

A STRUGGLE OF IDEAS

7.1 A Season of Controversy

7.1.1 “Bungaku” Broadly and Narrowly Defined

In April 1889, two months after the Imperial Constitution was promulgated, Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 published “Genron no fujiyū to bungaku no hattatsu” 言論の不自由と文学の発達 in that month’s issue of *Kokumin no tomo* 国民の友. Citing the examples of China and Russia, he maintained that restrictions on freedom of expression actually nurture the techniques of revealing thought, develop poetry, and produce a succession of exceptional novelists. He was clearly hoping that resistance against repression of free speech would bring forth great and noble “bungaku.” His mentions of Mengzi 孟子, Zhuangzi 莊子, and Sima Qian 司馬遷 show that he had in mind “bungaku” in the broad sense, including philosophy, thought, and history.¹

In response Iwamoto Yoshiharu 巖本善治, who took part actively in intellectual debates from the Christian point of view, attacked him the next month in *Jogaku zasshi* 女学雑誌, demanding to know what on earth he was talking about. “The greatest bungaku is that which succeeds in reflecting nature exactly as it is,” Iwamoto wrote; and again, “supremely beautiful art” cannot be accompanied by immorality. However, Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 pointed out that Iwamoto’s assertions had confused the issue. In “*Bungaku to shizen o yomu*” 「文学と自然」ヲ読ム (*Kokumin no tomo* no. 50), Ōgai noted Iwamoto’s failure to understand that Tokutomi Sohō had used “bungaku” “in the broad sense,” and he criticized him for “ignoring the fact that bungaku has two major, distinct areas.” These two areas are “art [*bi* 美] bungaku” and “scientific [*ka* 科] bungaku,” i.e., *Schöne Literatur*, which pertains to “beauty” (*bi* 美); and *Wissenschaft Literatur*, which pertains to “truth” (*shin* 真).² Ōgai then discussed the relationships between “nature” (*shizen* 自然), “the good” (*zen* 善), “phenomena” (*genshō* 現象), “objects” (*mono* 物), and “thought” (*sō* 想).

Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉, in *Nihon kaika shōshi*, was the first to divide “bungaku” into

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- 1 *Kokumin no tomo*, no. 48. Isoda Kōichi remarked of Tokutomi Sohō’s statement that it shows how restraint in expression out of respect for social taboo helps poetic insight to flower in a fictional world (*Rokumeikan no keifu*, p. 101). However, Isoda can hardly be said to have correctly grasped Sohō’s concept of bungaku.
 - 2 [Mori] Ōgai *zenshū*, vol. 38, p. 458. The title was later changed to “Bungaku to shizen to” 文学と自然と, and the piece was slightly revised. On the subject of this debate among Tokutomi Sohō, Iwamoto Yoshiharu, and Mori Ōgai, Kobori Keiichirō wrote in ““Bungaku” to iu meishō,” “Apart from the issue of its quality, in character it went forward at the same level as that at which we discuss the subject today.” However, this opinion represents his conception of “bungaku” as being equivalent to belles lettres. In reality, the examples Tokutomi Sohō cited from *Zhuangzi*, *Mengzi*, and Sima Qian’s *Shiji* no longer belong to the commonly accepted category of “bungaku.”

“knowledge” (*chi* 知) and “feeling” (*jō* 情), but it seems to be Mori Ōgai, in the passage just cited, who actually explained the relationship between the two domains. The fact that “bungaku” was used in both the broad and the narrow senses in this series of debates, and that there was visible confusion between the two, suggests a need to view the “season of controversy” (*ronsō no kisetsu* 論争の季節) in a new light, from a conceptual standpoint. This should provide a new perspective on the matter.

Ochi Haruo 越智治雄 wrote in his wide-ranging study of Meiji bungaku, “In a sense, the 1890s were a season of controversy.”³ In his *Kindai bungaku no tanjō* (1975), Ochi focused on the controversy surrounding Yano Ryūkei’s *Ukishiro monogatari* 浮城物語 (1890), which appeared the year after the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution, and he suggested that the matters at issue then were the seed of problems inherent in Japanese “modern bungaku” for a long time thereafter: the controversy of “politics and bungaku” and the debate over “mass literature” (*taishū bungaku* 大衆文学). Nor is that all. It is in 1890 that Yamada Bimyō 山田美妙, Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴, Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙, and Futabatei Shimei 二葉亭四迷, all relatively new arrivals on the literary scene, began to entertain doubts about “bungaku.” These doubts “converged with doubts concerning Japan’s modern era.”⁴ Ochi concluded his book by writing, “The year 1890, which announced the end of the enlightenment period, was also the year in which everyone came to face questions about the foundations of “bungaku.”⁵ This is an acute observation, one that takes into full account Tsubouchi Shōyō and Mori Ōgai’s “down-with-idealism controversy” (*botsu risō ronsō* 没理想論争) of 1891-1892, as well as the problems that preoccupied Kitamura Tōkoku and Natsume Sōseki. Indeed, it remains valid all the way into the postwar era. Even now Ochi Haruo’s insight fully deserves enduring consideration. In the discussion below it will be worth following his lead further.

In the year 1889, which began with the publication of Tokutomi Sohō’s “Gengo no fujiyū to bungaku no hattatsu,” Yamada Bimyō, Kōda Rohan, Ozaki Kōyō, and other such young novelists were just beginning to make a name for themselves. In contrast, the year ended with Shimada Saburō 島田三郎 (1852-1923), a Christian critic, deploring the weakness of the novel in the December issue of *Jogaku zasshi*. He wrote: “Their writing is soft and attenuated, without a trace of sturdiness or grandeur. As far as I can tell, for bungaku the present day is a time of extreme weakness.”

Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894), who after the failure of the liberal people’s rights movement aspired to become a critic, published anonymously, in the following issue of *Jogaku zasshi* (January 1890), an essay entitled “Tōsei bungaku no shio moyō” 当世文学の潮模様, in which he looked forward to the coming of a grand, generous-minded “bungaku.” He began by observing that “bungaku” had been the object of widespread attention ever since Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Tōsei shosei katagi*. He then cited two “political novels” (Suehiro Tetchō’s *Setchūbai* and Tōkai Sanshi’s *Kajin no kigū* [1885-97]), and went on to mention as well Yamada Bimyō’s “Musashino” 武蔵野 (1887), Ozaki Kōyō’s *Ninin bikuni iro zange* 二人比丘尼色懺悔 (1889), Aeba Kōson’s 饗庭篁村 *Muratake* むらたけ (1890), and Mori Ōgai’s “Omokage” 於母影 (1890). No doubt his choices reflected contemporary

3 Ochi 1975, p. 195.

4 Ochi 1975, p. 204.

5 Ochi 1975, p. 209.

opinion. They betray no tendency to give the “political novel” separate treatment. His feeling about the significance of the post-Shōyō period is worth noting. However, while Shōyō deplored the idea of “promoting virtue and condemning vice,” he said nothing about the “political novel” being a distinct genre. Considering also the tenor of Uchida Roan’s “Yamada Bimyō Tajjin no shōsetsu,” this seems to have been the general view of the novel current at the time.

Kitamura Tōkoku leveled the following criticism especially at the works of Aeba Kōson and Ozaki Kōyō: “The literary hero is exactly the same as the military hero. Without vast courage and mighty ambition, he is no literary hero at all.”⁶ As this pronouncement suggests, both Shimada Saburō and Kitamura Tōkoku seem to have adopted roughly the same broad definition of “bungaku” as Tokutomi Sohō in “Genron no fujiyū to bungaku no hattatsu.”

On January 13, 1890, the Kaishin Tō 改進黨 member Ozaki Yukio 尾崎行雄, recently returned from England, lectured to a gathering of the Bungakukai 文学会. He predicted that the novel of human feelings in the manner of Tsubouchi Shōyō would soon pass out of fashion; and that readers, tiring of the foolishness these feelings involve, would demand lofty, generous themes able to bring about the revival of the novel (“Bungakujō no Ozaki Yukio-shi” 文学上の尾崎行雄氏, *Kokumin shinbun* 国民新聞, February 12). Having lumped together the work of Shōyō’s young successors as “novels of human feelings,” Ozaki rejected them all. The Bungakukai had been founded in 1887 by Tokutomi Sohō and Morita Shiken 森田思軒 (1861-1897), with a view to creating a private academy, and at the time its members included new writers and critics. Present at Ozaki Yukio’s lecture were, among others, Yoda Gakkai 依田学海 (1833-1909), Tsubouchi Shōyō, Kōda Rohan, Ozaki Kōyō, Yamada Bimyō, Uchida Roan, and Ishibashi Ningetsu 石橋忍月 (1865-1926).

Ochi Haruo argued in *Kindai bungaku no tanjō* that Ozaki’s lecture sprang from the hope of reviving Yano Ryūkei’s *Keikoku bidan*, and that under these circumstances the appearance of Yano’s *Hōchi ibun Ukishiro monogatari* 報知異聞浮城物語 was inevitable.⁷ Yano Ryūkei was also a founding member of the Bungakukai.

Ukishiro monogatari, an adventure novel inspired by Jules Verne’s marine science novels, incorporated the latest knowledge of foreign conditions and military weaponry. The time of the novel is 1878. To further the policy of ensuring Japan’s success by means of commerce, the heroes seek their fortune in the South Seas, help Java achieve independence from Dutch domination, and place the country under the protection of Japan. After newspaper serialization the work came out in book form, with forewords by Morita Shiken, Tokutomi Sohō, and Mori Ōgai. Sohō called it “a work that couches so-called nineteenth-century practical studies in the form of fantasy, while Ōgai praised its many virtues, writing that it was no mere imitation of Jules Verne, and that the novel as a genre was by no means as narrow as people claimed.”⁸

6 [Kitamura]Tōkoku *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 278.

