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Intellectuals as Characters in Selected Works of Natsume Sōseki

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Kopie zadání práce.

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prameny a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne.....

Podpis.....

## **Anotace**

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Cílem této práce je učit a porovnat postavy tzv. intelektuálů ve vybraných dílech Natsumeho Sōsekiho, kde se tento typ fiktivních postav pravidelně vyskytuje. V úvodu je tento termín představen a rozebrán s ohledem na to, jak se význam tohoto slova měnil v průběhu dějin v závislosti na kulturním kontextu. Následně jsou v jednotlivých dílech rozebrány postavy, které by se takto mohly označit. Dále se text věnuje i problematice označení autora tímto termínem, způsobu využití těchto postav a jejich společným rysům.

Na tomto místě bych chtěla poděkovat vedoucí své bakalářské práce prof. Zdeně Švarcové, Dr. za cenné rady a připomínky. Velice si cením vstřícného přístupu, podnětných rozhovorů a času, který mi věnovala. Dále děkuji svým blízkým, kteří mi poskytovali psychickou podporu, a své editorce za pomoc s dokončením této práce.

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## **Notes on the text**

For the purpose of this work, the Japanese names are written in the name-surname order, with exception of the translated names in *Sanshirō* and *Botchan*. The Japanese texts are transcribed in a modified Hepburn romanization system.

The citation norm used in this thesis is the Chicago style of referencing. The transcription in citations is used with respect to the form of the cited text.

For the Czech annotations, the Czech transcription system is used.

## Introduction

Within the literature of Natsume Sōseki (夏目 漱石, February 9, 1867 – December 9, 1916), there is an observable phenomenon of a recurring type of fictional characters. For the purpose of this thesis, we shall call them *intellectuals*. In the following pages, I will focus on such fictional characters in selected works by Natsume Sōseki and the way they are portrayed, and divide them into basic types. Another aim of the thesis is to observe how the author himself might be mirrored in these characters and possibly define whether there is a purpose to the usage of these characters.

The key element for the purpose of this thesis is to define who an *intellectual* is. According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*,<sup>1</sup> *intellectuals* do not form a clearly defined group in modern societies. Their traditional role has been that of a “thinker and truth-seeker.” Throughout history they would be “priests or shamans,” “the philosophers and the scientific innovators of their times.” “Intellectual life flourished under two conditions: the relative independence of *intellectuals* themselves, and the unique position they held in societies that were largely illiterate.” Therefore, “the true intellectual is not so much performing a role as expressing a particular personality,” it comes naturally to the person in question.

Generally, the meaning of the word *intellectual* varies. In the nineteenth century “in France and the other advanced countries in Europe, *intellectuals* were distinguished from scientists and scholars who depended upon institutions and academies funded by the state, and from those practitioners of literature whose appeal was strictly aesthetic.”<sup>2</sup> That would be one approach, where there are two branches of scientific and aesthetic *intellectualism*. At the same time, “to be an intellectual was to claim a degree of independence of outlook; and the word in general parlance implied respect and approval.”<sup>3</sup>

A different approach to the *intellectuals* was held in central Europe. “State was more suspicious of radical ideas, intellectuals, while courted by the political parties, were looked upon with suspicion.”<sup>4</sup> As for the situation in Britain, “*intellectuals* could preach reform and hope to have an influence. [...] The word intellectual was held to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary Of Sociology*, 1st ed., s. v. “intellectual.”

<sup>2</sup> *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s. v. “intellectuals”

<sup>3</sup> Likewise.

<sup>4</sup> Likewise.

represent a foreign rather than British reality and was given a slightly scornful edge, as implying a lack of contact with everyday life.”<sup>5</sup>

Undoubtedly, an *intellectual* may be found in any social class, but universities as such could be considered a breeding ground for independently-minded individuals. On the other hand, “the heirs to the intellectual tradition work mainly in large institutions – usually universities – which are not hospitable to new or challenging ideas. Academics are by necessity careerists first and *intellectuals* second.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, universities could be considered an ideal environment for *intellectuals* to prosper, however, an individual that received a university education or is employed by an academic institution cannot be called an *intellectual* solely for their background. Plenty of Sōseki’s fictional characters are academics or students, however, not all of them are worthy of being called *intellectuals*, as we are to discover. Those that seemingly appear as *intellectuals* are in fact only surrounded by them and do not produce their own thoughts at all or could potentially be labelled so in their future. Such possibility is, nevertheless, highly arguable, since the characters in question are fictional.

Since identification of an *intellectual* depends on identifiable traits, we shall divide typical *intellectuals* into two basic categories.

First, there is the *intellectual* with a positive reputation: a thinker widely respected, outspoken, preferably with more than one literary work published. On the other hand, we could also argue that numerous *intellectuals* in history never published anything throughout their life, shared their thoughts with their followers only via lectures or discussions, and were later to be known through notes of their disciples.

Another type of an *intellectual* to take into account is the individual scorned by the society, the term being used ironically to describe anyone too talkative, too opinionated. The word is still used with both of these connotations, depending on the situation.

As for the types of *intellectuals* in Sōseki’s works, it is hard to determine what definitions concerning this topic the author had in mind. However, as will be discussed further on, Sōseki’s recurring characters of *intellectuals* can be also divided into two basic categories. After analyzing potential nominees for the title of an intellectual in the selected works of *I Am a Cat*, *Botchan*, *Sanshirō* and *Kokoro*, as well as Natsume

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<sup>5</sup> Likewise.

<sup>6</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary Of Sociology*, 1st ed., s. v. “intellectual.”

