

THE BIRTH OF “BUNGAKU” AS A TRANSLATION TERM

4.1 The Encounter between “Literature” and “Bungaku”

4.1.1 How the Term Came into Being

Why was the English word “literature” translated “bungaku”? To answer this question it will be necessary to show, first, that even today “literature” is a broad term with many meanings; and, second, that its now primary meaning of (high-class) linguistic art became dominant only in the second half of the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century.

Yinghua cidian 英華字典, an English-Chinese dictionary compiled in China in the mid-nineteenth century, attributes to “literature” the meanings of 文 (*wen*, Jp. *bun*), 文学 (*wenxue*, Jp. *bungaku*), 文字 (*wenzi*, Jp. *moji*), and 字墨 (*zimo*, Jp. *jiboku*). These last two terms, both of which literally mean “letters” (writing without regard to content), cover the idea of “literature” in the broadest possible sense; while 文 and 文学 convey its median sense of “polite literature” by alluding to the traditional idea of (beautiful) writing 文章 (*wenzhang*; Jp. *bunshō*, *monjō*) and to broad, especially Confucian 学問 (*xuewen*; Jp. *gakumon*) “learning.”

Translation into Japanese followed almost the same pattern. Walter Henry Medhurst’s *Eiwa waei goi* 英和・和英語彙 (English and Japanese and Japanese and English Vocabulary, 1830) translated “literature” as “bungaku,” while *A Pocket Dictionary of the English and Japanese Language* (1862) chose the term *ji-shiri* 字知り (“one who is literate”)—probably because of the close association, then still current in English, between “literature” and “literacy.” The revised, 1866 edition of the same dictionary replaced *ji-shiri* with *bungaku*. Further, *A Pocket Dictionary* translates “literary” as *bungaku no* 文学ノ; “grammar” as *moji bunten* 文字文典; “humanist” as *bungakusha* 文学者; and explains “humanities” as *bungaku shigaku oyobi Girisha Raten no gogaku o matomete iu go* 文学詩学オヨビ希臘羅甸ノ語学ヲ捨テ云フ語 (“a general term covering the study of literature, poetry, and the Greek and Latin languages”). The first edition of the so-called *Satsuma jisho* 薩摩辞書 (English-Japanese Dictionary, Shanghai, 1869) translates “literature” as *moji* 文字 and “letters” as *bungaku* 文学. As for *Eiwa taiyaku jisho* 英和对訳辞書 (1872), “literature” appears in it as *moji*, *gakumon* 文字、学問; “literary” as *bungaku no* 文学の, *gakumon no hōsoku ni shitagatte iru* 学問の法則に随つてゐる, *manabaretaru* 学ばれたる; and “literate” as *hakugaku no* 博学の. The first edition of Ernest Satow’s (1843-1929) *Eiwa zokugo jiten* 英和俗語辞典 (1876) gives “literature” as *bundō* 文道, while Tsuda Sen’s 津田仙 *Eikawayaku jiten* 英華和訳字典 (1879-81) has it as “bungaku.” All this is quite natural, since “literature” has such a wide range of meaning. Among the choices made, the meaning of “linguistic art” is not yet especially prominent. Moreover, according to Chiba Sen’ichi 千葉宣一, the first example of “bungaku” appearing in print as a translation for “literature” is to be found in *Tetsugaku*

jii 哲学字彙 (1871).¹

Let us consider the matter the other way round. Medhurst's dictionary gives "polite literature" as the English translation for the Chinese word *wenxue* (*bungaku*). Apparently Medhurst decided that "literature" was too broad in meaning for the purpose. Very well. But what, then, of the Japanese "bungaku"? James Hepburn's (1815-1911) *Wa-ei eiwa gorin shūsei* 和英・英和語林集成 (1867), the first Japanese-English dictionary ever compiled, translates *bundō* 文道 as "literature, learning" and defines "bungaku" as "learning to read, pursuing literary studies, especially the Chinese classics." Elsewhere, the *Nichifutsu jisho* 日仏辞書 (1862-68) of Léon Pagès (1814-1886) explains "bungaku" as meaning "étude et sciences des livres, et style élégant des lettres, etc." The examples convey quite accurately the scope and meaning of "bungaku" as the word was then used in Japan. As for "bungei," *Nichifutsu jisho* translates the term as "art de rédiger et de bien écrire les lettres." These examples suggest that, in the mid-nineteenth century, the word 文学 in both Chinese and Japanese designated works written in high-quality language; and that, in the judgment of contemporary Westerners, it roughly corresponded in meaning to the idea of "polite literature."

It is noteworthy that the third edition (1886) of Hepburn's dictionary was changed to define *bundō* as "Literature; learning; letters; belles lettres," and *bungaku* as "Literature; literary studies, especially the Chinese classics." Suzuki Shūji 鈴木修次 cited this entry as the earliest instance of "bungaku" being translated directly as "literature."²

The stronger the link between "bungaku" and "literature" became, the more "bungaku" as a translation for the English term tended to drive out all other candidates. As a result, we have now forgotten how broad a range of meanings is covered by the English word "literature." Why did the Japanese "bungaku" win out definitively over the competition?

First, the ranges of meaning covered by "literature" on the one hand and by "bungaku" on the other nicely coincide. Derived as it is from the Latin *littera*, which embraces both written documents at large and the art of writing, "literature" basically refers to letters (in the literal sense) and anything associated with them. In consonance with the intellectual climate prevailing in the cultural sphere of medieval Europe, where Latin served as the common language, the word meant the ability to read and write Greek and Latin, and a good knowledge of the classical works written in these languages. This broad range of overlapping meanings corresponds roughly to the conception of the classics (Taoist, Buddhist, and especially Confucian) in China, as well as to the closely related notion of *wenzhang* (Jp. *bunshō*). The relationship between Latin and English resembled that between literary, written Chinese and vernacular or dialectal speech; or, in Tokugawa Japan, that between *kanbun* or *kanshi* and vernacular Japanese. That is why "bungaku" was first translated as "polite literature." However, customary practice soon dropped the word "polite," until it became accepted in due course, in both Chinese and Japanese, that 文学 meant "literature."

Second, there developed in mid-seventeenth century England and France a tendency to value

1 Chiba 1978, p. 195.

2 Suzuki Shūji 1986, p. 330. In *Meiji bungaku zakki* 明治文学雑記, Ebihara Hachirō 蛭原八郎 cited other such dictionary translations of "literature" as *gakumon*, *bun*, *bundō* 学問、文、文道 (*Waei-eiwa gorin shūsei* 和英・英和語林集成, 1867); *bungaku*, *bunshō* 文学、文章 (*Eika jiten* 英華字典, 1871); and *bungaku*, *tatsubun naru koto*, *hakushiki naru koto*, *moji*, *bunshō* 文学、達文ナルコト、博識ナルコト、文字、文章 (*Eiwa jiten* 英和字典, 1872).

composition in verse more highly than composition in prose; while in the mid-eighteenth century there appeared a preference for “writers with an imaginative, polished style.” These developments correspond roughly to the Six Dynasties esteem for *wenzhang*, i.e., verse (*yunwen* 韻文, *meiwen* 美文). This esteem lived on into the Song, when there arose a clear distinction between poetry and prose. In Tokugawa Japan, *kanshi* and *kanbun* were held in high regard, and this attitude, half-divorced from the study of the Chinese classics, became rooted among the people at large. It is for reasons of this kind that, in both China and Japan, 文学 came into use as the translation for “literature.”

In short, the accepted equation between 文学 and “literature” was first suggested and then sustained by the coincidence in meaning between “distinguished writing” (*rippa na bunshō* 立派な文章) and “polite literature.”

Sense of the English word “literature”	Chinese / Japanese
Linguistic works (broad sense)	≡ “Wenshu”/“Bungaku” Centering on Confucian classics and Chinese poetry and prose (“distinguished writing”)
Polite literature (1): literature in the median sense including learning works	
(Linguistic arts in general)	
Polite literature (2): literature in the narrow sense including linguistic art	

Figure 9 Why Is the English Word “Literature” Translated As “Bungaku”?

4.1.2 The Disparity between “Bungaku” and “Literature”

“Bungaku” in Chinese or Japanese, and “polite literature” in English, may roughly correspond to each other, but “bungaku” and “literature” differ in meaning. In the case of Western Europe, the high value placed on the “artistic,” the “creative,” and the “imaginative”—a value that drove romanticism—shaped the modern conception of “literature” as centered on poetry, fiction, and drama. Linked as it was to cultural nationalism, this conception then gave rise to a distinction between “high-class” and “low-class,” according to which “low-class” writings were excluded from the recognized domain of “literature.” Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century this distinction excluded oral literature as well. As examples from a variety of dictionaries have shown, this generally remains the first meaning of the word “literature” even today. Even when “polite literature” is understood to include intellectual works as well, its central meaning clearly has to do with the notion of linguistic art.

However, no comparable situation existed in China or Japan until the advent of large-scale contact with European and American culture. In the Chinese case, the conception of *wenzhang* was closely associated with learning. The awed concern with origins found in *shangu* 尚古 (veneration for antiquity) thought meant that the *Shijing*, a collection of the songs of the people, was revered as the origin of poetry (*shi* 詩). However, later genres appreciated at the popular level, such as the Six Dynasties *jenzhi* 人志 and *zhiguai* 志怪, the Tang *zhuangqi* 傳奇, the Song *jiangtan* 講談 scripts (precursors of Chinese vernacular fiction [白話小説] and Yuan drama) were all judged unworthy and remained excluded from the category of “wenxue.” This attitude was permeated by the Confucian exclusion from respectable writing, including the poetry associated with the Confucian tradition, of

any element of fabrication or fiction; and it was closely connected with the insistence that when writing of feeling or imagination, what matters is to convey their truth.³ Chinese intellectuals, too, enjoyed *zhiguai* and *zhuangqi*, but in principle it was the firmly-held traditional view that fiction and the realm of the imaginary had low value. Seen from this standpoint, the Chinese idea of “wenxue” could not accommodate the changes that affected the increasingly broad meaning of “literature” during the nineteenth century. In short, the Chinese view of “wenxue,” which prizes truth, and the modern conception of “literature,” which prizes creative, original fiction, share in this respect no common ground. Although the expression “polite literature” was used to translate “bungaku” in the sense of high-class writing, “bungaku” and “polite literature” clash over the value to be accorded to fiction.

With respect to cultural nationalism, there existed in China a strong feeling that China was a world complete in itself. Consequently, while cultural nationalism certainly existed among Chinese intellectuals, they had little or no sense of confrontation or contrast with other countries. Moreover, imagination was applied above all to the classics, in the spirit of veneration for antiquity, and no particular value was ever attached to creativity.

In contrast, while mid-Tokugawa Japan still respected kanshi and kanbun as before, associated as they were with learning, rising literacy encouraged an increasing popularization of all the arts, and the lower samurai and upper merchant classes came to enjoy in most respects the same degree of culture. They also shared the same conception of an infinitely broad range of pastime accomplishments (*yūgei* 遊芸), as distinguished from *bugei* 武芸, the military arts.

