanagita's presence on the pages of the journal is undeniable (he contributed at least one article every issue), *Minzoku* also features numerous articles by Orikuchi, as well as articles written by established university researchers less directly associated with Yanagita, including pioneering Kyoto Imperial University archaeologist Hamada Kousaku and Tokyo Imperial University anthropologist Torii Ryûzô. As Seki puts it:

> In *Minzoku* the issues became far more wide ranging than in *Kyôdo Kenkyû*, covering facets of anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, social theory, primitive religion, Chinese thought, art, and material culture. Of particular interest is the fact that the journal did not simply take up issues related only to Japan, but went further and took up issues according to a comparative ethnological methodology as well. (1958:102)

Yanagita, writing anonymously in the first issue of *Minzoku*, proclaims that the editorial board intends to "set no limits on the sphere of learning connected with the term 'ethnos' (民族 *minzoku*)" (1925:98). In the midst of this intellectual ferment, *Minzoku*

was criticized by cultural anthropologist Nishimura Shinji for lacking methodological and disciplinary rigor.

Nishimura Shinji

The November 1926 issue of *Minzoku* carried a provocative article by Waseda professor Nishimura Shinji reviewing the journal's scholarly output over its first year of publication. Nishimura was a dynamic young professor of history in the newly organized department of history and sociology at Waseda University. (His scholarship on ancient seafaring was renowned enough to prompt the translation of his major works on nautical history into English). More directly relevant to his involvement with *Minzoku* is the fact that he was willing to delve into topics of anthropological interest in the course of his research. In the course of these explorations, he published several works on anthropology and folklore, including: *Nihon no shinwa to shûkyô shisô* (*Legends and Religious Thought of Japan*, 1924), *Bunka jinruigaku* (*Cultural Anthropology* 1924) and *Taishitsu jinruigaku* (*Physical Anthropology*, 1926) (Nishimura 1978:425-8).

Nishimura was an historian heavily invested in the ethnological craze of the 1920s, much of which rested on the promise of a comparative conception of anthropological science, an academic tradition that Yanagita Kunio rejected in later years.[8] Two years before Nishimura's retrospective article appeared in *Minzoku*, his *Cultural Anthropology* was reviewed in the historical journal *Shigaku* by historian Matsumoto Toshio. I quote this review at length because it appears to both contextualize and express Nishimura's own vision of anthropology quite well:

> The Great War has heavily influenced national policy. In addition, we have begun to sense the value of national lifestyles and sing the praises of ethnic nationalism. In this state of affairs, it is believed that the threat of conflict among the races has been especially exacerbated. However, having experienced a painful and unfortunate war, we all know how much we should fear and lament conflict amongst nations, peoples, as well as races. In order to avoid future misfortune, the League of Nations has been organized, the call to love all of humanity has been elevated, and various kinds of effort have been expended in order to plan for the harmony of the human race. However, of utmost importance in achieving our aim of world peace is furthering mutual understanding amongst the various national ethnicities, and at the same time attaining knowledge of the human race as a whole.

While achieving mutual understanding is possible through the furtherance of historical research, on the other hand, in the midst of promulgating theories related to the rise and fall of nations and the inferiority or superiority of various cultures, one might instead engender feelings of national bigotry, over-competitiveness, and hostility. In order to avoid such excesses, it is important to discard the prejudices of individual nations and peoples and instead turn towards a vision of humanity's development as a whole, and in order to do so, we must rely on that discipline that takes the human race itself as its object of study: anthropology... Although opposing theories do exist for certain aspects of his work, Nishimura's text is to be considered the only reference work in cultural anthropology thus far, a subject that is almost completely non-existent in our nation. (Matsumoto 1924:154-5)

While Matsumoto's review locates Nishimura's work in a widespread trend towards increasing interest in ethnological research during the inter-war period, Chie Nakane suggests that Nishimura's term "cultural anthropology" (文化人類学) was rejected in favor of "ethnology" (民族学 *minzokugaku*) until after the war (1974:57). The content of Nishimura's *Cultural Anthropology* drew heavily upon British and American anthropological scholarship (Nishimura 1978:310), and Nishimura himself was partially influenced by Tylor's biological, developmentalist framework (1978:193).