Sōseki himself, the resulting division into subtypes of *intellectuals* in Sōseki will follow in detail.

## **I Am a Cat (吾輩は猫である, Wagahai wa neko de aru, 1905)**

The earliest of Sōseki's works is full of youthful enthusiasm that may be observed to slowly diminish throughout his writing career. The novel was initially supposed to be a one-shot short story, however due to an editor's pressure on the writer to continue the story, Sōseki eventually developed it into a novel. As for the storyline itself, the novel narrates happenings in a household of the teacher Mr. Sneaze through the eyes of his cat.

The first part focuses on establishing the characters and presents a plot in a visit of Mrs. Goldfield in order to enquire about Mr. Coldmoon, Mr. Sneaze's friend, because she would like him as a possible husband for her daughter. The situation is evolved further on into the Goldfields trying to irritate Mr. Sneaze's life as retaliation for him insulting them. For the most part of the novel, the characters exchange their views on various topics such as marriage, literature, life etc. As the novel proceeds new characters appear to join the discussion or to stir up life in the household (including a break in and the question of marriage for the female characters in the novel). The novel ends briskly with an unexpected death of the narrator, as the cat drowns in a barrel of water.

### **1.1 Cat, the first person narrator**

As the central narrator and witness to everything in the household of Mr. Sneaze, the cat states clearly what it sees without leaving out its own opinion of the people around. Having the cat as the narrator provides a very subjective (it is often harsh with its conclusions) and at the same time very limited perspective (it only presents what it witnesses).

An example of a situation where the reader is not offered the whole picture occurs during the conversation between Mr. Sneaze, Coldmoon and Waverhouse about their unusual and inexplicable experiences. The cat seems unaffected by the stories and concludes "that human beings are good for nothing, except for the strenuous employment of their mouths for the purpose of whiling away their time in laughter at things which are not funny, and in the enjoyment of amusements which are not amusing."<sup>7</sup> In this manner, the cat sums up the nature of humankind and does not forget to scorn each of the humans present. Then it leaves, as it finds the conversation

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<sup>7</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *I Am A Cat*, (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), Vol. 1 Chpt. 2, E-book.

“intolerably boring,”<sup>8</sup> which results in the rest of the conversation in the house being hidden. Another point to be taken when reading the text is that the cat often thinks highly of itself, hence it assumes a negative stance toward the other characters, thus making its narration even more subjective.

The cat spends most of its time at the household of its master or strolling around and meeting other cats. It lacks a name since it was never given one nor does it wish to name itself. Rickshaw Blacky (車屋の黒, Kurumaya no Kuro) or Tortoiseshell (三毛子, Mikeko) are the ones the cat frequents the most, however these relationships are far from ideal. The cat hardly ever shares its opinions with them, only listens or flatters, therefore it is expressing itself to the same extent as when it is among humans.

Taking these facts into account, one may hardly think the cat an *intellectual*, nevertheless there are some factors that may favour such a conclusion. As we observe the cat judging the actions of its acquaintances, most of the time it finds them just nonsensical or boring; however, its critical evaluations may be viewed as quite outstanding. Since it spends most of its time listening to educated humans and their conversation on various topics, the cat is certainly not unaffected by human knowledge. A fact worth mentioning is that the cat also philosophizes on the nature of humans in the broad sense. Whenever humans are not the subject of the cat’s contemplations, it ruminates on how the world works. It searches in its thoughts for an answer to what place it has as a member of its species in this world, as well as what role the humans play<sup>9</sup>. Cat’s inability to understand the actions of the humans<sup>10</sup> further develops into

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<sup>8</sup> Likewise.

<sup>9</sup> “[...] I sneaked out after him by way of the veranda. If one is to make a worthwhile study of mankind, it is vital to seize upon eventful moments. At ordinary times, most human beings are wearisomely ordinary; depressingly banal in appearance and deadly boring in their conversation. However, at certain moments, by some peculiar, almost supernatural, process their normal triviality can be transformed into something so weird and wonderful that no feline scholar of their species can afford to miss any occasion when that transformation seems likely to take place.”

Natsume Sōseki, *I Am A Cat*, (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), Vol. 3 Chpt. 3, E-book.

<sup>10</sup> “I had been quietly listening to the successive stories of these three precious humans, but I was neither amused nor saddened by what I’d heard. I merely concluded that

doubt of the humans' right to ownership of everything towards the start of the second volume.<sup>11</sup>

As a narrator, the cat naturally assumes that it has an important role to fulfil. It describes and narrates the events in the house only because it is a special cat<sup>12</sup>. In the second part of the novel, the cat's approach changes towards a more active one. The cat's own perception of itself evolves:

“Though but a cat, I am not quite as other cats. I differ from the general run of idiot cats and stupid cats. *I Am a Cat* that lodges in the house of a scholar who, having read it, can bang down any book by Epictetus on his desk.”<sup>13</sup>

From this, we may conclude that the cat realizes the influence its surroundings have on it. It actually describes that it believes its brain is “as well-developed as that of any boy in his third year at a middle school.”<sup>14</sup> In human age that may not be considered impressive, nevertheless for a cat we may say it is a remarkable achievement. The reason for the change in its attitude from a passive role towards a more active role lies

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human beings were good for nothing, except for the strenuous employment of their mouths for the purpose of whiling away their time in laughter at things which are not funny, and in the enjoyment of amusements which are not amusing.” Natsume Sōseki, *I Am A Cat*, (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), Vol. 1 Chpt. 2, E-book.