The word *bungei* 文芸 (“literary art), too, was used in contrast to *bugei*, but as a Chinese term (*wenyun*) it had the same meaning as *yunwen* 芸文 and, like “wenxue,” designated scholarly accomplishment (*xueyun* 学芸) in general. Apparently it could be used to emphasize either learning (*xuewen* 学問) or letters (*wenzhang*).⁴ In Japan, the *Kango jirui* 漢語字類 dictionary (1869) translates *wenyun* as *gakumon*, *geinō* ガクモン、ゲイノウ). This suggests that scholarly accomplishment in general was interpreted broadly in the context of the late Tokugawa popularity of pastime accomplishments. The notion of *geinō* 芸能 (performing arts), having little to do with language proper, is as broad in meaning as “pastime accomplishments” itself.

Tokugawa “pastime accomplishments” became so diverse that the boundary between their higher-class and lower-class manifestations was blurred. Even within the same *yomihon*, Ueda Akinari and Santō Kyōden could use the term with entirely different expectations concerning their audience’s level of education. The cultural situation had become confusing. Such circumstances encouraged an awareness of fixed genres analogous to the poetry, fiction, and drama of Europe,

3 For example, in *Kindai bungaku to shite no Meiji kanshi* 近代文学としての明治漢詩, pp. 21-22, Iritani Sensuke 入谷仙介 described the “dual character” of kanshi in the following terms. First, “In terms of expression, it is characteristic of kanshi to rely on the classical poetic vocabulary refined and accumulated by Chinese poets through the centuries.” Iritani observed in particular that “From the early Song on, reliance on the Tang dynasty rhyme scheme meant that poetry was based on language divorced from daily speech.” Second, “Kanshi, based as it was on language quite unlike daily speech, in one respect was similarly constrained in yet another way. This had to do with celebrating reality. Reality may be quotidian or not. It need be neither objective nor external. On the contrary, it may just as well be a supernatural reality. In no case may it be a fiction created by the poet.”

4 Suzuki Shūji 1986, pp. 345-46.

together with a degree of interest in their historical background. No such concept as linguistic art ever emerged to bring all of them together, but Japan was better placed than China to accept this modern concept when it became available.

While the official Tokugawa emphasis on Neo-Confucianism, together with the established alignment of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto, continued as before, anti-Chinese cultural nationalism became a recognizable trend; upholders of Shinto began to resist the Confucian veneration of China; and the *kokugaku* movement arose to champion the uniqueness of Japan’s cultural heritage. One easily imagines the colonial menace of the West converting such cultural nationalism into the kind of political and cultural nationalism characteristic of a modern nation-state.

On the issue of imagination, even Motoori Norinaga, who championed the profoundly antimoralistic *mono no aware* as the fundamental principle of *waka* and *monogatari*, based his argument on the Confucian concept of “human feelings” (*ninjō* 人情). In that sense he recognized the value of invention as a technique for revealing timeless emotion, but this recognition had nothing to do with acknowledging imagination and creativity as a standard of excellence. However, Norinaga’s vision of a Japanese antiquity in which the natural expression of human feelings, unfettered by reason, gave rise to naturally harmonious community shared a good deal with the nationalistic imagination of romanticism. The *yomihon* of Ueda Akinari and Kyokutei Bakin tend visibly toward romantic imaginings of ancient times, other worlds, and strange prodigies. Indeed, *Seirei-ha* 精霊派 *kanshi* poetics tended to emphasize individuality somewhat as the romantic movement championed the freedom of the self. The Wang Yangming school of Confucianism, too, nurtured a mode of thinking that encouraged establishing a direct link, beyond all systems of thought, between self and universe. One easily imagines how, when the conception of linguistic art nurtured by romanticism in the West reached Japan, all these factors came together to facilitate its acceptance.

I will reflect on the subject of realism as world view and as expressive technique. In this way I will enter a little further into the encounter between “literature” and “bungaku,” in order to examine the situation to which it gave rise. The issue is closely associated with the reshuffling of related Tokugawa ideas when Japan absorbed their counterpart complex of Western conceptions. To this end I will concentrate on Japanese uses of the word “bungaku” in the period when the English word “literature” entered the country.

4.1.3 “Bungaku” in the Work of Nishi Amane

In late Tokugawa times “bungaku” was used to refer only to study of “letters” (*bunshō*), which in turn designated Confucian studies as well as *kanshi* and *kanbun*; while during the Bakumatsu period, stress came to be placed on Confucian studies, the “tradition” of which tended to be emphasized. The adoption of “bungaku” to translate the English “literature” then gradually changed the content of the term. However, “literature” being an extremely broad term, its translated counterpart at first took on many different meanings as well, so that its usage remained unstable.

First, it will be useful to examine occurrences of “bungaku” and its associated terms in the work of Nishi Amane 西周 (1829-1897), who studied at Leiden University in 1862 and became a pioneer in the introduction of European ideas to Japan.

- (1) The first example to cite is an occurrence not of “bungaku” itself but of the closely related “bunshō.” Nishi Amane translated as follows the names of the various faculties of Leiden University: “Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Faculty of [Bunshō] Letters.” He also referred to “students of letters” (*monjō[bunshō]gaku no gakushi* 文章学の学士).⁵ When he used the term “bunshō,” referring as it did to kanshi and kanbun, to translate the name of a faculty concerned with letters, languages, and the humanities in general, he no doubt understood that the similarity in semantic range made it unnecessary for him to coin a new term.
- (2) “Bungaku” appears as follows in a document entitled “Tokugawa-ke Numazu Gakkō tsuika okitegaki” 徳川家沼津学校追加掟書, composed for the reopening in late 1868 of the Numazu Military Academy, of which Nishi Amane had been appointed head:

Article Two: Bungaku refers to the four Faculties of Politics and Law, History and Ethics, Medicine, and Practical Sciences.⁶

“Practical Sciences” (*riyōka* 利用科) here refers to mathematics, astronomy, meteorology, chemistry, mineralogy, geology, mechanics, and economics.⁷ The document in question, which outlines the reform program for the school in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration, thus opposes to *bugaku* 武学 (military studies), the academy’s central mission, all the other, more general-purpose subjects just listed under the heading of “bungaku.”

The notion of *bugaku* and *bungaku* as a contrasting pair had long existed in China as well, where practical necessity eventually required that military studies be separated from the study of government. The pair was even given concrete form by twin forts, Wuxue Cheng 武学城 and Wenxue Cheng 文学城, in Shanxi 陝西 province. It is said that Zhang Han 章邯 of Qin 秦 built Wenxue Cheng next to Wuxue Cheng on the advent of peace. In Japan, the idea of “the two paths of arms and of letters” (*bunbu ryōdō* 文武両道) is thought to have emerged first among the warriors of the period of the sixteenth-century civil wars.⁸ The *bun* in question was of course centered on Confucian studies at large. Ernest Satow’s English-Japanese dictionary translates “literature” as *bundō* 文道 precisely because of the contrast between *bundō* and *budō* 武道, the military arts. It is on the basis of this conceptual contrast between *bun* and *bu* that Nishi Amane seems to have used “bungaku,” which the latter implied the more practical aspects of Confucian studies, for Western learning in general.

- (3) In 1870 Nishi Amane entered the service of the new Meiji government. In October of that year, he also opened a school called Ikueisha 育英舎 in Tokyo. The term “bungaku” appears in *Hyakugaku renkan* 百学連環 (1870), a record of his lectures made by Nagami Yutaka 永見裕. In the “General Introduction” Nishi stated, “When bungaku lies open, the Way is bright.” He

⁵ *Nishi Amane zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 478.

⁶ *Nishi Amane zenshū*, vol. 2, pp. 532-33.

⁷ *Nishi Amane zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 474.

⁸ *Sagara Tōru chosaku shū*, vol. 2, pp. 27-30.

also used the word “*bunshō*” as the Japanese counterpart for “literature” and stressed the depth of its relationship with *gakujutsu* 學術 (arts and sciences).⁹ For the purposes of translation, Nishi clearly adopted “*bungaku*” in the sense of Confucian studies and “*bunshō*” in the sense of *kanshi* and *kanbun*.

Next, Nishi observed that French “*belles lettres*” corresponds to English “humanities” or “elegant literature,” and went on to cite a saying then current in the West, to the effect that “Within ‘*bunshō*’ (letters) there are five fields of study.” He identified these as rhetoric, poetry, history, philology, criticism, and *belles lettres*.¹⁰ Concerning “*belles lettres*,” his comments suggest familiarity with the established French distinction between “*belles lettres*” and “*saintes lettres*” and a wish to affirm, for “*belles lettres*,” an entirely secular value making the term roughly equivalent to “humanities” in English. His remarks betray no interest in associating either “*belles lettres*” or “humanities” with any particular aesthetic value. They may have sprung from a desire to affirm the traditional conception of “*bungaku*”—a conception that combined Confucian humanistic teaching with the high-class (as distinguished from lower, purely vernacular writings) *kanshi* and *kanbun* summed up in the term “*bunshō*.” In other words, Nishi’s usage implies that, for him, “*belles lettres*” or “humanities” corresponded nicely to the traditional Japanese notion of “*bungaku*.”

In *Hyakugaku renkan* the “General Introduction” is followed by Chapter 1, in which, under the heading “*futsūgaku* 普通学 (“common science”),” Nishi listed history, geography, “*bunshōgaku* 文章学 (literature),” and mathematics, both pure and applied. In the field of history, he cited chronology (*nenpyō* 年表) and comparative chronology (*shokoku taishō nenpyō* 諸国对照年表), but also “romance” (*haishi* 稗史), as areas “akin to history but different from it.” As examples of *haishi* he cited *Sanguozhi* 三国志 (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms) and *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸伝 (The Water Margin) as “highly embellished truth.” Next, he took up the subject of “fable” (*shōsetsu* 小説), of which he wrote, “Works resembling history are *haishi*, while those closer to spoken stories are *shōsetsu*.” After subdividing “fable” into “apologue” and “parable,” he then went on to discuss “mythology” and to state that all these elements are to be found in Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記.¹¹

A modern reader familiar with history as a discipline founded, like science, on actual proof, may be startled to find *haishi*, *shōsetsu*, and myth included under that heading; although the observation that all these are to be found in *Shiji* helps to clarify the concept of history current in Nishi Amane’s time. However, the impact of science was then bringing about a major change in the Western concept of history. Nishi Amane, who himself had been influenced by the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), therefore appended to his classification of historical genres the admonition that “history” should confine itself to reliable evidence.¹²

Nishi’s explanation of “*shōsetsu*” mentions the types of popular tale known as *otogi-*

9 Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 17. However, Nishi Amane specified (p. 19) that *bunshō* differs from *gakujutsu* in its aim, in its methods, and in the fact that the latter requires the assistance of observation instruments.