7 Ochi 1975, p. 188.

8 Yano Ryūkei *shū*, pp. 77-78. In his introduction to the prefaces by Tokutomi Sohō and Mori Ōgai, Ochi Haruo remarked on the latter, “This preface, with its references to Verne, conveys depth, and its judgments are not necessarily clear” (*Kindai bungaku no tanjō*, p. 194). Tsubouchi Shōyō did not consider science fiction novels properly to be novels at all. In “*Ukishiro monogatari* o yomu,” Uchida Roan described the work as perhaps akin to those of Jules Verne, “which are excluded from the category of *bungaku*” (*Yano Ryūkei shū*, p. 391). However, Mori Ōgai had a very broad conception of the novel, as his translations show.

7.1.2 The Debate over *Ukishiro monogatari*

However Ishibashi Ningetsu, who by then had begun his career as a literary critic, had harsh words for the work. In “*Hōchi ibun* (Yano Ryūkei-shi cho)” 報知異聞(矢野龍溪氏著)(April 1890), he accused Ryūkei of treating neither human life nor human nature, but only war and adventure, and he saw nothing admirable in the novel’s heroes. Ishibashi had just published his “*Sōjitsuron*” 想実論 (March 1890). Citing short poems by Goethe and haiku by Bashō, he wrote concerning Suehiro Tetchō’s *Setchūbai* and Yano Ryūkei’s *Hōchi ibun Ukishiro monogatari* that their authors knew nothing of great poetry. That was what he had in mind when he wrote of giving the name of great, inspiring bungaku to works imbued with breadth of spirit and majestic poetry.⁹

Uchida Roan continued this criticism. In “*Ukishiro monogatari o yomu*” 「浮城物語」を読む (May 1890) he cited Yano Ryūkei’s own preface to the work, to the effect that “the essential purpose of the novel is to entertain the reader,” and he responded by upholding the principle that “the novel is something that poetically conveys the truth of human life.” He concluded, “*Ukishiro monogatari* has no literary value.”¹⁰ Roan’s attitude is closer than Ishibashi Ningetsu’s to the principles of

To criticism that detected imperialism in the advocacy of southward advance (*nanshin ron* 南進論) voiced in *Ukishiro monogatari*, Ochi Haruo opposed Yano Ryūkei’s insight into the European powers’ progressive encroachment into Africa, his awareness of an international situation that he deplored, and Japan’s international policy of assisting colonies toward autonomy, i.e., protectorate status. Yano seems accurately to have grasped Japan’s international policy of achieving first-class nation status and meanwhile of following the non-intervention, open door policy championed by the United States. No doubt Ochi and Isoda Kōichi analyzed *realpolitik* each from a slightly different point of view.

The idea of Japan as spearheading an independence movement for the weak countries of Asia appears in Tōkai Sanshi’s *Kajin no kigū*, and the policy of economic penetration without infringement of national sovereignty corresponds to the post-World War II notion of “new colonialism.” However, economic penetration accompanied by an announcement of the renunciation of military invasion differs in kind from a strategy of military preparation inspired by an urge to invade. No territory is acquired through invasion, but military victory results in a breakup of the conquered territory by means of an international treaty. Examples are Japan’s acquisition of Taiwan after the Sino-Japanese War and southern Sakhalin after the Russo-Japanese War. Likewise, victory over Spain in the Spanish-American War led to U.S. possession of the Philippines (1901). Japan crossed that line when, in the confusion preceding the Russo-Japanese War, it signed with Korea the Japanese-Korean Protocol of 1904. Nonetheless, the annexation of Korea in 1910 still required the “logic” (*riron* 理論) of the argument that both countries share a common origin (*Nikkan dōso ron* 日韓同祖論).

As international policy developed in the colonial redistribution period lasting from the late nineteenth century into the first half of the twentieth, military and political invasion, and economic and cultural penetration did not proceed in parallel. Instead, the debate on these issues followed a fairly tortuous course. In the augmented edition of *Ukishiro monogatari* (1908), Yano Ryūkei had the heroes who supported Javanese independence choose in the end to become Javanese: a gesture that can be called renunciation of national identity. In most cases, Meiji-period asianism coincided with nationalism. However, there also existed such cases as that of Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天 (1870-1922), for whom it was an article of faith to sacrifice himself for the Chinese revolution. Advocacy of “southward advance” continued in many forms until the Shōwa period.

9 Yamada Bimyō, *Ishibashi Ningetsu, Takase Bun’en shū*, p. 286.

10 Yano Ryūkei *shū*, pp. 387-93. Roan’s judgment that the work resembles those of Verne, “which are

linguistic art enunciated in Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Shōsetsu shinzui*.

Yano Ryūkei responded to such criticism in "*Ukishiro monogatari* ritsuan no shimatsu" 浮城物語立案の始末 (June-July 1890). He began by writing, "The domain of *bungaku* is *bungaku* of every kind, including poetry in Chinese and Japanese, history, fiction, literary musings, essays, and so on." Citing a saying attributed to Sir Walter Scott ("Fiction is that which gives the world respectable pleasure"), he called that pleasure the novel's principal effect, adding that secondary effects included "setting the world straight and uplifting manners, exhorting the reader and satirizing the times." After citing *Ukishiro monogatari*'s various effects on the reader he carried the matter further by arguing that "The art of *bungaku* is like that of painting," and that "The elegance of painting varies according to the subject"; hence by proposing that literary style varies likewise. "The novel addresses itself to people in the world at large," he went on, "and its success or failure is a matter for their judgment." "I do not aim to be appreciated only by the connoisseurs of the literary world," he wrote; and he stressed that in its "grandeur and scale" *Ukishiro monogatari* differed in kind from the "novel of human feelings" addressed to women and youth.¹¹ The latter, which gives "bungaku" its narrow meaning, focuses on love between men and women, and cultivates warmth of style, whereas the former takes "bungaku" in its broad sense to treat international affairs, science, and technology in a style appropriate to these subjects. Such was Yano's rebuttal.

In reply, Uchida Roan returned to the attack in "Ryūkei Koji ni tadasu" 龍溪居士に質す (July 1890). The subject matter is irrelevant, he wrote; the issue is the manner of writing. To hold that the purpose of "bungaku" is to entertain is to end up all too easily playing up to the mood of the times. Thus he acutely pointed out the flaw in Yano's position regarding the interchangeable character of subject and reader enjoyment.

Ochi Haruo observed that Yano Ryūkei's position "amounts to something like support for mass literature [*taishū bungaku*]."¹² As successors to *Ukishiro monogatari* he cited Murakami Namiroku's 村上浪六 *Mikazuki* 三日月 (1891) and Oshikawa Shunrō's 押川春浪 *Kaitei gunkan* 海底軍艦 (1900). He was undoubtedly right. The argument appears to have been over whether the purpose of the novel was entertainment, or entertainment meant to convey political or intellectual enlightenment, or again whether that purpose lay in purely artistic values. However, it probably seems that way to us because by now we are familiar with so many controversies over "politics and *bungaku*" or "mass *bungaku*."

Yano Ryūkei, whose intellectual lineage went back to Fukuzawa Yūkichi, was a student of Western learning and an advocate of westernization, and his broad definition of "bungaku" resembled that of Tokutomi Sohō. In connection with the art theory of Toyama Masakazu 外山

excluded from the category of *bungaku*," was probably influenced by that of Tsubouchi Shōyō.

11 *Yano Ryūkei shū*, pp. 367-68.

12 Ochi 1975, p. 190. In his appraisal of Murakami Namiroku's *Mikazuki*, Ochi Haruo wrote that its portrait of mighty courage against the backdrop of the peace of the Tokugawa era was more than enough to satisfy the reader in search of lost heroes (p. 197), and he connected the work to the lineage of *Ukishiro monogatari*. In "*Ukishiro monogatari* to sono shūi" 「浮城物語」とその周囲 (included in *Yano Ryūkei shū*), Ochi gathered from Murakami Namiroku a kind of "advocacy of sovereignty" (*kokken shugi* 国権主義). This connection between Yano Ryūkei and Murakami Namiroku represents a valuable insight, but Namiroku's tale of chivalry shows no sign of any wish to introduce enlightened political ideas. The differences between the novels of these two writers are what they seem to be.

正一 (1848-1900), Ochi Haruo also discussed Toyama's "poem in the new style" (*shintaiishi* 新体詩) entitled "Shakaigaku no genri ni dai-su" 社会学の原理に題す (1887). This poem, which celebrates Spencer's theory of universal evolution, neatly captures an enlightenment-minded scholar's conception of "bungaku."

Spencer, to a no lesser degree,
Developed and extended the same truth,
Ever refining that great principle
Until before one's eyes not only plants and trees,
Nor merely the whole animal world,
But every single living thing,
Yes, all things living and all things dead,
And, beyond, all formless and all form
Lay at one within its embrace:
So he reached new knowledge of ultimate truth.¹³

Yano Ryūkei's statement, "The art of bungaku is like that of painting," shows that, for him, "entertainment" (*goraku* 娯楽) included within it art in the broad sense. In giving priority to subject matter, his contention that style accommodates itself to the latter leans toward *daizaishugi* 題材主義 (subject-first-ism). Underlying this idea is the belief that the novel provides the people (i.e., the nation) with healthy entertainment and properly includes, within this entertainment, intellectual and scientific material of an uplifting, constructive nature. In short, Yano's position is probably connected with the enlightenment-minded intellectual understanding, based on the concept of "bungaku" in the broad sense, of what "the people's bungaku" (*kokumin bungaku*) should be.