<sup>11</sup> “In the first place it is my opinion that the sky was made to shelter all creation, and that the earth was made so that all things created that were able to stand might have something to stand on. Even those human beings who love argument for the arguing's sake could surely not deny this fact. Next we may ask to what extent did human effort contribute to the creation of heaven and earth, and the answer is that it contributed nothing. What right, then, do human beings hold to decide that things not of their own creation nevertheless belong to them?” Likewise. Vol. 1 Chpt. 2.

<sup>12</sup> “Since I am a truly unusual cat, one born into this world with a mission demanding purely mental activity, I am responsible for safeguarding the inestimable worth of my own rarity.” Likewise. Vol. 2 Chpt. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Likewise. Vol. 1 Chpt. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Likewise.

in the problems the Goldfield family has been causing. The cat simply cannot bear to watch them get their way with things.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly, the cat could be considered an *intellectual* character despite not being an ideal prototype. The cat is very well aware of being filled with potential it is not able to show:

“[...] Such incommunicable knowledge would, like a buried diamond, be denied its brilliance and my hard-won wisdom would all be won for nothing.”<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the second volume, the cat claims it has gained the power to read people’s minds<sup>17</sup>, thus enabling the reader to see what motivation lies behind some of the other characters’ statements. In that particular instance, it realizes that its owner has been considering eating the poor cat.

## 1.2 Mr. Sneaze (珍野 苦沙弥, Chin’no Kushami)

Mr. Sneaze represents the head of the household. As he is of older age, he may get rather obstinate<sup>18</sup> in his decisions, which is why his family often gives in to his demands

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<sup>15</sup> “[...] I am proposing to take magnificent unself-interested action simply in order to realize the will of Heaven that smiles upon impartiality and blesses happy medium. [...] she [Madam Conk] seeks to trouble a man of talent; for all these reasons even a cat must do what can be done to prevent her getting away with it.”  
Likewise.

<sup>16</sup> Likewise.

<sup>17</sup> As for how it happened, the cat refuses to explain: “Some of you may wonder how a mere cat can analyze his master’s thoughts with the detailed acumen which I have just displayed. [...] Such a feat is a mere nothing for a cat. Quite apart from the precision of my hearing and the complexity of my mind, I can also read thoughts. [...] Don’t ask me how I learned that skill. My methods are none of your business.”  
Likewise. Vol. 2 Chpt. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Not in a vicious way, as the cat notes. “[...] his nature is of a completely different type from that of the vicious, heartless products of modern civilization.” (Vol. 2 Chpt. 1). Nevertheless, the incident when a group of students pesters him and he chases after them several times proves that his stubbornness often blinds his better judgement. (Vol. 3 Chpt. 1.)

(but not without a proper back-talk). As a teacher, he has gained some respect,<sup>19</sup> therefore he is convinced that he has the right to think of himself rather highly. Yet, most of the time he should devote to reading he spends sleeping instead;<sup>20</sup> moreover his own students in school do not respect him much. The most productive time of his day would be the time he spends with his friends and disciples in discussions.

In the cat's eyes, the respect for its master is rather undeserved. After spending so much time with Mr. Sneaze, the cat realizes the man often speaks up just so he does not feel left out of a conversation.<sup>21</sup> Frequently, the cat assumes the master to be plainly stupid or tactless, for example the time when he criticizes a nose of a visitor<sup>22</sup> or fails to advise his pupil, exaggerating the consequences of the pupil's actions.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Mr. Sneaze should be the wise one in his own house, but he disobeys his doctor's advice and experiments with cures about which he learns from rumours only.<sup>24</sup> In the cat's eyes, it often comes as a surprise that it is possible for a well-read man like him to lack basic insight.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “[...] he is occasionally mentioned as a scholar, or something of that sort. Only the other day a comment on your husband [Mr. Sneaze] appeared in a literary magazine.” Likewise. Vol. 1 Chpt. 3.

<sup>20</sup> “Sometimes he just brings the book, places it beside his pillow, and makes no faintest attempt to read it. [...] It would seem that for my master a book is not a thing to be read, but a device to bring on slumber: a typographical sleeping-pill, a paginated security blanket.” Likewise.

<sup>20</sup> “It is true that my master's character is based on so firm an inborn bedrock of cold reserve and obstinacy that he is, by nature, one of this type from this world's wet blankets. Nevertheless, his nature is of a completely different type from that of the vicious, heartless products of modern civilization.” Likewise. Vol. 2 Chpt. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Likewise.

<sup>22</sup> Likewise. Vol. 2 Chpt. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Likewise. Vol. 3 Chpt. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 2-3.

<sup>25</sup> Wavehouse, on the other hand, simply thinks of Mr. Sneaze as a man that “believe[s] anything and everything that anyone says.” Likewise. Vol. 3 Chpt. 2.