10 Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 18.

11 Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 4, pp. 76-78.

12 Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 4, pp. 76-78.

banashi 御伽噺 and *kusa zōshi* 草双紙. It is all very well to use the term “shōsetsu” broadly, but *otogi-banashi* or *kusa zōshi* like *Momotarō* 桃太郎 (the example he cited) are “popular literature” (*minshū bungei* 民衆文芸) that may perhaps be studied from the perspective of the “humanities,” but that do not belong in the category of “belles lettres” or “elegant literature.” Nishi gave no thought to the connection between the “belles lettres” he discussed in his general introduction and “shōsetsu,” which thus included “popular literature.”

Next, Nishi discussed “bunshōgaku” 文章学 (literature). After explaining such matters as pronunciation, grammar, and “rhetoric,” he stated, “In the last analysis, literature is something else. It is poetry.” (The original gives both “literature” and “poetry” in English.) He then went on to discuss poetry,¹³ noting the similarity between Western and Chinese poetry, both of which rely on rhyme, and the difference between these and Japanese poetry, which is based on syllable count. Thus he left no doubt that, for him, *waka* and *renga* were to be included in the larger category of “poetry.” The passage suggests the developing Tokugawa-period view that *kanshi*, *waka*, and *haikai* all belong to a single genre.

In Nishi Amane’s “General Introduction” and in his discussion of “literature,” the word “literature” is translated in three ways: as “bunshō,” “bunshōgaku,” and “bungaku.” In fact, Nishi translated “rhetoric,” too, as “bunshōgaku.” He therefore had not settled on a consistent translation for the term, although it is also true that *Hyakugaku renkan* is a record of lectures and so not a work in which consistency is to be expected. In any case, his main aim was to introduce to Japan the corpus of Western learning as he himself had absorbed it, and no doubt his translations of particular terms served merely to support his explanations of the concepts involved. His works up to and including *Hyakugaku renkan* suggest that, for him, the category of “bungaku” included at once learning in general, poetry (*shiika*), and fiction (shōsetsu).

Hyakugaku renkan was rediscovered in 1932 and first published in 1945, in volume 1 of *Nishi Amane zenshū* (Nihon Hyōronsha). Nishi’s lectures must therefore have influenced only a small number of the students at his school. The work has served the purposes of this book by providing a model of the way the concept of “bungaku” then took shape among westernizing intellectuals. At the same time, Nishi’s inconsistent translations of “literature” suggest also the inconsistency of the position he assigned “bunshō” and “bungaku” within the general corpus of learning. Let us now consider some occurrences of the term “bungaku” in his later work.

- (4) In “Chisetsugo” 知説五 (*Mei roku zasshi* 明六雜誌, no. 25, 1874), Nishi Amane listed four fields under the heading of *futsū no gaku* 普通の学 (his translation of the expression “common science”): *bun* 文, *sū* 数 (mathematics), *shi* 史 (history), and *chi* 地 (earth sciences). He also explained that these can be grouped under two headings: *shinri* 心理 (corresponding to the humanities) and *butsuri* 物理 (corresponding to the natural sciences). The continuity with *Hyakugaku renkan* is clear, but the order of presentation is different, since *bun* is named first. Nishi stated that *bun* refers to “the arts of language and writing” (*gengo, bunji no gakujutsu* 言

13 *Nishi Amane zenshū*, vol. 4, pp. 83-100. *Nihon kokugo daijiten* cites an example from Nishi Amane’s *Hyakugaku renkan*, under the fourth meaning (“linguistic art”) given there for “bungaku.” The example itself may possibly be said to refer to linguistic art, but, as explained above, the concept of “bungaku” evident in *Hyakugaku renkan* is by no means limited to that meaning, being much broader. The example is therefore inappropriate.

語、文辞の学術), which he divided into “grammar” (*gogaku* 語学) and “rhetoric” (*bungaku* 文学).¹⁴ Here he used “bungaku” to mean the study of written, as distinguished from spoken language.

- (5) A final matter to cite concerns a piece entitled “Nihon Bungaku Kaisha sōshi no hōhō” 日本文学会社創始ノ方法 (*Tōkyō Gakushi Kaiin zasshi* 東京学士会院雑誌, vol. 1, no. 10 (1880)). Nishi proposed creating a humanities and social sciences section within the Japan Academy (Nihon Gakushiin 日本学士院). He had this to say concerning the name he suggested:

One may say that history, politics, law, philosophy, and economics, linked as they are to the study of human thought and feeling, have a great deal in common with *bungaku*, and that although each has its own fundamental principles, they should be quite capable of communicating with one another.¹⁵

In other words, Nishi proposed “bungaku” as an appropriate term to stand for all the humanities and social sciences. In this text “bungaku” no longer includes science, as it did in his “Tokugawa-ke Numazu Gakkō tsuika okitegaki.” It now represents the *shinri* (humanities) of which Nishi wrote in “Chisetsugo.”

Nishi Amane’s use of the term “bungaku” remained unstable to the end. In the larger perspective, however (apart from his use of it to translate “rhetoric”) it designates from our perspective a category combining learning in general with linguistic art, and its instability stems from hesitation over whether or not to include the sciences in the notion of learning in general (*gakujutsu ippan*). The question of whether or not the scope of linguistic art is limited to higher-level works also remained unresolved.

4.1.4 The Stability and Instability of a Translation Term

“Bungaku” appears as a term for learning and the arts in general (*gakugei ippan* 学芸一般) in the opening chapter (“Bungaku gijutsu” 文学技術) of *Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情 (1866-70) by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1834-1901). After explaining how the learning of ancient Greece reached Europe via the Arabs, Fukuzawa wrote as follows.

It is said that the subsequent flourishing of *bungaku gijutsu* [the liberal arts and technology] in the countries of Europe is due entirely to the Arabs.... Learning advanced greatly after the invention of printing in 1423, and philosophy [*keigaku* 経学], medicine, poetry, and history reached the highest degree of excellence. Only the physical sciences [*kyūri no gaku* 究理の学] failed to do so.¹⁶

In the expression *bungaku gijutsu*, *bungaku* corresponds to the medieval term “liberal arts” (*gakugei*

¹⁴ Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 1, p. 463. Later on, Nishi divided “common science” simply into *bun* 文 and *sū* 数.

¹⁵ Nishi Amane *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 587.

¹⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi *zenshū*, vol. 1, pp. 301-302.

学芸), which stands in opposition to “industrial arts” (*kōgei* 工芸). This is the term Fukuzawa rendered as “bungaku,” which properly meant Confucian studies together with kanshi and kanbun. *Keigaku* is what we now call philosophy (*tetsugaku* 哲学), *seiri* corresponds to medicine and physiology, and *kyūri* refers to physics and chemistry. Fukuzawa adopted the same terminology in his *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論の概略 (1875). He wrote:

The man of knowledge and judgment will wish to admit learned and talented Christian missionaries, to study their arts and crafts [*bungaku gigei* 文学技芸] together with their religion, and thus to advance our own civilization. However, the arts and crafts involve skill. Christian missionaries need not be the only ones who can teach skill.

And,

When one compares the skill of the Japanese to the skill of the Westerners, there is not a single area—not the liberal arts [*bungaku*], not technology [*gijutsu*], not industry [*kōgyō* 工業]—in which we surpass them.¹⁷

However, it is well known that in the first edition of his *Gakumon no susume* 学問ノススメ (1872-76) Fukuzawa distinguished between “practical studies close to the needs of daily life” (*ningen futsū nichiyō ni chikaki jitsugaku* 人間普通日用に近き実学) and “learning without practical use” (*jitsu naki gakumon* 実なき学問):

“Learning” means something other than such *bungaku* without practical use to the world as simply knowing difficult Chinese characters, reading baffling old texts, enjoying *waka*, or composing *kanshi*. *Bungaku* like this may be just the thing for giving people pleasure, but as scholars of Confucian and native studies have always said, it does not deserve that much praise.¹⁸

“Knowing difficult Chinese characters” and “reading baffling old texts” no doubt correspond to the root meaning of the English word “literature,” while Fukuzawa must have felt that “enjoying *waka*” and “composing *kanshi*” were consistent with its more modern meaning of high-class linguistic art.

In the sixth edition of *Gakumon no susume*, an article on the hiring of an American missionary to teach at Keiō Gijuku 慶応義塾 (later, Keiō Gijuku University) distinguishes *bungaku kagaku* 文学科学 from *gogaku* 語学 ([the study of] languages).¹⁹ In this case *kagaku* means not (as it normally does now) the natural sciences, but instead a field of learning, and the expression as a whole may reasonably be taken to refer to the field of English and American literature. Not to employ this missionary, Fukuzawa wrote, would be to “place a great obstacle in the way of *bungaku* in our land (*tenka bungaku* 天下文学).” Seen in this light the expression “*bungaku* without

17 Fukuzawa *Yūkichi zenshū*, vol. 4, pp. 104-105, 107.

18 Fukuzawa *Yūkichi zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 30.

19 Fukuzawa *Yūkichi zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 69.

practical use to the world,”²⁰ already noted in the first edition of *Gakumon no susume*, appears to refer to what Fukuzawa called elsewhere “Japanese and Chinese antiquarian studies” (*wakan no kogaku* 和漢の古学).²¹ This suggests in turn that, for Fukuzawa, reading the Chinese and Japanese classics, composing kanshi, enjoying waka, or losing oneself in the old fiction of either country had nothing to do with learning (*gakumon*), but were instead useless for the world of the future. Perhaps his support of hiring the missionary suggests that he expected the missionary’s lectures to include moral themes. Later on, in *Bungaku no kai* 文学の解 (1886), Fukuzawa called for the development of *bungaku* as a “science” (サイエンス).²²

Fukuzawa Yukichi’s use of the word “*bungaku*,” like Nishi Amane’s, is unstable, since he employed it as necessary in a variety of contexts. However, also as in the case of Nishi Amane, he seems fundamentally to have taken the Western arts and sciences (*gakugei ippan*) as corresponding to “*bungaku*,” the conception of which included the “*bunshō*” centered on Confucian learning and kanshi. If in calling for westernization and practical learning he could in this way refer to Western arts and sciences in general as “*bungaku*,” then the following example should be no surprise. It is from an article published in 1875 in the magazine *Katei zasshi* 家庭雜誌.

Bungaku means science [サイエンス]. The term covers all fields of study. It does not refer to poetry, prose, and so on.²³

However, few other examples support this outright exclusion of poetry and prose from the category of “*bungaku*.” As we shall see, the works of Fukuchi Ōchi 福地桜痴 (1841-1906) and Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉 contain occurrences suggesting that, at the time, the practice of using “*bungaku*” to designate with a single term both the arts and sciences in general, and linguistic art was already well established among westernizing scholars.