Nishimura was already a well-established academic by the time he contributed his review article to *Minzoku* in 1926. He was a key member in Waseda's newly organized department of history and sociology[9] and had already published several sections of his multi-volume work on Japanese nautical history. That being said, Nishimura occupied an ambiguous position in the world of institutionalized academics. He was a member of a young, forward-looking department outside of the imperial university system, and he taught courses and conducted research in cultural anthropology, a subject that was apparently "almost completely non-existent" in Japan. Although Seki Keigo considered *Minzoku*'s core group to consist of "one big brilliant, anti-academic family" (1958:102), Nishimura was unlikely to be perceived as a symbol of institutionalized academia from the outset. Many contributors to *Minzoku* were professors, and even members of Yanagita's core group taught classes at various universities. Yanagita himself taught classes at Waseda on agricultural policy sometime around 1906 (Waseda University 1981:51).

On the other hand, Nishimura was a tenured professor at a well-established private university, and, through his translations and citations of foreign works, he was also a member of an international scholarly community. In response to Nishimura's

criticism, Yanagita would try to dramatize his position as standing against a monolithic, elitist academic establishment. However, an understanding of Yanagita and Nishimura's respective backgrounds confounds any attempt to conceive of their personal dispute in terms of a simple binary between "establishment" history and "resistant" minzokugaku. As will be explained below, the Nishimura/Yanagita debate was not a simple power struggle for institutional resources, nor was it a debate in which the terms for disagreement were defined entirely according to theoretical differences.

What's in a Name? Ethnology versus Folklore Studies

After making a few perfunctory remarks celebrating *Minzoku*'s first year of publication, Nishimura begins to raise questions concerning the appropriateness of the journal's name. The argument is rather confusing since it involves the use of two Japanese homophones (both pronounced "minzoku") with overlapping meanings. The question of *Minzoku*'s proper name is crucial to the stabilization of "minzokugaku" as a term of disciplinary identity. Nishimura writes:

> the first issue of *Minzoku*…seemed like an elegant, charming, beautiful magazine that had been lightly kissed on the cheek. That immediate impression came to me as a result of the name of the journal *Minzoku*. We always use the word "minzoku" (民族 "ethnos" or "ethnic group") as a synonym for "nation" (国民).[10] Considering the contents of this journal, I wondered if *Minzoku* (民俗 *Folklore*) would not be more appropriate? "Minzoku" (民族) was probably chosen as a translation for the [German] terms "Ethonologie" or "Volkerkunde"; a fact I was made aware of upon reading Oka Masao's article "Minzokugaku no Mokuteki" (民族学の目的 "The Aims of Ethnology"). However, we always use the English term "Folklore" to designate the discipline in question, and since this term is translated as "Minzokugaku" (民俗学), I began to think that *Minzoku* (民俗 *Folklore*) would be a better choice. It is unsuitable for this journal to deal specifically with the interconnections between culture and physical constitution (体質) that are associated with the word "minzoku" (民族 "ethnic group"). Furthermore in the case of "ethnology" ("etonorogi"), ethnic groups are generally defined in terms of physical constitution rather than culture. (Nishimura 1926:200)

Nishimura advocates writing the "zoku" of "minzoku" with a different kanji character, preferring the kanji-compound used to translate the English term "folklore" (民俗) over the one used to translate the term "ethnos" or "clan" (民族). Having differentiated between the physical and cultural aspects of anthropology in two recently published works, Nishimura decided that since the journal *Minzoku* was primarily concerned with cultural traditions as opposed to climactic and physical conditioning, it ought to adopt the translation of the English term "folklore" instead of a word used to translate "ethnicity" or "race."

