

Illuminating the Language of Identity: Nationalism and Interiority in Natsume Sōseki's Kokoro

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Abstract

Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro* (心) is one of the most influential pieces of Japanese literature from the 20th century. Framed by the end of the Meiji era and the beginning of the Taisho era, this canonized work has often been analyzed for its themes produced by a tumultuous, reforming Japanese society. Building off this scholarship, I utilize Anderson's and Hobsbawm's approaches to nationalism and invented tradition to inform my own analysis of national affectation on the individual at the turn of the century. Although the topic of nationalism in Meiji Japan is a common theme in scholarship, this paper examines it with the use of linguistic analysis predicated on national language policy of the late 19th century. The government's treatment of language is one disseminated form of nationalist sentiment that is invaluable to highlight in the cultural works of the time. The emergence of the I-novel (*watakushi shōsetsu* or *shishōsetsu*)—a genre consisting of confessional, realist works written in the first-person narrative style—during this period is evidence of linguistic style being used to build upon the discourse of identity. *Kokoro* is unique due to its liminal status as such, as Sōseki utilizes similar aspects to those inherent in the genre. The dichotomous nature of his techniques of obfuscation and revelation reveal a subtextual layer present in the novel's themes of identity. Furthermore, his inclusion of pivotal, historical events as a backdrop for the daily lives and interactions of his fictitious characters conflates national affairs with that of the individual. Building upon this scholarship of Meiji nationalism and identity, this paper begins with a historical background on the standardization and nationalization of the Japanese language, the *genbun itchi* movement, the nature of native Japanese literature, and the effect of foreign, translated literature at the time. Utilizing this context, I discuss the *shishōsetsu* genre in relation to *Kokoro*, detailing how it flouts and follows its conventions. Furthermore, due to the concurrent emergence of this literary genre with the formation of the Japanese nation-state, I utilize scholarship on the era to contextualize the *mise-en-scène* of the novel. Through this, I discuss the dichotomy between individual and national identity, as

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presented by Sōseki. By highlighting the structure in my analysis of *Kokoro*’s nationalistic themes, I exemplify the importance of analyzing the literal language used to inform the reader’s understanding of its complicated characters.

Keywords

Nationalism, national identity, Meiji, linguistics, sociolinguistics, Natsume Soseki, I-novel, *kokugo*, interiority

1 Introduction

Meiji-era Japan (1868–1912) was a time rife with transformations. On a macro level, this period enacted change for a plethora of nations. Japan, a relatively secluded island, keenly felt the need to question their position in the world’s expansion and interaction. One reaction of the government was to send out students and scholars to other countries—most notably several in Europe—to glean practices and methods of thought to assess their merit. If found worthy, Japan would adopt them. As one of these students, the soon-to-be renowned author Natsume Sōseki was undoubtedly affected by the discourses of national identity and what “modernization” meant. These discourses naturally bled into his own writings. *Kokoro* (こころ), originally published serially in a newspaper from May to August of 1914, would become one of Sōseki’s most popular works.

Told in the first-person, *Kokoro*—a word often translated to heart or mind—details the friendship between a young student and his aloof senior with a mysterious past. The first two sections contain the student’s recollection of their daily interactions during his university days, while the third section consists of the senior’s final letter to the student before his suicide. Despite the novel’s production occurring after the end of the Meiji era, its conflict of “tradition” versus “modernity” and the diegetic events reference the real-world suicide of a national figure index and ground the story in the people’s subsisting anxieties. Although many have discussed the nationalism of this period in cultural productions including *Kokoro*, rarely has this been informed by a linguistic analysis. The importance of these epistemological concerns is evidenced by the nation’s linguistic politics of the time, including movements such as *kokugo*, the standardization of national language, and *genbun itchi*, the unification of literary language to that of the vernacular. Furthermore, the increase of literature in first-person point of view informed this discussion of subjectivity. *Shishōsetsu*, specifically, deals with confessional narratives steeped in realism. While *Kokoro* is not canonized as such, research done in the genre assists my analysis of Sōseki’s novel.

The push for nationalization in the Meiji era disseminated through various mechanisms, one of which was the idea of *kokugo*—literally “national language”—pioneered by Japanese linguists and scholars. The proposition would erase linguistic

variation and enforce one standard form to present a united front in a global context. They claimed it would guarantee an educated general populace capable of collective reasoning. This change, like many of this era, is often cited to be a period of “modernization,” which is used in tandem with “Westernization.” This conflation of terms assumes a Eurocentric causation and erases Japan’s autonomy and cultural footprint as a society. In order to side-step this ill-informed connotation, Martin Triche—while still acknowledging the ways in which Japan attempted to emulate Euro-American conventions—calls attention to a broader, epistemological fashion of “nation-state” that was gaining traction across many countries at the time.² In his article, historian Hikaru Shimoda mentions that those who spoke the Tokyo variety perceived other dialects as completely incoherent, with certain figures claiming they could understand an English speaker better than another Japanese speaker of a different dialect.³ This dire anecdote pointed towards the diverse state of Japan’s set of dialects and grew to be a pressing anxiety for those with nationalist interests. However, the idea that Japan was the only country to lack a national language was a mere illusion.⁴ At the time, most countries did not have one national language uniformly used across the populace. Implementations of

such grew more prevalent as the idea of nation-states gained traction.

The development of Japan’s ideology of nationhood should not simply be accredited to “modernization” or “Westernization.” Instead, it would be more accurate to think of it in terms of “globalization” as technology and capital interest began to advance through industrialization across the world. *Kokugo* ultimately gave rise to a consciousness of one collective “nation” that was “Japan” in the eyes of the public. Erecting a social construct of a nation was more easily accomplished with the standardization of speech and written form, as, once education and policy began to be uniform, the resolution of national identity was realized.⁵

This push for a standardized form of spoken language was heavily dependent on a standardized form of writing for tangible uniformity. Japan was a unique case. Leading up to this point, the written form was mainly comprised of archaic Japanese and Chinese characters (*kanji*) and the *kana* system which was derived from *kanji* to transcribe the Japanese phonetic alphabet. While literature written in this form had once intimated a highbrow level of scholarly knowledge, in the interest of nationalism it was disregarded in the *genbun itchi* movement, where written form was made to resemble the colloquial speech. Academics initially resisted the idea,

² Martin Y. Triche “Kokugo and the ‘Nation’ in Meiji-Era Japan: Language Standardization, Ideology, and National Identity.” (Master’s thesis, USC, 2013), 13–14, ProQuest (1152294191).