The teacher may not have had his breakthrough in *intellectual* society yet, but he has certainly not lost any hope of seeing it in his elder years.<sup>26</sup> When Beauchamp Blowlamp visits him in order to get his support, he gladly accepts, not out of charity but rather out of a hope that his name may be placed among so many names of celebrated scholars.<sup>27</sup> Earlier in the novel, the reader witnesses Mr. Sneaze's attempts at being productive and failing later on, as well as him changing focus multiple times only not to stick with any particular activity.<sup>28</sup> In the words of Waverhouse, Sneaze is a "man of leisure," who "never has any engagements."<sup>29</sup> Throughout the novel, the reader might even experience disillusionment with the old man's self-proclaimed intellect and self-confidence, as we learn that the scholar's reputation is not as positive as it seems at first. When told that his self-confidence does not quite match the level of his reputation, he likens himself to unpopular scholars that had to arm themselves for protection, yet saw an incredible success in their own works. This, of course, is hardly the case with Sneaze, "a mere teacher of the English Reader."<sup>30</sup>

It seems Mr. Sneaze is slightly sensitive when it comes to his ego. The reader may notice that several times, i.e. when he realizes he has been deceived by Waverhouse or when he shares his story that is absolutely unconnected to the preceding ones told by his

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<sup>26</sup> Upon discussing the issue of a doctorate, Sneaze responds: "You never know. I might become one [a doctorate] one of these days. You mustn't always doubt my worth. You may well be ignorant of the fact, but in ancient times a certain Greek, Isocrates, was almost a centurian when he shook the world with his masterpiece." Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 3.

<sup>27</sup> "His face assumes the expression of one who would sign even a secret commitment to engage in rebellion, provided it was clear that the signature carried no binding obligation. [...] To be included, even by name only, among so many names of celebrated scholars is a supreme honor for one who has never before had such an opportunity." Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 1.

<sup>28</sup> For example him switching from watercolours to translating or his habit of falling asleep while reading a book.

<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 1

friends.<sup>31</sup> On another occasion, he proudly presents Waverhouse with his translation thinking he has done a good job at both translating and choosing a work to translate.<sup>32</sup> Thankfully for his ego, he does not realise his friend is not sincere with his praise.<sup>33</sup>

Mr. Sneaze's personality does not consist of negative traits only. Throughout the novel he has come forward with several poems, meditations on life itself<sup>34</sup> and known authors as well as the previously mentioned translation. He is even advised to collect his short pieces into a book.<sup>35</sup> His works are filled with visible efforts despite the leisure that can be observed through the cat's eyes.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "I have long known of my master's selfishness and narrowmindedness. [...] Why can't he listen to the stories of the other two in silence? What good purpose can he serve by talking such utter rubbish just because his competitive spirit has been roused?" Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 2.

<sup>32</sup> A similar incident happens later in the novel, when Mr. Sneaze attempts to translate the name of Christopher Columbus. Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 1.

<sup>34</sup> I. e. in his own words: "Modern man, even in his deepest slumber, never stops thinking about what will bring him profit or, even more worrying, loss." Or "the main characteristic of the future will be a steady rise in suicides," which is followed by him pondering on the ways to achieve an original suicide as well as aesthetics of the act itself.

Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

<sup>36</sup> "[...] He does possess (though it is a pitifully small example) that sine qua non of any writer or scholar, a study. In addition, though he is normally to be found asleep in front of it, he does actually spend much of his time with some difficult book propped up before his nose. One must accordingly regard him as a person of at least the scholarly type."

Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 1.

### 1.3 Waverhouse (迷亭, Meitei)

Mr. Sneaze's friend, Waverhouse, an aesthete, is all in all an extravagant person with peculiar humour. Most of the time he creates stories<sup>37</sup> and non-existent people, and generally ridicules people,<sup>38</sup> who might not realise it. It is part of his charm, even though most people do not find it to be a positive personality trait, especially since he keeps interrupting others in order to share his exaggerated overstatements.<sup>39</sup>

Because of his way of speaking one may never be quite sure whether he means what he says. From his words, he clearly is man of knowledge or at least possesses an ability to pretend he is one. The characters are often confused whether to believe his words or not.<sup>40</sup> He describes himself as “a highly sophisticated simpleton”,<sup>41</sup> a phrase that might sound puzzling but also fitting to his nature at the same time. At first, he appears to be a well-travelled man, speaking of the manners in France or of his family background, while not everyone is aware of that being false. In Sneaze's words, “he's probably got the money and the time. If he wanted to, he could go off anytime. He probably just converted his future intention to travel into the past tense of widely travelled experience as a sort of a joke.”<sup>42</sup>

According to Waverhouse's words, he also strives to present the world with a work of his own as Mr. Sneaze does, even though it is arguable how serious he is about

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<sup>37</sup> Once in a restaurant, Waverhouse managed to dispute an existence of a non-existent dish and even obtained an apology and explanation for not being offered the meal. Another time he persuaded Mr. Sneaze to continue painting through an invented quote of a famous artist. Likewise, Vol. 1. Chpt. 1.

<sup>38</sup> His jokes are not malicious.

<sup>39</sup> Sneaze to Coldmoon: “It is never clear, when one is dealing with Waverhouse, whether he's listening or interrupting.” Likewise.

<sup>40</sup> I. e. the incident with moat-bells in a restaurant that quite puzzled Beauchamp Blowlamp. Likewise.

<sup>41</sup> Likewise.

<sup>42</sup> Likewise.

the goal.<sup>43</sup> Waverhouse is far from writing anything of value. When challenged to write an essay on aestheticism in a bet, during the designated time period he shows no results. When finally confronted about the bet, he claims that his will to actually write something remains strong. His will to write is of much higher value to him than actually writing anything; therefore he claims to be the winner of the bet. This is an example of Waverhouse's empty words and low ambitions. He uses his intellect and studies for amusement in most cases rather than in a productive sense.

