

Natsume Sôseki—An attempt of *Kusamakura* as an imagery novel

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**SUMMARY**

This paper focuses at first on Natsume Sôseki's interests in fine arts and his own works, especially some of his self-made post cards where female figures are often painted with an Araigami hair style, even as nude pictures in some cases. They show the influence of Pre-Raphaelitism on Sôseki and additionally the collapse of the life basis at the end of the Meiji period. The second half of this paper attempts to examine his novel *Kusamakura* as a response to this collapse, considering the meaning of “an imagery novel” or “a Haiku novel” that Sôseki himself gave to it.

**Key Words:** fine arts, *Kusamakura*, literature, modernization, Natsume Sôseki

Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), one of the representative writers in the Japanese modern age, came to Scotland more than a hundred years ago. It was the last period of his study in the United Kingdom and he stayed there for two months. He wrote his memories of Scotland later in one of his essays, entitled *Spring Miscellany*, which begins with the sentence, “The Vale of Pitlochry is deep into autumn”. This essay “Long Ago” has only one character, the owner of the hotel there. In addition, he is only depicted as a motif in the landscape. I would like to quote a picturesque part of this essay that is colorful and shows a contrast between light and shadow.

“A squirrel waving its long thick tail flits about, racing up a black trunk. Meanwhile, on the old, thickened moss another squirrel quickly scampers out of sight. The moss is fulsome and unmoving. The squirrel’s tale swishingly rubs the deeply green earth and enters the dark. / He[the owner of the house] turns to one side and points to Pitlochry’s bright valley” (Sōseki, vol. 12, p.196)<sup>1)</sup>.

The first intention I have in making this quotation lies in the introduction of Sōseki’s relationship with Scotland<sup>2)</sup>, but this quotation also refers to the subject of my analysis. That is I will analyze the interest of the novelist in the fine arts. This work is divided into two parts. In the first half, I will show you what Sōseki had to do with the fine arts, including his own art products, so that we can think about the historical meaning of his interest. In the second half, one of his novels, *Kusamakura*(『草枕』), will be discussed. *Kusamakura* is noticeable throughout his works and often called an imagery novel. I evaluate this unique work in relation to his encounter with the European culture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which led him to the fluctuation of his concept of literature. In my opinion, *Kusamakura* is to be called one of his measures against such a fluctuation. Finally, I will try to consider its meaning from the point which Sōseki attained in his last period.

Natsume Sōseki wrote in his essay “My memories etc”. as follows—— “As I was a little boy, there were fifty or sixty pictures in my house. I looked at each of them alternately in front of the Tokonoma, or in the storehouse, or at a time of summer airing. I found it a pleasure, to sit down alone in front of them and spend time in silence”(Sōseki, vol.12 , p.426)<sup>3)</sup> . As this quotation shows, he had been strongly interested in pictures and intoxicated by them in his childhood. I would like to introduce him as an artist.

Let me begin with Sôseki as a calligrapher. He loved calligraphy art during his whole life and produced many works as authors in the East Asian tradition normally did. The most famous work is 《則天去私》 that is thought to indicate the state of his mind in his last year, but 《雲去来》(Fig.1) or 《月落不離天》(Fig.2) is also impressive. His essays and letters show that a lot of his fans begged him to draw calligraphic works so often that he became irritated. 《酒渴愛江清》(Fig.3) which was drawn in 1914 is attractive, too. He wrote a letter about this work to a young painter, Tsuda Seifû, which says he was very satisfied with it. The earliest letter from Sôseki to Seifû, that we can read now, was written on 24<sup>th</sup> June in 1911. Seifû kept a friendship with Sôseki

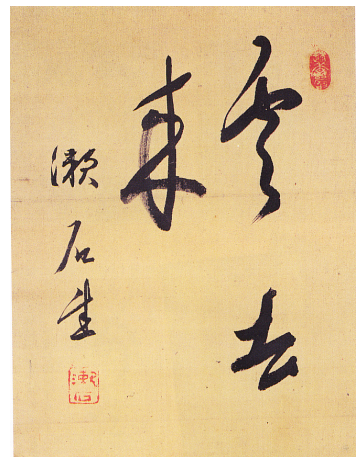


fig.1



fig.4

till Soseki's death, and instructed him in painting. Needless to say, Sôseki had not been trained at a school of the fine arts and remained a mere amateur in this genre. For example, in his letter to Seifû about his work 《山水有山図》(Fig.4) drawn in 1912, we can imagine what Sôseki thought about his own paintings. He wrote cheerfully that this work was a failure because of the shadows painted on the houses. He hung it on the wall of his room and enjoyed looking at it and listening to the severe criticism of another young pupil there. The works 《菊図》 and 《あかざと猫》(Fig.5), which were both painted under the instruction by Seifû, look better than 《山水有山図》, and his