According to Ochi Haruo, Yano's statement in "*Ukishiro monogatari* ritsuan no shimatsu," to the effect that "The elegance of painting varies according to the subject," was derived from a remark made by Toyama Masakazu in a lecture that Toyama gave in April 1890 to the Meiji Bijutsukai 明治美術会, a society for the promotion of Western painting. The lecture, entitled "Nihon kaiga no mirai" 日本絵画の未来, was published the following month. Ochi also cited Mori Ōgai's critique of it as evidence of the complexity of the controversy then raging.

In his lecture Toyama Masakazu emphasized the importance of intellectual content (*shisō* 思想) in painting and advocated treating social problems in that medium, in a positive manner. Mori Ōgai then attacked Toyama in "Toyama Masakazu-shi no garon o baku-su" 戸山正一氏の畫論を駁す (May 1890), deploring the unconvincing character of his language and stating, "It is not subject matter that defines the quality of a painting, but rather the way the artist has married it to imagination and technique."¹⁴ Ōgai's statement rests upon a romantic view of art ("Artistic imagination is for the most part a matter of natural gift") and a concept of expression according

13 Quoted from Ochi 1975, p. 190. In *Ukishiro monogatari to sono shūi*, Ochi Haruo cited Tokutomi Sohō's "Bungaku sekai no genjō" 文学世界の現状 and an example of the use of "bungaku" from Ozaki Kōyō to suggest that "bungaku" in this sense probably referred to all scholarly and artistic writings, including those on statesmanship.

14 [Mori] Ōgai *zenshū*, vol. 22, p. 179.

to which the artist uses technique to convert his imaginative world (the “inner work,” *naijutsuhin* 内術品) into the “outer work” (*gaijutsuhin* 外術品).¹⁵ On the basis of this conception of art and expression, Ōgai proposed an anti-realist critique of painting, to the effect that “The painting as a concrete object is not required to describe phenomena existing in the outer world.”¹⁶ This view of painting naturally suggests that the same attitude pervades Ōgai’s conception of literary art (*bungei*). As a theory of art (*geijutsu*) it goes far beyond the standard of “realism” (*shajitsu*) set by Tsubouchi Shōyō in *Shōsetsu shinzui*.

In response to an increasingly prominent pursuit of “beauty,” those who had been advocating enlightenment ever since early Meiji times emphasized political and social thought by championing what one might call *daizaishugi*; and Ōgai had provided an acute critique of their position from a romantic perspective. In that sense, Mori Ōgai’s critique of Toyama Masakazu was in tune with Uchida Roan’s of *Ukishiro monogatari*.

The outcome of this series of debates differed somewhat from what one might imagine. Kōda Rohan’s “Kenkai suikoden” 硯海水滸伝 (August 1890) beautifully satirizes the world of fiction writers and critics of the time, and Yano Ryūkei’s *Ukishiro monogatari* makes an appearance at the very end of it. Ningetsu and Roan set out to attack it, but Ryūkei counterattacks with so large a force that Ningetsu and Roan retreat, and Rohan himself ends up falling head first into a bottomless well.¹⁷ The intent of all this is playful, but it conveys no casual message. Rohan, who had only recently burst onto the literary scene, certainly differed in style and manner from the realism (リアリズム) of Tsubouchi Shōyō, but he was unmistakably a writer of “human life and feeling.” His “Kenkai suikoden” also evokes quite precisely Ozaki Kōyō’s unusual disengagement from the whole matter, as well as the success of Aeba Kōson, whose works on such favorite themes as “strife in a great house” (*o-ie sōdō* お家騒動) then loomed large in the world of fiction. All this suggests that, for writers other than Ozaki Kōyō, the pure realism of “human life and feeling” laid down by Tsubouchi Shōyō in *Shōsetsu shinzui* and *Tōsei shosei katagi* may then have been in peril. Considering the later development of those who followed Shōyō’s line, including Shōyō himself, it may not be inaccurate to consider that this was when the lineage of pure, realistic, and non-judgmental depiction of human life and feeling dissolved.

The controversy over *Ukishiro monogatari* pitted those who upheld “bungaku” in the broad sense against those eager to promote the narrow acceptance of the term. It really was a struggle of ideas—a direct confrontation over the issues of what “bungaku” is and what it should be. That confrontation is even more clearly visible in the group of works on the “history of Japanese bungaku” that were undertaken at the same time.

7.1.3 The Invention of the “History of Japanese Literature”

Also in 1890, Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō published the two volumes of their *Nihon*

15 [Mori] Ōgai *zenshū*, vol. 22, p. 177.

16 [Mori] Ōgai *zenshū*, vol. 22, p. 184.

17 [Kōda] Rohan *zenshū*, vol. 24, p. 99.

bungaku shi, Japan's first "history of bungaku."¹⁸ The "Foreword" (*shogen* 緒言) states:

When the authors graduated from university the bungaku of our land was rising in strength like the morning sun. The literary works and the histories of bungaku that we longed to see would be out very soon, or so it seemed, and we were glad. However, our hopes were in vain. Fiction alone has developed out of all proportion, with the result that people in general have come to believe that bungaku *is* fiction. Free verse, too, has made its appearance in the world, but it is not yet flourishing. No doubt the success of the novel is a cause for rejoicing, but the novel is only one variety of art [*bi* 美] bungaku. If history, philosophy, political science, and so on—so-called science [*ri* 理] bungaku—do not develop in equal measure, bungaku will have failed to progress as it should.¹⁹

The authors had graduated from the Department of Japanese Bungaku at Tokyo University around 1878. Their term *ri bungaku* 理文学 corresponds to the *Wissenschaft Literatur* that Mori Ōgai, in "*Bungaku to shizen o yomu*," had translated *ka bungaku* 科文学. However, neither term seems to have continued in use, unlike the contrasting *bi bungaku* 美文学, examples of which occur here and there later on. In their "Foreword" the authors promised to treat the history of "the bungaku of our land in its totality" (*waga kuni bungaku zentai* 我国文学全体),²⁰ meaning both *bi bungaku* and *ri bungaku*. Obviously, the "bungaku" of their title designates the broad meaning of the term.

Their Chapter One ("What Does 'History of Bungaku' Mean?") clearly states, "History of bungaku, a type of history, gives an account of the origins, development, and vicissitudes of bungaku";²¹ and it also touches on the relationship between world literary history and history of the literature of individual countries. Chapter Two ("The Difficulty of Defining Bungaku") mentions that "literature" means several things in the languages of Europe; that the use of "wenxue" varies in Chinese as well; and that the situation in Japan is the same. Recently, it continues, learning has been divided into two broad divisions: "bungaku" (matters related to human life and human nature) and "kagaku" (matters related to physical functioning and principles)—in other words, the humanities and the natural sciences. However, the former category still being too broad, the authors then propose in the following words a "definition of pure [*junko taru* 醇乎たる] bungaku":

"Bungaku" means that which aims, by means of a particular style [*aru buntai* 或る文体], skillfully to express thought, emotion, and imagination in the service of practicality

18 The Foreword states, "This book is the first history of Japanese literature" (*Nihon bungaku shi*, vol. 1, "Foreword," p. 9). In his commentary on the work (reprint of the original edition, *Meiji Taishō bungaku shi shūsei*, vol. 1), Hiraoka Toshio cited the literary controversy that arose in 1890, observing that it concerned the fundamental nature of bungaku and suggesting it was no coincidence that the first history of Japanese bungaku was published in that same year. He also listed the other books on Japanese bungaku published that year: Haga Yaichi and Tachibana 1890 (April); Sekine 1890 (April); Ueda Kazutoshi 1890 (May); and the work under discussion here in November.

19 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, "Foreword," pp. 2-3.

20 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, p. 1.

21 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, "Foreword," pp. 4, 8.

and pleasure, and to convey broad knowledge to the great majority of people.²²

With respect to content the term “bungaku” therefore includes “kagaku,” but the category is restricted to works distinguished by sophisticated literary technique, works that can be judged on the basis of language and rhetorical beauty. In other words, the standard by which to judge whether or not a work is “bungaku” has to do with the aesthetic value of its style. This idea is close to the concept of “belles lettres,” which embraces not only fiction but also fine writing of many kinds. In its case, however, the standard is aesthetic appeal not explicitly centered on fiction. In that sense it, too, differs slightly from the modern European concept of “polite literature.” The authors had a particular reason to adopt this concept of “bungaku,” one peculiar to the “history of bungaku” genre.

Taguchi Ukichi’s *Nihon kaika shōshi* was written under the influence of works like Guizot’s *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, but at this time Taine’s *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* had the greater number of readers. In this work Taine brought together the three major elements of race, historical period, and environment (natural and social) in order to discuss the genius of classic writers and the spiritual history (*seishinshi* 精神史) of the people.²³ Nonetheless, both Guizot and Taine subscribed to the notion of national culture and civilization born of the nationalism that swept Europe in the late eighteenth century and after, as well as to the idea of “literature” as the flower of each nation’s culture. Throughout the nineteenth century this idea was turned to the purpose of instilling in each nation’s people a sense of their own national identity. Therefore it was commonplace to uphold the concept of “literature” in the median sense, or the idea of “belles lettres,” and not to limit “literature” to linguistic art. The emphasis may have been on the genres of linguistic art, but the concept still embraced both “knowledge” and “beauty” (*chi* 知, *bi* 美).