³ Hiraku Shimoda. “Tongues-Tied: The Making of a ‘National Language’ and the Discovery of Dialects in Meiji Japan.” *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 3 (2010), 722.

⁴ Shimoda, 729.

⁵ Triche notes how, at the time, language standardization was not necessarily the main drive on the nationalist agenda, yet it has retroactively been recognized as a pivotal role in the perception of a unified “nation,” 29–30.

invoking the importance of a vestige of traditional practices. Opposing propositions grew to be as extreme as abandoning the *kana* writing systems altogether and adopting the Roman alphabet;⁶ however, a compromise was eventually established. The question of which vernacular dialect to conform the written form plagued theorists until, finally, the Tokyo variety was elected due to the city's status as the capital.

While the effect of the *genbun itchi* movement continued to spread, what constituted a “modern” novel came into question. At the time, literature was perceived differently in Japan than in Europe. Historically, fiction was regarded as entertainment for the lower class, crude and uncultivated, while non-fiction was what constituted “literature,” esteemed due to its accurate portrayal of reality. An essay was considered to be a part of the canon of literature just as much as a short story created from pure imagination.⁷ This is not to say genres of fiction literature did not abound, merely, that intellectuals regarded them as trivial. As the era and cultural perception shifted, the dominant attitude was challenged with claims that literature need not be “real” to be taken seriously. A completely fabricated narrative could be just as highly regarded as a real account. By allowing fiction into the circles of revered literature, scholars began to chip away at the prevailing bias against it. On

the other hand, seeing the deconstruction of what was considered “pure” literature, some critics were as committed as ever to exclude fiction from literature, which materialized in different forms.

One such form was the development of the *shishōsetsu* (translated as I-novel).⁸ *Shishōsetsu* is one genre of Japanese literature that is difficult to describe. Its devotion to lived experience—predominantly the author's own experience—utilizes a literary focus of an exact depiction of reality. While it is usually characterized with first-person narration, Edward Fowler points out that as long as the story reflects the author's life authentically, *shishōsetsu* could implement other perspectives like third person.⁹ The genre's predilection for a faithful portrayal of reality creates an elusive nature in what exactly constitutes the contents of a *shishōsetsu* piece. Since the very nature of the narrative must be dependent on the individual, there is a tendency to consider the *shishōsetsu* as unconstrained and ineffable. In the introduction of his book, Fowler rectifies this paradox by highlighting its draw to the public. He points out that its “whole *raison d'être* rests on the powerful illusion of its textual transparency—its sincerity—which lets the reader view the author's experience ‘unmediated’ by forms, shapes, structures, or other ‘trappings’ of fiction,” and invites the

⁶ For an in-depth discussion of these proposals, see Lee Yeounsuk, “Perspectives on Kokuji, the National Script.” in *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*. (University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 23–29.

⁷ Edward Fowler. *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishōsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction*. (University of California Press, 1988), 4.

⁸ Fowler, whom my discussion of the I-novel is heavily indebted to, discusses how the reading of the first kanji in *shishōsetsu* (私小説) is sometimes read as *watakushi*, a formal way to say “I” in Japanese. In *Kokoro*, the furigana for this reading of the pronoun is provided as such. However, because Fowler consistently refers to the genre as *shishōsetsu*, I have done so as well.

⁹ Fowler, 4.

reader to be a voyeur.¹⁰ This voyeuristic quality is enforced by one distinctive similarity across multiple *shishōsetsu* accounts: confession. In detailing his lived experience, the author is unveiling his interiority—or, the inner world of his psyche, good and bad. There is an implicit understanding that the reader is experiencing an autobiographical account which has been faithfully represented.

Additionally, the literary theme of “individualism” was established differently between traditional European and Japanese literature. While the former has trended towards an individualism that measures oneself against society, Japanese literary individualism has a distinctly Buddhist core. The examination of the self is not to discover uniqueness, but to reestablish the inherent natural world lying dormant within. Once the individual uncovers this version of the self, they can disregard social constraints and “withdraw” into themselves.¹¹ This assertion of individualism predates the development of the *shishōsetsu*.

Returning to the factor of globalization, Japan’s burgeoning cultural exchange with Europe and the United States demanded an increase in translation—specifically, of literary works. Translators in the beginning of the Meiji era were more concerned with translating the information into the classical *kanbun* (literally, “Chinese writing”) style they had used for centuries, still upholding the established order of literary language. However, with the increasing precedence of

language standardization, translators began to experiment with new forms and syntactic structures, adapting European writing techniques and “not hesitat[ing] to violate the rules of Japanese writing,”¹² as Mino Saito, a professor of foreign studies, puts it. To that effect, not only did they utilize foreign linguistic style for accurate adaptation, but they also began to implement it into their own works, transforming the language in original literature produced in Japan. Saito maintains the import of the syntactic influence of the European (mainly English) style upon Japanese. The dissipation of the established *kanbun* style opened a vacuum for foreign writing techniques to fill. These new forms, adopted and assimilated by prolific authors, became pivotal in establishing what “modern” literature was.

Published immediately after the close of the Meiji era, *Kokoro* was placed in this ever-growing canon of modern Japanese literature. By discussing the linguistic conventions Sōseki utilizes in *Kokoro*, I will explore the novel’s portrayal of the nation’s effect on the interiority of the characters living in a transforming society. This paper will begin by discussing *Kokoro* in relation to the conventions of the *shishōsetsu* genre by highlighting Sōseki’s manipulation of confession, an uncovering of the interior psyche, versus obfuscation, an intentional concealment of this inner psyche. The latter is a term I use throughout this paper as an antonym to the former. Sōseki utilizes both on a broad scale regarding the genre of literature

¹⁰ Fowler, 26–27.

¹¹ Fowler, 15.

