

Time and the Paradox of the Orient

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"Time is everything, man is nothing; he is at the most the incarnation of time."

—Karl Marx

In 1876 on the cusp of the transformation of the archipelago into modern Japan, Erwin Baelz reported a conversation with a Japanese intellectual: "We have no history. Our history begins today."¹ This quote has usually been overlooked in histories of Japan and when recognized it is as if the Japanese had awakened from what Kant describes as mankind's "self-incurred immaturity."² Lurking in this statement is both our acceptance of modernization as a process of change in the world, the way that historical thinking has normalized that process, and the reinforcement and reiteration of that process through history.

Recently, to better extract myself from those layered and interrelated forms of thought, I have shifted the basis of my inquiry from the study of pasts through historiography to time as the basis of thinking about pasts. Time has been so naturalized in modern society that we have overlooked the extent to which it imbricates our lives and scholarship. But while there are many forms of passing, time is not an externality; it is a metric. The physicist S. A. Diddams, et. al. recently stated in *Science*, "As important as 'time' might be...it is no more than an arbitrary parameter that is used to describe dynamics, or the mechanics of motion."³ Because it is a metric, we must also consider

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1) Quoted in George Macklin Wilson, "Time and History in Japan." *American Historical Review*, 85 (1980): pp. 557-571.

2) Here, I am of course referring to Kant's wonderfully concise definition of the modern as mankind's [not humankind] exit from his self-incurred immaturity" in his essay "What is enlightenment?"

3) S. A. Diddams, JC Bergquist, SR Jefferts, CW Oates, "Standards of Time and Frequency at the Outset of the 21st Century," *Science*, 306 (2004): p. 1318.

how our conceptual forms for reckoning time, like history, are also metrics.

The particular way that we understand time is historical. In Japan, the *nengo*, Gregorian calendar, and twenty-four hour clock were all adopted during the first decade of Meiji. In Europe several time reckoning systems were used up through the seventeenth century when a singular, continuous and linear time gradually came into use. In both regions prior to the modern period time was not a universal, abstract time, but was episodic and local.⁴⁾ The way that we think of time today (and in the humanities and the social sciences) is rooted in the notion of time emerging in the 17th and 18th centuries that was so influenced by the writings of Sir Isaac Newton. History, today, is built upon this absolute time, and we treat it as if it is a natural, sequential condition that is separate from the human. Hegel writes, "Time is real and objective not only because it constitutes the framework within which the subject organizes possible experience; it is real because it is the process which exhibits the reality of the subject itself."⁵⁾ Today, this time is considered classical time in the sciences and there are other more accepted notions of time, especially Einstein's relative time.

The Orient and *tōyō* were central to the problem and resolution of the lament during the early Meiji era that Japan has no history. It is a simple and remarkable observation of the ideological baggage in geocultural notions. While *tōyō* was formulated to correct for the Orient, it nevertheless, also constricts Japan; the understandings they imbed remain largely intact. In this paper I will suggest through Japanese intellectuals that the fixity of Newtonian science is not the most apposite way to conceive of the interchange between the West and East Asia. If we are to move beyond these categories, we must examine the ways that history is embeded in classical time. We need to move our studies of others into twentieth century concepts of time.

"The race for first place"

One way to think about the encounter between the West and Asia during the nineteenth century is as a synchronization of the myriad places throughout the globe. This is

4) One of the best studies that describes this transformation of the reckoning of time in Europe is Donald Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For an account of the transformation of time during the Meiji era see my *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

5) Quoted in Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past*, p. 36.

exploration, enlightenment, imperialism, etc., those specific moments—the encounter of the modern West with Asia, Africa, Middle East, etc. D. Graham Burnett has called the world at the beginning of the twentieth century a “geochronocultural tableau.” He points to this temporal *mappamundi* as a key watershed event of the nineteenth century.⁶⁾ We have long recognized components of this temporal mapping in our labels like developmentalism, Third World, Orientalism, primitive, and so forth. It is the unification of the world into the same system where difference becomes variation, the levels of incompleteness in a linear system.