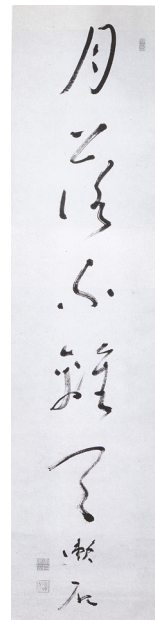


fig.2

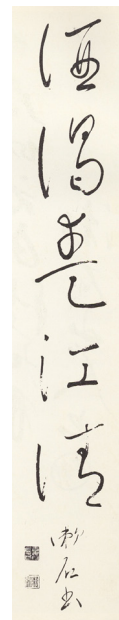


fig.3

painting technique seems to have developed, even though Sôseki himself wrote that the latter was not well done. The relationship between Sôseki and Seifû was that of close friends rather than that between pupil and teacher. Sôseki lost his fifth baby in 1911 because of her sudden illness, and begged Seifû in 1913 to design a grave stele for the dead daughter. Such a friendship seems to correspond to the place which painting occupies in Sôseki's creations as a whole. In the spring of 1914, he sent a letter to Seifû before starting to write his most famous novel, *Kokoro* (『心』): “Recently the people in the world seems to be hateful... On the contrary, the sky, the earth, the grass and the trees look so beautiful” (Sôseki, vol.24, p.279), and two weeks later he wrote again to Seifû, “I must begin to write a novel at last. So, I stopped painting” (Sôseki, vol. 24, p.281).

On the one hand, writing a novel —his professional work— might seem to him the field where he must struggle with actuality. On the other hand, painting might seem to him the place where he could recover from the fatigue of that fight. Seifû could be a guide to this refuge.

Novels and the fine arts left another connection in Sôseki. Seifû designed the covers of Sôseki's last two books, *Grass on the Wayside* (『道草』) and *Light and Darkness* (『明暗』). Sôseki was a novelist who was very concerned with book design of his own works. He designed his own important works, *Kokoro* and *Inside of My Glass Doors* (『硝子戸の中』). Regarding his book design, I must introduce another artist, Hashiguchi Goyô. Goyô was a younger brother of Hashiguchi Mitsugu, who had been taught by Sôseki at Kumamoto High School around the end of the 1890's, before Sôseki's study abroad. Goyô had started his career with studying oil painting at Tôkyô High School of the Fine Arts, but became acquainted with Sôseki after coming home, and became a designer of 16 of Sôseki's books from *I Am a Cat* (『吾輩は猫である』) to *The Wayfarer* (『行人』). He designed not only the book cover of other authors' books, for example, Izumi Kyôka, but also got the first place in the poster competition of Mitsukoshi, the first department store in Japan. He is also famous as the representative artist in the Shin-Hanga movement in 1920's, which modernized the tradition of Edo-Ukiyoe. That is to say, Goyô moved from the great art to the lesser art in the meaning of William Morris, maybe through stimulation from Sôseki. Sôseki had begun to read *The Studio* during his time in London and continued to buy this illustrated magazine every month till his death. It is said that Sôseki mediated the influence of the arts à la fin de siècle to Goyô.

Sôseki's interest in the arts à la fin de siècle is important to understand the relationship between Sôseki and the fine arts. As he suggested to Goyô the way to the lesser art through the book design of *I Am a Cat* or *The London Tower* (『倫敦塔』), he often sent postcards to some of his younger friends including Goyô. They were painted by himself in aquarelle. Watercolour was very



fig.5



fig.6

popular in Japan at that time, perhaps because of its technical simplicity and similarity to traditional Japanese painting, and it was very popular among the intellectuals and artists to send a self-made picture postcard. Sôseki was one of them and this picture postcard is a part of his fine arts works. We can find among the pictures of his cards not only flowers and landscape, but also the female figure. Almost all of these women have so-called Araigami, which means undressed hairstyle. The Japanese women in those days usually had their hair dressed in some traditional styles in public. We can also see women in the Araigami-style in the Shin-Hanga works by Goyô, which depict the scenes of bathing. Araigami was a symbol of the private life of a woman. There is also a postcard of Sôseki with a nude painting addressed to Goyô's brother(Fig.6). Sôseki gave little explanation of the pictures on his cards. In the case of the nude postcard, he made only some comments on Mitsugu's Haiku-poems. However, he wrote there, "Your Haiku-poetry is unique in being en-rei" (Sôseki, vol.22, p.354). The old-fashioned word En-rei(艶麗) means "sensual", so that this comment of Sôseki could correspond to that nude painting on his card. It was only a few years after nude painting had been imported from the Western world to Japan. There occurred even some controversies about the morality of nude painting in the media. Sôseki discussed the same problem in his lectures at Tôkyô Imperial University; there, he theoretically considered how the nude picture can be appreciated as art when it is looked at without moral judgements, that is, only aesthetically. Yet, he wonders why such an art is possible in the solemn society of Europe, perhaps remembering the United Kingdom in the Victorian era(cf. Sôseki, vol.14, p.198). Therefore, it seems interesting that Sôseki drew some sensual female figures in spite of his negative criticism of nude painting.