What appears at first glance to be semantic quibbling by Nishimura in fact touches upon fault lines of academic controversy running through the histories of British anthropology and folklore studies. Editor Oka Masao's translation of a lecture by British anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers, "The Aims of Ethnology," established a decidedly anti-evolutionist tone for the journal, one that Nishimura was quick to pick up on in his critique. The journal would be generally concerned with the scientific study of culture (though not necessarily divorced from racialist assumptions), instead of the hypothetical environmental conditions for the generation of civilizations. The journal soundly rejects the outdated linear evolutionism of Henry Thomas Buckle in favor of the cultural diffusionism of W. H. R. Rivers.[11]

On the other hand, when it comes to choosing between British folklorist George Laurence Gomme's concept of "folklorism" (民俗学) and W. H. R. Rivers concept of "ethnology" (民族学) the question becomes murkier. As anthropologist William R. Bascom has noted, similarities between the terms "culture" and "folklore" have been at the root of controversy between folklorists and anthropologists from the late 19th century onwards. In the end, ethnographic observation was ultimately delegated to anthropology, although the German term "volkskunde" continued to refer to topics of ethnographic interest.

Given the semantic overlap between the British terms, it is unsurprising that translations for "folklore" and "ethnology" were generally interchangeable in the Japanese context. Since the origins of this ambiguity lay in the original English definitions, there was little hope that Nishimura's appeal to the authority of British scholarship would resolve the problem of *Minzoku*'s name. Nishimura's qualms with the appropriateness of the name were not addressed during the journal's existence, and, needless to say, the original name remained unchanged. After *Minzoku* ceased publication in 1928, a new journal using Nishimura's preferred folkloric term *Minzokugaku* (民俗学) was soon established, although the words for "folklore studies" (民俗学) and "ethnology" (民族学) continued to be used more or less interchangeably for several years afterwards. However, some researchers intermittently argued that by using the word "folklore studies" (民俗学) to refer to their discipline, they were narrowing the

range of research topics (Seki 1958:108). At this stage, although Yanagita's actual method differed from that of ethnologist Torii Ryuuzou, they would both consider themselves ethnologists.

Looking ahead a few years after the *Minzoku* controversy, Nishimura's term was ultimately adopted by Yanagita himself, although his reasoning differed notably from Nishimura's. In his discourse on method, *Kyoudo Seikatsu no Kenkyuu-hou* (郷土生活の研究法 *Method for Researching Native Place Daily Life* 1935), Yanagita explicated his theory of "minzokugaku in one country" (一国民俗学):

> When members of one country gather together the popular traditions of their own country it is called "Folklore." When one examines the traditions outside one's country, no matter how broadly distributed, it is called "Völkerkunde" or "Ethnology"... If I could, I would name "Volkskunde" the study of folklore in one country (一国民俗誌学), and "Völkerkunde" the study of folklore in many countries (万国民俗誌学), or the comparative study of folklore (比較民俗誌学). If we were ever able to organize both fields of knowledge into one system, the time would come to employ the term "Volkslehre", and I would proudly name that field of study Japanese folklore studies (日本民俗学). (*quoted in* Seki 1958:138)

Although the word "folklore" (民俗学) remains the same, we see a movement from a definition based on the study of culture broadly defined (similar to Nishimura's notion of cultural anthropology) to one inseparable from nation-states, or in other words, from a definition based on *research methodology* (based on a physical/cultural split) to one based on *place* (domestic or foreign). Yanagita's insistence on the primacy of native knowledge in the field of minzokugaku represented a clear break with theoretical trends in European ethnology and folklore. The field of ethnology in Europe had always adopted the non-European "other" as its research object, and while European folklore, exemplified by Grimm in the early nineteenth century, was initially practiced within the bounds of Europe, it soon expanded to include European imperial possessions in a comparative framework as well.[12] For instance, the influential British folklorist George Laurence Gomme compared Greek and Indian traditions of folklore in order to argue in support of Aryan supremacy in his 1892 work *Ethnology in Folklore*.