¹² Mino Saito. “The Power of Translated Literature in Japan: The Introduction of New Expressions through Translation in the Meiji Era (1868–1912).” *Perspectives* 24, no. 3 (2016), 419.

and on a smaller scale within the nomenclature of his characters. Furthermore, by focusing on the names of the characters—or absence thereof—I will examine Sōseki's tactics in language use to perform a fresh dissection of the novel's ideas of individuality. Finally, this discussion of individuality will be expanded and contrasted with national identity, emphasizing the ties *Kokoro's* fictional characters have to real national figures. With this analysis, I hope to illuminate the importance of investigating not only what we say, but how we say it, and how the linguistic tactics, subconscious or not, are inextricably tied to our thoughts, fears, and desires.

2 Structural Paradox of Genre

Before utilizing specific, linguistic implements to inform this discourse of individual versus national identity, I must emphasize one metatextual paradox: that of *Kokoro's* placement in genre. While critically considered outside the realm of *shishōsetsu* due to certain explicit divergences, I find some similarities which Sōseki—whether intentionally or not—implements in his construction of this novel. Due to the contemporaneous emergence of *shishōsetsu's* development with the burgeoning Japanese nation-state and Sōseki's own literary career, I wish to bring the three into a dialogue with each other. In doing so, I will highlight the paradoxes of obfuscation and confession inherent in this narrative within the context of modern literature.

On the one hand, there are valid reasons for *Kokoro* to remain outside of the

shishōsetsu genre. Most glaringly, the demand for authorial historicity is something *Kokoro* cannot deliver. In fact, Sōseki, while playing with the style of a first-person narrative in much of his works, does not try to claim autobiographical integrity. Asian Studies professor James Fujii discusses how *Kokoro* is a direct refutation of *shishōsetsu* by “centering death,” in addition to its focus on a representation of reality as opposed to true, experienced history on the individual level.¹³ He points out how the narrative style situates the character of the student as an intermediary, reporting to the reader on his relationship with Sensei up to his supplementation of Sensei's own formalized testimony, after which the student's narrative voice disappears altogether. According to Fujii, this style of intermediation carries a difference from the *shishōsetsu* style: the former is concerned with storytelling and the latter with truth.¹⁴ Additionally, Sensei cannot be mistaken for Sōseki's self-insert as the character meets his death by suicide, and Sōseki did not commit suicide. This negates the student, a storyteller, and Sensei, a character whose death is used as a plot-point in the storyteller's narrative, as Sōseki's literary reflection in the confines of a *shishōsetsu* narrative. Furthermore, to instill mystery—a dramatic implementation which would hardly be favorable in *shishōsetsu*—Sōseki both conveys explicit foreshadowing to the readers and elides information to grab ahold of the readers' attention.

Foreshadowing is a literary device Sōseki implements quite frequently throughout the story in small doses. In the beginning of the novel, the student tells the reader matter-of-

¹³ James A. Fujii, “Writing Out Asia: Modernity, Canon, and Natsume Soseki's *Kokoro*.” *Positions: Asia Critique* 1, no. 1 (1993b), 217.

¹⁴ Fujii, 1993b, 217.

factly that “Sensei is dead[...].”¹⁵ Throughout this first section of the book, he discloses sentiments similar to these, implying Sensei’s unfortunate demise in the near future and hinting at the letter that comprises the last section of the book. Additionally, there is a moment where he refers to an impending “sense of doom” when Sensei tells him he will eventually disclose the secrets of his past at “the proper time.”¹⁶ At this point, the reader already knows Sensei is dead, yet Sōseki continues to trickle these anecdotes of foresight frugally. This is a dramatic device that an official piece of *shishōsetsu* would not take part in. If one is concerned with a realist text of a similar form to a diary, the teasing of future events is an impossibility. Foreshadowing is an overt way to keep readers engaged, ensuring they return to receive the whole picture that is promised in sporadic glimpses. This is one such reason *Kokoro* is not part of the *shishōsetsu* canon.

Obfuscation is another dramatic device providing an air of mystery, yet from the opposite angle. Sōseki is careful to obscure the reason for Sensei’s disillusionment with the world until the final act, once again a telltale sign of a fictional narrative. The student and the reader are drawn to him due to this mysterious lack of context. The student tells the reader, “[...] Sensei still remained for me a figure half-hidden in the shadows. I could not be content until he was fully revealed to me. I could not bear the thought of being parted from him before then.”¹⁷ Sensei, in his view, is objectified as a puzzle to be solved. He honestly enjoys Sensei’s friendship and company, yet much of his

interest is—at least initially—driven by the latter’s enigmatic nature. This is one of the core tensions of the plot. Sensei keeps the affairs of his past to himself, and only when lecturing the student about the affairs of inheritance does he disclose the experience of his uncle’s betrayal. Sensei, while holding regret for his foolishness at the time, does not feel particularly guilty; he is comfortable sharing this instance of his past. However, he keeps secret all matters related to his relationship with his wife and his friend K, which he feels a moral responsibility for. The reader is mapped onto the student as Sōseki builds an aura of mystery around Sensei. However, due to the reportative framework of the student transcribing his past interactions, the reader is reliant on him. We are forced to trust his willingness to divulge the information we desire to know. The use of foreshadowing balanced with the persistent use of sidestepping allows Sōseki to utilize mystery to draw in his audience in a distinctly fictional manner, which the scholars obsessed with “pure,” realistic literature would have disavowed.

On the other hand, I argue *Kokoro* does carry echoes of this *shishōsetsu* genre, despite these dissimilarities. It utilizes elements of confession and interiority which, while not exclusive to the genre, is applied in a similar fashion.

While half of the novel is composed of a diary-like account, the remaining half that is Sensei’s letter is the ultimate confession. It exposes the role he played in his friend’s suicide, which no one else was aware of; up until his decision to write about it, it had been

¹⁵ Natsume Sōseki, *Kokoro*, Edwin McClellan (Regnery Publishing, 1957), 8.

¹⁶ Sōseki, 1957, 68.

¹⁷ Sōseki, 1957, 99–100.

a secret guilt pricking his conscience. His final act before resolving to commit suicide is to confide in one of his only friends, resulting in the letter, which was intended for the student alone. Sensei ends it with the charge to hide its contents from his wife, not wanting the shadow of his past to tarnish her purity.