This concept made its first public appearance near the start of the Meiji period. The regulations governing newspapers (*Shinbunshi Jōrei* 新聞紙条例), issued in July 1871, specified as legitimate content for newspaper articles economic developments and natural disasters, followed by “industry and new technology (*zōkōshinki* 造工新器), science, arts, and poetry (*gakugei shiika* 学芸詩歌), food and clothing, insect pests, plants and forests, medicinal products. . . , and translations of Western books.” Judging from the context, *gakugei shiika* is to be taken as a single word and does not prove that *gakugei* (the arts, the liberal arts) and *shiika* (poetry) were then normally considered to belong to a single category. However, in a revised version of the same regulations, published in 1873, this article was changed to “official reports, *bungaku*, the industrial arts [*kōgei* 工芸], amusements, food and clothing, housing, Western books, translations,” and so on. In this new version *zōkōshinki* has become *kōgei*, and the other items have similarly been shortened from four-character to two-character compounds. It thus appears that the four-character expression *gakugei shiika* was condensed to the two characters of “*bungaku*.”

20 Fukuzawa Yukichi *zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 109.

21 Fukuzawa Yukichi *zenshū*, vol. 15, p. 15.

22 In “Shinkaron to *bungaku*,” Chiba Sen’ichi called *Bungaku no kai* Fukuzawa’s final statement on the subject of *bungaku*.

23 Quoted by Yanagida Izumi in *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, vol. 1, p. 91.

This occurrence of the word marks the public debut of “bungaku” as a category covering both the liberal arts and poetry. One may plausibly attribute this event to Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828-1902), the scholar of the West who, as a senior secretary in the Ministry of Education, was entrusted with the task of composing these regulations.

Further conjecture suggests that the category may well have been meant to include *gesaku* fiction. Indeed, in the “Three-Article Education Law” (Sanjō no Kyōken 三条の教憲) of 1872 the government promulgated a Shinto-centered mass education policy that sought to mobilize in pursuit of its goal both *gesaku* and kabuki. In response the *gesaku* writer Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文, hitherto the author of popular comic and satirical works, set about producing *gesaku* works attuned to the new policy, hence aiming to “promote virtue and condemn vice.” Moreover, in 1874 there began to emerge so-called “minor newspapers” (*shōshinbun* 小新聞), which, unlike the “major newspapers,” with their emphasis on political opinion, devoted greater space to human-interest stories and popular events. These included a great deal of *gesaku* and other such entertaining material. It therefore seems likely that, as in Nishi Amane’s usage, the “bungaku” that first appeared in public documents addressed to the population at large did not exclude “popular literature.”

4.2 The Beginnings of “Japanese Literature”

4.2.1 “Lamenting the Stagnation of Japanese Literature”

Let us now consider an example from “Nihon bungaku no fushin o tan-zu” 日本文学の不振を嘆ず by Fukuchi Ōchi, published in *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* 東京日日新聞 on April 26, 1875. Citing various occurrences of “bungaku” in this essay, Isoda Kōichi stated that as far as he knew, and within the medium of movable type print, they constitute “the earliest example of the use of ‘bungaku’ as a translation term for ‘literature’ in the sense of artistic writing”; and he described them as “the most appropriately Japanese expression of the concept of ‘literature’ originating in nineteenth-century Europe.”²⁴ If so, then Fukuchi’s article represents the first newspaper appearance of the word “bungaku” in the sense in which we use it today.

“Nihon bungaku no fushin o tan-zu” begins, “Japanese bungaku has long been in decline.”²⁵ Anticipating the objection that the Ministry of Education had established schools throughout the country and that “bungaku” had never before in Japan flourished as it did now, Fukuchi insisted nevertheless in his exordium that “Japanese bungaku is quite obviously declining day by day.” Entering then upon his main argument, he first conceded that Japan did indeed boast such kanbun works as *Nihon shoki*, *Dai Nihonshi*, and *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史, but he noted that “Japan is a country without historical works written in language intelligible to ordinary people.” He observed moreover that no history of the Meiji Restoration had yet been published, nor even any account of the Japanese embassies to America and Europe. This he took as proof of the decline of “bungaku.”

24 Isoda Kōichi *chosaku shū*, vol. 5, p. 95. Isoda’s view arises from the fact that he noted in Fukuchi’s article only certain instances of the use of “bungaku”: those that support his thesis regarding the establishment of the word as a translation term in Japan.

25 Fukuchi Ōchi *shū*, p. 342. The following quotations from “Nihon bungaku no fushin o tan-zu” are all from pp. 342-43.

Next, he emphatically placed the “novel and wonder tale” (*noveru shōsetsu denki* ノヴェル[小説]伝奇)—i.e., “the bungaku of the shōsetsu,” endowed as it is with the wonders of a style that, by providing a full description of life as it is lived and conveying the detail of human feelings, stirs the reader to both joy and anger”—at the head of bungaku as a whole; affirmed that it is “a Japanese habit” to rank the once-popular *Taketori* 竹取 and its successor monogatari, as well as such *gesaku* works as those of Santō Kyōden at “the very bottom”; and called the fallen condition of the shōsetsu “a sign of the collapse of bungaku.” On the subject of “drama,” “that is to say, *gidayū* 義太夫 scripts,” Fukuchi called them “that aspect of bungaku which deserves the highest esteem.” He also called waka, renga, and haikai the “poem[s]” of Japan and wrote:

What else but waka transmits the pure, ancient Japanese language to us in the present day? And the bungaku of poetry in Chinese is no less essential than waka, renga, and haikai for evoking nature and giving expression to human feelings.

In conclusion, Fukuchi observed that although scholars of English and French studies have no respect for those of Chinese, it is the scholars of Chinese who learned all on their own to write Chinese poetry and who imposed their ideas. They had a genuine function in the world. In contrast, the scholars of English and French have no books of their own, almost all the books published since the Restoration being translations, until the world is infested with nothing but “pamphlets” of extracts. No, he complained bitterly, these people actually have no talent whatever for bungaku. On the other hand, he continued, *we* “are practiced in bungaku, thanks to Chinese books, and are therefore able freely to express in writing whatever we have in mind, whether right or wrong.” And yet under the current educational system children are hardly likely to receive that much schooling in bungaku. With this, Fukuchi brought his peroration to a close. I would like now to examine more closely its valuable examples of early Meiji use of the word “bungaku.”

First, let us consider the way the term is used throughout the essay as a whole. Fukuchi began by employing it in the broad sense of learning in general, literacy, or all written works. Then, toward the middle, it clearly functions to designate the notion of linguistic art. Finally, in the last part of the essay it reverts to meaning literacy, in the sense also of education and reasoning. Thus it includes almost the whole semantic field covered by the English term “literature.” In other words, Fukuchi’s essay shows that he had mastered the full range of meaning associated with the word “literature.” The early Meiji period boasted many experts in English,²⁶ but his linguistic ability stands out even in such company. He had twice been overseas as an official interpreter for bakufu missions, and his experience gained him a place on the Iwakura Mission as well. No doubt that experience is what made this essay possible.

Next, let us consider the content of this multivalent usage of bungaku, first in connection with the term’s sense of learning and education. At both the beginning and the end of his article Fukuchi remarked on the decline of scholarship. No doubt scholarship had indeed suffered from the political and military chaos of the years surrounding the Restoration. It is also true that large numbers of excerpted translations were characteristic of the enlightenment period following the Restoration. As

26 For details, see Ōta Yūzō 1981 and 1995.

for the new education system, it had been established in haste in 1872. Even before then, however, some Osaka districts had purchased daimyo mansions and storehouses in order to start schools for the local children, while at Iwakuni foreigners were hired to teach English, mathematics, and science. Despite local variations, the popular groundswell in favor of education seems therefore to have begun quite early. The Directive on Education of 1879 established elementary schools on the American model and placed the supervision of education under regional control, but the popular enthusiasm for education was certainly spontaneous.

In this connection it is worth noting what Fukuchi had to say, in the closing section of his essay, regarding scholars of English and French studies. His attack on them appears to reflect the contemporary strength of language studies. Furthermore, his use of the expressions “scholars of Chinese” (*kangakusha* 漢学者) or “scholars of Chinese and Confucian studies” (*kangakujusha* 漢学儒者) was unknown until Bakumatsu times. In Bakumatsu and later “Western studies” (*yōgaku* 洋学), the successor to the “Dutch studies” (*rangaku*) of an earlier age, learning came to be divided up country by country. At Daigaku Nankō 大学南校, a predecessor of Tokyo University established in 1872 on the grounds of the Tokugawa bakufu’s former Bansho Shirabesho 蕃書調所, the fields of study included English, French, and German. This trend seems then to have set Confucian studies correspondingly apart, originating as they did in China, under the heading of “Chinese studies.” Indeed, the terms *kanjusha* 漢儒者 (“scholar of Chinese and Confucian studies”) and *wagakusha* 和学者 (“scholar of Japanese studies”) appear in the opening section of the first volume of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*.²⁷

It is worth noting that although Fukuchi was traditional-minded in his complaint that “Japan is a country without historical works written in language intelligible to ordinary people,” and his praise of waka as “transmit[ting] the pure, ancient Japanese language to us in the present day,” he simultaneously emphasized the role of Chinese writings in literacy training. In fact, he turned his lament about Japanese historical works around to conclude that, in truth, “Since until the medieval period British history was written in Latin, there is nothing wrong with Japanese history having been written in kanbun.”

At any rate, for Fukuchi, “Japanese” undoubtedly meant written language intelligible to ordinary Japanese people. This position is consonant with the vernacular revolution then taking place in Europe. Fukuchi clearly understood writing in Chinese—poetry and prose—to play the same role in Japan as Latin did in England and Europe. Well-educated Englishmen studied Latin and thus enhanced their reading and writing ability, while the English used by ordinary Englishmen was full of Latin. Likewise, the language used by ordinary Japanese was full of Chinese words, and the Japanese, too, enhanced their literary knowledge by studying works written in Chinese. In short, Fukuchi grasped accurately that the literacy of the ordinary Japanese was underpinned by study of written Chinese. Therefore, when he advocated the unity of the spoken and written languages (*genbun itchi* 言文一致), he did not lapse into narrow linguistic nationalism and call for the immediate abolition of Chinese studies and Chinese characters. On the contrary, he worried that neglect of written Chinese might damage literacy. Fukuchi probably took this position precisely

²⁷ *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 10 and elsewhere.

because he knew English well and was familiar with British education.²⁸

4.2.2 The Concept of “Japanese Bungaku”

Let us now consider the second among the many meanings that Fukuchi Ōchi gave to the term “bungaku”: that of linguistic art. He did so in the section that Isoda Kōichi described as “the most appropriately Japanese expression of the concept of ‘literature’ originating in nineteenth century Europe.” Nothing obvious about the passage signals a determining role for it, but the passage deserves attention because the attitude it expresses constitutes a prototype for the later understanding of “bungaku” in Japan.