Yanagita later admitted that it was already too late for folklore studies (民俗学) to absorb ethnology (民族学) into a form of comparative folklore studies (比較民俗学) due to the fact it would be too difficult to change the name of government-sponsored ethnological institutes (Yanagita 1935). Instead, ethnology and folklore studies would both exist in an uneasy relationship throughout the prewar era. The field of ethnology

ultimately received the most institutional backing, and, owing to its connections with state-sponsored racialist theories, was more discredited than folklore studies in the aftermath of the war.

Where Nishimura intended to separate minzokugaku from physical anthropology only, Yanagita had drawn a line in the sand separating minzokugaku from ethnology/anthropology as a whole on the basis of national borders, asserting the primacy of place and engendering a form of disciplinary provincialism that postwar folklorists would try to ameliorate in order to revitalize their dying discipline. Keio historian Oguma Eiji recently offered the following explanation for Yanagita's break with anthropology:

> The first reason Yanagita kept anthropology at arm's length was that he needed to establish the independence of the new academic discipline of folklore from closely related academic disciplines. It is also possible that he was opposed to the methodology of Western cultural anthropology that investigated the customs of colonized regions from the standpoint of the civilized conqueror. (Oguma 2002:200)

Yanagita's explicit break with European folklore could be viewed as part of a larger "revolt against the West" during the interwar period.[13] However, although Oguma Eiji suggests otherwise, Yanagita's antipathy towards Eurocentrism did not necessarily eliminate the tendency for ethnography to be conducted from the standpoint of 'civilised conqueror'. As mentioned earlier, Yanagita actively encouraged Japanese ethnologists working under the auspices of the Imperial government in Japan's own colonies. While Yanagita wanted to de-center anthropology from the West, he was generally unconcerned about the possibility for ethnocentric bias in minzokugaku.

On the other hand, however much Yanagita's academic thought conformed to contemporaneous trends, his stance did not turn minzokugaku into a mainstream science overnight. Folklore studies would remain marginal from the pre-war into the post-war era, but unlike in Britain, its ethnographical interests would not be absorbed by anthropology until considerably later. Yanagita's colleagues Oka Masao and Seki Keigo would try to reconcile anthropology and folklore studies in an attempt to revitalize their dying discipline, but their influence was decidedly limited in comparison with Yanagita's. Folklore's marginal status in comparison with other disciplines paradoxically helped catapult Yanagita to popularity in the post-war era as founder of an indigenous science while ultimately rendering minzokugaku stagnant in comparison with the burgeoning field of cultural anthropology.[14]

Folktales as Historical Evidence?

Nishimura's comments on *Minzoku's* name touched on the unresolved and perplexing issue of sorting out the difference between ethnology and folklore, if one was to acknowledge that such a difference existed in the first place. Perhaps owing to this perplexity, his critique was passed over without immediate comment in the next issue of *Minzoku*. On the other hand, Nishimura's comments about the relative merits of the articles published during the first year of *Minzoku* prompted an acerbic response by Yanagita Kunio.

Nishimura mostly praises authors outside of Yanagita's circle, and he singles out archaeologist Hamada Kousaku's articles on the stone and bronze ages as particularly important contributions to scholarship. He does praise Yanagita colleague Oka Masao for translating the aforementioned article by W. H. R. Rivers, although he had made the comment earlier in his article that translations do little to advance the field of learning as a whole (Nishimura 1926:122).

But in reference to Yanagita's article "Using the Branch of a Yanagi Tree for the Divination of Springs" (楊枝を以て泉をトする事), Nishimura writes that Yanagita's argumentation is "too artistic" (芸術的に過ぎて) and that it gives the reader an "impression of vagueness" (模糊の感). He grants that this style is, for Yanagita, "a unique '-ism'" (独特の主義) and agrees with the reader who, after reading Yanagita's travelogue Kainan shoki, wanted to forgive Yanagita for his excesses on account of the insights at which his research hints.