By including the letter in the product of *Kokoro*, the student is exposing his breach of Sensei's trust. The reader does not know what happens from the moment the student receives the letter up to his decision to record his younger days. As Doris Bargen, a professor of Japanese studies, discusses, this could be interpreted as a sign of Sensei's wife's death, which releases the student from secrecy, but this is not assured.¹⁸ Therefore, we must operate with the facts we have: Sensei entrusted his confession to his friend alone, yet his letter is later published alongside the student's memoir. Both confessions, explicit and derived, are reported as their lived experiences. While their nature does not implicate Sōseki as a *shishōsetsu* narrative would, they drive the plot so significantly that I find a degree of parallelism.

Furthermore, there is a two-fold interiority the novel possesses, revealing the student's and Sensei's inner desires and fears. Despite their fictionality, Sōseki places them in the potent historical context of Emperor Meiji's death, narrativizing for the reader the effects such events could have on an individual. Philosopher and literary critic Kojin Karatani links the rippling effects of the *genbun itchi*

movement to this "discovery" of interiority—i.e., what lies within. To Karatani, by standardizing language to the vernacular a commoner speaks, *genbun itchi* creates a paradoxical perception that a hidden meaning lies underneath. Flowery prose and metaphor are abandoned for everyday speech to represent a "real" psychology. Furthermore, he assimilates the *kabuki* actor Ichikawa Danjūrō's technique of forgoing face paint for his naked face to the effect of language colloquialization in *genbun itchi*. By creating a system of "ordinary" writing and designating it as a symbol of realism, there was the self-prescribed need to "search for meaning 'behind' the actor's ordinary face and gestures."¹⁹ Here, the "ordinary face and gestures" of the actor equals the newly standardized language on the page, now resembling everyday speech. An author relying on a contemporary vision of realism could not use the archaic *kanbun*, used only by the higher classes, to connect to a widespread, "ordinary" audience. The desire for "ordinary" and "real" in fictional representation begot the need to analyze what was within, i.e., the interior of what was being depicted.

One such instance of this search for a hidden meaning in *Kokoro* is when the student contemplates Sensei's voluntary exclusion from society:

"I wondered also why Sensei felt the way he did towards mankind. Was it, I would ask myself, the result of a

¹⁸ For a full discussion of the possible interpretations of how Sōseki ends the novel, see Doris G. Bargen, "Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro*: Living as Though Dead." in *Suicidal Honor: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ogai and Natsume Soseki*. (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 185–186.

¹⁹ Kojin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Duke University Press Books, 1993), 57.

coldly impartial scrutiny of his own inner self and the contemporary world around him? And if one were as naturally reflective, intelligent, and as removed from the world as Sensei, would one inevitably reach the same conclusions? Such tentative explanations, however, which suggested themselves to my mind, did not completely satisfy me. Sensei's opinions, it seemed to me, were not merely the result of cloistered reflection. They were not, as it were, like the skeleton of a stone house which has been gutted by fire. They were more alive than that. True, Sensei, as I saw him, was primarily a thinker. But his thoughts, I felt, were based firmly on a strong sense of reality. And this sense of reality did not come so much from observation of the experience of others removed from himself, as from his own experience."²⁰

He not only situates Sensei in opposition to the world but also makes a point to specify Sensei's "inner self," i.e., his interiority, as that which is at odds with the exterior. Sensei, an intellectual character, is incompatible with his surroundings as they are now. This informs the discourse of interiority in the face of nationalism and how an individual reconciles the differences between his own identity with the identity that is rapidly being placed over him by his nation. At first, the student wonders if this conflict has only been magnified the longer Sensei has been withdrawn from the world, though he quickly

finds this conclusion lacking. At the time of this musing, the student does not find the answer, though he suspects it has something to do with an experience in Sensei's life. It must also be noted that the student is careful to warn that these observations are only subjective. By including interjections like "as I saw" and "I feel," he is reminding us that we are viewing Sensei through his own inner world. With no other resources to inform us of the character of this man objectively, we are forced to trust this subjective account.

These elements resembling that of a *shishōsetsu* narrative are important to highlight due to the genre's formation being concurrent with the formation of Japan as a nation—the effects of which are thematically prevalent in *Kokoro*. These parallel formations are part of the environment influencing—whether subconscious or not—Sōseki's linguistic choices. I will dissect this tension of nationalism versus individual identity in the remainder of this paper.

3 Nomenclature: Power of a Name

Sōseki employs a specific pattern of namelessness for *Kokoro*'s cast of characters. With the conspicuous absence of names for his main cast specifically, Sōseki's convention of nomenclature almost makes it difficult to talk about the characters collectively. Nearly none of the characters are bestowed an individual name, instead utilizing titles or relational ties to identify them. The lack of names highlights a distinct subtextual layer of identity discourse in the

²⁰ Sōseki, 1957, 31.

novel. From the namelessness of the student, Sensei, and K, to the multiplicity of names Sensei's wife inhabits, Sōseki's nominal representation of *Kokoro's* agents augments this obfuscatory element persistent in his diegesis.

When referring to the narrator of the first two sections of the book, titled "Sensei and I" and "My Parents and I," there are various options to pick from, yet none seem quite right. Simply using the term "narrator" does not work, as nearly half of the novel is narrated by Sensei through his letter. The next available option is using the title "protagonist," which intimates a primacy of this character over Sensei.²¹ While one could argue that this figure fits that role of "main character," doing so presupposes Sōseki's intentions, and for a novel that seems so intent on utilizing enigma, it would be disingenuous to make such an assumption.

The book begins with the student as the narrator, yet the first passage is him discussing Sensei. Much of *Kokoro's* plot is focused on the dynamic between these two characters, and although there is a section in which Sensei is physically absent, this narrating character consistently invokes Sensei's presence by comparison or mere recollection. Even when he is not the focus, his presence haunts the musings of the student, who continuously compares his father to Sensei and finds the former less impressive. This undeniably speaks to Sensei's protagonism. Therefore, inspired by Fujii's example in his own article examining

this novel where he refers to the character as "the Student,"²² I shall take it one step further and use "Gakusei"²³ from here on to reflect the use of "Sensei."²⁴ This fits into Sōseki's style of notating a character's occupation and place in society, as he does with Sensei.