To work through the ways that classical time has organized our epistemology I will turn to a metaphor proposed by Michel Serres, a fascinating philosopher who forces us, especially those interested in the non-West, to interrogate both our modern notions of time and the ways that it frames our world. He reacts to the linear progressive time that is the foundation of the disciplines of history and area studies (as well as many others): “That’s not time, only a simple line. it’s not even a line, but a trajectory of the race for first place—in school, in the Olympic Games, for the Nobel Prize. This isn’t time, but a simple competition—once again, war.... The first to arrive, the winner of the battle, obtains as his prize the right to reinvent history to his own advantage.”⁷⁾ This metaphor of a race strikes me as particularly apposite for the temporality of the modern, especially as it has imbricated our understanding of the non-West. It is a competition—the hallmark of capitalism—that places all on treadmills, the acceleration of change in our lives and of our societies.

Like a race, abstract, absolute time serves as the framework that is seemingly natural. Its seduction is the possibility of participation in a system that seems to offer all the same conditions. This was the goal of Meiji Japan, *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong military), the horizon of wealth and power. This is part of Hegel’s genius as well as the genius of modernity—to establish a goal that brings units into the same order that then uses variation and the past to mark place and, especially, to explain why others do not measure up. This race to be modern, this conceptual mapping of the world, gives order. Various places are synchronized according to the same system, a temporal metric that assigns position within the absolute space of the globe. A part of the unification of the

6) D. Graham Burnett, “Mapping Time: Chronometry on Top of the World,” *Daedalus*, Spring 2003: p. 8.

7) Michel Serres, with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*. Translated by Roxanne Lapidus. (University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 49.

world was the ordering of the different places into a hierarchy according to some developmental system.

At the same time that the world was being synchronized, history as we understand it today was also undergoing transformation. It is well known that throughout the nineteenth century European historians were adapting a unilinear temporal framework rooted in a notion of time as “empty” or “homogenous.”⁸⁾ As Burnett suggests, the content of “empty” time, is anything but neutral; it establishes order. History is the principal knowledge and media that is used to organize this system. Michel de Certeau writes, “Thus, historical discourse becomes the one possible myth of a scientific society that rejects myths—the fiction of a social relationship between specified practices and general legends, between techniques that produce and demarcate places in society and legends that propose a symbolical ambiguity as a effect of time.”⁹⁾ This statement is central if we are to unpack issues embedded in the Orient and *tōyō*. The keys are the ideas of myth of a scientific society, the ways that history establishes social relationships, and techniques that produce and demarcate place.¹⁰⁾ The problem, I believe is that our current understanding of the international often hinders and obfuscates understanding of others; we look for their failures and why they are not more like us, the universal, rather than what they are.

This connection between linear time and history was evident in the efforts of Japanese intellectuals to locate Japan in relation to the Orient throughout the twentieth century. I will outline some of the issues through three intellectuals, Inoue Tetsujirō, Shiratori Kurakichi, and Tsuda Sōkichi as they sought to formulate and then reconceptualize *tōyōshigaku*.

8) Benedict Anderson, popularized these words, but few have ventured beyond noting its hegemony. Two very different works that discuss the transformation of history are Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past*; and John Toews, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

9) Michel de Certeau, “History: Ethics, Science, and Fiction,” in Norma Haan, et al, *Social Science as Moral Inquiry* (Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 150.

10) I don't think of myth as false, but Joseph Mali recently describes, simply as “a story that has passed into and become history” (xii). Two books that have been important to my understanding of myth are Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth* (MIT Press, 1985) and Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of a Modern Historiography* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Correcting Western (Mis)understanding

Inoue Tetsujirō was one of many intellectuals of late-nineteenth century Japan who recognized the problematic nature of this race. He did not discuss it in this abstract way; instead, he expressed it through his anger at the condescension he experienced while in Europe, the conflation of Japanese and Chinese, and the location of Japan as inferior to the West. Here, Inoue was reacting to the categorization of Japan and Japanese as Oriental; the backward, quaint, exotics in need to tutelage of modern ways. Using de Certeau's words Inoue is reacting against the Orient as a myth of the scientific West and the social relations (condescension toward Asians) it authorized.