Nishimura clarifies his comments in his reaction to Yanagita's article "The Tree of Struggle and the Enoki Tree" (争いの樹と榎樹). First he claims that the article is representative of folkloric research in terms of bibliographic methods. He then criticizes the article for being unscientific. As evidence, he points to a section of Yanagita's article that describes a village belief in the divine power of the Enoki tree. In the seventh chapter of his article, Yanagita recounts that in the town of Fusa in Chiba prefecture, the mansion of a wealthy man is believed to have been swept away in a flood emanating from the roots of an Enoki tree planted in the courtyard of his home. He concludes that "it seems clear that the Enoki tree made a powerful impression on our ancestors for many ages" (Yanagita 1926:463). While Nishimura does not attack Yanagita's conclusion per se, he does criticize Yanagita's method of reaching that conclusion. Nishimura claims that a scientific explanation can be found for water bubbling out of an Enoki tree. For instance, its roots may have absorbed a great deal of groundwater after a heavy rainfall. Nishimura accuses Yanagita of having the harmful habit, prevalent among folklorists in general, of trying to preserve mysterious folktales as mysteries

rather than critically examining them. Nishimura then states what he believes the proper relationship between the disciplines of folklore and history should be:

> Folklore (フォークロア) is a part of the discipline of history. It thereby follows that historians like us presuppose that legends (説話) are to be treated as historical facts (史実) and judgment is to be passed down on them concerning their veracity. From this standpoint, we are likely to feel that [Yanagita] handles them in a frequently roundabout way. (Nishimura 1926:124)

Yanagita Kunio shot back a critical reply to Nishimura in the next issue of Minzoku in the article, "The Tale of Matsuo Kenji" (松王健児の物語):

> There are some historians in our midst who do not recognize folktales as worthy objects of historical study. The expressed belief that some folktales exist that can be simply treated as historical facts (史実) was sorrowfully optimistic. This is because the content of folktales is never historically factual. However, if one adopts this attitude [and decides not to examine folktales] whenever one tries to inquire about the past lives of our countrymen, one is necessarily limited to records of great ministers and generals, handicapping one's access to historical evidence (史料). However, the folktales that we inquire into would still be historical facts in themselves by virtue of their very existence, and their distribution throughout the country also constitutes a powerful secondary source of historical evidence. The content of the oral traditions is only useful for comparative purposes. I too intend to be a historian, but since the main object of my study is located in the past experiences of those common Japanese people who had no access to written records, it is necessary for me to seriously deal with ancient objects of belief, especially those folktales that are complex and contain many special characteristics. (Yanagita 1927:255-256)

Yanagita implies that folklorists are interested in the lives of commoners while historians are interested in "great ministers and generals" (大臣大将), thus introducing an overtly political dimension into the academic debate. This political assertion is important for minzokugaku's trope of marginality. It will be echoed in Seki Keigo's disciplinary history and become one of the guiding principles of the popular history (minshûshi) movements in the 1970s.

In Yanagita's writings, the elite/commoner divide refers to precisely what differentiates the disciplines of history and minzokugaku. Fukuda Ajio writes that Yanagita generally regarded history and folklore studies to be inseparable. The year after his response to Nishimura was published, Yanagita wrote, "the purpose of our field of study is mostly the same as that of historians. It only has a slightly newer method" (Yanagita 1928). It would take several more years before Yanagita systematized his method in works like Kyoudo seikatsu no kenkyû-hô (1935), but he emphasized consistently that folklorists were attempting to accomplish the same goal as historians— that of the reconstruction of the past. In the 1935 essay "Kokushi to minzokugaku" ("National History and Folklore Studies"), Yanagita wrote, "if there are no written records transmitted from old, it is necessary to search amidst facts that remain extant in the present. We ought to affix a method with which these numerous remnants can be compared, allowing us to retrace the changes that have occurred over time"(Yanagita 1935, quoted in Fukuda Ajio). Whereas Yanagita tried to divide folklore studies from ethnology by emphasizing place, he attempted to draw folklore studies closer to national history (a specialization that already emphasized place), thereby exhorting folklore studies to occupy an intermediate location between the two disciplines. Ultimately, Yanagita's influential vision for minzokugaku is one that uses the methods of ethnology to write national history, a vision inevitably caught between an aspiration to represent the margins (from ethnology) and an aspiration to speak with the authority of representing the nation-state as a whole.