Mikami Sanji’s two-volume *Nihon bungaku shi* was published in the context of the Ministry of Education’s policy change to allow private compiling and publication of school textbooks.²⁴ In the same year *Kokubungaku tokuhon* 国文学読本, edited by Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 and Tachibana Sensaburō 立花銑三郎, had already been published in April, and the first volume of *Kokubungaku* 国文学, edited by Ueda Kazutoshi 上田万年, had come out in May. In December *Chūtō kyōiku: Nihon bunten* 中等教育—日本文典, edited by Ochiai Naobumi 落合直文 and Konakamura Gishō 小中村義象 appeared. Then, in September 1902 it was the turn of Konakamura Gishō and Masuda Ushin’s 増田于信 *Chūtō kyōiku: Nihon bungaku shi* 中等教育 日本文学史, followed in November by Ōwada Takeki’s 大和田建樹 *Wabungaku shi* 和文学史. The period deserves to be called the age of literary history.

Each of these works has its own character. Some, for instance, consist mainly of example passages, while Ōwada emphasized “the history of our national language,” stating, “The history

22 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, p. 13.

23 Mikami and Takatsu’s *Nihon bungaku shi* lists as the constituent elements of *kokubungaku* 国文学 (national literature) “the unique characteristics of the people,” “the environment,” and “the times,” and then goes on to observe, “The Frenchman Taine, who put together a history of French literature, said that he was studying the psychology of his people” (vol. 1, main text, pp. 26-29).

24 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, “Foreword,” pp. 10-11, states, “If this work is used as a textbook, it will be best to start with the Edo period.”

of bungaku involves narrating the development and evolution of ideas about language.”²⁵ Their ways of periodizing history differ, and likewise their cutoff dates for recent times. Mikami and Takatsu divided their work into the following sections: “The Origins and Development of Japanese Bungaku,” “The Nara Court,” “The Heian Court,” “The Kamakura Period,” “The Northern and Southern Courts, and the Muromachi Period,” and “The Edo Period.” Ōwada, for his part, adopted “High Antiquity” (*jōko* 上古), “Middle Antiquity” (*chūko* 中古), “Recent Antiquity” (*kinko* 近古), “Early Modern Times” (*kinsei* 近世), and “The Present” (*kindai* 今代), corresponding respectively to the Nara, Heian, medieval, Tokugawa, and Meiji periods.

Despite their diversity, all these works were designed to serve as middle school textbooks for the children of the elite, the future leaders of Japan. Their function was to assist in forming the cultural identity of the nation state. Ōwada put that purpose succinctly when he wrote, “The history of bungaku is the chief element that serves to foster patriotism [*aikokushin* 愛国心].”²⁶ Similarly, all show pride in Japan’s long cultural tradition, in an age that saw the promulgation of the Kyōiku Chokugo and great efforts to raise awareness of a cultural tradition longer than that of any of the Western powers—a tradition of which Japan was very proud.

The first section of Mikami and Takatsu’s work lists England, France, and Ancient Greece (and the Germans for the period 1550-1750) as the only countries in the world to have a complete and consistent history of their own literature. It then goes on to observe that Japan, like China, boasts a rich and diverse literature well over two thousand years old, and that Japan therefore deserves a complete history of that literature, which merits comparison and contrast with that of any Western country.²⁷ Seen from this perspective Japanese literature is, after China’s, the second-oldest literature in the world. Mikami and Takatsu called the songs found in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* “the dawn of our country’s bungaku”²⁸ and wrote, “After the creation of *man’yō moji* 万葉文字, our country came at last to have a writing system to proudly call its own.”²⁹ They also revealed their position in the following terms:

The reason *kokugakusha* have hitherto stressed writing in Japanese (*wabun* 和文) is simply that they compare our early literature with that of China. The range of their comparison is therefore extremely limited. We have now summed up the literature produced in our country over the last two thousand years and more, that is to say, the totality of the literature of our land. When compared with the literatures of the Western countries it proves in no few instances to be inferior, but it also has many unique virtues of its own.³⁰

This passage makes clear a broad conception of “Japanese literature,” one not confined to the Japanese writing favored by *kokugakusha*, but expanded to include kanbun-influenced historical

25 Ōwada 1892, p. 10.

26 Ōwada 1892, p. 11.

27 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, p. 4.

28 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, p. 73.

29 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, p. 106.

30 Mikami and Takatsu 1890, vol. 1, main text, pp. 3-4.

and intellectual works. This conception of “Japanese literature” can be called in two senses an “invented tradition.”³¹ First, it involved the invention of a history founded on a new concept—that of “Japanese *bungaku*”—which had not existed earlier. Second, it involved the creation of an idea that clearly departs from the European definition of “national literature.”

In Europe, too, the history of each country’s literature was conceived in terms of the concept’s broad meaning, and in accordance with the modern nationalism that dissolved the old community of knowledge based on Latin and looked instead to the beginnings of each nation’s vernacular language. Thus it became the common practice to see the origins of each nation’s “literature” in its earliest surviving vernacular writings. Mikami and Takatsu did the same, since a fully compatible outlook already existed in Japan: that of the *kokugakusha* who spurned anything written in kanbun and sought the origins of “pure Japanese” in what the early literature called *yamato kotoba* やまとことば, the spoken language of the time.

However, Mikami and Takatsu were not *kokugakusha* themselves, and they placed considerable emphasis on texts written in mixed Sino-Japanese (*wakan konkōbun* 和漢混淆文). Ōwada Takeki’s *Wabungaku shi* devotes little space to the history of kanbun in Japan, but it does not exclude it. The cultural nationalism of the time generally acknowledged Japan’s debt to China, thus preserving at the same time the pattern of the relationship of Eastern civilization to the West. In this one can discern an aspect of the preoccupation with “national essence” (*kokusuishugi* 国粹主義), or even “preservation of the national essence,” typical of the 1890s. This preoccupation often overlapped with the desire to build an Asian civilization capable of resisting that of Europe, i.e., with asianism. In that sense it was not pure state nationalism. For example, amid the intoxication caused by Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War and the consequent contempt for all things Chinese, Miyake Setsurei, a major spokesman for the political group known as *Seikyōsha* 政教社, attacked renewed proposals to abolish the use of Chinese characters, stressed Japan’s debt to the ancient civilization of China, and appealed instead for better education on the subject of the characters’ many readings.³²

The year 1890 began the age of the “history of Japanese *bungaku*,” but histories of contemporary *bungaku* were appearing at the same time. These included Uchida Roan’s “Gendai *bungaku*” 現代文学 (*Kokumin no tomo* 国民の友, November 1891-January 1892); Yamaji Aizan’s 山路愛山 “Meiji *bungaku shi*” 明治文学史 (*Kokumin shinbun* 国民新聞, March-May 1893); and Kitamura Tōkoku’s “Meiji *bungaku kanken*” 明治文学管見 (*Hyōron* 評論, April-May 1893). Each of these attempted from its own point of view to set forth the history of “*bungaku*” in the broad sense. Together, they show that this above all is what “*bungaku*” meant in the 1890s.³³

31 Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984 discuss how modernization systematizes a people’s traditional identity. However, there remains a need to make finer distinctions, as appropriate, between pure imagination and the revival, reorganization, or supplementing of tradition. It is important to note that this process took a different course in Japan.

32 Miyake 1895.

33 In *Nihon kindai bungaku no shuppatsu*, Hiraoka Toshio showed that in the late 1880s and early 1890s the word “*bungaku*” was still generally understood in its broad meaning.

7.2 A Concept Questioned

7.2.1 From *Bi Bungaku* (Belles Lettres) to *Jun Bungaku* (Pure Literature)

The meaning of “bungaku” in this sense is now clear. Under these circumstances the term “art [*bi* 美] bungaku” seems to have come into fairly frequent use, from about 1890 on, in order to distinguish the genre of linguistic art. For example in 1889, in “*Nihon no gengo o yomu*” 「日本の言語」を読む, Kitamura Tōkoku had used “bungaku” to mean written as opposed to spoken language, in other words written texts or rhetoric. In 1890, however, in “*Tōsei bungaku no shio moyō*” 当世文学の潮模様, he began using the term more or less in the meaning of linguistic art; and by 1892, in “*Shojo no junketsu o ron-zu*” 処女の純潔を論ず, he could write, “Our art bungaku has little to do with religion, and that is particularly true of the art bungaku of the Tokugawa period.”³⁴ Taine had inspired in Tōkoku an early interest in history of bungaku,³⁵ and Tōkoku’s use of “art bungaku” may well have been influenced by the “Foreword” to Mikami and Takatsu’s work.³⁶

However, Tōkoku’s special interest lay in the religious elements in “art bungaku”; and since in Tokugawa art bungaku the works of Matsuo Bashō and Takizawa Bakin, at least, offered these, he devoted his attention to comparing religion in Bashō and Bakin. His interest in religion appears to have begun with the “great contemplative force overspreading the universe” that he mentioned in “*Tōsei bungaku no shio moyō*”—an idea resembling the “great spiritual presence” of which Ishibashi Ningetsu wrote in “*Sōjitsuron*.” Close to the beginning of “*Rai Noboru o ron-zu*” 頼襄を論ず (1893), a study of Rai San’yō, Yamaji Aizan had written, “Writing is a business” (*bunshō sunawachi jigyo nari* 文章即ち事業なり).³⁷ Tōkoku called this “reaction” (*handō* 反動),³⁸ and it above all explains why he wrote, “With the hammer of ‘history’ [*shiron* 史論] he [Aizan] enlarges the scope of his assault and seeks violently to attack pure bungaku.”