It is clear from the passage that Fukuchi, like Nishi Amane in his *Hyakugaku renkan*, stood between “bungaku” as history and “bungaku” as linguistic art. Still, his discussion of the way forward for Japanese “bungaku” is distinctly weighted toward fiction (*shōsetsu*), drama (*gikyoku*), and poetry (*shi*). Fukuchi had been championing poetry and the novel for some time already before he wrote this article. This made him highly unusual at a time when scholars of things Western were interested almost exclusively in practical learning (*jitsugaku* 実学).²⁹

Let us begin with Fukuchi’s claim that it is a Japanese peculiarity to look down on “the bungaku of the *shōsetsu*.” Several factors lie in the background of this assertion. These include the high regard accorded Confucian studies, together with Chinese poetry and prose, throughout the Tokugawa period, and the corresponding, lingering tendency to dismiss popular *haikai* poetry and fiction as vulgar; the high value attached to “manliness” (*otokorashisa* 男らしさ), under the influence of the surge of *bushidō* 武士道 (warrior) spirit during the political and military turmoil of the transition from Bakumatsu to Meiji times, together with the revival of Wang Yangming’s ideal of the “great man” (*daijōbu* 大丈夫); the contemporary vigor of poetry in Chinese; the *kokugaku* view that *waka* and monogatari fiction fundamentally evoked “womanish feelings” (*memeshii kanjō* 女々しい感情); and the centrality in Western studies of “practical learning” and the concern for science, technology, and the development of industry. All these reinforced each other, encouraging the tendency to see all the literary arts except Chinese poetry and prose as “pastime accomplishments” fit only for amusing women and children.

No doubt one may take it that Fukuchi gave fiction pride of place over poetry and drama as a consequence of the rise of the novel in nineteenth-century Europe. Fukuchi applied to this genre the composite term *shōsetsu denki* 小説伝奇, which combines the Tang *zhuangqi* 伝奇 with the late Song *baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小説. The term *shōsetsu* (Ch. *xiaoshuo*) was current in the Tokugawa period as well, yet Takizawa Bakin himself placed his works in the lineage of the monogatari. This suggests that while there existed an awareness of fiction as a genre, with its own traditions, there

²⁸ Fukuchi wrote: “When a Westerner goes about translating a Japanese work, he abandons his own language and resorts to Latin or Greek, just as [in an analogous case] we would resort to Chinese” (*Fukuchi Ōchi shū*, p. 345). For Fukuchi’s views on *genbun itchi* and on scripts, see his “Bunshō ron” (1881), “Bunshō no shinka” (1885), “Bunshō kairyō no mokuteki” (1886), and “Genbun itchi” (1901).

²⁹ See the essay “Fukuchi Gen’ichirō” 福地源一郎 in Yanagida 1965, vol. 1. However, the conception of “bungaku” adopted there is entirely Yanagida’s own.

was no current term that embraced the whole. Perhaps Fukuchi's resort to the composite *shōsetsu denki* as a translation for “novel” suggests that he saw elements of the *zhuangqi* in the romantic novel of nineteenth-century Europe.

Similarly, Fukuchi translated “drama” as *engi inpon* 演戲院本, thus embracing the scripts of both kabuki and jōruri. (Nishi Amane never mentioned *engi* or *gikyoku* in his *Hyakugaku renkan*.) Later on, it was the word *gikyoku* 戲曲 that became the standard translation for “drama,” while Chinese settled on the word *juben* 劇本, at least when the work included relatively few musical elements. No doubt there existed at first, in Japanese as well, an underlying assumption that music was integral to dramatic performance.³⁰

Both *shōsetsu denki* and *engi inpon* represented arts greatly favored by the common people of the Tokugawa period. In this respect Fukuchi's understanding of “literature” differed from that current in Europe, where “popular literature” was rejected or seen as inferior. In *Hyakugaku renkan*, Nishi Amane gave “belles lettres” and “elegant literature” as synonyms for “bungaku,” but his discussion of *shōsetsu* covered *otogi-banashi* 御伽噺 and *kusa zōshi* 草双紙 as well, and he failed to distinguish clearly between “elegant” and “popular” literature. It is not as though either man was ignorant of the tendency for the recent European idea of literature to exclude works written for the people at large and to accept only those of a higher class. More probably, the flourishing movement (begun by Grimm brothers Jacob, 1785-1863, and Wilhelm, 1786-1859, and by Hans Christian Andersen, 1805-1875) to collect folktales or turn them into novels, together with the way the idea of “national literature” (favored by such writers as Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, 1843) encouraged works depicting popular life and the adoption of a popularly accessible style, clouded the literary distinction between “high” and “low.” It may well be, too, that Fukuchi Ōchi in particular assimilated monogatari and *gesaku* to the lineage of *shōsetsu denki* out of a nationalist desire to claim that Japan had its own counterpart to the European novel.

In “Bunron” 文論 (1875), Fukuchi wrote that he had long counted among “the four great masterpieces of Japan” “Bakin's *Hakkenden*, Tanehiko's *Inaka Genji*, Ikku's *Hizakurige*, and Shunsui's *Umegoyomi*.”³¹ Thus he gave the highest praise to Takizawa Bakin's 滝沢馬琴 *yomihon Nansō Satomi hakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 (1814-42), Ryūtei Tanehiko's (柳亭種彦) *kusa zōshi Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* 倭紫田舎源氏 (1829-42), to Jippensha Ikku's *kokkeibon* 滑稽本 *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* 東海道中膝栗毛 (1802-22), and to Tamenaga Shunsui's 為永春水 *ninjōbon Shunshoku umegoyomi* 春色梅兒誉美 (1832-33)—all of them examples of *gesaku* writing. It is clear that his interest tended strongly to favor popular (*zoku* 俗, “vulgar”) works. (However, since Fukuchi had no praise for *senryū* 川柳, *hauta* 端唄, or *kouta* 小唄, or for the *dodoitsu* 都々逸 ballads that were popular from Bakumatsu into early Meiji times, one should perhaps reserve judgment on this issue.)

Concerning poetry, Fukuchi translated “poem” as *shi* 詩, which deserves to be called a bold choice. In those days *shi* unmistakably meant poetry in Chinese. The awareness of *shi*, *waka*, and *haikai* as a single genre had begun to crystallize already in the late Tokugawa period, but Fukuchi removed *shi* from this list, to declare *waka*, *renga*, and *haikai* “the *shi* of Japan.” Since his idea of

30 In Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Shōsetsu shinzui* (1885-86) the characters 戲曲 (*gikyoku*) are phonetically glossed jōruri, no doubt for the same reason. See supplementary vol. 3, p. 14.

31 Fukuchi Ōchi *shū*, p. 345.

“Japanese bungaku” precisely reflected Western European linguistic nationalism, he overlooked the fact that poetry based on Chinese poetic forms had long been composed in Japan, and he limited his definition to works actually written in Japanese. As Nishi Amane understood, waka, renga, and haikai indeed follow set forms, but they lack the rhyme characteristic of Western or Chinese poetry. Moreover, the composition of renga is a collective enterprise unlike any known in the West. No doubt one can discern in the way he ignored such differences and declared these three to be “the *shi* of Japan” a desire to proclaim that in this respect Japan was the equal of Europe. Moreover, the judgment that waka preserves in the present “the pure, ancient Japanese language” surely preserves also the flavor of mid-Tokugawa *kokugaku* thought.

One further remark. Fukuchi cited as the chief feature of the novel that “by providing a full description of life as it is lived and conveying the detail of human feelings, it stirs the reader to both joy and anger”; and he declared the key feature of waka, renga, and haikai to be that “they describe the visible world and give expression to the emotions.” His approach both to the novel and to poetry in Japanese gives equal weight to description of the outer world and evocation of the internal one of feeling or emotion.

Nineteenth-century aesthetic ideals commonly found the source of beauty in the emotions, emphasized the inner freedom of the self, and prized imagination and creativity. The fact that Fukuchi accorded external description an importance equal to that of internal feeling suggests the possible influence of the Eastern tradition, especially poetry in Chinese and Japanese. Or perhaps the influence is that of realism, which was so prominent in nineteenth-century Europe.

4.2.3 The Beginnings of the “History of Japanese Bungaku”

Yanagida Izumi cited as the first harbingers of the “history of Japanese literature” *Nihon kyōiku shiryaku* 日本教育史略 and *Bungei ruisan* 文芸類纂, published in 1877 and 1878, respectively, by the Ministry of Education; and Taguchi Ukichi’s *Nihon kaika shōshi* 日本開化小史, published between 1877 and 1882.³² *Nihon kyōiku shiryaku* was compiled for the Philadelphia World’s Fair of 1876, at the suggestion of the foreign expert (*o-yatoi* お雇い) David Murray (1830-1905), and its content corresponds precisely to its title. Part One (Kyōiku gaigen 教育概言) is by Murray (trans. Kobayashi Giichi 小林義一); Part Two (Kyōiku shiryaku 教育志略) is by Ōtsuki Shūji 大槻修二 (Nyoden 如電, 1845-1931); and Part Three (Bungei gairyaku 文芸概略) is by Sakakibara Yoshino 榊原芳野 (Kinshū 琴洲, 1832-1881). The term *bungei* in the title of Part Three is equivalent in meaning to *gakugei* 学芸 (learning and the arts).

Until the end of the Tokugawa period, education was centered on Confucian studies and on mastering Chinese poetry and prose: a field known traditionally as “bungaku.” In this usage, the term corresponds to the core meaning of the English word “literature.” Therefore, as Yanagida Izumi pointed out, *Nihon kyōiku shiryaku* indeed amounts to a history of Japanese “bungaku.” Its survey of Japanese education as a whole, past and present, in terms of this core meaning of “bungaku,” distinguishes a contemporary emphasis on “Japanese and Chinese bungaku [calligraphy, reading, composition]” from a past stress on “history, philosophy [*rigaku* 理学], poetry [*shifu* 詩賦],

³² Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, p. 317.

and fiction [*shōsetsu* 小説].”³³ In the former case, “bungaku” refers to education in reading and writing, and so differs somewhat from the older sense of “bungaku” as Chinese poetry and prose. In the latter case, “bungaku” seems rather to refer to Confucian studies. Section Two (“Bunshō” 文章, “Letters”) of Part Three includes under this heading “diaries, travel accounts, monogatari, waka prefaces, waka,” thus suggesting a shift in the traditional meaning of “bungaku.” Section Three (“Bungaku sōron” 文学総論) begins with Confucian studies and goes on to cover painting, medicine, natural history, history, and so on. “Bungaku” in this case means learning in general, or encyclopedic learning.

Acceptance of the term “literature” caused a change in the traditional usage of “bungaku,” so that the latter came to mean Japanese writing and education in writing, hence all of the Japanese literary arts, just as in the Fukuchi Ōchi article discussed above. However, while Fukuchi emphasized the linguistic arts, Murray announced in Part One of *Nihon kyōiku shiryaku* that the Meiji period had seen a shift from the old notion of education in “bungaku” to education in science (*bunkagaku* 分科学), and he stated that “the old ‘bungaku’ education had wasted its time on poetry [*shifu*].”³⁴ In short, in his zeal to promote education in science, Murray ignored the earlier usage of “bungaku” in order to gather into it everything covered by the English term “literature.”