The tendency toward the sensual expression belongs to the arts à la fin de siècle in general. Pre-Raphaelitism was the most closely related to Sôseki. We find a lot of such images in it and also in l'art nouveau and dem Jugendstil. There is no doubt that Sôseki saw such sensual pictures in London and felt very interested in them<sup>4)</sup>. He sympathized deeply with those art movements. Thus, he created beautiful and attractive women which tempt male protagonists into ruin, so-called femmes fatales, not only in his postcards but also in almost all of his novels. Une femme fatale named Nami also appears in *Kusamakura* which I will discuss later. The protagonist of this novel imagines in one scene this woman floating on the water of a pond, naming apparently Ophelia, the picture by John Everett Millais. Sôseki had seen it at The Tate Britain.

Why did such influence occur? Why was the figure of la femme fatale transported immediately from Europe to the islands in the Far East? In order to think about this question, I would like to introduce another artist, Asai Chû, one of the representative oil painters in the Meiji period. He was a friend of Sôseki and taught Tsuda Seifû. He died in 1907, about a decade earlier than Sôseki. We can say that the friendship between Sôseki and Seifû belongs to the legacy of Asai.

Asai was in Europe at the same time as Sôseki, that is, in Paris for two years from 1900, and met Sôseki there once and then visited him in London just before coming back home. The

International Exposition in Paris of 1900 is well known with the “Triumph of l’art nouveau”. Asai was sent to Paris as an inspector of the exhibited works from Japan, and astonished at the contemporary European arts there. He was attracted especially by the crafts designed à l’art nouveau and accepted this mode for the first time in Japan.

The oil painter Asai expanded his activity into the world of design, because he was invited as a professor to Kyôto High School of the Crafts, which was established as the first school for the arts and crafts in Japan. This school has developed into the Kyôto Institute of Technology. Its museum still owns the collection of the ceramic wares which were bought by Asai from Paris as specimens for education there.

He taught in the school as well as provided the craftsmen in Kyôto with his own ideas of design so as to rehabilitate the tradition of the ceramic and lacquer ware industries there. His design is of course influenced by l’art nouveau. For example, we can find botanical patterns in his works. However it seems very difficult to feel the kind of sensuality which characterizes Sôseki’s creation. Even his contemporaries got a similar impression from his works. Nakazawa Iwata, the first principal of the school, was the person who invited Asai and had a strong friendship with him till his death. He says in the memorial book of Asai, “You would not have been good at drawing a sensual (En-rei) design. I have not heard at all that you made such a work” (Nakazawa, p.5). The same word en-rei appears in the nude picture postcard of Sôseki as mentioned above. Asai was 11 years older than Sôseki. I find the difference in age between them historically significant. Here, I would like to compare Asai with another painter, Fujishima Takeji, who was born in 1867, that is, the same year as Sôseki, and who designed the famous literature magazine *The Myôjyô* (fig.7). In addition, I would like to compare Asai with another younger artist, Ichijo Narumi, who also designed the same magazine (fig.8). We can say that their design works are much more sensual than those of Asai, for example, the cover of *The Shin-Syôsetsu* (fig.9), which was drawn in France.

It is apparent that Sôseki had a strong friendship with and respect for Asai. His novels, lectures, and letters afford some reminiscences of this deceased painter. What is the meaning of the difference which even these close friends showed in regard to sensuality? I have written papers in Japanese and German about their various relations including this difference<sup>5)</sup>. Their difference indicates a change of the foundations of life during the Meiji period. Namely, the basis for the Japanese people in the early Meiji, to which Asai belonged, was



fig.7



fig.8



fig.9

collapsing during the modernization. The generation of Sôseki or Fujishima was conscious of this change as hollowing their relationship to their own community, while Asai maintained this relationship till his death. This community, simply speaking, the Meiji-nation, is what had supported the modernization since the Restoration, but it is homogenous with the society before it. The essential element of this homogeneity is called I-e(家). The word I-e originally means house as well as the family which lives in it, and it signifies the moral microcosm which regulates the behavior and even the emotions of the members. This I-e community is constructed mainly of blood relations, but can include people by other relations, and is related to the public world. That is, I-e is not private, but rather weaves other I-e communities into a connected society. This network had been called Han or Bakufu before the Restoration destroyed it, but its structure remained in the Meiji-nation till about the 1890's. For the people in those days, working for their own I-e was the same as devoting themselves to their nation. However, the modernization reached full stage around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Industrialization drove the people as laborers to the city, and the I-e community in the rural area was dismantled. As a result, an industrialized nation in the genuine sense emerged, separated from the former amalgam of the I-e communities. In such a situation the intellectuals and artists must have been conscious that their life lost its foundation. Sôseki also belonged to such a rootless intelligentsia. Yet, the 11-year-old artist Asai was called with respect "Samurai Painter" by the people around him, and he was able to live in the traditional way without feeling it hollow out.