In 1891 Inoue gave a speech in which he called for the creation of a field called *tōyōshigaku*. This turn to the past is usually depicted as a conservative reaction against Westernization or modernity. But Inoue accepted the temporality of modernity; he was trying to address a central contradistinction of the modern nation state—the need to discard the past for the “new” at the same time that the past is central to the formulation of the nation. Moreover, he accepted one of the central tenets of capitalism; in his “chokugo engi,” the most conservative of texts, he writes, “time, in other words, is an asset (*kazai*).”¹¹ However, like so many intellectuals at that time, Inoue recognized the particularity of the universal presented by Western scholars, in particular, the near absence of Asia. Inoue generally accepted the idea that the West was more advanced, scientifically. He did not however accept the lumping of all cultures of East Asia as the Orient. A principal goal of his *tōyōshigaku* would be to inform Westerners about Japan, its progress, and its culture. Here, Inoue recognizes the power of the name. The Orient, in the words of de Certeau, produced and demarcated place.

In his notion of *tōyōshigaku* Inoue sought to correct for the static condition and overly general expanse of the Orient. He proposed to provide information about Japan, China, and Korea that would correct Western understanding; it would correct Westerners about Japan, and it would also separate China and Korea (because, he argues they have little interest in such history) from Japan. In short, with *tōyōshigaku* Japan joins the race. This makes his *tōyō* modern. He recognizes that the Orient embeds a hierarchy through

11) Inoue Tetsujirō, “Chokugo engi” In Katayama Seiichi, ed. *Shiryō, chokugo engi: kappatsujioyobi kanrensho shiryō* (Kōryōsha shoten, 1974 [1891]), p. 169.

its temporal categories. For Inoue, *tōyōshigaku* was necessary to redefine those categories. Using the words of de Certeau, he is seeking to dispell a myth of a scientific society, the Orient of the rational West; and, he is seeking to demonstrate the "fiction of a social relationship" that locates Japan and defines its relations through its Orientalness.

This is the utility of history. First, the world or universal histories of the West embed this very problematic. The European histories that were commonly read in Japan, George Zerffi's *The Science of History*, Francois Guizot's *History of Civilization*, and Henry Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* each claimed some universal process through which Europe was elevated over a static (or stagnant) Asia. Inoue's proposed *tōyōshigaku* would use that same idea of history to correct Western myths, establish different social relations, and begin a new history to create new myths for a Japan as a scientific society. First, it naturalized the nation as the principal unit of the international. Second, it synchronized Japan into the international world by defining Japan as a progressive place like other Western countries. Third, this knowledge was essential to correct the Western notion of the Orient to point out how the Orient is a "myth of a scientific society." And last, *tōyōshigaku* would help establish the histories of China and Korea. In other words Japan would define them, for them, thereby beginning the production and demarcation of those nations as the not yet in relation to Japan.

Naturalization of an Idea

With Inoue the notion of *tōyōshigaku* remained an idea, but it was soon taken up by a number of academics. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, Shiratori Kurakichi, the orientalist at Tokyo Imperial University, who is usually credited with founding (*tōyōshigaku*) in Japan, and Naitō Kōnan, the eminent sinologist from Kyoto Imperial University became the two historians most responsible for constructing modern Japan's academic understanding of Asia. Using modern (primarily Rankean) historical methodologies and visions, the goal of these two historians was to establish a history using a philosophy of history—progressive development toward a more rational society—and strategies common to positivistic history—chronological division into some form of ancient, medieval (feudal), and modern. Shiratori formulated his North-South dualism, and Naitō organized progress in terms of shifting cultural centers. For Shiratori, China advanced from the ancient to the medieval where it continued (or more accurately stag-

nated), and Naitō's *shinagaku* described advancement to modernity around the late-T'ang and Sung dynasties, followed by steady decline to the twentieth century. Shiratori's Oriental studies and Naitō's Sinology bear important differences, but from the perspective of this race, they are similar—both discovered that they could not just fill the gaps and instead had to rewrite the history of the East.¹²⁾

Shiratori's tactic was not to correct for lacunae in Western understanding; instead, he recognized the relativity of the meaning of East and West and throughout his career worked to clarify the difference between Japan and Europe. In 1938 he pointed out, correctly I believe, that while Japanese consider the East and West as Asia and Europe, these identifications are relative and could just as easily indicate Japan and China or China and Inner Asia.¹³⁾ His *tōyō* was not about adaptation, but the creation of a national subjectivity autonomous from others. Shiratori recognized the futility of Inoue's tactic. He recognized that a common misconception—reinforced by the ideology we seek to analyze—is that if Japan (or any non-Western place) thoroughly learns modern concepts and adopts modern structures it will be successful. He understood that as long as the criteria of modernity is defined by the West, such cultures will always be incomplete variations of those standards; the very process, stated differently is imitation, a process that signifies inferiority and dependence. Like the Orient, his *tōyōshigaku* used a linear, progressive time, but he also formulated a different dynamic historical process through which societies develop.