Writing in *Minzoku*, Yanagita has still not entirely worked out his vision for minzokugaku, but the pieces are all visible. Yanagita claims to use a comparative ethnographic method to unearth historical materials. Without such methods, Yanagita claims that one is necessarily limited to the history of elites as opposed to a history of commoners. As Figal points out, for Yanagita the problem is that positivist historians do not consider folktales and popular beliefs to be real historical facts (1999:173). Yanagita aligns this tendency with elitism, stating that unless folk beliefs are considered historical facts in themselves, a history of the common folk is not possible.

The theoretical and political dimensions of the divide between Nishimura and Yanagita make reconciliation impossible. In the next issue, Nishimura mobilizes the authority of Tylor and Gomme to overturn Yanagita's comment that "the content of folktales is never historically factual," but he ignores Yanagita's claim that folktales constitute legitimate historical facts (1927:531-532). In a response appended to the end of Nishimura's article, the author (presumably Yanagita) tries to link Nishimura's citations of European experts with his elitist attitude towards folktales. One would think that in a theoretical argument about the utility of folktales in positivist historiography, the nationality of the authors cited would be irrelevant, but in fact, I think it is of the

utmost importance in this debate. It reveals that Yanagita and Nishimura are unable to reconcile their positions precisely because they are arguing at cross-purposes.

From the perspective of theoretical coherency, Nishimura won the argument. He supported the claim that the content of folklore contains historical facts with extensive documentation, and the question of whether folktales are legitimate historical facts in themselves is moot. For Nishimura, they are legitimate to the extent that they can aid in historical reconstruction, which is precisely Yanagita's objective. The difference would seem to be that while Nishimura is more interested in reconstructing the more easily observable landscape of marriage customs and material culture (he praises articles that deal with those two subjects), Yanagita appears more interested in reconstructing the landscape of folk belief. However, where one would expect Yanagita to grant that folktales can be used for both reconstructive projects (one associated with folk psychology, the other associated with social history), he flatly claims that the content of folk tales are never historically factual. This is because Yanagita attempts to reframe the argument in terms of politics. Yanagita shifts the debate from one about proper truthful representation to one about political representation. Nishimura's argument revolves around the duty of the historian to judge true from false (真偽の判断を下す)(Nishimura 1926:124), while Yanagita's emphasis is on who is represented, elites or commoners.

While never explicitly abandoning positivism, Yanagita moves away from a discussion that problematizes his own research methodology to one that problematizes the historian's traditional research object. Interestingly, although Figal claims that Yanagita's work as a whole represents a challenge to positivist historiography, Makita Shigeru points out that Yanagita would always claim that his own research was a form of "positivist science" (Makita 1973:292). Yanagita might have tried to expand the prevalent definition of positivism in the course of his work, but I think this contradiction ultimately hints at the privileging of political reasoning over abstract theory as the essence of Yanagita's vaunted anti-academicism. Yanagita's rupture with history and ethnology was politically motivated on both sides. In the case of ethnology, the complicated academic debate in Britain over the difference between folklore studies and ethnology was jettisoned in favor of a break that tried to place native citizens in charge of their own ethnographic representation (with the call of "minzokugaku in one country"). In addition, Yanagita tried to politicize the practice of history by accusing traditional historians of siding with elites.

It is important to note that the arena of Yanagita's political activities shifted after he ended his open petition against the Shrine Merger Act in 1908. By the time Yanagita published his important theoretical texts in 1935, he expressed most of his views in an increasingly euphemized academic language. His articles and theoretical works were critiques of the politics of academic practice in anthropology and history. Yanagita

consistently critiqued the elitism of historical studies and the "overly hasty" (quoted in Kawamura 1996) cosmopolitanism of anthropology, all in accordance with his political status as a conservative populist, a nationalist interested in the periphery.