Although not in the same way as Mr. Sneaze, Waverhouse too is slightly egocentric. Not only does he exaggerate and invent stories to entertain people, he also amuses himself by advising his friends how to correct their sentences.<sup>44</sup> At other times, he points out problematic points in the works of others without any intended irony.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, there are instances when Waverhouse has used his talent for powerful speech in order to benefit his friends, not just to criticize their statements. Such would be the case as he tries to save Coldmoon from an unfortunate marriage with his speech to Suzuki.<sup>46</sup>

Worth noting is the fact that Waverhouse frequently indulges in conversation with Mrs. Sneaze. Half jokingly, half seriously, they cover the topic of what it means to be Sneaze's wife as well as the situation of women in Japanese society. Waverhouse notes how things have changed since his youth. He even mentions displays of women in the red lantern quarters, where they were being sold. His point is to compare the evolution of marriage and of the relationships between a man and a woman since those times without dismissing the situation of women compared to the situation of men.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “[...] I felt I would like the name of Doctor Waverhouse to become renowned, that I should be acclaimed as a leading figure in Meiji literary circles, while my mother is still alive.” Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Likewise.

<sup>45</sup> I. e. his advice to Coldmoon not to unnecessarily mention Hellenism in his work (Vol. 1 Chpt. 3) or him offering feedback on Coldmoon's thesis and play (Vol. 2 Chpt. 3). Another instance would also be, for example, his feedback on Blowlamp's poem dedicated to Opula.

<sup>46</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

The mentioned conversation about women and men is followed by a number of stories that easily establish Waverhouse as a talented storyteller in the eyes of Mrs. Sneaze. In his own words, Waverhouse comments on his own vast knowledge as follows:

“I know almost everything about almost everything. Perhaps the only thing I don’t know all about is the real extent of my own foolishness. But even on that, I can make a pretty good guess.”

This quote sums up Waverhouse’s nature as a man of knowledge that is aware of his limits but also illustrates how his wit works hand in hand with his speech skills. Perhaps that would be the reason why he prefers to express his thoughts in spoken word instead of in writing. The cat feels that “it is a pity that Waverhouse, who is both well-read and intelligent, still should strive to be merely clever.”<sup>48</sup>

#### **1.4 Avalon Coldmoon (水島 寒月, Mizushima Kangetsu)**

Another friend of Mr. Sneaze and his former student, Avalon Coldmoon, studies for his doctorate in terrestrial magnetism. As a hobby, he has taught himself how to play the violin. As part of the subject of his studies, he focuses on polishing stones, but is also interested in philosophy and literature. Over the course of the novel, Coldmoon is introduced to Opula Goldfield (金田 富子, Kaneda Tomiko) as a possible marriage candidate, only to surprise everyone with the fact that he has arranged a marriage on his own accord with someone else.<sup>49</sup>

Coldmoon is a well-respected scholar. He gives a public lecture on the laws of physics and ensures to cover the problematic of his topics in close detail, often mentioning unnecessary cultural notes.<sup>50</sup> In his lecture covering the discourse of “The Mechanics of Hanging,”<sup>51</sup> he describes the cultural background of the practice of hanging, literary mentions of the practice and the execution of the practice itself. From

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<sup>48</sup> Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Likewise.

<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Likewise.

there, he moves on to the mathematic side of the issue, which is “the very essence of his lecture”<sup>52</sup> but also the part that is hard to understand for his audience.

As a scholar of physics, Coldmoon is not expected to delve into art and history. Yet he uses every opportunity to support his studies with cultural commentary. Further on in the novel, he surprises his colleagues with a play he has been writing, a one act “haiku-play.”<sup>53</sup> Consequently, he likens paintings and drama, since both are art. He has invented a new style of a single scene play based on a haiku. From this, we may assess that he has been influenced by the artistic nature of his friends at the Sneaze household to further develop his interest in art.

Similarly confusing, or surprising, is the subject of his thesis, entitled “The Effects of Ultraviolet Rays upon Galvanic Action in the Eyeball of the Frog.”<sup>54</sup> For that, he is required to polish and grind glass balls, which are meant to be used in further experiments. He is estimated to finish in ten years, ideally, but decides to drop the thesis at once towards the end of the novel. We may only guess that the thesis was only part of the means to discourage the Goldfield family’s efforts.

His inclination to lead his life the way he prefers, as his sudden marriage might prove, could be considered influence of Sneaze’s stubbornness on his favourite pupil. To the outsider’s eye, he might appear odd, as he lives in a shabby house with a name board stuck to his gate with rice.<sup>55</sup> His offer to listen to a tiger’s roar in the middle of the night also seems unusual to Sneaze. According to the cat’s descriptions, Coldmoon prefers his solitude spent in studies, but he obviously does not mind the company of the Sneaze household scholars, where he is allowed to be open with his eccentricities.

### **1.5 Beauchamp Blowlamp (越智 東風, Ochi Tōfū)**

Introduced to Mr. Sneaze via a card as Coldmoon’s friend,<sup>56</sup> Blowlamp describes himself as a “devotee of literature and art.”<sup>57</sup> Among the scholars visiting Sneaze, he could be considered the most honest and naive character.

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<sup>52</sup> Likewise.

<sup>53</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 2.

As for the subject of his interests, Blowlamp is fascinated by literature. He is part of a reading group re-enacting various literary works. When reading them, he states that “the idea is to empathize with the characters” and “to bring out their individual personalities.”<sup>58</sup> Any mention of a literary work in progress by the other characters excites him. He is attentive to their words no matter their seriousness. He offers his own advice on Coldmoon’s haiku-play<sup>59</sup> and Sneaze’s long poem.<sup>60</sup> He considers Coldmoon to be a “genius,”<sup>61</sup> since “no man can truly be an artist unless he has sensitivities as keen as Coldmoon’s” and Coldmoon’s expressions are subject of Blowlamp’s admiration.