The second document under discussion, *Bungei ruisan*, was put together by the same Sakakibara Yoshino who was responsible for Part Three of *Nihon kyōiku shiryaku*. Yanagida Izumi proposed that the former was composed first, but that, at Murray’s suggestion, the latter version was published earlier.³⁵ *Bungei ruisan* is divided into four parts, each filling two volumes (*kan* 卷), ranging from an account of the writing system (*jishi* 字志), through style and learning (*bunshi* 文志, *gakushi* 学志), to a discussion of the paraphernalia needed for writing (*bungushi* 文具志). Its aim is an orderly overview of learning and the arts in general, and it claims particularly to present both Japanese and Chinese “bungaku” in a comparative perspective.³⁶ The editorial policy for the whole was no doubt determined by Nishimura Shigeki, the Ministry of Education chief clerk (*daishokikan* 大書記官) who wrote the preface.

The inclusion even of writing implements suggests the broadening and redefinition of the earlier conception of “bungaku,” but it is not as though the work sought to classify its materials and to establish their mutual relationships, or to analyze them historically. In that sense, it cannot be said to constitute a “history of Japanese literature” in either the broad or the median sense of the term.

A greatly expanded project of the same general nature as *Bungei ruisan*, one that attempted to include the whole corpus of classical writing, was *Koji ruien* 古事類苑. The work was begun by Nishimura Shigeki in 1879. The initial plan was to divide the material into forty major sections (*bu* 部), and the first section of the work (Teiō bu 帝王部, “The Sovereign”) was published accordingly in 1896. However, in 1900 the sections were reduced in number to thirty. The project

33 Quoted in Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, p. 324. Examples of *rigaku* as a contemporary translation of the term “philosophy,” in parallel with *tetsugaku* 哲学, are cited by Hirayama Yō in the preface to *Nishida tetsugaku no saikōchiku: Sono seiritsu katei to hikaku shisō*, from the works of Kikuchi Dairoku 菊池大麓 and Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民.

34 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, p. 324.

35 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, pp. 325-26.

36 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, p. 327.

was completed in 1914. The section on *bungaku* (three Western-style volumes) appeared in 1902. It began with such linguistic matters as “The Writing System” (*moji* 文字), “Rhyme” (*on’in* 音韻), and “The Study of the Japanese Language” (*kokugogaku* 国語学), and from there went on to “Japanese Writing” (*wabun* 和文), “Chinese Writing” (*kanbun* 漢文), “Epistolary Writing” (*shokanbun* 書簡文), “Japanese Poetry” (*uta* 歌), “Linked Verse” (*renga* 連歌), “Haikai” 俳諧, “Poetry Contests” (*utaawase* 歌合), “Poetry Gatherings” (*utakai* 歌会), “Chinese Poetry” (*shi* 詩), “Japanese Studies” (*wagaku* 和学), “Chinese Studies” (*kangaku* 漢学), “Study of the Classics” (*keigaku* 經学), “Study of History” (*shigaku* 史学), “Study of Protocol and Etiquette” (*yūsokugaku* 有職学), “Ethical Studies” (*shingaku* 心学), “Fiction” (*shōsetsu* 小説), and Poetry and Prose. Next came “Foreign Languages, including Western Studies” (*gaikoku gogaku, tsuketari yōgaku* 外国語学 付洋学), then “Universities” (*daigaku* 大学) and other topics covering the education system. These were followed by “Chinese Works” (*kanseki* 漢籍) and other bibliographical topics, as well as “Mathematics” (*sanjutsu* 算術), “Documents” (*sho* 書), “Painting” (*kaiga* 絵画), “Printing” (*insatsu* 印刷), “Seals” (*inshō* 印章), and such topics as “Paper” (*kami* 紙), “Brushes” (*fude* 筆), and “Inkstones” (*suzuri* 硯). In this way the work gathered every aspect of writing, from language and learning to writing materials, under the heading of “*bungaku*.”

In contrast, it is certainly possible to discern in Taguchi Ukichi’s *Nihon kaika shōshi* the first beginnings of a “history of Japanese literature.” A historian and economist influenced by European enlightenment thought, Taguchi was the translator of Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) and Herbert Spencer’s *Principles of Sociology* (1876-96). *Nihon kaika shōshi* represents his attempt as a young man to give an account of the development of Japanese civilization from ancient times to the Meiji Restoration.

The work covers topics as diverse as financial capital, music, and manners and customs. Translations of François Guizot’s *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* (1828-30) had already appeared in 1874-75.³⁷ Written against the background of the monarchist restoration that followed the French Revolution, this work grasps “civilization” from the standpoint of both the material (the political system, industry, war, etc.) and the spiritual (religion, literature, science, art, etc.); and it gives them a Christian-based teleological interpretation that posits a struggle between these various elements, leading toward a single goal of worldwide progress—their unifying factor being the superiority of French civilization. In the end Guizot celebrates the legitimacy of the French Revolution and of bourgeois power, in other words, of civilization based on the modern nation-state. In the process he attributes to “literature” the indispensable role of guiding the human spirit. It may well be a spirit of rivalry that inspired Taguchi to write his own work.³⁸

In the fourth volume (ca. 1877)³⁹ of *Nihon kaika shōshi*, Chapter 7 (“Japanese *Bungaku* from the Beginning until the 1800s”) begins as follows.

37 Nagamine Hideki, trans., *Yōroppa bunmei shi* (1874-77); and Murata Atsumi 村田充美, trans., *Seiyō kaika shi* (1875).

38 Taguchi’s emphasis on the material aspects of civilization led Yanagida Izumi to suggest that his models included not only Guizot’s *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, but also Henry Thomas Buckle’s *History of Civilisation in England*, which was widely read in early Meiji Japan.

39 See Ōkubo Toshiaki 1977, p. 440.

Bungaku is the visible image of the human heart. There have always been many seeds that give rise to what appears in the world of the heart. Some of these manifestations have to do with government, and some with manners and customs. Bungaku is that which is manifest in letters [*bunshō*]. Such manifestations are imbued with knowledge [*chi* 智] and feeling [*jō* 情]. When feelings appear in letters, the result is called the narrative style [*kijitai* 記事体]. This refers to history, fiction, and the like. When knowledge appears in letters, the result is called written argument [*ronbun* 論文]. This refers to academic [*gakubun* 学文] and editorial [*ronsetsu* 論説] writing.

The aim of written argument, which has to do above all with study, is to set forth truth [*ri* 理] and to persuade the reader. Therefore, one who practices it must have superior knowledge. The narrative style gives first place to the imagination; by describing the way things are, it causes the reader to experience people's feelings. Therefore, one who practices this style must have superior feelings.⁴⁰

In this passage Taguchi refers to everything expressed in words as “bungaku” and attempts to bring out its history. Nonetheless, unlike Nishi Amane, he saw “bungaku” as the expression of “feeling” and “knowledge,” and thus divided it into those two areas.⁴¹

Still, with respect to what he called “narrative,” which embraced history and fiction, he made no distinction between the two. No doubt one may see in his emphasis on the imagination the influence of European romanticism. As noted above, that is because Chinese poetry and prose emphasize concrete experience as well as feeling and imagination, and reject or accord only a low value to fiction. Taguchi's insistence that the practitioner of each kind of writing should be superior in knowledge or in feeling, respectively, brings his approach close to the European concept of “belles lettres.”

However, the “the 1800s” (*senhappyaku nendai* 千八百年代) of Taguchi's chapter title refers not to the nineteenth century of the Western calendar, but rather to that of the imperial era that began with the accession of Jinmu Tennō. Thus it designates a stretch of time ending with the founding of the Kamakura shogunate (ca. 1200). In this there is no trace of any distinction between “myth” on the one hand and “history” or “bungaku” on the other. In his Chapter 8, Taguchi discussed “the development of Japanese bungaku” through the Sengoku period. In short, he attempted a complete, outline history of Japanese bungaku (in the broad sense) from the *Kojiki* on, seen from the standpoint of a nationalist-minded scholar of Western learning.

The Taguchi who divided “bungaku into” “feeling” and “knowledge” evaluated the flourishing of Neo-Confucianism of the mid and late Tokugawa period (1720s to 1830s) as “the very apogee of Tokugawa bungaku.”⁴² He then stated under the heading of “fiction” (*shōsetsu*) that during the same period Santō Kyōden “had laid the foundations of fiction, after which Takizawa Bakin,

40 *Taguchi Teiken shū*, p. 50.

41 Yanagida Izumi (*Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, vol. 1, p. 342) suggested that this dual division corresponds to the theory proposed by Macauley. However, Taguchi rejected Macauley's theory of progression from the “literature of feeling” to the “literature of knowledge.”

42 *Taguchi Teiken shū*, p. 33.

Ryūtei Tanehiko, Tamenaga Shunsui, Shikitei Sanba, and others “had at last made bungaku worth reading.”⁴³ In other words, Neo-Confucianism represented the bungaku of “knowledge,” while *yomihon* and *gesaku* represented the bungaku of “feeling.” Taguchi’s evaluation of late Tokugawa *gesaku* fiction is almost the same as that of Fukuchi Ōchi, save that one mentions the *kokkeibon* writer Shikitei Sanba while the other lists Jippensha Ikku. However, while Taguchi’s conception of “Japanese bungaku” is founded on the imperial view of history (*kōkoku shikan* 皇国史観), his high opinion of Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism differs from what one might call the “pure Japanism” of Fukuchi, with his reverence for works in Japanese, his rejection of poetry in Chinese, and his reflections on the *shi* of Japan.

All this suggests that, throughout the early Meiji period, scholars familiar with Western learning used the term “bungaku” in differing ways, but that they gradually agreed on a range of meaning that combined linguistic art with humanities-oriented general learning. Then (with the exception of foreign experts like David Murray or the dedicated westernizer Fukuzawa Yukichi) this conception of “bungaku” became strongly linked with notions of cultural nationalism and “tradition.” Nothing in this view encouraged excluding “popular literature” from the category of linguistic art; on the contrary, it was perfectly normal to include in the definition of “bungaku” Tokugawa-period *gesaku* fiction and *jōruri* scripts. For such scholars, these late Tokugawa works corresponded to the fiction and drama of Europe, and constituted a vital part of “Japanese bungaku.”