His North-South dualism represented two cultural typologies whose conflictual interactions on the Eurasian continent, that is both East and West, determined the nature of different peoples. That nature is understandable through history, the specific ways that the dualism manifested itself in different sites. The nature of that interaction determined the characteristics of each site, becoming the data for national histories. Interestingly even though described chronologically, this narrative stops time in two ways. First, in this framework the nation takes on the characteristics of an organism: it is a unit that has its own past, way of thinking and of acting; individuals do not form the patterns, but great men discover the underlying laws that govern the unit. In other words, the nation has always existed; it is timeless.

12) For an account of the formulation of *tōyōshigaku* see my *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (University of California Press, 1993).

13) Shiratori Kurakichi, "Tōzai kōshōshi gairon," *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshu*, vol 8 (Iwanami shoten, 1970), pp. 111-136.

Second, the chronological narrative of development restricts the present to the past. In the case of Japan, it becomes a depository of the best of Asian cultures; civilization gradually moves from west to east. The North/South dualism appears first on the continent, but later manifests itself in Japan; Buddhism and Confucianism begin to the West, but as those places lose sight of their essence these ideals move east. In other words, *tōyōshi* provided a conceptual map through which Japanese can be both rational and spiritual, despite a framework that sets them as oppositional forces. Japanese are rational in the organization of their own society and when contrasted to Asia, but spiritual in contrast to the West. Yet though Japan is at the pinnacle, it is described through ancient Asia, the Orient; China and Korea become both Japan's past and Japan's "not yet," contemporary evidence of not measuring up.

The difficulty with this idea of *tōyōshi* is that its goal is to relocate a relational interaction into a different absolute framework. The relativity of east and west that Shiratori pointed out was tactical—to remove Japan from the Orient. It was effective in altering (for Japanese) the negative implications of their placement in the Western Orient—definitional restrictions, placement as backward and inferior, and even a conception that prevents change and innovation. But like the Orient, *tōyōshi*, too, claims absoluteness. *Tōyōshi* depends upon a framework of absolute time and absolute space that seeks to homogenize (synchronize) all according to its framework. This is evident in Naitō's conviction after the outbreak of the Chinese revolution that the Chinese turned against "his Chinese culture."¹⁴

Moreover, *tōyōshi* did not create a more global understanding. Here it is worth remembering Bakhtin's statement that the word is half one's own and half another's. This makes quests for universality exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. To be universal, a concept must belong to everyone and to no one.¹⁵ *Tōyōshi* (and modern social science) uses an absolute framework that is applied to a relational (international) condition. To the West, Japan was Oriental, a part of its ancient past; *tōyō* was similar enough to the western Orient that it allowed the placement of Japan within the western Orient, not *tōyō*, again making Japan inferior to the West. To the Chinese, Japan's use of China's past made it easy for them to see Japan as only a derivative of China with western learning,

14) Joshua Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Kōnan (1866-1934)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 273.

15) Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux des Memoire*," *Representations*, 26 (1989): 8.

thus eliminating the need for the Chinese to learn from Japan. In short, Japan was confined to that past that was formulated to give it progress.

Escaping from History

The delimitations of history were keenly felt in the Japan of the early Showa period. The incorporation of *tōyō* was certainly a critical aspect of Japan's effort to build its own vision of modernity. Yet, *tōyō* also trapped it—Japan was trapped by the myths of the West as well as its own. It remained Oriental, that is, inferior to the West, and as *tōyō*, confined to its past. A number of scholars did try to formulate a past that did not relegate Japan to a fixed position as the “not yet” of the West. I would like to turn to Tsuda Sōkichi, not because he solved the issues, but because he has been such a difficult intellectual to categorize.

In his book, *Shina shisō to nihon* Tsuda argued that Japan is a modern world culture (*gendai no sekai bunka*). Even though he was not very specific about the content of that culture, he was clear that this argument is difficult to sustain because of the opposition of Orient from Occident. He writes, “Thus because it is clear that the underlying tone of the life of the modern Japanese is so-called Occidental culture, in other words, the culture of the modern world, treating this as opposite to Chinese and Indian cultures which have virtually no interaction with modern life contradicts reality itself.”¹⁶⁾ Tsuda was attempting to argue that Japan was creating a new modern ethic, one which was compatible with Japan's pasts as well as science; the dualism of the West as materialistic and the East as spiritual prevent this.