In Coldmoon’s words, Blowlamp is “an uncommonly honest person.”<sup>62</sup> Considering his attitude toward the other scholars, we could say his respect is almost naive. When he appears for the first time, he introduces himself as Coldmoon’s friend and discusses Waverhouse with Mr. Sneaze. Blowlamp is puzzled by Waverhouse and his statements. At first, he thinks him to be a worldly man, knowledgeable in various topics. Listening to Waverhouse, however, he cannot help thinking Waverhouse is only exaggerating and bluffing. Especially when he attempts to persuade a waiter that the fact they are not serving “moat-bells,”<sup>63</sup> is absurd. Not knowing Waverhouse’s nature yet, he falls for his tricks. Nevertheless, he does so even after knowing him for a while.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, another proof of his naivety is his invitation to Sneaze to join his reading group, knowing only his reputation at that point. He becomes friends with Opula Goldfield later on in the novel, the character that is ridiculed by the others for being self-centred, while Blowlamp, on the other hand, is deeply inspired by her.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Likewise.

<sup>58</sup> Likewise.

<sup>59</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Likewise.

<sup>61</sup> Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Likewise, Vol. 1 Chpt. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Likewise.

<sup>64</sup> I. e. Waverhouse claiming to know poet Masaoka Shiki. Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

Among other activities, Blowlamp is a man of poetry. He has written a poem dedicated to Opula and another one for the anticipated wedding with Coldmoon. When his audience does not understand the first poem, he jumps to the defence of modern poetry in general and explains the complexity that is hidden even to the authors themselves.<sup>66</sup> Toward the end of the novel, his poetry is finally granted appreciation by Tataru Sanpei (多々良 三平, Tataru Sanpei).<sup>67</sup>

## 1.6 Singleman Kidd(八木 独仙, Yaki Dokusen)

The character of Singleman Kidd appears further on in the novel. He is deemed to be a philosopher, “looks about forty and sports a smart goatee on his long face.”<sup>68</sup> From the conversation’s flow, the cat assumes he is also one of Sneaze’s friends from school. He discusses an incident with young students who pester Sneaze and offers him advice. His calm composure and philosophical speeches appeal to Sneaze, who later even repeats Kidd’s thoughts in his own words.

We could say that Kidd poses a contrast to Waverhouse’s eccentric nature by being a man of more traditional thoughts, calm and passivity<sup>69</sup> at every occasion, who “presents a negative, ‘oriental’ nihilism.”<sup>70</sup> He is not as interested in art and literature as the other visitors at Sneaze’s household, yet he does not mind spending time with them

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<sup>66</sup> “You can’t understand it if you do no more than glance through it [...]. More often than not, modern poets are unable to answer even the simplest questions about their own work. Such poets write by direct inspiration, and are not to be held responsible for more than the writing.”

Likewise, Vol. 2 Chpt. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 1.

<sup>69</sup> In Kidd’s words: “Perhaps, after years of the hardest training of the mind, we, too, might reach that ultimate passivity where, with the same empowered disconcert so spiritedly shown by Sogan, we too might understand how, like a flash of lightning, the sword cuts through the breeze of spring.”

Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 313.

or listening to their conversations. Kidd's opinion on life is that "a man can only attain to peace of mind by training himself to be passive."<sup>71</sup> His stance on the worldly realities is stable, since, as Waverhouse notes, his ideas "haven't changed one whit in the long ten years since [Waverhouse] heard them in [their] own undergraduate days."<sup>72</sup>

Unlike Sneaze's, Waverhouse's opinion of Kidd is not full of respect. Kidd's changelessness is seen as stubbornness and lack of insight in Waverhouse's eyes. Furthermore, Kidd often repeats the same phrases and once contradicted, Waverhouse hints, Kidd's speeches turn nonsensical. In Waverhouse's opinion, Kidd's influence on other characters can prove rather negative. He states two cases of his acquaintances that turned "stark raving mad"<sup>73</sup> upon coming in contact with Kidd. Still, they do not mind spending time together.

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<sup>71</sup> Natsume *Sōseki, I Am A Cat*, (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), Vol. 3 Chpt. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Likewise, Vol. 3 Chpt. 2

<sup>73</sup> With one case almost drowning and dying afterwards, and another ending up in an asylum.

Likewise.

## Botchan (坊っちゃん, 1906)

Through a human perspective of the main protagonist nicknamed Botchan, Sōseki concentrates the spotlight on the educational board and the characters responsible for the upbringing of future generations. The story follows the protagonist from his early age to his employment in Shikoku as a teacher of mathematics. Being a former inhabitant of the capital city, his manners differ greatly from those of the locals. His biggest weakness appears to be his lack of knowledge regarding the closeness of relationships that is common in provincial life and the gossip that comes hand in hand with it.

Similarly to *I am a Cat*, *Botchan* offers a wide range of characters. *Intellectuals* in this novel range from pretentious ones to those who do not appear to be or at least would not consider themselves to be *intellectual* despite being part of the academia. Since the nicknames they have been given by the protagonist are quite fitting, the nicknames shall be used in the following section when referring to them.

The novel is also written from the first person perspective. Again, the narrator is emotionally involved in the narration and offers only his own view on the incidents. Since the perspective is limiting to the reader, it is essential to take into account the fact that the narrator's emotive state may influence the narration. Unlike the cat in *I Am a Cat*, Botchan as a narrator is personally involved in the incidents; therefore his view on the events in the novel is limited as well as his insight into what is happening.