I think such a difference is reflected in the appearance of the sensual nature of Sôseki's art and its non-appearance in Asai's. This nature derives from the collapse of the foundations of the traditional way of life. It is one of the fantasies people use to compensate for misfortune, that is, to cover the abyss which was opened up by the modernization. I previously mentioned the Araigami-style of the female figures on Sôseki's postcards. The hairstyle of the women indicated their position in society in those days. A woman before marriage, for example, normally had her hair dressed in the so-called Shimada-style and a woman after marriage in the Maru-style<sup>6</sup>). In this way the female gender was regulated in the I-e community. Accordingly, the Araigami, if depicted, can be a symbol of the deviation from this control, or further, of the collapse of the I-e community. Escaping from the regulation of the I-e, the gender becomes private and consequently secret. As a secret thing, it stops being a mere process of reproduction and gains the power to lure others, the male in this case, into eroticism. That is to say, it becomes sensual. Such a fantasy might seem to relieve the alienated male in industrialized society. Yet, it is only something like a mirage which looms from the abyss of life, so that the tempted male must actually be led to the fate of ruin, isolated from the community.

Sôseki's novel, *Mon* (『門』), depicts the later life of a man who robbed his friend of his wife. This protagonist, Nonaka Sôsuke, leads a sad life with her in a rented house in the suburb of Tôkyô, having abandoned the obligations which he ought to have as the master of the family. This couple lives intimately, but is isolated from the public world and closed in a space where

nothing new or amusing can happen. The former I-e community which brought about public relationships is extinct here.

We can feel such a depression in almost all of Sôseki's novels, whose protagonists, as urbanized intellectuals, have lost their relationship with their community. Ichiro, the hero of *The Wayfarer*, and Sensei of *Kokoro*, are both in deep despair coming from that abyss and are going inevitably to their death と. Sôseki made comments in some of those postcards as mentioned above that the figures on them are ghosts of a morning glory or a colored leaf (Sôseki, vol.22, p.322 and 326), in other words, beings outside of the present world. The Eros of the sensual figures is tied with the Thanatos, as Proserpina by Dante Gabriel Rossetti shows.

In the diaries of Asai in France, we can notice that he could enjoy the company of various women in France, for example, a young girl who came by a bicycle with her boyfriend, barmaids whom he sketched like Toulouse-Lautrec, or Geisha-girls from Japan for whom he cooked Japanese dishes. On the contrary, Sôseki couldn't associate well with ladies. It is well known that he was even on bad terms with his own wife. This difference between the artists indicates, in my opinion, that Asai kept the basis on which he could behave as he would, but Sôseki found himself in that abyss which let him associate actual women with la fame fatal.

How should we live in the loss of the traditional community which modernization has brought about? ——This was the fundamental question that drove Sôseki's activity in his whole life and that each of his works was an attempt to answer. *Kusamakura* (『草枕』) as an imagery novel shows one of the directions he took.

### 3

*Kusamakura* is well known to us Japanese in its beginning sentences, “If you work by reason, you grow rough-edged; if you choose to dip your oar into sentiment's stream, it will sweep you away. Demanding your own way only serves to constrain you. However you look at it, the human world is not an easy place to live” (Sôseki, vol.3, p.3)<sup>7)</sup>.

First, I want to tell you about the abstract of its story. The protagonist cum story teller is a traveling painter, who comes over the mountain path to the hot spring place called Nakoi, in order to escape from the ordinary life and to indulge himself in the art world. He meets Nami there, a daughter of the hotel owner, who had once married, but divorced and came back there. This still young and beautiful lady gives various strange performances, passing through the garden in the midnight like a ghost, suggesting her suicide by drowning herself in the old pond near there, and coming into the bathroom without clothing, when the painter is already in there. The painter is attracted by her and wants to draw a picture of her, which Nami also wishes to see. It is however difficult for him to accomplish the work. Nevertheless, he doesn't hurry, instead he enjoys thinking about how to draw the picture. The exchange of dialog between the painter and Nami continues in a rambling way. However, the story begins to move in the second half, after



Nami's cousin, Kyûichi, enters into the story. Nami and her family leave Nakoi and go down the river with the painter, in order to see Kyûichi, who is conscripted in the Russo-Japan War, in a city. Kyûichi rides on a train there. Suddenly from the window of the same coach comes the face of Nami's divorced husband. She noticed him. The painter witnesses the special emotion A-ware (pity) coming over her face. The final words are as famous as the first: "'That's it! That's it! That's what I need for the picture!'" I murmur, patting her on the shoulder. At last, with this moment, the canvas within my own heart has found its full and final form" (Sôseki, vol.3, p.171).