The potential in Tsuda's deconstruction of *tōyō* was that it freed Japan from a rigid and fixed concept of itself and its future. His narrative did not attempt to locate either the West or China into fixed hierarchical positions. Instead he recognized that history is dialogic in that it is shaped by different forces. His strategy was to rehistoricize the pasts of *tōyō* to show that it was a construction and misuse of historical data. His methodology was straightforward and rather common sensical: he insisted on the strict and accurate interpretation of materials, but he was willing to use a much wider range of documents (including what we now call literature) to understand pasts. The key difference emerged when applied to particular ahistorical notions, like *tōyō*.

16) Tsuda Sōkichi, *Shina shisō to nihon* (Iwanami bunko, 1938), pp. 178-179, 194.

To build his argument he distinguished between History (*rekishi*) and history (*shigaku*). *Rekishi* fixes the past. Here, he seems to parallel de Certeau's statement of History as one form of "myth of a scientific society that rejects myths"; that myths are the categories of knowledge which become ahistorical constructs, removed from history itself. *Shigaku* emphasizes process, multi-voicedness, and non-linear change (or non-change) that exists in life (*seikatsu*). Tsuda's use of ancient stories and tales was an effort to expand the archives to material written in the past that had been removed from history (*rekishi*) when it was recategorized into literature. He states,

The consideration that history is material for loose reminiscences, the misconception that the life of the past is something fixed, the delusive longing that tries to perpetuate in the future an image of a fixed past, and the quests for such continuity in history are for the first time irrelevant (*rongai*). Life gives form to history, and life is formed by the past, but it does not continue exactly as it has, it constantly faces the future and establishes new forms; and, that which forms a new life changes contemporary life, faces the future, and creates a new life.¹⁷⁾

The fixed past is *tōyō*, the association of China and India with Japan, and its juxtaposition against the West. Instead, Tsuda argues that Japan is Occidental. Occidental, here, is not white or European; it is a modern culture that gives Japan the spirit that advances cultures. He stated, "because science is not simply the expression of spiritual activity, through it a new life (*seikatsu*) unfolds, and through the unfolding of this new life new spiritual activity is produced and new ethics also take form, this is the cultural significance of science."¹⁸⁾ By focusing on life (*seikatsu*), Tsuda was coming close to earlier intellectuals such as Miyake Setsurei, Takayama Chogyu, and Yamaji Aizan. Each sought to write a past of the nation that was built from activities of individuals rather than ideals excavated from the past (usually aristocratic ideals). Life to Tsuda is a recognition of the multiplicity of events and factors that affect past events and that are inseparable from the present. In short he is calling for a history of a place that is written of that place first rather than through a framework and categories that are already determined.

He was not arguing that Japan is the same as Western countries. It is different

17) Tsuda, "Rekishi no mujunsei," Tsuda Sōkichi: zenshū, vol20 (Iwanami shoten, 1965), p. 189.

18) Tsuda, *Shina shisō to nihon*, pp. 191-192.

because each nation has its own historical development, the climatic and historical conditions which give rise to practices, traditions, and character. Japan is neither Western nor Oriental; it is a modern, scientific place. Interestingly, Tsuda has unpacked Japan's modern history in order to write a history of Japan as modern. In other words, he has tried to expose the failure of the idea of a universal history, not because he denies the possibility, but sees the contradictions in the way it has been done. He argues that a country develops on its own and interacts with other cultures; it does not develop from others. Japanese society should not be conceived in terms of fixed principles from the Oriental past that were rendered essential "Japanese" characteristics. But Japan's conception of the future was also not necessarily related to that narrow path blazed by western countries.

Tsuda was perceptive enough to see that in the writing of History (*rekishi*) a forgetting—the erasure of the way that history itself helps constitute the modern—is of vital importance. This itself is a myth of History. By pointing to the separation of past, history, and life, Tsuda has exposed a site where time and history are conflated. He is pointing to a point where, linear time has been so naturalized in modern society that we have overlooked the extent to which it structures our lives and scholarship. Too often, we fail to see the intertwined relation between our objects of study and the categories and codes that guide our analyses. Understanding time (and history) as historical enables us to recognize that we are operating in a temporal framework that simultaneously constitutes our objects of our study as well as our categories of knowing. In short, making time the subject enables me to separate the event-pasts—from the way that pasts were and are represented.