Sensei does not have the chance to "make a name for himself" in the literal sense. We are introduced to him immediately but through Gakusei's perspective. Thus, his depiction is inherently tied to his social relation to another person, which is enhanced with the utilization of the title "Sensei." Due to the conventions of a first-person narrative style, we are granted a window into the subjective mind of one individual, yet still Sōseki elides much information. At the onset of the novel, Gakusei introduces Sensei in what follows:

I always called him "Sensei". I shall therefore refer to him simply as "Sensei," and not by his real name. It is not because I consider it more discreet, but it is because I find it more natural that I do so. Whenever the memory of him comes back to me now, I find that I think of him as "Sensei" still. And with pen in hand, I cannot bring myself to write of him in any other way.²⁵

This immediately situates the relationship between the two main characters. Both are eventually given the opportunity to convey their inner thoughts to the reader through the first-person point-of-view, but the student is given precedence in the role of narrator. This first paragraph dictates the hierarchy innate in their relationship. The term "sensei" is

²¹ In fact, Bargen notates *Sensei* as the protagonist in her chapter discussing *Kokoro*. See Bargen, 160.

²² For a full discussion of these characters, see Fujii, 1993b, 194–223.

²³ *Gakusei* (学生) literally means "student."

²⁴ In the English version of the novel, McClellan does not translate this title, noting how English does not have an appropriate equivalent—the closest being "teacher."

²⁵ Sōseki, 1957, 1.

usually translated into “teacher” in English; however, Edwin McClellan, the translator, notes how the nuances of the Japanese word would be lost if it were to be changed as such. Sensei, the character, is not Gakusei’s teacher, but he is in a position of seniority over him, and Gakusei, although addressing the slight oddness of the predicament, finds himself naturally calling him thus.

Furthermore, the first sentence, given to us by Gakusei, immediately places Sensei as a paramount figure in the story. The introduction intimates the reader’s supposed prior knowledge of a figure which holds prevalence with the use of the third-person pronoun “him”;²⁶ however, this is, of course, the first time the reader hears of him. Additionally, no name is given. In fact, Sensei’s name is never revealed, nor is Gakusei’s. While the book’s use of first-person necessitates some lack of labeling, there is a persistent anonymity in relation to the entire main cast. This anonymity seems counterintuitive to a novel resemblant of the *shishōsetsu* with its usual focus on the subject’s—and oftentimes the author’s—confessions; thus, this is one such way Sōseki paradoxically plays with interiority and obfuscation. Gakusei overtly addresses his lack of intent to conceal Sensei’s identity, yet there seems to be an inability to address him directly. This hides Sensei’s character behind the moniker. It is a mere title, yet so pervasive that Gakusei only thinks of his friend in terms of this nickname, like an unconscious muscle.

This introductory paragraph is from Gakusei’s perspective, although the reader is immediately given more information about

Sensei than about him. At this point, we do not know the present narrator’s gender, age, or occupation, nor the setting. Of course these are shortly revealed to the reader, yet there is undeniable subtextual import in the primacy of Sensei’s debut along with Gakusei’s establishment of his inextricable form of address.

Throughout the entire novel, Sōseki plays with the dichotomy of revelation—as in his foreshadowing of Sensei’s death well before the reader becomes familiar with him—and restriction—such as the blocking of anything related to Sensei’s past until his volitional act to write Gakusei his letter. I parallel this thematic implementation to the architectural construction of the cast’s names, tying the importance of language in identity formation both individually and societally. This introduction is vital in its swift setup of the characters whose thoughts the reader will be directly privy to yet granted no promise of fully knowing.

Moreover, the figures of Sensei and Gakusei are uniquely positioned in relation to each other. The former’s title would intimate Sensei is a professor of some sort, yet we are later informed that he does not work. Gakusei is the one to decide on the name in a spur-of-the-moment interaction when he answers Sensei’s question and, out of embarrassment, retaliates with the same question. In the original novel, Gakusei asks “*Sensei wa?*”²⁷ which is written in the English translation as: “And you, Sensei?”²⁸ and this is the impetus for Sensei’s name.

There are various ways to address someone with the second-person pronoun in

²⁶ In the Japanese version, Sōseki uses “*sono hito*” or “that person,” 7.

²⁷ Sōseki, *Kokoro*, (Shinchōsha, 1984), 14.

²⁸ Sōseki, 1957, 6.

Japanese, with *anata* being the standard form. Linguist Yoko Yonezawa illuminates the historical origin of *anata*, stating that it “originated as a directional demonstrative to refer to a direction ‘that way, over there.’”²⁹ It was used as a substitute for a name or pronoun due to the taboo of directly addressing a superior. Due to repeated use in this fashion, the word’s meaning shifted to indicate a second-person pronoun. This shift triggered a loss of the respect it initially connoted. Yonezawa invokes a term in the field of Japanese linguistics known as *keii zengen no hoosoku*, or “theory of depreciation of politeness,” which she describes as “the loss of humble or respectful meanings that occurs over a period of time.”³⁰ With the repeated use of a euphemism, it begins to lose its polite connotation. This phenomenon, she maintains, is why the pronoun stopped being used to the extent it had been. Yet, *anata* still held its neutrality and lack of social indexation, unlike its counterparts. Due to its origins as a directional indicator, it did not signal gender, age, occupation, or other semantic information. Consequently, the National Language Council of Japan proposed *anata* to be the standard form for the second-person pronoun in 1952.³¹ However, it has not been adopted into everyday speech as they had hoped. Referring to someone so directly is still considered taboo in Japan, and there is an especial aversion to using it towards someone of higher status. In fact, people perceive the word contrastingly, some saying it is too formal, while others deeming

it too intimate. Instead, the language utilizes ellipsis, a process which omits information the language deems irrelevant or can morphologically index elsewhere. In Japanese, this actualizes with the first and second-person pronouns, allowing the context of the sentence to inform who is doing what and to whom.³²

With this context, Gakusei’s impulse articulation is somewhat explained, as he could not simply use a pronoun without committing a social *faux pas*. Yet, his invocation of “sensei” is quite arbitrary, and while the title could be used not only for a teacher but also someone of high occupational status like a politician or doctor, neither of these fits Sensei’s character either.³³ If anything, Gakusei’s presumption of Sensei’s occupation only makes sense retroactively. As their friendship deepens, Gakusei seeks out Sensei’s wisdom more and more as though he really were his teacher. Sensei himself settles into the role once he is prescribed it. Throughout their interactions, Sensei lectures his junior on various topics such as love and how to handle money. An indeterminate amount of time passes from their meeting before Gakusei divulges to the reader: “I considered conversation with Sensei more profitable than lectures at the university. I valued Sensei’s opinions more than I did those of my professors.”³⁴ Gakusei is drawn to Sensei from the moment he sees him in the distance in the beginning of the novel, but his impulse to employ “sensei” as his moniker becomes a self-fulfilling

²⁹ Yoko Yonezawa, *The Mysterious Address Term Anata “you” in Japanese*. (John Benjamins, 2021), 38.