Conclusion

The marginalization of folklore studies is inseparable from Yanagita's politics. During the craze for ethnic nationalism in the 1920s, it appeared as though the fluid discipline of minzokugaku might be absorbed into the slightly more mainstream academic practice of historians like Nishimura Shinji. However, Yanagita rebuked the advances of historians and European-influenced ethnologists, perhaps prompting W. H. R. Rivers translator Oka Masao to flee to Europe. Eventually, Yanagita's political critique would be expressed in terms of a theoretical framework for folklore studies.

This realization brings Seki's history of minzokugaku into greater focus. The tension in his work between asserting folklore's marginalization and extolling its early inter-disciplinarity could also be viewed as a tension between preserving the Japan-centric politics of minzokugaku and encouraging disciplinary cross-pollination that might expose the arbitrariness of Yanagita's assumptions about the relationship of the folk to the nation-state.

Unlike Seki, the constituents of the Yanagita craze in the sixties often had no interest in reviving minzokugaku as a distinct science, but they were attracted to Yanagita's politics on both academic and non-academic levels. On the activist level, Yanagita's opposition to bureaucratic excess during the Shrine Merger Act found echoes in contemporary ecological movements. Furthermore, on the academic level, disillusionment with Marxism drew historians to Yanagita's work as a means of engaging the history of commoners while discarding the notion that Japan's modernity is somehow incomplete in comparison with the West.

In closing, I would like to return to the frequent assertions about folklore studies that I identified in the introduction: that Yanagita Kunio founded the indigenous science of Japanese folklore studies during the early 20th century, and that folklore studies has always been a marginalized discipline. I argue that both of these statements are partially grounded in the historical record. We can conceive that Yanagita Kunio founded folklore studies if we consider the discipline to have begun with Yanagita's break with the disciplines of ethnology and history, two decisions that I argue were originally motivated by Yanagita's politics, not theoretical developments in European folklore studies. Furthermore, it is undeniable that minzokugaku was institutionally marginalized during much of its history. Nevertheless, the continuance of minzokugaku's marginalized status

during an explosion of interest in ethnological topics is closely linked to the "anti-academic" relationship between politics and theory among Yanagita's followers. We might legitimately ask if folklore studies would still appear to be marginalized if it were viewed through the lens of politics as opposed to academics. Yanagita and his associates appear much less marginalized when viewed from a perspective that transcends the relatively narrow field of intellectual production. Yanagita's anti-elite populism is "resistant" insofar as it discloses the Eurocentric bias of prewar anthropology in Japan and elsewhere, yet it is also "complicit" insofar as it remains beholden to a definition of the "folk" that serves the needs of nationalist mobilization.

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Notes

[1] Of course, this statement does not disparage the body of scholarship that attempts to indict Yanagita by linking him to the emperor system (see Iwamoto and Yoshiteru in the bibliography). I merely think that such scholarship still leaves some questions unanswered in regard to the interaction between disciplinary aspirations prevalent in the field of minzokugaku as a whole and the influential critique of modernity that is more broadly associated with the work of Yanagita Kunio.

[2] The Minamata and Yokkaichi incidents were environmental disasters that led to the formation of important citizen activist groups. They are seen as important starting point for grassroots activism in postwar Japan. See George 2002, *Minamata: Pollution and the Struggle for Democracy in Postwar Japan*.

[3] Nihonjinron literally means "theories about the Japanese people". It refers to a popular genre of academic and pseudo-academic texts that purport to analyze the cultural uniqueness of the Japanese people. Nihonjinron utilizes numerous disciplinary perspectives, ranging from folklore studies to sociology, linguistics, philosophy, and biology. A famous example is the work of the psychologist Takeo Doi. For a critical analysis, see Oguma 2002, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-Images*.