Thus Tōkoku employed the term “pure bungaku.” It was not only his youth that made his terminology unstable, it was also the time when he wrote. The term appears just once in his “*Jinsei ni aiwataru to wa nani no ii zo*” 人生に相渉るとは何の謂ぞ (1883); but in “*Naibu seimei ron*” 内部生命論 (1893), in the section entitled “*Bungei is Not Discussion*” (*Bungei wa rongi ni arazaru koto* 文芸は論議にあらざること) he explained the “bungei” by adding, “The term is functionally equivalent to ‘pure bungaku’.”³⁹ In his other writings he used the latter term frequently. As his

34 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 26.

35 The name of Taine appears in a review of Sekine Masanao’s *Shōsetsu shikō*, entitled “*Bungaku shi no daiitchaku wa idetari*” 文学史の第一着は出たり ([Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 1, p. 256).

36 This shift in the meaning Kitamura Tōkoku gave the word “bungaku” in his writing probably marks the disappearance from the Japanese language of “bungaku” in the sense of rhetoric. This meaning presumably dropped out because the debate over the broad and narrow meanings of “bungaku,” in about 1890, excluded the issue of rhetoric; and because it was at roughly this time that rhetoric came to be referred to a *bijigaku* 美辞学, in such works as Takada Sanae’s *Bijigaku* (1889) or Tsubouchi Shōyō’s “*Bijironkō*” (*Waseda bungaku*, January-September 1893).

37 Yamaji Aizan *shū*, p. 296.

38 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 113.

39 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 244.

contrasting of “bungei” with “rongi” makes clear, “pure bungaku” did not mean to him what it did to Mikami and Takatsu in their *Nihon bungaku shi*: beauty of style (*bunshō bi* 文章美). Instead, it was equivalent to “art bungaku” as distinguished from “science [*ri* 理] bungaku.” His way of using “pure bungaku” was probably derived from that adopted by Uchida Roan, since he could hardly wait to read Roan’s erudite introduction to the topic of “bungaku” and, in “Bungaku ippan” 文学一斑 (1892), published an ecstatic review of it.

Uchida Roan’s *Bungaku ippan* begins by discussing the definition of “bungaku” and then situates various Japanese works within that broad context. The range of concern is similar to that of comparative literature. Roan’s aim was unlike that of the various “histories of bungaku” discussed above, and his mode of thought differed entirely from theirs. At the very outset he noted that the term “bungaku” had hitherto been used in ways that made no distinction between it and learning or writing in general. Following Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), he divided human thought into the “mathematical” (*sūgakuteki shisō* 数学的思想) and the “sentimental” (*jōkanteki* 情感的), the latter of which he defined as the substance of “bungaku.”⁴⁰ Referring to the Russian literary critic Belinskii, he further divided “bungaku” in this sense into two: poetry (“that which gives synthetic expression to emotional thought”) and philosophy (“that which explains things analytically”).⁴¹ History and criticism, he specified, had hitherto been the “expression” (*hyōhaku* 表白) of thought and hence belonged to the domain of “poetry,” but analytical thinking had made such progress that they now counted as “philosophy.”

This division resembles the one made by Mori Ōgai, or by Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō, between “science (*ka* 科, *ri* 理) bungaku” and “art bungaku.” However, this way of representing all expression of “emotional thought” (*kanjōteki shisō*) in terms of its central element, poetry, may well be close to the German use of the counterpart term, “Dichtung.” Apparently “Dichtung” can sometimes be used to refer even to oral literature. German romanticism tended strongly to assign the fundamental position to “poetry”—an attitude that pervades Hegel’s (1770-1831) *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (1835). The practice of calling such material as essays “philosophy” is also derived from the German use of the word “Philosophie.” Uchida Roan referred to “poetry” as *junsei bungaku* 純正文学,⁴² but he called it *jun bungaku* at the start of the “Poetry” section of his Chapter Two:

Jun bungaku 純文学, i.e., *shi* 詩, is known in English as “poetry.” Its range is extremely broad, since it includes not only kanshi and waka, but also *senmyō* 宣命 [imperial orders written in Japanese], *norito* 祝詞, *kyōgen* 狂言, *yōkyoku* 謡曲 [noh scripts], *jōruri* 浄瑠璃, *daichō* 台帳 [kabuki scripts], and *shōsetsu* 小説 and *yajō* 野乘 [legends]. All these belong to the domain of “poetry.”⁴³

The modern European concept of “bungaku” does not include such items as *senmyō* or *norito* under the heading of linguistic art. It is probably those who subscribed to the broad definition of

40 Uchida Roan *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 10.

41 Uchida Roan *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 10.

42 Uchida Roan *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 16.

43 Uchida Roan *zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 20.

“bungaku,” in the manner of Mikami Sanji or Ōwada Takeki, who were more inclined to do so. Perhaps Uchida Roan’s classification also had something to do with Fenollosa, who interpreted art in terms of religion.

However, Roan also had his own reason for it. As he explained in his introduction, “bungaku” studies human life and observes society.

In action it smoothes the mighty hero’s turbid waves of passion and ferries mankind across to the far shore; in tranquility it quiets the seething mind, overspreads the secrets of all creation, and illumines the mysteries of the universe.⁴⁴

The idea that “bungaku” “studies human life and observes society” is close to the thought of Tsubouchi Shōyō in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, but the religious coloring of what follows is pronounced. *Bungaku ippan* reveals an interest in comparing the *Kojiki* myths with the biblical Book of Genesis, and in such a context the recognition of *senmyō* and *norito* as “bungaku” is perhaps not surprising. The rhythmical character of their language, too, makes them easy enough to acknowledge as linguistic art.

The weight Roan gave to religious elements is visible also in his rave review, published at almost the same time as the novel itself, of Kōda Rohan’s *Fūryūbutsu* 風流仏.⁴⁵ His ecstatic praise of the scene in which the sculptor of buddha images, intending to carve a statue of the Buddha, carves instead the naked body of the woman he desires, is in the spirit of Shōyō’s definition of “bungaku” as linguistic art; but it demonstrates that, for him, the ideal was realistic portrayal of human life and feeling. In this regard, Roan’s attitude is close to that of Ishibashi Ningetsu, who described the essence of “bungaku” as a “great spiritual presence.” It is no wonder that Kitamura Tōkoku, who valued the religious dimension of “art bungaku,” should have admired *Bungaku ippan*.

Let us consider some other, roughly contemporary examples of the use of “art bungaku” and “pure bungaku.” In 1891, the year before *Bungaku ippan* appeared, Tsubouchi Shōyō published two essays in the November issue of *Waseda bungaku*: “Gaikoku bi bungaku no yunyū” 外国美文学の輸入 and “Hon’yaku subeki gaikoku bungaku” 翻訳すべき外国文学. In them he gave the term *gaikoku bungaku* (foreign bungaku) its broad meaning and referred to “emotionally stirring writing” (*jōshu no bun* 情趣の文) as “foreign art bungaku.”⁴⁶ A little later Takase Bun’en 高瀬文淵 (1864-1940), active as a novelist and critic in the late 1890s, wrote as follows in an essay entitled “Bungaku iken” 文学意見, which he appended to a novel of his (*Shihen: Wakaba* 詩篇若葉) published in 1893: “In recent years the stimulus of European bungaku and the revival of the bungaku of the Genroku period have caused a new flowering of art bungaku.”⁴⁷ The following November (1894) Ueda Kazutoshi, recently returned from study of linguistics in Germany to the euphoria of victory in the Sino-Japanese War, gave a lecture entitled “Kokugo kenkyū ni tsuite” 国語研究に就いて, on the future of the study of the Japanese language (*Taiyō*, January 1885). In it Ueda distinguished between study of the Japanese language and study of “so-called Japanese art

44 Uchida Roan *zenshū*, vol. 2, pp. 15-16.

45 “Rohan-shi no Fūryūbutsu” 露伴子の「風流仏」, in Uchida Roan *shū*, p. 151.

46 [Tsubouchi] Shōyō *senshū* 逍遥選集, supplementary vol. 3, p. 683.

47 Yamada Bimyō, *Ishibashi Ningetsu, Takase Bun’en shū*, p. 354.

bungaku, or pure bungaku.”⁴⁸

Ueda Kazutoshi issued his opinion from the perspective of European linguistics, which studied spoken languages and clearly assumed the opposition drawn by modern linguistic nationalism between Latin and each country’s vernacular language. Therefore he lamented, “At this very moment no imperial decree can be issued, no essay be written except in Chinese,”⁴⁹ sounding very much as though he refused to recognize the *kanbun yomikudashi* style as Japanese at all. Thus in him modern European linguistic nationalism conjoined with the *kokugaku* contention that the language of ancient Japan was pure Japanese. Needless to say, this sort of rejection of “Chinese” ignored the reality that the ancient immigrants to Japan had spoken and written Chinese, and that for long centuries thereafter a great many Chinese words had penetrated the spoken language of the common people.

At the same time, the expressions *junsui bungaku* 純粹文学 and *jun bungaku* 醇文学 appeared in Tsubouchi Shōyō’s “Sensō to bungaku” 戦争と文学 (*Taiyō*, January-March 1895). It seems to be roughly from then on that the term “pure bungaku” began to replace “art bungaku.” “Art bungaku” suggests material of any kind written in an artistic style. Perhaps “pure bungaku” was felt to be more suitable for the purpose of distinguishing linguistic art from the concept of bungaku in the broad sense.