We can now consider some reasons why this work is called an imagery novel. First, the protagonist is a painter and the goal of the story is the depiction of the heroine. Second, the description is in itself picturesque. I would like to introduce one paragraph as an example. That is the scene in which the painter sits down alone in the room, opening all the Fusuma- and Shoji-doors wide and contemplating in the stillness at dusk.

"And today all is quieter still. The master of the house, his daughter, and the male and female servants seem to have all departed and left me here alone—departed not to some ordinary place but to the land of mists perhaps, or to the realm of clouds. Or perhaps cloud and water have moved closer, so that their little boat drifts unawares upon a sea so calm that the hand is too languid to reach for the tiller, then floats off and away until the white sail seems to become one with water and cloud, until at last even the sail itself must scarcely know how it might differ from them—perhaps it is to this distant realm that they have all departed. . . . Or they become skylarks, singing all day the delights of the mustard blossom's gold, and now, as the light fades, soaring to where the evening's deep violet trails its hues. Or perhaps as gadflies they have lengthened the long day with their labors, failing at the last to sip from the last flower's center its sweet accumulated dew, and now they sleep a scented sleep, pillowed beneath some tumbled camellia blossom" (Sôseki, vol.3, pp.71-72).

For example, the description of a vast expanse of cloud and water from which the white sail cannot be distinguished is reminiscent of Joseph Mallord William Turner. The flow of the description which starts from the gold of the mustard blossom and reaches the red of the camellia blossom via the evening's deep violet can also be called picturesque. We can read descriptions of this kind almost everywhere in the novel.

Furthermore, *Kusamakura* gives a theory of art. After the quotation above, the painter develops his own opinion in regard to the picture, dividing it into three categories. The first is the realistic picture which represents external things objectively and the second is the subjective which depicts the outside things with the emotions of the artist. It is the third that the painter himself intends to create. He says that this kind of picture expresses the inside feeling independent of the influence of the outside world. He takes this category as the one that belongs to the art tradition of East Asia, mentioning Yosa Buson as an example<sup>8)</sup>. However, considering

that the painter mentions “an abstract conception” of it, or he associates this with music, it seems to me that his theory is similar to that of Wassily Kandinsky, who writes *Das Geistige in der Kunst* soon after *Kusamakura*, namely in 1912, and advances toward the picture without object (die ungegenständliche Malerei). I find it thought-provoking that the starting point for this Russian artist is in Munich as a center of the Jugendstil movement which is said to be one of the roots of his abstract painting.

Now, Kandinsky’s attempt to link the picture with music was for him an antithesis to the tradition of the theory of art which thought of music as a temporal art and painting as a spatial and non-temporal art. Sôseki had a similar intention. The painter in *Kusamakura* jumps to literature after proposing his picture theory and mentions Gotthold Ephraim Lessing who was viewed by the contemporary Japanese intellectuals as a representative of the orthodox theory of art in Europe. The painter says as follows: Lessing thought that the essence of literature was the temporal process contrary to the picture as a spatial art. According to his theory, it would be impossible to write a work of literature as what I imagine in the third picture, because only that which “contains no events that develop through time” should be depicted. Yet, another possibility about literature occurs to the painter, “If poetry is a suitable vehicle for expressing mood, that mood need not be portrayed through chronological events; as long as the simple spatial requirements of a picture are fulfilled, the language of the poem will be adequate to the expressive task” (Sôseki, vol.3, pp.71-72).

Here, Sôseki thought of an alternative form of the literature which doesn’t have the plot as its essence. He tried to exploit this very possibility just in *Kusamakura*. The idea of the novel without plot—— I think this is the most significant aspect of *Kusamakura* as an imagery novel. Sôseki says in a self-commentary *My Kusamakura* written after its publication that he wrote this novel intentionally to be entirely contrary in form to the normal concept of the novel. That is, he planned it as “what can leave only a kind of feeling—— an aesthetic feeling”, or “what has neither plot nor development of events” (Sôseki, vol. 25, p. 210). He also calls this type of novel Haiku-novel. Haiku is a very short traditional poetry which scarcely has a plot. Sôseki, a friend of Masaoka Shiki, was also a good Haiku-poet.