4.3 “Bungaku” in a Transitional Age

4.3.1 The Problem of “Higher” and “Lower” Bungaku

It will now be worth reviewing the conclusions reached by Yanagida Izumi and Wada Shigejirō, both of whom sought to trace the shifting view of “bungaku” in the early Meiji period. According to Yanagida in the first volume of his *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, “bungaku” was divided in Tokugawa times into “higher” and “lower” levels. Then, in the practically minded climate of the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods, Chinese learning (“higher bungaku”) became dominant. The subsequent acceptance of recent Western learning gave rise to the broad conception of “bungaku” as meaning learning in general; then the value of the narrower concept, contained within it, came gradually to be recognized. Soon, this narrower concept of “bungaku” gained its independence from learning, even as the standing of “lower bungaku” began to rise; so that throughout the Meiji period both levels gradually drew together, and the old notion of “bungaku” was replaced by a new one.⁴⁴ The first issue that deserves scrutiny is the following. Did the Tokugawa-period division of bungaku into “higher” and “lower”—a division fundamental to the thesis just outlined—ever exist?

The idea that it did seems to resonate with a passage in *Kinsei jusha no bungakukan*, by

43 Taguchi Teiken *shū*, pp. 59-60.

44 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, pp. 40-42. This passage underlies the standard interpretation that remains current today. Examples are Hiraoka 1973, Chapter 1 (“Futatsu no bungaku” ふたつの文学); Ino 1980a, p. 12.

Nakamura Yukihiro. In Chapter 4, which discusses the late Tokugawa period, Nakamura wrote that in this period the distinction between *ga* 雅 (elegant) and *zoku* 俗 (vulgar) became blurred. Indeed, he cited examples to argue that it tended to disappear altogether. He stated, “It would be inaccurate to say that the distinction between primary and secondary literary arts, hitherto taken for granted in the Tokugawa period, collapsed. Rather, the distinction was reformulated into the modern one between pure and popular literature.” I have already explained that this is a misunderstanding caused by surveying Tokugawa culture from the vantage point of the modern notion of “bungaku” as linguistic art and then attempting to isolate corresponding areas from it. If any such concept bringing together every aspect of linguistic art had really been influential and widespread in the late Tokugawa period, the concept of linguistic art would surely have separated out from the various meanings of the English word “literature” and have become established earlier in Japan. When Taguchi Ukichi and Fukuchi Ōchi became aware of the English category known as “literature,” they did not hesitate to include *gesaku* fiction within it. This no doubt demonstrates that their interest ran toward the popular, but their use of the word “bungaku” itself shows that they used it consistently to refer to all language based learning and art.

However, in contrast to Nakamura Yukihiro, who saw “bungaku” achieving independence from learning (Confucian studies), hence the birth of the concept of linguistic art, in the mid-Tokugawa period and complete acceptance of this concept by Bakumatsu times, Yanagida Izumi held that it became established only about 1888, during the active careers of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei. On this matter the two therefore disagree fundamentally. What, then, was Yanagida’s reasoning?

In the second section of his *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, vol. 1, Yanagida discussed the view of “bungaku” current between about 1850 and 1870 (the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods). He divided the works of the time into “higher bungaku” (works appealing to the ruling class) and “lower bungaku” (those appealing to the people), and he gave an outline chronology of each. Most of the works he defined as “higher” naturally have to do with Chinese poetry or discussions of history, but there also appear among them such items as Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719; *Hyōkō kiji* 漂荒紀事 [*Robinson hyōryūki* ロビンソン漂流記], 1852, trans. by Kuroda Yukimoto 黒田行元 from a Dutch translation), Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help* (1859; *Saigoku risshi hen* 西国立志編, trans. Nakamura Keiu 中村敬宇, 1870-71), and Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Gakumon no susume* 学問ノススメ. “Lower bungaku” is represented by *gesaku* fiction, from Tamenaga Shunsui and Ryūtei Tanehiko to Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文 (1829-1894).⁴⁵ Yanagida wrote as follows.

In short, the people of the time saw nothing strange in considering both higher and lower together to be bungaku. Considering the matter from the standpoint of content, much of higher bungaku transmits teachings from the past, but it does not wholly lack creativity or originality. Lower bungaku is creative above all and emphasizes fantasy, but here and there it, too, transmits teachings from the past. From the standpoint of thought, there was a tendency for the higher to look down on the lower, and for the lower to resist the higher. The higher, especially, seems to

⁴⁵ Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, pp. 50-53.

have considered itself alone to be true *bungaku*, while the lower saw itself as being outside *bungaku* altogether; however, both recognized that *bungaku* was *bungaku*. It is therefore worth noting that, despite certain incompatibilities between the two, both contained within themselves the seeds of a new Japanese *bungaku*.⁴⁶

Yanagida’s insistence that “the people of the time saw nothing strange in considering both higher and lower together to be *bungaku*” seems meant to highlight the idea that although from our modern perspective it is “lower *bungaku*” (*gesaku*, etc.) that seems to be “*bungaku*” itself, people then included not only *kanshi* and history, but also such works as *Saigoku risshi hen* and *Gakumon no susume* in that same category of “*bungaku*.” And they were indeed so regarded. The first reason for this is that in Tokugawa times “*bungaku*” meant Confucian studies as well as Chinese poetry and prose. The second, as Yanagida pointed out, is that as the political crisis caused by pressure from the Western powers increased, interest in the “practical” (*jitsugaku*) dimension of Neo-Confucianism grew, encouraging so receptive an attitude toward Western practical studies that works of this nature, too, tended to be regarded as “*bungaku*.”⁴⁷ It is also correct that in the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods “The higher, especially, seems to have considered itself alone to be true *bungaku*, while the lower saw itself as being outside *bungaku* altogether.” Among intellectuals concerned above all, under the prevailing political circumstances, with the state and society, it became common enough to criticize warriors for being too preoccupied with Chinese poetry and prose. It is not surprising that such intellectuals should have looked down on *kokkeibon* meant to amuse the people, and *kusa zōshi* and *ninjōbon* written to please women and children.

However, it is nonetheless necessary to emend the idea that “the people of the time saw nothing strange in considering both higher and lower together to be *bungaku*.” As we have seen, the reaction against Neo-Confucianism, the pillar of Tokugawa academic thought, took a great many forms. It is also well known that satire against the ruling class, as well as disguised resistance against government suppression of free speech, were rife in all written genres from the mid-Tokugawa period on. Nonetheless, this sort of upward directed resistance never developed into any kind of debate over what “*bungaku*” should be. That went on outside “*bungaku*” in the sense of Confucian studies and Chinese poetry and prose. Nakamura Yukihiro rightly observed that there already existed a tendency to reverse or confuse *ga* and *zoku*, but that tendency never became dominant, and the distinction between *ga* and *zoku* never entirely collapsed. A conception of “*bungaku*” that united Confucian studies, etc. with *haikai* and *gesaku* first emerged when the Western scholars of the early Meiji period—men who had accepted the broad category of “literature” in English—found themselves unable to despise the literary arts of the people.

4.3.2 The Shadow of Posterity

After the mid-Tokugawa period, the writers, readers, and content of both *kanshi* and *kanbun*, and of *yomihon*, became almost indistinguishable from one other in terms of social rank. *Tōshisen*

46 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, p. 53.

47 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, pp. 34-42.

wakun 唐詩選和訓 and *Tōshisen gahon* 唐詩選画本 were intended for educated members of the common people, while Ueda Akinari's *yomihon Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (1776) was written for the same level of reader or higher. In *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, vol. 1, Yanagida Izumi classified *yomihon* as "lower bungaku," yet he listed an edition of *Ugetsu monogatari* in his chronology of "higher literature" in the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods.⁴⁸ For the same period he also placed Japanese poetry and prose, which in Tokugawa times had generally been ranked below their Chinese counterparts, in the category of "higher bungaku," even as he classified "poetry" (*shiika* 詩歌) as "lower." None of this is clear.⁴⁹ This does not mean that Yanagida's analysis is unclear; rather, it is the very concept itself, in the late Tokugawa period, which was uncertain. That is because, as Nakamura Yukihiko noted, there was at the time a tendency for *ga* and *zoku* to become reversed or confused.

Kanshi and waka certainly changed over time, but fundamentally they were long the property of the ruling class, and they were often mentioned in the same breath as "poetry" (*shiika*). However, "bungaku" meant Confucian studies and poetry or prose in Chinese, a category to which waka did not belong. Confucian scholars of the school of Ogyū Sorai may have recognized kanshi and waka as belonging to the same class, but they certainly did not consider *kibyōshi* suitable for inclusion as well. Motoori Norinaga may have felt that waka, renga, haikai, and even sawyer's songs were all "the *uta* of Japan," but that is only because he valued waka and monogatari more highly than writing in Chinese and considered them uniquely Japanese. For Norinaga, waka and kanshi sprang from the same source, but Confucianism had made of kanshi something quite different in nature. For *kokugaku* thinkers, Japanese poetry and prose were *fumi* 文, and to study them was to study *fumi*; however, they never called waka and monogatari "bungaku," or thought of them that way. It is true that in the late Tokugawa period *shiika* and haikai began to be recognized as belonging to a single genre, but this recognition never became widespread.

Yanagida Izumi, who saw in the traditional concept of "bungaku" two streams, that of "practical studies" (*jitsugaku*) and that of "elegance" (*fūryū*), often placed poetry and prose (*shibun* 詩文) under the heading of "elegance" and sought to connect it with "lower bungaku." However, *shibun* clearly refers to poetry and prose in Chinese and has to do with the learned arts (*gakugei* 学芸). In contrast, there did not yet exist any concept that brought together all of "lower bungaku" under a single rubric.

Of course, a readiness to appreciate the skill of fine writing existed in China at least from the Six Dynasties period on, and its influence encouraged the same attitude in Japan. If that attitude were to be equated with a conscious awareness of "bungaku," then one would have to remove from the category of "bungaku" the works of Zhu Xi 朱熹, for example. Then the Tokugawa-period concept of "bungaku" would collapse. In principle there existed a clear hierarchy among the various genres, but in late Tokugawa times people of diverse classes or social stations, or of differing points of view, actually came to hold divergent notions of genre and genre hierarchy, thus eroding accepted ideas on the issue. No concept embracing all genres, from Confucian writings to *gesaku* fiction, arose until the early Meiji scholars of Western studies appeared on the scene.

48 Yanagida 1965, vol. 1, pp. 34-42, and chronology on p. 50.

49 On p. 24 Yanagida placed poetry and fiction (*shōsetsu*) in the "lower" bracket, but on p. 35 he placed poetry in the "higher."