7.2.2 The Controversy over “Hard Literature” and “Soft Literature”

Let us return to 1890. In May, just when the controversy over *Ukishiro monogatari* began, the Min’yūsha 民友社 critic Takekoshi Sansa 竹越三叉 (1865-1950) asked in “Kinjitsu no bungaku” 近日の文学, “How are we to import great and lofty thought into the world of bungaku?” Citing the ideals of humanity, he proposed that, by “disporting itself in the realm of the ideal,” bungaku should properly guide the people on the path to progress.⁵⁰ The following year, in “Bungakukai no ketten” 文学界の欠点, Takekoshi made himself clearer, explaining that “humanity” (ヒューマニティー) meant “the great way of human feelings” (*ninjō no daidō* 人情の大道), in other words, the ideals of “duty and feeling” (*giri ninjō* 義理人情), freedom (*jiyū* 自由), and equality (*byōdō* 平等), and that these were vital to the “human revolution” (*ningen kakumei* 人間革命) that would turn them to building up “the common people, i.e., the family” (*shōkokumin sunawachi katei* 小国民即ち家庭).⁵¹ Throughout the Meiji and Taishō periods, the terms *jinmin* 人民 and *kokumin* 国民 were precisely synonymous, and it was at this time that the term *kokumin no bungaku* (bungaku for the people) began to emerge. Naturally, in the case of *kokumin no bungaku*, Takekoshi used “bungaku” in the same sense as Tokutomi Sohō.

In 1892, in “Kongo no nanbungaku” 今後の軟文学 (an installment of his “Bunwa sūsoku” 文話数則 column, published under the name Sansa Gyorō 三叉漁郎 in the Sunday supplement to *Kokumin shinbun*, October 23), Takekoshi divided “bungaku” into “hard” (硬) and “soft” (軟).⁵²

48 Ochiai Naobumi, *Ueda Kazutoshi, Haga Yaichi, Fujioka Sakutarō shū*, p. 115.

49 Ochiai Naobumi, *Ueda Kazutoshi, Haga Yaichi, Fujioka Sakutarō shū*, p. 114.

50 *Min’yūsha bungaku shū*, pp. 123-24.

51 *Min’yūsha bungaku shū*, pp. 124-25.

52 Nagafuchi Tomoe demonstrated (“Tōkoku wa ‘nan bungaku’ o daiben shita no ka”) that the first use

This idea started a debate. It can be summarized as follows. “The current decline of soft *bungaku*” means, in the absence of any “idealists (*risō-ha* 理想派),” the decline of the “feeble *bungaku* of the realists (*shajitsu-ha* 写実派). The way to break through this impasse is therefore to remedy “soft *bungaku*’s” lack of any element of “philosophical thought” or “thought concerning human life (humanity ヒューマニティー)” —in other words, to mix into “soft *bungaku*” elements of the “hard.” Takekoshi’s position was clearly an extension of the warning issued by enlightenment-minded critics in the winter of 1889 against the “novels of human feelings,” centered as they were on the affections of men and women, published by writers like Ozaki Kōyō. The thesis of such critics was that *bungaku* was in a “state of collapse” (*bungaku kyokusui setsu* 文学極衰説). These proponents of “hard *bungaku*” recommended instead critiques of social issues and of history, the “historical perspective” (*shiron* 史論) so favored by Min’yūsha members, and particularly critiques of historical figures. Their distinction between “hard *bungaku*” of this kind and the “soft *bungaku*” of linguistic art, especially the novel, resembles the one between “science *bungaku*” and “art *bungaku*,” or Uchida Roan’s (in *Bungaku ippan*) between “philosophy” and “poetry.” In content it merely repeated the idea that “*bungaku*” should lead “the people.” However, the proposition that “*bungaku*” in the broad sense could be divided into “hard” and “soft,” that the “hard” was superior, and that the success of the “hard” would mean progress for “*bungaku*” as a whole, became the object of repeated criticism. Stubbornness on both sides kept the debate going for over a year.

Kitamura Tōkoku launched the attack in “Bunkai kinjō” 文界近状 (November 1892). Of this usage he wrote, “It is not at all pleasing to see words from the profane world—that of government and politics—dragged into a discussion of leadership in the sacred world of *bungaku*.”⁵³ His expression “the sacred world of *bungaku*” no doubt reflects his idealistic search for religious inspiration in “art” or “pure *bungaku*,” while his protest about terms relating to government, and so on, probably refers to the terminology used by the hard-liners (*taigaikō* 対外硬) with respect to revision of the unequal treaties and the situation on the Korean peninsula. Six months or so later, Mori Ōgai wrote mockingly in “Mumei-shi ni kotauru sho” 無名氏に答ふる書 (May 1893), “He has no idea that the hard can be found in artistic writing and the soft in factual writing. He is hilarious.”⁵⁴ In a similar mood, Uchida Roan wrote in “Konnichi no shōsetsu oyobi shōsetsuka” 今日の小説及び小説家 (July 1893), “This idea that *bungaku* is divided into hard and soft is no doubt a new discovery by these great sages of Japan.”⁵⁵

Nevertheless, the terms “hard *bungaku*” and “soft *bungaku*” seem gradually to have gained acceptance. The debate emphasized that the “novels of human feelings” by such writers as Ozaki Kōyō were in the same lineage as the Tokugawa-period *ninjōbon* 人情本, and this helped to confirm the use of the term “soft *bungaku*” to refer both to *gesaku* fiction and to novels that dealt

of the terms *kō bungaku* and *nan bungaku* occurs in this “Bunwa sūsoku” column by Takekoshi. The Nagafuchi article discusses the *kō bungaku/nan bungaku* controversy at length and refutes the accepted idea that Kitamura Tōkoku advocated *nan bungaku*.

53 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 76.

54 [Mori] *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 23, p. 208. “Mumei-shi ni kotauru sho” was later published in *Tsukikusa* 月草, with some deletions and under a revised title.

55 Uchida Roan *shū*, p. 172.

with matters of love. For example, Chapter Three (“Nanpa bungaku to seiji shōsetsu” 軟派文学と政治小説) of Katō Takeo’s 加藤武雄 *Meiji Taishō bungaku no rinkaku* 明治大正文学の輪郭 (1926) contains the subheading “Tokugawa bungaku no zantō” 徳川文学の殘党, and the author refers to early Meiji *gesaku* fiction as *nanpa bungaku* 軟派文学.⁵⁶ Similarly, in *Watakushi no mita Meiji bundan* 私の見た明治文壇, Nozaki Sabun 野崎左文 wrote of the reporters for the minor newspapers of early Meiji times, “Most were practitioners of soft bungaku, on the order of *gesaku* writers, kabuki playwrights, and haikai or waka poets.”⁵⁷ The term *nan bungaku* appears even today in most middling or larger Japanese dictionaries, although the definitions given for it vary.

Many aspects of the debate over “hard bungaku” and “soft bungaku” are worth noting, even after these terms became established. First, although the debate at the outset concerned the question of what “soft bungaku,” i.e., linguistic art, should be, it tended more and more toward the primacy of the “historical perspective” (*shiron*) over linguistic art. The so-called “Jinsei sōshō ronsō” 人生相渉論争 controversy between Kitamura Tōkoku and Yamaji Aizan went forward in the very middle of this debate. Yamaji Aizan’s “Rai Noboru o ron-zu” can be said to represent the kind of critique of historical figures so favored by Min’yūsha members. Near the very beginning of it Aizan wrote, “Writing is a business,” thus provoking a hypersensitive reaction from Tōkoku. In the background of this assertion lay Aizan’s dismissal of “soft bungaku,” in other words, something approaching a dismissal of art itself. Tōkoku himself resolved the matter in a logical manner in his “Shūkyō to tetsugaku to wa bungaku no genso” 宗教と哲学とは文学の原素 (*Seisho no tomo zasshi* 聖書之友雑誌, 1893).⁵⁸ The “bungaku” at issue in this case was synonymous with “art bungaku.”

Another matter worth noting is the change in Uchida Roan’s position on the subject. In the controversy over *Ukishiro monogatari*, Roan had taken the side of Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Shōsetsu shinzui*, but in the course of praising Kōda Rohan’s *Fūryūbutsu* to the skies and stressing religious content in *Bungaku ippan*, he seems to have parted company with exclusive allegiance to realistic depiction of human life and feeling. He tended more and more to attack any attitude then in fashion. In “Konnichi no shōsetsu oyobi shōsetsuka” and its sequel, “Futatabi konnichi no shōsetsuka o ron-zu” (September 1893), Roan write harshly of Kuroiwa Ruikō’s 黒岩涙香 adaptations (*hon’an* 翻案) of foreign detective novels and the “city tough novels” (*bachibin shōsetsu* 撥鬢小説) of Murakami Namiroku, and, placing Tamenaga Shunsui in their company, he made clear his disapproval of commercialism.⁵⁹

56 Katō Takeo 1926.

57 Togawa 1998-99, vol. 1, p. 5.

58 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 182. In “Bunkai kinjō” (1892) Tōkoku wrote ([Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 77), “Some call Japan the land of Zen. Indeed, in Japan, Zen is the major constituent element of philosophy, bungaku, and religion.” Placed this way in a series that includes philosophy and religion, “bungaku” presumably refers to the category of *bi bungaku* 美文学 (art literature). Tōkoku manifested here the desire to pursue a *bi bungaku* that embraced philosophical and religious elements. He combined this *bi bungaku* with bungaku in the broad sense.

59 Kitamura Tōkoku’s case is somewhat different. In “Bunkai yōhō” (1892) and “Bunkai jiji 3” (1883), à propos of the “collapse of the novel” (*shōsetsu no kyokusui* 小説の極衰), he treated Murakami Namiroku’s *Mikazuki* and *Yakko no Oman* 奴のお万 as belonging to the category of “bungaku.” In contrast, under the heading of the “vogue for detective novels” in “Bunkai jiji 3,” he declared this

A third matter to note is that the idea of “bungaku for the people” (*kokumin bungaku*) had become quite current. In an anonymous contribution to the “Bunkai genshō-kainai” 文界現象—海内 in *Waseda bungaku* (April 1893), Tsubouchi Shōyō questioned the idea of separating politics from *bungaku* in these words: “Political phenomena and literary phenomena both reveal the workings of the national spirit in their time.” One who reads *Shōsetsu shinzui* as a declaration of the independence of *bungaku* from politics and ethics might well take this for a change of position. Surely it should be classified as one of Shōyō’s “conversions” (*tenkō* 転向), to be set alongside his giving up the novel, the most advanced genre of all, in order to “improve” drama, the most backward. Kitamura Tōkoku’s “Kokumin to shisō” 国民と思想 (1893) no doubt shows the influence of this sort of thinking.