Sôseki’s opposition to the standard contemporary European literature represented by Lessing is also a result of his research on English literature. He was a lecturer of English literature at Tôkyô Imperial University before becoming a novelist in 1907. *Kusamakura* and *I am a Cat* were written when he was still a researcher. However, he had experienced a fundamental fluctuation in regard to the concept of literature since he started to study English and English literature. He had grown up in the traditional system of education, which allowed him to enjoy the Chinese classics. Yet, he could not appreciate the English literature even after having trained well in English, although he understood the language. As a result, he had a fundamental question, whether the concept of literature in Chinese classics is the same as that in the English literature. This question led him to the deeper doubt or skepticism about the universality of the

concept of literature which the contemporary European theory discussed and he began to quarrel with the simple but serious problem, “What is literature?” His fight with this fundamental problem leaves a great work *The Theory of Literature* (『文学論』), in which he thinks about the temporal character of literature emphasized by Lessing and says as follows: “The realm of literature which contains the time is indeed wider than that of the picture or the sculpture. However, it is to be said that the literature can have a common feature with the picture when we think of a transitory description or a lyric poetry etc. which reduces time” ((Sôseki, vol.14, p.225). He thinks of Haiku or Tanka (it is another kind of traditional short poem in Japan) as a discontinuous literature which breaks off the temporal process. He further says; A lot of people think that the long novel which continuously depicts the development of many events is more valuable than a fragmental literature like Haiku. Sôseki protests against this opinion. “The length of the time that the work contains cannot decide its value as literature” (Sôseki, vol.14, p.227). The fragmental literature which is similar to the picture is able to have its peculiar value. As an imagery or Haiku novel, *Kusamakura* was, for Sôseki, a concrete attempt at an alternative which was derived from the suspicion against the universality of the literature.

However, Sôseki’s attempt is not only involved in one genre of the art. So far as literature is one of the forms of human understanding, the fluctuation of its concept ought to do with the view of life or philosophy. The concept of literature which brought Sôseki to his fundamental question is historically constructed in modern Europe, and the temporal process as its essential element is necessarily connected with the idea of progress as the core of modernization. Sôseki’s alternative to that concept in *Kusamakura* is therefore to present a critically alternative life style to modernism. The famous oppositional scheme of this novel, “human feeling(人情)” versus “unhuman detachment(非人情)”, corresponds to this antagonism. The “human feeling” is the practical Ethos in the actual human world which develops itself in the temporal process, producing the distinctions between good and evil, or pleasure and pain and so on. The “unhuman detachment” means a standpoint of escaping from the actual world and observing this only as an aesthetic object. Sôseki opposes such an aestheticism to the modernization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to release “a mind exhausted by the world of steamships and trains, rights and duties, morals and manners”(Sôseki, vol.3 , p.10). *Kusamakura* as an imagery novel was a critique of the modernization and industrialization since the Restoration.

Of course, it is easy to say that such a criticism remains mere escapism which produces only an illusion of utopia. Sôseki was surely conscious of that, because *Kusamakura* as a whole isn’t the world of the “unhuman detachment” at all, but a story of the creation of this world. Moreover, it depicts the process of this creation within reality as the world of “human feeling”. The following quotation shows the relation between both worlds: “I’ve been mistaken to assume that in this little village in the spring, so like a dream or a poem, life is a matter only of the singing birds, the falling blossoms, and the bubbling springs. The real world has crossed

mountains and seas and is bearing down even on this isolated village” (Sôseki, vol.3, p.105). Sôseki’s consciousness of the illusive character of “unhuman detachment” is reflected in the structure of the novel and brings its initial intention into failure. That is to say, the plot invades the Haiku-novel especially after the entrance of Nami’s cousin as I mentioned above. In other words, the imagery world is always threatened by reality, and the novel as a whole depicts the tension between beauty and actuality. We must say the standpoint of writing *Kusamakura* has already deviated from the utopia.

It is by the introduction of the emotion A-ware, the last keyword of this novel, that Sôseki tried to overcome the gap or distance between “unhuman detachment” and “human feeling”. This emotion is depicted here as such that the aesthetic object Nami for the painter, who looks almost like an unmovable and even cold-hearted woman, pities her husband for his present needy situation. The aestheticism and the moral are united in the emotion. The A-ware has been discussed ever since Sôseki and caused many questions, being considered as what could destroy the fundamental scheme of *Kusamakura*. In my opinion, there cannot be something substantial which corresponds to the A-ware. This means that we can’t find a concrete and adequate answer even if we ask what the A-ware is. The translator of this novel into German, for example, identifies it with an emotion which was idealized in the ancient court literature in Japan and says, “it may be mysterious to the western readers today”(Sôseki(Langemann), S.213). It is, however, no exaggeration to say that this A-ware is mysterious and incomprehensible even for us Japanese today. I think we should understand it only as an indicator of the conflict between aestheticism and practice, a conflict which Sôseki had within himself.