As Yanagida Izumi remarked, it is not only untrue but illogical to hold that the concept of “larger” (*ōki na* 大き^な) or “broader” (*hiroi* 広^い) “bungaku” arose, under the influence of Western “literature” and “science,” just when the idea of two “bungaku,” the “higher” and the “lower,” had become established. The reason is that if the idea of “bungaku outside bungaku” (*bungaku igai no bungaku* 文学以外の文学) had existed, then it follows that the concept of “broader bungaku” would have existed too, even if not entirely self-consistently, before Western influence began to affect Japan.⁵⁰

The structure proposed by Yanagida attempts to convey quite flexibly the actual situation of the literary arts in the Tokugawa period. However, it is founded on the premise that Tokugawa society was ruled by a system of rigid feudal status, and that culture and its concepts reflected the social system. Thus it suffers from the decisive limitations imposed on it by an age when this sort of historical view and method were dominant. Nowadays, a more sophisticated analysis of the Tokugawa power structure has made it clear that the two-level system created by efforts to concentrate power at both the bakufu and the domain level makes it impossible to equate this society with the feudal model provided by Europe, in which the lord fully governed his domain. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that in central Japan, from the Kantō to the Kansai, there was considerable fluidity of social station (*mibun* 身分) and of class (*kaisō* 階層). (To reduce social mobility and intellectual and cultural fluidity to a theoretically rigid hierarchical social structure is to apply dogmatically the principle enunciated by Marx, to the effect that “the superstructure is defined by the base structure,” and thus to come under the influence of an analytical method that yields no analysis at all. In the domain of “bungaku,” this non-analytical analytical method permeated the field, regardless of the author’s intellectual position, in the period after the Second World War, and the issue will therefore be discussed further in Chapter 9 and later.)

Furthermore, according to Yanagida, one reason the ruling class despised “lower literature” in the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods is that the quality of *kusa zōshi* and *kokkeibon* had declined. However, this is only because Yanagida himself had a low opinion of the *gesaku* works of writers like Tamenaga Shunsui—an opinion in conflict with views broadly held at the time. Such enlightenment-minded figures of the Restoration period as Fukuchi Ōchi and Taguchi Ukichi highly esteemed Bakumatsu *gesaku* works. Therefore their ideas differed from the modern conception of “literature” in English, which would have despised or rejected both late Tokugawa “practical studies” and “popular literature”; for they were elaborating a concept of “bungaku” that included both learning in general and linguistic art. This concept was indeed, in substance, the same one that Yanagida termed “larger bungaku” or “broader bungaku.” No doubt Tokugawa culture, when viewed according to the “broader bungaku” standard formed in the Restoration period, seemed to include two levels of “bungaku,” the “higher” and the “lower,” giving rise to the idea that in the Tokugawa period “bungaku” was seen as covering both. This idea may be traceable to the notion of “lower bungaku,” or to the Tokugawa habit of referring to *gesaku* fiction as “soft bungaku” (*nan*

50 In his “Introduction” (Johen 序編), Yanagida Izumi wrote (p. 27) of Japanese literature being balanced between higher and lower, and of fiction rising in status while poetry came more to resemble fiction, so that in the end both, as in the West, came to be included within a single concept. This view clashes with his statement, regarding the Bakumatsu and Restoration periods, that “the people of the time saw nothing strange in considering both higher and lower together to be bungaku.”

bungaku 軟文学), but the practice of referring to writing on the state, society, or history as “hard *bungaku*” (*kō bungaku* 硬文学) seems to belong to the mid-Meiji period.

4.3.3 The Survival of Humanistic “Bungaku”

Next, it will be worth considering Wada Shigejirō’s “Meiji shoki ni okeru ‘bungaku’ no gainen.” Wada first showed that “the traditional meaning of ‘bungaku’ in the Tokugawa period” had two aspects (study of the Confucian teachings and composition of written works), and he went on from there to propose an entirely orthodox analysis of “what sort of ideas on *bungaku* were assimilated from the West” and “how these affected the traditional concept of *bungaku*.”⁵¹

Wada then acknowledged the survival of the traditional concept of “*bungaku*” in Nishi Amane’s contention, in the opening chapter of *Hyakugaku renkan*, that “*bungaku*” means “at once study of ‘the Way’ [*michi* 道] and study of letters [*bunshō*], so that it is used in a dual sense.” However, he discerned in the content of this “Way” “a new tendency to replace the Confucian notion of ‘the Way’ with Western ethical and spiritual civilization.”⁵² Next, he noted in Iwamoto Yoshiharu’s definition of “*bungaku*” as “the study of written style,”⁵³ and in Nakamura Keiu’s (1832-1891) view that “*bungaku*” meant “learning and the literary arts” (*gakumon bungei*),⁵⁴ “a tendency to emphasize rhetoric.” In this Wada saw a survival of the Tokugawa concept of “*bungaku*” as learning and literary technique. He discerned something new, however, in what he called “a retreat of the elements associated with Confucian learning.”⁵⁵ The view that in early Meiji times “*bungaku*” manifested both a survival of Tokugawa attitudes and a shift toward Western thought is in accord with observable facts and has a certain persuasiveness.

However, Wada also stated on the basis of entries in the English-Japanese dictionaries of the time that Nishi Amane’s confusion of “learning” with “*bungaku*” may have been due to the pull not only of Japanese traditional thought, but also of the concept of literature in the West.⁵⁶ If so, then it is no longer possible unilaterally to define early Meiji “*bungaku*,” consisting of “learning” and “literary technique,” as “the traditional meaning of ‘*bungaku*’ in the Edo period,”⁵⁷ or as “thinking current from the Edo period on.”⁵⁸ In other words, one may assume that neither Nishi Amane, nor Iwamoto Yoshiharu, nor Nakamura Keiu, merely followed “traditional Japanese thinking,” but that as scholars of Western studies they had some knowledge of what “*bungaku*” meant in the West, and that they superimposed one concept on the other, so to speak, using the term “*bungaku*” in a composite sense.

Wada Shigejirō also discussed Ariga Nagao’s 有賀長雄 *Bungaku ron* 文学論 (1885). It seemed to him that Ariga’s approach to explaining the concept of literary art in the modern West, based

51 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 14.

52 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 16.

53 Iwamoto 1885.

54 Nakamura Keiu 1876.

55 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 30.

56 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 23.

57 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 14.

58 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 16.

as this approach was on principles of synthesis and harmony derived from Confucian ideas, was “somewhat far-fetched.”⁵⁹ However, this “farfetched” quality no doubt arose from the attempt to absorb the modern Western concept of “art” through the medium of Confucianism. Ariga’s attitude may well represent that of most of the westernizing scholars of his day, since they were engaged in the same sort of enterprise. Surely it was just because the concepts of “literature” and of “bungaku” coincided to a degree that “bungaku” was chosen to translate the English term and served to explain it, despite a degree of distortion in the process. There are countless such examples. Nakamura Keiu understood and commended Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help* from a Confucian standpoint, in a manner that Meiji intellectuals found entirely comprehensible. Kitamura Tōkoku’s 北村透谷 “Meiji bungaku kanken” 明治文学管見 (1893) makes that quite clear.⁶⁰ In order to determine what notion of “bungaku” had been newly absorbed from the West and how it related to the traditional one, it is no doubt necessary first of all to understand where the traditional concept and the new, imported one coincided and where they differed, and what sort of situation arose as a result. That is precisely why this book takes the approach of comparing the Western concept with the one that served as a receptor for it.

Wada examined the “conceptions of bungaku recently absorbed from the West” that occur in Nishi Amane’s *Hyakugaku renkan* and “Chisetsugo,” and Kikuchi Dairoku’s *Shūji oyobi kabun* 修辞及華文. He concluded that the notion of “bungaku” gradually lost its connection with Confucianism but retained a strong association with rhetoric and technique, and that there appeared within it a leaning toward art, that is to say, “attentiveness to emotion and the senses, and a consequent recognition of originality. However, he observed that the works understood as constituting “bungaku” “included everything published in such fields of the humanities as philosophy, ethics, history, and critique of civilization.”⁶¹ Thus he gave more concrete expression to content of Yanagida’s “broader bungaku.”

In the early Meiji period, as Yanagida observed, there are indeed examples of learning in general (*gakujutsu ippan*, science) being referred to as “bungaku,” but Wada correctly pointed out that the content of this general learning leaned toward the humanities. However, relatively few examples reveal any tendency to exclude linguistic art from this category. From the Bakumatsu period into early Meiji, what one might call the traditional “bungaku” was translated as “polite literature,” and, as Nishi Amane’s *Hyakugaku renkan* shows, it was accorded the same meaning as “belles lettres” or “humanities.” In his *Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情, Fukuzawa Yukichi, too, understood “bungaku” as referring to “liberal arts” as opposed to “industrial arts.” Wada cited the continuing survival of the “association with rhetoric and technique” as a reason for seeing the more recent concept of “bungaku” as an extension of the one current in the Tokugawa period; however, his argument fails because “literature,” too, had a similar traditional association. Even elements that appear to be inherited from the past have been refashioned.

Wada then passed/moved on to a discussion of the concept of “bungaku” as it appears in *Bungaku ippan* 文学一斑 (1892) by Uchida Roan 内田魯庵, “Meiji bungaku shi” 明治文学史

59 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 37.

60 “He praised Smiles’s *Self-Help* from the perspective of Chinese Confucian thought.” [Kitamura]Tōkoku *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 173.

61 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 29.

(1893) by Yamaji Aizan 山路愛山, “Meiji bungaku kanken” 明治文学管見(1893) by Kitamura Tōkoku, and *Meiji bungaku shi* 明治文学史 (1894) by Ōwada Takeki 大和田建樹. He observed that the willingness to refer to humanities related works as “bungaku” appears to have flourished even into the late 1880s. He concluded that from the late 1870s into the 1880s “bungaku” works associated with Confucian learning decreased, while with respect to Western works, there was a strong tendency for the term to be associated less with poetry and fiction than with critical works in the humanities field and with rhetoric.⁶² He also remarked that this understanding of “bungaku” as referring to works in the humanities survived for quite a long time thereafter. Citing such an example from Takahashi Tansui’s 高橋淡水 *Jidai bungaku shi* 時代文学史 (1906), he wrote that it was probably close to being the last. He ended by stating that the confusion between “bungaku” as humanistic writing and rhetoric on the one hand, and the concept of “bungaku” as pure literature on the other, constituted an important theme.⁶³

Phenomenologically speaking, this assertion is certainly plausible. The various theories that situate the establishment of “bungaku” as linguistic art in about 1887 apply only to a very restricted selection of writings. However, as the preceding discussion has shown, it is not possible to define the “bungaku” of the first twenty years of the Meiji period as meaning Confucian learning; nor does the period end with the demise of “bungaku” as humanities and rhetoric. Why, then, did the latter survive into the twentieth century? And through what convoluted process did “bungaku” as linguistic art pass in its development? These questions must be considered, because in addition to Yanagida Izumi, Kobori Keiichirō 小堀桂一郎 demonstrated that the modern concept of “bungaku” arose in about 1875 among scholars of Western learning, while Isoda Kōichi dated the same event to roughly 1867, in the curriculum of Tokyo Imperial University. These developments were no doubt linked, but why did they then go no further, and why did the full, modern meaning of “polite literature” or linguistic art not become fully established earlier? Was the cause in the end simply the weight of Tokugawa tradition?

In order to answer these questions it will be necessary to examine the fundamental nature of the education and university system that affected intellectuals in the early to mid-Meiji period. The effort will help to clarify further the content of Yanagida’s “broader bungaku,” as well as the system that supported it.

62 Wada Shigejirō 1963, p. 38.

63 Wada Shigejirō 1963, pp. 33-34.