The effort to lift the level of “bungaku for the people” continued. In 1895, in the context of the heightened nationalism characteristic of the period surrounding the Sino-Japanese War, Kaneko Umaji 金子馬治 (Chikusui 筑水, 1870-1937) adopted a romantic perspective in “Kokumin *bungaku* to sekai *bungaku*” 国民文学と世界文学. Uchida Roan, for his part, began “Sengo no *bungaku* (*kokumin o shite kiun ni jō-zeshimeyo*)” 戦後の文学(国民をして機運に乗せしめよ) by writing:

The war is won. A half-developed nation of East Asia has leapt into the company of the developed nations. Under these circumstances, everything of ours—our knowledge, art, and technology [*bungei gijutsu* 文芸技術], of course, but everything else that any of us do—must be worthy of a first-class nation.

He continued, “Victory in war gives colossal strength to the people, and the people turn this strength to works of peace”; and, “Now that we are guarantors of peace, we must become great teachers, spreading civilization throughout the world.” For Roan, the task was to bring Japan’s “spiritual civilization” to world level, indeed to develop it to a position of world leadership. There is more than a little exaggeration in all this, of course, but the core issue was that “We must now advance to the point of being in reality a first-class nation in terms of literary art and of science.”⁶⁰

genre to be addressed solely to “the people at large” (*gōko* 江湖) ([Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 218).

In “Bungakusha to naru hō” (1894), Uchida Roan cited Kitamura Tōkoku’s *Hōraikyoku* 蓬萊曲 as proof that then current drama was “completely incomprehensible and excessively lofty in inspiration. How could any ordinary brain,” he asked, “produce such mightily poetic stuff? It is undisciplined and all tangled up” (*Uchida Roan zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 274). “Bungakusha to naru hō” is sympathetic to drama, but Roan did not rate *Hōraikyoku* highly.

For a detailed discussion of Kitamura Tōkoku’s changing view of “bungaku” and changing use of the word, see Suzuki Sadami 2004b. In modern Japan, generally the notion of humanities and fine art was not separated from religion before the emergence of scientific socialism. See Suzuki Sadami 2005b.

60 *Uchida Roan shū*, pp. 184-89. This call to develop the spiritual civilization of Japan toward supremacy over all other peoples was probably influenced by Leopold von Ranke’s (1795-1886) conception of the “great nation.” Near the end of “Sengo no *bungaku*” Roan mentioned von Ranke at the head of the following lament: “The nineteenth century began with the tyranny of the despot Napoleon, but hardly anything remains of it now. Von Ranke has passed away already, Renan is gone,

Roan's talk of *bungei gijutsu* presumably refers to *gakumon*, *geijutsu*, and *gijutsu* (learning, art, technology). "Military affairs and bungaku are equally human concerns," he wrote, meaning by "bungaku" (or so the context suggests) the same thing as *bungei geijutsu*, i.e., "bungaku" in the broad sense. Elsewhere, as in his exhortation to "make the strength gained from the war work toward the rise of *bungei*," he apparently meant by this last term the combination of *bungaku* and *gijutsu*, meaning the category of "bungaku" in the narrow sense combined with art (*bijutsu*). His use of these terms shows that the word "bungaku" was not yet fully current in its restricted meaning of linguistic art.

Further, the term *kokumin bungaku* occurs in a passage of "Waga kuni genkon no bungeikai ni okeru hihyōka no honmu" (*Taiyō*, June 1897) by Takayama Chogyū, who wrote of "raising the banner of bungaku for the people" "from the standpoint of the people themselves."⁶¹ This proposition is based on the idea that individual self-awareness is equivalent to self-awareness as a constituent member of the nation. The following year, in "Shōsetsu kakushin no jiki" 小説革新の時機, Takayama Chogyū made a point of arguing that the realist novel (*shajitsu shōsetsu*) of the kind Tsubouchi Shōyō had called for in *Shōsetsu shinzui* was in a different line.

Finally, in 1898, in response to turmoil in the political world, Uchida Roan published "Seiji shōsetsu o tsukurubeki kōjiki" 政治小説を作るべき好時機, in which he urged novelists for a while to abandon the "sacred universe of love"⁶² and, at least at the level of Tōkai Sanshi or Ozaki Gakudō 尾崎罌堂, to take up in the "political novel" the antics of the politicians. It is not that he meant to reject the love novel. However, his insistence on the necessity of the political novel shows how far he had strayed by now from the *Shōsetsu shinzui* line. Still, Roan himself pursued such works as *Rōshafu* 老車夫 (1898), which evokes the spirit of those living in the lower depths, and *Yaburegaki* 破垣 (1901, banned), which describes the degeneracy of the aristocracy. From about 1897 on, works like these came to be referred to as "social novels" (*shakai shōsetsu* 社会小説). This was the time when socialist thought began to penetrate the political novel, and the two became almost indistinguishable.

and likewise Taine, Stendhal, and Tennyson. The world of the spirit is desolate, inhabited as it is now by only two or three shadowy forms." Fifteen years later, von Ranke's ideal of a peaceful "great nation" would influence the formation of Yoshino Sakuzō's 吉野作造 ideas and reappear as kin to those of Ukita Kazutami 浮田和民, who contributed so much to the rise of "Taishō democracy." In the period surrounding the Japanese annexation of Korea, Ukita rejected military, political, or economic domination of another country in an essay entitled *Rinriteki teikoku shugi* (1909) and on that basis he went on to advocate the idea of employing moral suasion. Thirty years later, Ukita's ideas re-emerged in a different form, together with von Ranke's name, in the conception of peaceful, moral dominion, free of any struggle for power, advocated by Nishida Kitarō in his *Nihon bunka no mondai* (1940). A further three years later the same ideas, transformed again, were presented in a discussion among young scholars of the Kyoto school—a discussion entitled "Sekaiteki tachiba to Nihon" 世界の立場と日本—as underlying the conception of "moral energy" supporting the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

61 Takayama Chogyū, *Saitō Nonohito, Anesaki Chōfū, Tobarī Chikufū shū*, p. 19.

62 Uchida Roan *shū*, p. 199.

7.2.3 What Was at Issue

It is impossible to grasp major changes in concepts and ideas simply by examining the words used by professional writers and scholars of Western learning, and the vocabulary of university organization; yet unless one does so, the meaning of what was written then, and the attitude toward the times implicit in those writings, will remain forever obscure. Let us look back over the controversies of the 1880s and 1890s through the window of the concept of “bungaku.”

First, it is clear by now that the series of controversies which arose in the 1880s pitted the proponents of “bungaku” in the broad sense against those who sought to promote it in the narrow one. The novelistic ideal proposed by Yano Ryūkei, which was founded on the broad meaning of “bungaku,” assumed a wide readership, put “entertainment” (*goraku*; including art) first, and gave second place to enlightenment or education. In contrast, the ideal based on the narrow meaning of “bungaku” as linguistic art sought, from within that concept, to make an issue of “religion” and “philosophy,” and tended to reject the element of “entertainment.” At issue with respect to “bungaku” were therefore “political” thought and “education”; “entertainment”; and “religion” or “philosophy.”

It is surely accurate to consider that, at the time, the “bungaku” we know now—the one carrying the narrow meaning of linguistic art—was still latent within the broader sense of the term, drifting uncertainly among the ripples of language. In other words, the debates of those days concerned the framework of the concept. For just that reason this whole complex of issues—the relationship of “bungaku” to politics and society, to philosophy and religion, to “entertainment,” the scope of the audience addressed, the proper attitude toward creation for pay—were thrust forward very frankly indeed. That is why almost all the issues debated repeatedly during the later history of literary art can be found among them in primitive form.

In 1890, amid all these debates, Ozaki Kōyō was probably alone in maintaining the conviction he expressed in the rhetorical question, “Do they not know that someone with only a tiny garden sees no more than that garden?” After gaining early recognition, Yamada Bimyō decided that it was too soon for him to write poetry, and that he needed to devote himself instead to refining his thought. Kōda Rohan showed interest in religious depth and moral concerns, while Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei gave up writing novels and lapsed into silence. As Ochi Haruo observed, all these writers faced the question of what “bungaku” is and what it should be. As one of the writers who identified this crisis precisely, Ochi cited Ishibashi Ningetsu in “Sōjitsuron” (March 1890). Ochi wrote, “It is clear that the matter radically at issue was art (*geijutsu*), and especially the question of what was *bungaku*.”⁶³

Ochi Haruo was not wrong about this. People were indeed questioning the nature of art, and especially of *bungaku*. At the center of their interest lay the problem of Ishibashi Ningetsu’s “Sōjitsuron” and the problems of imagination and realism, spirit and reality. However, the questions of what art is, and especially what *bungaku* is, were not being asked within the range of *bungaku* as linguistic art. No one was inquiring, with respect to any particular, established genre, how that genre should relate to entertainment, education, religion, or philosophy, what relationship it should

63 Quotations in this paragraph are from Ochi 1975, pp. 200-209.

have with the state, or what a novel written for the people at large (*minshū*) should be. Yano Ryūkei insisted on a “bungaku for the people” (*kokumin bungaku*) based upon “bungaku” in the broad sense. Precisely for that reason, the controversy surrounding *Ukishiro monogatari* assimilated the ideas of the newly-launched “history of Japanese bungaku” genre and developed at the same time into a debate over “bungaku for the people.”