³⁰ Yonezawa, 42.

³¹ Yonezawa, 5.

³² For an overview of linguistic preferences in Japanese pronoun use, see Yonezawa, 1–5.

³³ Yonezawa, 4.

³⁴ Sōseki, 28.

prophecy—each character stepping into their roles: the “teacher” who imparts knowledge and wisdom onto his “student” who, in turn, heeds the former’s advice.

Continuing to examine Sōseki’s implementation of namelessness, the character known as K is even further obscured to us. While “sensei” holds some indication of status, age, and position of hierarchy in a social exchange, “K” is one letter. Sōseki’s usage of a letter from the English alphabet must also be highlighted. The reader, like Gakusei, is introduced to K through Sensei’s suicide letter which details his upbringing and university days. K is Sensei’s childhood friend who, upon Sensei’s request, comes to live with him in the same boarding house. Tension between them grows as they both fall for the same woman. K confesses his feelings to Sensei, and in reaction, Sensei goes to the woman’s mother and asks to marry her daughter before K can. This devastates K, and he ultimately commits suicide.³⁵ While introduced to the reader posthumously, K is a core figure which haunts Sensei in his later years. Sensei repeatedly refers to K’s death as “a shadow” hanging over him. Even in the sections between Gakusei and Sensei, K is a figure disembodied yet relevant. From explicit scenes, like that of both protagonists visiting K’s grave, to the root of Sensei’s mysterious disillusion, K is ever-present in

each section of the novel before he is introduced to the reader.

Despite his oppressive imprint, Sōseki irrevocably alienates his character from the reader. Sensei controls how much information is divulged about his friend, and while he details personal elements like K’s familial dynamics and his austere and stubborn personality, there is hardly anything about his physical appearance. We learn he is taller than Sensei and that he has close-cropped hair, but little more. Without a face or a recognizable name, K is stripped of referential characteristics, similarly to Gakusei. Yet with Gakusei, the reader is privy to his interior thoughts and feelings. There is no such exposure of K’s interior world. There is, of course, an identity in Sōseki’s construction of him, yet it is relayed through Sensei’s memory alone, barring the reader—and Gakusei—from forming their own perception of him, sans Sensei’s illustration. Furthermore, while Borgen makes the assertion that all three male characters are “writers” producing a physical representation of their inner voice,³⁶ I make the distinction between K and the other two, as we don’t get to read his suicide note. Sensei reports what it said, but once again, K’s voice is filtered through Sensei. K embodies a liminal position within the novel’s makeup. On the one hand, he is a standard, diegetic character, limited in corporality yet a freely independent

³⁵It is explained that K grew up in a temple and was heavily influenced by the ascetic lifestyle. In his confession to Sensei, he battles with the incongruity of his own ideals with his romantic emotions. Sensei harshly condones his inconsistency due to his own jealousy, further driving K to his feelings of shame. His inner turmoil is largely responsible for his suicide, though the news of Sensei’s betrayal is the catalyst for him to go through with it.

³⁶ Borgen, 181.

agent. Conversely, he is a disembodied force, affecting the narrative and remaining characters without spatial and temporal restrictions. His name, “K,” is taken from a foreign alphabet, distinguishing him from the rest of the cast and partially “othering” him in a distinct, nominal way. Introduced to the reader in the company of a Western foreigner, Sensei is someone who undoubtedly has ties to a foreign lifestyle in the style of his home and the amenities he enjoys. He chooses to title his friend this way. The English pronunciation of *k* falls in line with the Japanese phoneme *ke* (け), allowing the Japanese reader a point of familiarity, once again enforcing the paradox that K himself comprises.

While these three characters embody either a title, pronoun, or letter, Sensei’s wife is one who occupies several referents. In Sensei’s letter, she inhabits the referent *Ojōsan*, or “young lady,” but she is not called this in Gakusei’s present timeline. Her name is revealed to be Shizu as Gakusei details his perception of her and Sensei’s relationship,³⁷ yet she is not called this any other time. Her name is supplied by Gakusei in a scene in which he wants to convey the tenderness felt between the couple. Sōseki employs her name in such a moment of relational intimacy but refrains from doing so again thereafter. While her case stands out in Sōseki’s cast, there is another element that seems to be a key motivator for her name specifically. “Shizu” calls to mind another historically relevant figure who shares a similar name: Nogi Shizuko. She was the wife of General Nogi Maresuke, who, after the Emperor died, committed suicide. Not only was the general’s suicide a divisive moment for

Japan, but the novel’s timeline being situated around it hints at Sōseki’s wish to contextualize this climactic peak for his own characters. The mapping of Sensei with General Nogi is something I will discuss later, but for the reason of mirroring Shizu’s character to the general’s wife, I maintain that this is to further the parallel between their husbands.

The component of reality aside, Bargaen also highlights the semantic meaning of Shizu’s name which uses the kanji for “quiet” in Japanese. She discusses Shizu’s thematic role as one character whose interior world we are completely barred from. Bargaen points out how her silence is a stark contrast compared to the three male characters, each of which in some form memorializes their voices in written form. Yet, Shizu, much like her name suggests, is a silent bystander in each of their lives.³⁸ The representation of her character is sifted through two men’s perceptions of her, prohibiting her from directly conveying her version of events. While one could argue this is merely a byproduct of the patriarchal framework of society, to do so could, inadvertently, play into that exact projection. To treat Shizu’s character as a secondary element in Sōseki’s diegesis because of men’s disregard for women would be to silence her once again. Regardless of Sōseki’s intention, her character deserves to be treated with the same gravity as her male counterparts. The reader is given a heavily slanted portrait of her, colored with disregard of her mental acuity due to her status as a woman. As Bargaen maintains, Shizu is one who undoubtedly understands much more of the inner workings of all three men than the pages allow her space for. To understand what is written

³⁷ Sōseki, 1957, 17.