This conflict also indicates Sôseki’s awareness of the limitation of his own literature in those days. It is well known that Sôseki criticized *Kusamakura* himself in a letter to one of his pupils. There he blamed the painter’s life style and said that he would rather like to write a novel with the passionate spirit that the royalists around the time of the Restoration had against the Tokugawa Shogunate(Sôseki, vol.22. p.605). The hero of his novel *Nowaki* (『野分』) written just after *Kusamakura* is reminiscent of this spirit. This spirit reminds. The protagonist of the former is a man of letters. His noble character leads him to criticize the immorality of the rich and powerful men that the rapid industrialization has produced, but he is therefore excluded from society by them as a crazy man<sup>9)</sup>.

*Kusamakura* is concluded with the A-ware, that is to say, with the consciousness of the impossibility of reconciling beauty with actuality. Sôseki however couldn’t continue to walk on the path which was taken in *Nowaki* and to struggle further with the immoral world that had developed under the modernization. This way was shut from him. Why did he meet a setback? I suppose it is because there remained a fundamental illusion in escaping into an imagery world as well as in criticizing and regulating the immoral world with a noble character. What is the illusion? It’s the illusion that the human being would be independent of the actual world around him so that he could either escape it or regulate it from a separated position. We can also say that

it is a groundless belief in the power of human beings, that could invent such an isolated position. In my opinion, this belief is not essentially different from the myth of the will to power which dominates the modernized world. Both movements against modernization are secretly related to the actual world as the object to be avoided or controlled.

However, just after *Nowaki*, Sôseki becomes aware of the vulnerability of his criticisms of modernity from afar. The aesthetic attraction is a transitory fantasy which can easily turn to disillusionment, and what looks like a fine character is likely to change instantly into evil in various human relations. They are both insubstantial. For example, the fragility of beauty was depicted later in *Sorekara* (『それから』), and the essential identity of noble character and egoism was disclosed in *Kokoro*.

Nevertheless, I don't think that Sôseki's way of thinking ended up with a mere acceptance of the modernized world as the only actuality. In his second last and autobiographical work *Grass on the Wayside*, he describes the world in which he himself lives with an impressive adjective *kata-zuka-na-i*, which means, "unable to be put in order". He means by it that the process of events which trouble him cannot be brought to an end. Modernization as the development of technology looks like a movement which puts everything in order——puts in order for human kind, making everything into something useful for human being. Thinking about this characteristic of modernization, Sôseki's word "kata-zuka-na-i" could sound strange, but it seems that the word is adequate to express the essence of the actual world today. We can behave incomparably freely in the present world which is structured to let all things emerge as convenient for us, but such a freedom indicates aimlessness and is linked to an anxiety that we might be already involved in an endless process<sup>10</sup>). I suppose such a situation is nothing other than the necessary result of modern technology.

Technology intends to make everything into something useful, namely a means. A means must have its purpose. The thing A is a means for another thing B as A's purpose, but B must also be a means for the third C, and C must be a means for D and so on. Such a connection between means and purpose continues infinitely so far as the technology wants to utilize everything. Then, we can find no purpose in the modernized world in which everything is only a means. However, so long as there can be no purpose, the concept of utility has already hollowed out, because the utility or the means without purpose would be absolutely inconsistent. The fundamental movement of technology and modernization, namely to utilize everything in the world, makes the concept of utility itself meaningless——I once called such a paradoxical but necessary result of the technology "the eclipse of the utility" in my first book *Yanagi Muneyoshi Te-toshite-no-Ningen*. I think the word "kata-zuka-na-i" indicates the darkness of this "eclipse".

"The eclipse of the utility" robs the human being of its purpose and meaning. I think, however, it is in such an absence of the Telos that we can start to consider the fate of the human kind in the technological age. It is impossible to actually release us from the space structured for utility and sustained by money and power. This is the only world for us to live in. Yet, I would

like to say as follows: the modernized world is essentially fictional, although it usually looks real, because utilization is in itself nothing but an artifice which intends to conceal that absence of the Telos. The word “kata-zuka-na-i” reveals this darkness behind our utilized “reality”. If we truly experience what this impressive word by Sôseki suggests, we have already taken one step out from the realm of modernization. In other words, the eclipse has begun to exhaust our desire which is caused and increased by industrialization day by day because it has deprived the meaning of utility as the essence of production. As a result, we can live and meet together in a different way from that of modernism in the “eclipse” as an essential space without modern structure.—I think it is such a thought about an alternative life style in the technological age that Sôseki also reached in his latest years.

*Kusamakura* as an imagery novel was an experimental work which tried to produce an aesthetic world as a refuge, but inevitably remained a failure as far as the plot invaded its picturesque but imaginary world. However, we can say that this novel also includes signs of Sôseki’s later progression, if we consider the plot to be a kind of structure. That is to say, Sôseki in *Kusamakura* imagined the unstructured world as a utopia transcending and separated from reality, but in his later years he found such a world as the primitive and essential space for human being within or at bottom of the modernized society. If so, it might be possible to say that Sôseki walked on one and the same path to that world. What is this world in itself? It still attracts me as a philosophical question<sup>11)</sup>.