The 1890s conception of “popular bungaku” of course referred to “bungaku” in the broad sense. It was in tune with the Min’yūsha’s concern for the common people (*heiminshugi* 平民主義), and it was closely linked at the same time to popular enlightenment and reform (*kokumin no keimō kaikaku* 国民の啓蒙改革), i.e., to cultural nationalism. In short, the debate was one that fundamentally questioned the full range of scholarly knowledge (*gakugei zentai* 学芸全体). The still immature notion of linguistic art was therefore shaken to its foundations. Writers who had begun their careers in the years surrounding 1887 under the influence of Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Shōsetsu shinzui*, and even Shōyō himself, were obliged by this debate—one wholly external to the notion of linguistic art—to recognize the decisive limitations of linguistic art in the guise of pure realism (*shajitsu shugi* 写実主義). The conception of the novel set out in *Shōsetsu shinzui* now revealed its makeshift character.

With respect to external concepts and internal structure, that conception was still wholly unrefined. As a view of art it amounted to no more than a device. That is why Tsubouchi Shōyō himself went through “conversion” (*tenkō* 転向) after “conversion,” and why the writers he had inspired found their ideas about “bungaku” seriously in question. Shaken though they were by the controversy, their sensibility was not especially acute; nor was Ozaki Kōyō’s even though he remained unshaken. Presumably, only Ozaki Kōyō retained a firm idea of linguistic art. However, what he thought is not at issue here. The issue is as follows.

For example, in 1892 Kōda Rohan (who, despite chiming in with his own talk of human life and feelings, kept distance between himself and *Shōsetsu shinzui*) completed *Gōjū no tō* 五重塔, which recasts the mentality of the Tokugawa-period carpenter in terms of the ethics of the modern craftsman. Uchida Roan’s understanding of “bungaku,” with its romantic aspects, shifted a great deal in the presence of the Sino-Japanese War and the social change that followed it. Moreover, the heavy taxation introduced after the war increased the number of tenant farmers and urban paupers, whose fate became a “social problem” that inspired a succession of “idea fiction” (*kannen shōsetsu* 觀念小説) and “misery fiction” (*hisan shōsetsu* 悲慘小説). Examples are Izumi Kyōka’s “Yakō jūnsa” 夜行巡査 and “Gekashitsu” 外科室 (1895); Oguri Fūyō’s 小栗風葉 “Renbo nagashi” 恋慕ながし (1894); and Hirotsu Ryūrō’s 広津柳浪 “Heme den” 変目伝 (1895). Soon, even the Ken’yūsha leader Ozaki Kōyō came to write *Konjiki yasha* 金色夜叉 (1897-1903, unfinished), which evokes a world ruled by money. Tokutomi Roka’s *Hototogisu* 不如帰 (1898-99) became the first of a plethora of “family novels” (*katei shōsetsu* 家庭小説) with political, social, or intellectual content. These terms (*kannen shōsetsu*, *hisan shōsetsu*, *katei shōsetsu*, and so on) are no more than vague, journalistic jargon, but while the works to which they refer assume the view of “bungaku” as linguistic art, all these works also make a point of taking up burgeoning social problems. In that sense, the narrow conception of “bungaku” had made a major shift to a new level, one far removed from that of *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Higuchi Ichiyō 樋口一葉 (1872-1896) emerged as a writer in the very middle of this process.

Most of the “political novels” written tended toward socialist views, and since this meant attacking society as it really was, they seem to blend easily with the kind of work devoted to linguistic art. From about 1898 to 1904, there appeared a distinct group of works—one often placed under the heading “early naturalism” (*shizenshugi* 自然主義)—that attempted to convey the reality of the depths of society. But is that designation not meaningless, after all? Is not the idea that the modern Japanese novel originated in *Shōsetsu shinzui* simply an approximation derived from the fixed notion that Japan’s modern period began when modern European ideas entered the country? Regarding these questions, the reader should refer to Chapters Nine and Ten.

One more matter remains to be discussed, concerning so-called “early naturalism”: Takayama Chogyū’s statement, in his “Biteki seikatsu o ron-zu” 美的生活を論ず (1901) that “When all is said and done, the greatest pleasure in life is instinctual desire [*seiyoku* 性欲].”⁶⁴ At the time the character *sei* 性 commonly referred to “inborn nature” (*honshō* 本性), rather than, as now, to “sex.” By *seiyoku*, which now means “sexual desire,” Chogyū therefore meant all human instinctual behavior. Perhaps this stance, which might be called *honnō jūsokushugi* 本能充足主義 (advocacy of instinctual fulfillment), could be said to play the role of giving a biological content (that of the human “instincts”) to “human feelings” (*ninjō*), i.e., the passions (*bonnō*) upheld in *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the proper subject for realism (*shajitsu*). After discussing many more debates over “bungaku,” we will have occasion to pursue this matter further in 11.2.

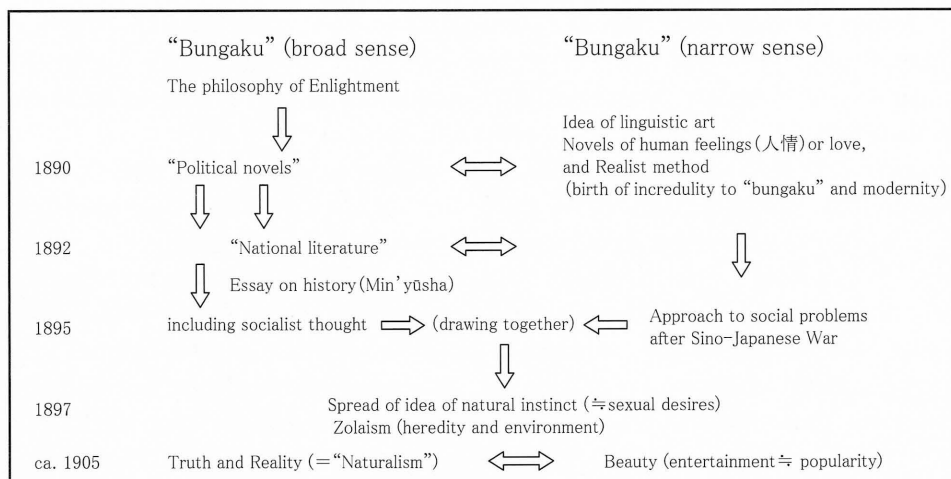


Figure 16 Changes in the Novel from the Late 1880s to 1900s

What the season of controversy of the 1890s demands of us is not that we should peer into it through the window of “bungaku” in the narrow sense. On the other hand, we will no doubt consider how the notion of linguistic art, violently shaken from the outside, changed and developed thereafter within itself. We will see how the relationships between “bungaku” in the narrow sense and political and social ethics, religion and philosophy, or pleasure and education, were discussed within the narrow “bungaku” itself; to what sort of works these relationships gave rise; and how,

64 Takayama Chogyū, *Saitō Nonohito, Anesaki Chōfū, Tobari Chikufū shū*, p. 81.

by assimilating elements of these relationships with external concepts, the narrow “bungaku” drew strength for its own development from the confrontations between these elements. For that purpose, we will need to be able to move our critical gaze back and forth between the inside and the outside of the concept of “bungaku” as linguistic art. Of course, the prerequisite for this venture will be an understanding of each historical period from within. It is precisely because we have attempted to grasp the period of the 1890s from inside, without being waylaid by the concepts and ideas of our own time, that the dominance then of “bungaku” in the broad sense has stood out as so obvious a reality. Only a critique that grasps from within not just the works themselves but also their time, scrutinizes them on that basis from outside, and captures the dynamic connections across the inner-outer divide, will guarantee that we will “learn from history.”⁶⁵

65 Ochi Haruo saw in the 1890 controversy the beginnings of the issue of “politics and bungaku” and the idea of “popular bungaku.” He also shrewdly discerned in the attitudes of writers in 1890 an underlying suspicion of bungaku, which he then connected to suspicion directed toward Japanese modernization. His view probably matured in the context of the “popular bungaku” (*kokumin bungaku*) controversy that arose at the time of the establishment of the 1955 political realignment; Nakamura Mitsuo’s essay “Futatabi seiji shōsetsu o,” published in 1959 just before the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960; Asukai Masamichi’s “Seiji shōsetsu to ‘kindai’ bungaku”; and then, after the wave of anti-security treaty protests had receded, the controversy over such issues as the transformation of pure bungaku, in which the question of the then newly-emerging autonomy of pure bungaku was debated. Ochi Haruo’s article “*Ukishiro monogatari to sono shūi*” was written in 1962.

Ochi’s perspective on the 1890 controversy, to the effect that it marked the beginning of the controversy over “politics and bungaku” and “popular bungaku,” was probably formed in many ways in the light of these debates. However, his essay is highly suggestive, with respect both to his remarks concerning the concept of “bungaku” held by enlightenment-minded intellectuals of the time, and to his effort to situate Ishibashi Ningetsu’s essay “*Sōjitsuron*” at the center of the 1890 controversy. In particular, his observations concerning the issue of *sō* 想 illuminate Kōda Rohan’s aspiration to religious depth, the problems that preoccupied Kitamura Tōkoku and Natsume Sōseki’s practice of Zen. Thus Ochi may well have blazed a path between the religious fervor that arose before and after the Russo-Japanese War, and literary art. (See below, 11.2.1, 11.2.2.)