³⁸ Bargaen, 181.

between the lines, it is up to the reader to give her character the chance to transcend her depiction.

To provide Shizu's name in such a frugal way implies an unobtrusive desire to overlay Sōseki's fiction with history. The disclosure of her name, although briefly implemented, carries a ringing importance when situated with the rest of the characters who are not awarded the same treatment. For the rest of Gakusei's narrative, he refers to her as "Sensei's wife"—foregrounding a relational association. The only other plot-relevant characters with names are, in fact, General Nogi and the Emperor Meiji. They do not physically make an appearance in the story, but Sōseki mentions the trajectory of their later years coincidentally with his own characters enough to assert the import of their temporal placement. It should also be noted that various minor characters are given names, yet each of them is extremely irrelevant to the overall plot. This haphazard naming of one-off characters accentuates the absence of names for the main cast who are veiled by referents. Sōseki's naming of his characters is divided between the nameless—coinciding with his fictitious agents—and the named who are either historic figures or extraneous fill-ins. Shizu is in between, a made-up character, but one which is meant to align with the real Nogi Shizuko. Despite her name, Shizu still falls prey to Sōseki's convention of giving his characters a referent to embody. Whether that be an occupational title, a pronoun, letter, or relational tie, each informs a broader substrate of identity—or lack thereof—in Sōseki's style of writing.

4 National and Personal Identity

The construction of "the nation" was an ideological phenomenon gaining traction in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since historian Benedict Anderson's discussion of "nationalism" where he defined it as "an imagined political community,"³⁹ scholars and historians have attempted to study how a nation will describe its own genesis and the subsequent rhetoric that forms out of it. Anderson explains how a nation is "imagined" due to the individual's inability to meet every person in a large group-formation like a nation, thus forcing them to presuppose their similarities to their countrymen. Anderson does not think of nations as a fabrication, as their installation has had clear, real-world effects. Their existence, therefore, is dependent on the people's belief in and adherence to a mythology. This belief, according to Anderson, is heavily reliant on the widespread printing of the news.

In a similar fashion to Anderson's discussion of nationalism, Eric Hobsbawm, a British historian, connects the formation of a nation with "invented tradition." He describes it as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities." In *Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Philip Spencer and

Howard Wollman, *A Reader*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 49.

continuity with the past.”⁴⁰ There is a difference between a custom carried out due to its practicality and a tradition enforced due to its symbolic worth. The latter is what Hobsbawm is concerned with, which he further connects to symbols of nationalism. He discusses how nations adopt an already-present ritual to prove their image of longstanding histories; however, because nations are a relatively new construction, the ritual must undergo reification to fit the modern nationalist rhetoric.⁴¹

Meiji-era Japan was no exception to this. As I have discussed, the sudden need for a national language was one reaction holding a paradoxical rhetoric of what was considered “modern” yet still innately “Japanese.” Historian Carol Gluck discusses this paradox of Meiji self-identification, articulating how “the ‘West’ embodied the standard of modernity, which in turn posed the challenge of defining the ‘East’ along a new axis of identity.”⁴² In order to step onto the global stage now comprised of nations, Japan had to model itself in the fashion of the United States and Europe, yet it needed to maintain a proud identity distinct from them. This not only actualized through political rhetoric but cultural production as well. Gluck goes on to point out newly formalized objects of study and their terminology arising out of this era, such as this idea of *kokugo*, or what constituted national literature, history, etc. She writes how “[n]one was utterly new, but all were newly reified, or at least, redefined.”⁴³ All were resituated in this light

of nationalism to engender one common perception. Japanese nationalism, actualizing out of a pre-existing cultural mythology, substantiated itself through the dogmas and rites already present, simultaneously redefining what those dogmas were with the new, nationalist verbiage. Therein lies Hobsbawm’s definition of tradition, reimagined for the purpose of nationalist rhetoric.

The belief in this rhetoric, according to Anderson, is heavily reliant on the widespread printing of the news. In the chapter of his book discussing *Kokoro*, Fujii connects Anderson’s discussion with Meiji Japan:

It is worth noting that during the Meiji period, the “print community” facilitated the emergence of cultural heroes that were discursively created, and such figures were often employed in ways that (sometimes intentionally, at other times unintentionally) served the cause of national consolidation. Thus, the image of the Meiji emperor was given different spins according to the needs of the moment, and the representation of General Nogi Maresuke (1849—1912) quickly shifted from that of an inept strategist, responsible for heavy casualties among the Japanese army on the Asian continent, to war hero cum educator and guardian of such virtues

⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions.” In *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Canto Classics, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm, 10–14.

⁴² Carol Gluck, “‘Meiji’ for Our Time”. In *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, (Brill, 1997), 13.

⁴³ Gluck, 15.

as selflessness, military valor, and dedication to the nation.⁴⁴

This is evidence of the rampant reification of Japan's history, even going to the extent of revising its "modern" history. The narrative surrounding General Nogi was memorialized and conceptualized differently after his death. His final act was attributed to be one of dedication to Japan, as it was done in a style resemblant of *junshi*, an outlawed, old practice of subordinates taking their own lives in honor of their lord's death. The Emperor's death symbolized the end of an era, and General Nogi enforced it further with his suicide, fashioned similarly to this Edo-style act of subservience. Committing suicide on the same day as his Majesty's funeral sent a bold statement which was narrativized to fit the nationalist sentiment of duty to one's nation. This narrative was cohesively presented through the "print community" as Fujii points out. The broad reach newspapers had was effective in establishing a collective canon, unifying the populace's perception, which Sōseki then utilized in *Kokoro* as a significant plot point.

Predicated on this discussion, *Kokoro* links the public, national figures with the private, fictional characters. Gakusei's father is tied to the Emperor and Sensei is tied to General Nogi. It is revealed Gakusei's father

has kidney disease, prompting Gakusei to leave Tokyo behind—and, with it, Sensei—to be by his side, comprising the second section titled "My Parents and I." However, Gakusei notices his father's condition is not as serious as he had initially feared. He remains relatively healthy until they receive news that the Emperor has fallen ill. The news reaches Gakusei and his parents amid planning a graduation party. Gakusei informs the reader:

Before the day of the dinner party arrived, however, an important event took place. Emperor Meiji was taken ill. This news, which was spread throughout the nation by the newspapers, reached us like a gust of wind, blowing away the plans for a graduation party which had been tentatively made, not without difficulty, in an insignificant country house.⁴⁵

"I think that we had better cancel the dinner," said my father when he read the news, looking at me over the top of his spectacles. He then became silent, and it seemed to me that he was thinking of his own illness.⁴⁶

While it is Gakusei's conjecture that his father is comparing his own anxieties of illness to the Emperor's, the novel's

⁴⁴ Fujii, James, "Death, Empire, and the Search for History in Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro*." In *Complicit Fictions, The Subject in the Modern Japanese Prose Narrative*, (University of California Press, 1993a), 134.