Noting that *Botchan* is a humorous novel about interpersonal relationships rather than discussing principles, it is essential to mention that the major themes of the novel are morals and formalities, individualism versus collectivism, provincial life meeting life from the capital. The world of academia is not the main focus in the novel. Therefore, we do not come across sections of text discussing art, philosophies or literature on the scale *I Am a Cat* offers its reader. Consequently, it is difficult to label any of the characters as an *intellectual*. The school where the novel takes place is an ideal place for *intellectuals* to exist, but the characters mostly fulfil the traits of an ironic definition of the term, if at all.

## 2.1 Botchan (坊っちゃん), the first person narrator, teacher of mathematics

As an Edo-born, Botchan is quite different from his new colleagues. However, his hometown is not the only factor forming his attitude towards life. From the times of his childhood, he has been a defiant person, although he could as well be described as rather rash. The steps he follows to prove his beliefs may be as extreme as jumping out of a window, or cutting his finger off<sup>74</sup>, just to prove himself when challenged. Botchan is an ideal example of Sōseki's individualistic characters. Despising insincerity and pretentiousness, Botchan has a strong sense of justice. It is exactly these character traits that prove to be problematic for his new life on Shikoku.

As a child, Botchan was treated strictly, until his family lost hopes in him and ostracized him. Unfair treatment he received from his family members and kindness from the maid Kiyō only aid him in developing a strong sense for justice. Therefore it is not surprising that, when facing ostracization in the workplace, he is willing to act in accordance with his morals. When Botchan first encounters his students, he describes himself as of a smaller size as well as a person that would fight anyone.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the whole novel, the reader encounters several cases that prove that he indeed is not afraid to stand up to anyone as long as the cause is worth it<sup>76</sup>, since Botchan strongly adheres to his own moral code. He often makes assumptions about other characters before knowing the whole truth. Despite that, he is willing to change his opinion based on the facts provided.<sup>77</sup>

Upon being introduced to his responsibilities, Botchan learns about the high expectations of the headmaster:<sup>78</sup> At first, he considers leaving his post despite not

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<sup>74</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 13.

<sup>75</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 38.

<sup>76</sup> Together with Porcupine, Botchan comes in Squash's defence when he is faced with abuse at his own farewell party. He even refuses a wage raise, knowing the prize the offer represents.

<sup>77</sup> Such would be the case of his mistrust of Porcupine turning into a friendship.

<sup>78</sup> "Telling a reckless character like me that I was to be a role model for the students, and that I would be required to conduct myself in such a way that I would be looked up to by everyone in the school, and that a true educator is one who not only imparts knowledge but exerts a positive moral influence in his personal life – this was asking for

having enough resources to live on until he could find a new employment. We can see from this situation that he does not consider himself anything more than a math teacher. He sees no reason for going beyond his responsibilities and lecturing the students on moral values. As he himself states, the salary would not be worth such an effort.<sup>79</sup> However, the headmaster immediately assures him that those are mere hopes that he does not need to fulfil.

Botchan is often impulsive in his words. He complains about the school forcing him to stay in the building until three o'clock despite the fact that he has already finished his lessons.<sup>80</sup> He blames his impulsiveness on being an Edo-born, but we can only guess whether that is the reason. Youth might also be considered a reason for his behaviour. It is, after all, his first experience as a teacher after receiving his diploma. Yet, some might perceive it as naivety or stupidity.

If we consider the preceding, we may conclude that he has a strong moral core but does not strive to present the world with his own intellectual creations. He is a young, honest character concerned with real life worries of practical nature.<sup>81</sup> As for his qualities as an *intellectual*, it would be safe to assume that he does not think of himself as one. He neither writes nor discusses topics other than what concerns people on a day-to-day basis. As a math teacher, he does not perceive it as his field of knowledge. Botchan does not consider himself to be a smart person. Nevertheless, being in the *intelligencia*, he has the potential to be one, unfulfilled throughout the narration of the novel.

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a lot more than he had any reasonable right to expect.”  
Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 30.

79 “Did he really think that anyone of such distinction was going to come all the way out to some country town like this for forty yen a month?”  
Likewise

<sup>80</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 39.

<sup>81</sup> Botchan puts righteousness before anything else. Even if the school’s reputation is at stake, he chooses moral code over the greater good. He would rather turn in his own resignation letter than to let his colleague suffer for the mistake they both did, knowing the mishap was a plan to get rid of Porcupine.  
Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 163.

Since *Botchan* is also written in the first person narration, the description of other characters is limited and ought to be taken with a grain of salt, as he is often prejudiced against his colleagues. In the following articles, the focus is given to the more prominent characters in the novel.

## 2.2 Badger (狸, Tanuki), headmaster

The headmaster seldom appears throughout the novel and does not often speak. He is rather indecisive, therefore Redshirt and other characters may force their own will upon him almost effortlessly.

## 2.3 Redshirt (赤シャツ, Akashatsu), the Assistant Principal, Bachelor of Arts

With an effeminate voice and always sporting a red flannel t-shirt, we could say that Redshirt plays a role of the antagonist. In *Botchan*'s words, Redshirt happens to be "a genuine university graduate, which means that he has to be an important person."<sup>82</sup>

Throughout the novel, Redshirt does indeed enjoy a higher position than his colleagues. Being the Assistant Principal, he may reprimand other teachers for i.e. eating at a restaurant only because he deems it incompatible with the teacher status. On the other hand, he himself pays regular visits to geishas and leaves the school during night duty.