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註

<sup>1)</sup> The quotation follows the translation by Damian Flanagan( pp.149-151).

<sup>2)</sup> This text was originally presented as a talk at the University of Edinburgh. I would like to give a special thanks to Prof. Richard I Thomson and Dr. Chia-Ling Yang for my invitation to speak there.

<sup>3)</sup> We can find a similar kind of memory in *Grass on the wayside*, his autobiographical novel in his later years.

<sup>4)</sup> Sôseki's admiration to a particular young Japanese painter shows the same tendency. He wrote in a letter to Seifû, “I saw a picture of Mr. Aoki after a long time. I find him genius” (Sôseki, vol.24, p.15). The contemporary painter Aoki Shigeru burst into prominence at the end of the Meiji era with his representative work *Fruits of the sea* and then after a few years his life ended up in misery. Sôseki takes up another famous picture of Aoki in his novel *And Then*, too. It is said that this work titled *Wadatsumi-no-Iroko-no-Miya*, whose motive derives initially from ancient Japanese myth, was drawn on the model of a Pre-Raphaelite Burn Jones.

<sup>5)</sup> Cf. Itô 2008 and 2012.

<sup>6)</sup> Of course, Sôseki understood the social meaning of the hair style and wrote his novels on the premise of it. For example, see *The Spring Equinox and Beyond* (『彼岸過迄』).

<sup>7)</sup> All the quotations from *Kusamakura* follow the translation by Meredith Mckinney.

<sup>8)</sup> The painter says here, “As for Western artists, their eyes are mostly fixed on the external phenomenal world,...so I have no idea how many may have been able to impart some spiritual resonance to their depiction of an object” (Sôseki, vol.3, pp.76-77).

<sup>9)</sup> The possibility of such a humanistic style of literature was not found after *Kusamakura* for the first time. We can notice it in this novel too, which mentions in addition to the art of “unhuman detachment” a possibility of the art, “that cannot but repel evil and cleave to the good, shrink from the warped and align itself with the straight, aid the weak and crush the strong”(p.128). Sôseki thought theoretically at that time that the aesthetic and the moral literature were equal in artistic value and only history could decide which of them was dominant.

<sup>10)</sup> This is the feeling of spending time in the modern world, which is expressed also in *Kusamakura* by the symbol of the steam locomotion; it carries away human being to somewhere no one knows, who loses his mind in the freedom without order.

<sup>11)</sup> About the experimental character of *Kusamakura* numerous papers have been written, among which I quote here Shimizu Takayoshi's as one of the most related to mine. I treat also the concept “novel without plot”, however paying attention especially to the critical intention against the modernization which this concept of Sôseki includes. I expect to find the other possible experience of time than what the plot of the modernized literature has in itself as a temporal phenomenon. The phrase below “the unstructured world as the primitive and essential space for the

human being” indicates such an experience that is, in my opinion, different from Shimizu’s “eternal time”, namely the sequence of destiny. I will deal with the problem of time in another paper of mine about *Kusamakura*, which will be published as a contribution to the anthology *Philosophie in Japan*(edited by Prof. Dr. Hans Peter Liederbach) in Munich.

#### 夏目漱石——『草枕』・絵画小説という試み

夏目漱石の思想史的精神史的研究の一端をなす本論は、美術に対する漱石の関心の痕跡を辿ることから出発し、とくにロンドンからの帰国後数年間に彼自身によって描かれた絵葉書に着目する。洗い髪スタイルをもってそこに現われる裸体の女性的形象は、ラファエロ前派などへの彼の関心とつながるとともに、その関心自身の由来として、漱石自身も帰属していた伝統的な生の地盤の崩落を示唆している。近代化がもたらした、こうした崩落への応答は、漱石の文学活動の根本的モチーフをなすが、本論は後半において、そうした応答の一つの試みとして『草枕』を取り上げる。「絵画的小説」もしくは「俳句小説」と呼ばれたこの小説は、「プロットなき小説」という理念の下でなされた近代化への一つの対抗であり、その基本概念「非人情」は、この対抗の拠点となるはずだったが、美的世界構築は、結局のところ虚構的世界への逃避に留まり、『草枕』自体においてもプロットの不可避的出現によって浸食されて破綻に終わった。その後漱石は、美的世界と並ぶ、もう一つ別な神話である人道主義的な地点からの近代批判の試みを経た上で、近代化のただなかに留まり、あらゆるものが有用化されていく世界の根底に潜む構造化されざるリアリティーに接近していく。本論は、晩年の作品『道草』のキーワード「片付かない」を通して、そうした可能性を示唆することによって結ばれる。

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