⁴⁵ Tying in this idea of modernity and traditionalism, the book utilizes the binary of urban spaces versus rural. Gakusei is often dismissive of his rural origins and much more enthralled by the urban Tokyo. He

often belittles his parents, bemoaning their lack of understanding or knowledge of the outside world. Conversely, in Gakusei's eyes, Sensei, a Tokyo resident, represents someone who has much wisdom and intelligence. For a discussion on these often-paralleled discourses of modern-urban versus traditional-country, see Fujii, 1993a, 132–135.

⁴⁶ Sōseki, 1957, 88.

trajectory hereafter supports the parallel. His father grows quieter in the days following, obsessively watching the newspaper for any updates on the Emperor's health. He tells Gakusei, "[...] it does look as if His Majesty's illness is not unlike mine."⁴⁷ Once he learns of the Emperor's death, he takes it as a sign of his own impending demise. He soon becomes bedridden, and his condition worsens. He is also the first of the characters to find out about General Nogi's death, who is Sensei's parallel in this stylistic sense of demise.

In Sensei's letter, after he confesses his past, he tells Gakusei about his contemplation of death in reaction to his ever-present guilt for K's suicide. With the Emperor's death, a symbolic catalyst for the changing times, his own feelings of relevancy in a new and modern Japan are shaken. As a joke, Shizu invokes the act of *junshi*. This word sticks with Sensei, who tells Gakusei that "the antiquated word had come to hold a new meaning for [him]."⁴⁸ Yet, just what this new meaning is exactly, is unclear. One could interpret it as Sensei using his sense of responsibility in K's death to explain his own suicidal ideation. Alternatively, it could be his way of showing fidelity to the end of the era he belongs in and his abstinence from the new era which he sees as alien to him. Regardless of the ambiguity, Sensei, who had already been at war with his suicidal ideation, now felt a clarity due to his personal reimagining of the word. This action is resemblant of a process in historical linguistics known as folk etymology. It is a retroactive process where a word—usually unintentionally—gets prescribed a false origin in an attempt to clarify the history of its genesis. Sensei is

intentionally conducting a folk etymological process on *junshi* to make sense of his interior turmoil. Sensei's reanalysis of the meaning of *junshi* morphs from a broad, culturally recognizable phenomenon into an individual act, meaningful and personal only to him. Yet in a similar fashion to Gakusei's father, only once General Nogi's suicide is announced can Sensei himself finally go through with his own. He writes to Gakusei:

It was two or three days later that I decided at last to commit suicide. Perhaps you will not understand clearly why I am about to die, no more than I can fully understand why General Nogi killed himself. You and I belong to different eras, and so we think differently. There is nothing we can do to bridge the gap between us. Of course, it may be more correct to say that we are different simply because we are two separate human beings.⁴⁹

General Nogi's suicide, triggered by his Emperor's death, signaled the end of an era. Sensei feels this keenly, going so far as to distinctly separate himself from Gakusei due to "belong[ing] to different eras." His statement of not understanding General Nogi's suicide indicates the irrelevancy of the "why" and places the meaning on the actual act of ritual suicide motivated by fidelity to someone or something.

The tension that subsumes *Kokoro* in its very essence is this realization of interior identity defined against a national collective. Usually, these reified traditions were

⁴⁷ Sōseki, 1957, 90.

⁴⁸ Sōseki, 1957, 245.

⁴⁹ Sōseki, 1957, 246.

practiced prior to their adoption into the nationalist rhetoric. Similarly, individuality was not created out of thin air. Measuring oneself against the collective has been done long before nations were erected; yet, since the global institutionalization of nations, the discourse of interiority has been reformed as a reaction. The formation of Japan as a “nation” compelled the delineation of one, collective people under that nation. Once the Japanese government began dictating what was innately “Japanese,” the interiority of the individual was realized. In Karatani’s view, interiority, as we discuss it now, paradoxically developed due to the “systematicity of the very ‘inner self’ that is usually seen as challenging systems.”⁵⁰ The construction of national identity demands a conformation to it on the individual level. How does the individual fit into the collective image, embodying a “Japanese-ness,” or how are they an outlier, embodying an “other-ness”? This collision of identity informs *Kokoro*’s mirroring of the national figures with the private.

5 Conclusion

Kokoro, a novel constructed at the culmination of massive language and literary reforms, is rife with themes of individuality and nationalism. By backgrounding these reforms, I have attempted to dissect Sōseki’s linguistic techniques to unveil the discourse of identity that his novel presents. While literary scholars reject *Kokoro* from the *shishōsetsu* genre, one can see similar implementations in its structure. It uncovers the inner psyches of Sensei and Gakusei,

which informs the reader of the anxieties surrounding Japan, rapidly transforming through global influence. Furthermore, the system of nomenclature exercised on the main cast situates each character on a stage of societal relations. Sōseki strips them of proper names, an absence which emphasizes the nationally recognized figures who *are* named. I have examined these elements that *Kokoro* presents in order to analyze the tension of individual reification for the sake of the nation’s rhetoric.

I have mainly conducted this analysis on the English translated version of the novel. Since my argument is predicated on linguistic structures, I have tried to incorporate elements in reference to the original Japanese version. In the future, I would like to revisit my linguistic study of Sōseki’s writing without the barrier of translation to better inform my understanding of the Japanese linguistic conventions he broke or adhered to. Furthermore, this study is solely focused on one text. I would like to expand this method of close reading to other works in the era for further analysis. By opening the discourse on language policy and change affecting *Kokoro*, the creative works of the last two hundred years can be reanalyzed to illustrate the importance of self-presentation through the language we use.

⁵⁰ Karatani, 61.

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