But we must not go too far. It is questionable whether Tsuda removed Japan from the race. Although he created a different description of Japan's development, he was still not able to extract Japan from the international—the dilemma of its positions vis-a-vis China and the West. Although his deconstruction of *tōyō* might raise the similitude with Fukuzawa Yūkichi's "Datsu-A-ron" (separation from Asia) published in 1885, in which he argued that Japan must break all ties with contemporary China, Tsuda did not seek to separate Japan from contemporary China, but from China as Japan's past. He accepted that position, common to liberalism, that Japan must aid/help/enlighten China. Tsuda believed that Japan was more advanced and proposed a missionary policy toward China; "if Japan tries to help develop the culture of China it should assist and support (*joryoku*

subeki) that which spreads contemporary and world culture there.”¹⁹⁾ This statement is certainly less forceful than the causative construction used by some of his colleagues. But the main difference was that the need to help China now emanated from the universal spread of modern culture, not because it was also a part of *tōyō*.

Multiple Temporalities

Tsuda's account is interesting because he shows us the limits of *tōyōshi* (and the Orient) within Newtonian time. It fixes the past, present, and future. He is moving toward a history that in my mind is closer to twentieth century time. Here, it is important to invoke a statement by a noted historical sociologist, Norbert Elias who called for this need to change our temporal framework. He writes,

An enquiry into 'time'... is a useful point of departure for the great spring-cleaning that is long overdue. There is always a need for it when an intellectual tradition providing the basic means of orientation within its societies has run its course for several centuries, as ours has from the (so-called) Renaissance to the present time.²⁰⁾

The Orient and *tōyōshi* are two geocultural constructs that are tied to this Enlightenment form of thinking. Each of the above intellectuals sought to modify some part of that thinking by rewriting history. Tsuda gets closest to that “spring cleaning.”: he argues for a history that is closer to one that recognizes, not the time and space of past events and ideas, but the timespaces through which our lives pass. He removes Japan from the places—the Orient, India, China, the West, etc.—that populate the temporal matrix of development. His history (*shigaku*) moves us a step away from the associations of the international that is liberal capitalism.

Tsuda's writings help us recognize the limitations of our own conceptual forms, here, the hegemonic boundaries of absolute time. I believe that we need to recognize that we are operating within a mythological understanding of our world, in some ways little different than the world of ghosts and wonders of pre-Enlightenment societies. Years

19) Tsuda, *Shina shisō to nihon*, p. 199.

20) Norbert Elias, *Time: an Essay* (Blackwell, 1992), pp. 93–94.

ago, Wilcox held out hope that history, too, might find a way to embrace the relative time of Einstein. He writes, "We should be alive to the likelihood that Einstein will eventually change our concept of historical time as much as did Newton."²¹ Wilcox excavated histories prior to Newtonian time to unearth other ways of thinking about the past that recover the underlying ideas, multiple possibilities, and unconscious forces that had been the dominant mode of history. It is a search for a multiple temporality in which inherited customs, practices, and knowledge, the anachronistic, the now, and some future are coeval; coexisting within the same present. Beyond eliminating the presumption of omniscience in our examination of the past, another possibility is to think in terms of unitary processes and multiple conditions, or forces of gathering and distributed objects.

A different kind of history might recognize the different temporalities, heterogeneity, and non-linearity that exists in our lives as well as our modern edifice. Here, I would like to end with a statement by Hermann Minkowski, an influential physicist who built upon the work of Albert Einstein and Hendrik Lorentz to argue in 1908 for a space-time, a four-dimensional continuum:

The views of space and time which I wish to lay before you have sprung from the soil of experimental physics, and therein lies their strength. They are radical. Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality.²²

This history would first recognize each moment of the various units that comprise our worlds—communities, families, workplace, nation. Only then would it seek the associations that occur through moments of interaction. This, too, is far from thorough enough to give certainty; but isn't that too, only a myth that depends upon dead, and ahistorical pasts, like the Orient and *tōyō*.

21) Wilcox, *The Measures of Times Past*, p. 48.

22) H. Minkowski, "Space and Time," (1908), in H. A. Lorentz, *The Principle of Relativity* (Dover, 1923): pp. 73–91.