[4] Seki often uses the term "gakusha" (学者 scholar) to refer to practitioners of more institutionalized disciplines. The term appears to be used here in a sarcastic sense that connotes narrow-minded scholasticism.

[5] I derive the concept of a double-break with intellectuals and the "people" from Bourdieu 1990 *In Other Words*: 150.

[6] Many of these names also appear in the introduction to various earlier texts, including Yanagita's Minkan Denshou-ron (1934) and Nihon Minzokugaku Nyumon (1943), jointly written by Yanagita Kunio and Seki Keigo. Seki appears to have been the first to articulate the importance of the work of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, a late nineteenth-century German folklorist/historian hitherto seldom mentioned in connection with the work of Yanagita. Riehl's formulation of the "authentic peasant" bears an resemblance to Yanagita's notion of the "unchanging folk". Riehl writes, "within the German nation there is an invincible conservative force, a solid core of continuity in the face of every change. This is our peasantry. The peasants are genuine originals, with no real counterpart in any other nation. An educated person may incline towards conservatism for theoretical reasons; the peasant does so by virtue of tradition. In the social struggles of our age the peasant has played a more important role than most suspect, for he has served as a natural barrier against the spread of French revolutionary doctrines among the lower strata of society." (Riehl, *The Natural History of the German People*, 155) For a closer match replace "French revolutionary doctrines" with the twin influences of Buddhist sinification and Westernization/urbanization.

[7] Interestingly, Seki's obsession with bolstering minzokugaku's claims to scientific rigor causes him to ignore the influence of an earlier Tokugawa tradition of national learning scholarship (国学 kokugaku) on the development of the discipline. On the other hand, in the post-war era many thinkers would emphasize the influence of kokugaku on Yanagita Kunio, trumpeting the indigenousness of folklore studies and its direct challenge towards the Eurocentric worldview of the academy.

[8] To my knowledge, the clearest statement of Yanagita's intention in this regard is expressed in his unpublished manuscript "Hikaku-minzokugaku no mondai". See also Kawamura 1996, 'Dai-tô-a minzokugaku' no kyojitsu.

[9] Before the establishment of the department of history and sociology, history courses were split between the departments of Western and Asian literatures.

[10] As regards Nishimura's negative association of "ethnic group" with "nation", it is important to remember that the words corresponding to "nation" and "ethnic group" in English have different connotations in their Japanese context, and that these connotations were different in the mid-twenties than they are today (not to mention the fact that these connotations undoubtedly differed for university academics as compared to factory workers). Of help is Kevin Doak's observation that the mid-20s saw an explosion of interest in the concept of ethnic nationalism linked to the word minzoku (民族) which came to be increasingly associated with race-centric nationalist ideology. Nishimura's critique relies on the assumption that minzoku (民族) as "race" is biologically defined; a definition that does not mesh well with the culture-centric approach adopted by most of the authors associated with the journal. In addition, since

Nishimura clearly criticizes the sociolinguistic register of the word (he implies that the title is not serious enough), one might also try to link the word for "nation" ("kokumin") to light reading by means of Tokutomi Soho's famous Meiji-era magazine named The Nation's Friend (Kokumin no Tomo 1887-1898) or his contemporaneously published newspaper Kokumin Shinbun (1890-1929). See Doak 1998, "Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan."

[12] Yet Yanagita never completely disowned a comparative framework, as his provisions for the field of comparative folklore studies suggest. Kawamura argues that this is connected to Yanagita's apologia for Japanese imperialism. See Kawamura, 'Dai-tô-a minzokugaku no kyojitsu, chapter 1.

[13] I borrow the phrase from Harry Harootunian and Tetsuo Najita's article in volume 6 of the *Cambridge History of Japan*, "Japanese Revolt against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century."

[14] A recent indictment of folklore studies' stagnation can be found in Schnell and Hashimoto 2003, "Guest Editor's Introduction: Revitalizing Japanese Folklore."

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