According to *Botchan*'s account, he appears to think of himself highly and has a sly manipulative nature. As far as Redshirt's manipulative techniques are concerned, he often twists words<sup>83</sup> and credits his mischief to others.<sup>84</sup> His younger brother is one of

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<sup>82</sup> Natsume *Sōseki*, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 32.

<sup>83</sup> For example the instance when he tries to persuade *Botchan* not to believe in Porcupine and blames his youth and inexperience for his naivety when it comes to trusting people.  
Natsume *Sōseki*, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 71.

<sup>84</sup> I. e. blaming Porcupine for the grasshopper incident or for taking advantage of *Botchan*'s predecessor.  
Likewise.

the students at the school, and Redshirt takes advantage of the fact by turning the students against the teachers. On another occasion, he turns the uproar among the students and teachers into a newspaper article defaming Botchan.

Another proof of Redshirt's cunning nature would be the fact that he frequently visits Squash's romantic interest. His intentions appear to be to persuade her and her family to favour him over Squash. Exactly for that purpose, he finds a new teaching opening for Squash in a distant school offering better wage.

Any provocation on the accused side would only cause more pestering from Redshirt, therefore it is counterproductive to challenge him about his wrongdoings. As a result, Botchan and Porcupine join hands in order to avenge the poor Squash and question Redshirt about his own infamous mishaps. They end the meeting by throwing eggs at him, prepared to answer for their actions respectively.

#### **2.4 Pale Squash – Mr. Koga (うらなり – 古賀, Uranari - Koga), teacher of English**

Mr. Koga (from here on referred to as Squash) is of pale disposition and of taciturn nature. He allows people to trample him under foot and is rather passive in expressing his own opinions.

Botchan describes him as the definition of the word "gentleman." He helps Botchan to find an accommodation, his passive and polite nature does not allow him to leave his own farewell party despite being ignored by the other teachers. His passive nature enables the other teachers to take advantage of him. Namely, Redshirt frequents Squash's bride-to-be and manages to transfer Squash to another school. In spite of this, Squash maintains contact with the family of his bride-to-be, knowing of Redshirt's plotting.

It is the characters of Botchan and Porcupine that later come to his defence when he is faced with abuse at his own farewell party.

#### **2.5 Porcupine – Mr. Hotta(山嵐 – 堀田, Yamaarashi - Hotta), another teacher of mathematics**

Porcupine is similar in nature to Botchan. He is also honest and hot-blooded when it comes to his opinions. Nevertheless, since he is much older and has lived in the world

of schemes at the school for a while already, he thinks about his actions carefully, unlike the protagonist of the novel. He was born in Aizu and represents strong samurai-like morals.

He understands well the world of the provincial education and the importance of not turning other people against him. That is why he advises Botchan to keep his complaints to himself or share them with him as he is more understanding than others and will not exploit him.<sup>85</sup> In Porcupine's explanation, "Might is right," in other words "the people with power get their way."<sup>86</sup>

Porcupine is a good-natured character. He treats Botchan to a dish of shaved ice when he arrives and offers him advice. He is also the only teacher to come to the defence of Botchan when he is judged for the grasshopper incident. Nevertheless, he maintains his objectivity and brings into question the fact that Botchan also neglected his night duty.<sup>87</sup> As both of them are manipulated by other people they grow to mistrust each other, only to learn further on in the novel of the good intentions both of them held. Toward the end of the novel, Porcupine is forced to pay for following the righteous path and hands in his resignation after a plot to force him out of the school. Having lost the only reason not to act upon the wrongdoings of his colleagues, Porcupine finally gains an opportunity to avenge himself as well as Squash.

## **2.6 Hanger-on – Mr. Yoshikawa (野だいこ – 吉川, Nodaiko – Yoshikawa), art teacher**

The character of the art teacher is also from Tokyo, as Botchan is. However, he differs from him in both his behaviour and opinions. Hanger-on is witnessed to be accompanying Redshirt on every possible occasion.

Clearly, he has recognized Redshirt's power in the school affairs and strives to get on his good side. As a reward for his loyalty, he even acquires Botchan's former lodgings. When Redshirt invites Botchan to join them on a boat, the couple in question would gossip and whisper in order to exclude Botchan from the discussion but also to rouse his curiosity. From time to time, they would exclaim loudly only to provoke

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<sup>85</sup> Natsume *Sōseki, Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 39.

<sup>86</sup> Natsume *Sōseki, Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 48.

<sup>87</sup> Natsume *Sōseki, Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 88.

Botchan's imagination and possibly assume that Porcupine has been behind some of his unfortunate accidents.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> "Did they mean that the Porcupine had incited me to turn the incident into a big brouhaha? Or that he had incited the students to go after me? I couldn't figure out what they were getting at." Natsume *Sōseki*, *Botchan* (New York: Kodansha America, 2006), 69.

## Sanshiro (三四郎, 1908)

If we were to define what type of a novel *Sanshirō* is, it would be the following. Firstly, it is a novel about the impact of westernization on ordinary people. Secondly, it is a coming-of-age novel. Again, we can sense the presence of the author in the events and characters in the book. The background of the story is Tokyo, namely Tokyo Imperial University, the very same university where Sōseki taught. The characters in the book resemble some from his previous novels and even some of his fellow academics.

Parallel to the westernization, the protagonist of the novel represents the traditional, unchanged provincial life coming into contact with the modern, moving urban life. Arriving from the Kumamoto province, where he has lived a slow life of close relationships, Sanshirō exerts himself to keep up with the fresh new experiences university life brings him, yet despite his effort he remains unchanged and longs to return. All the excitement wears off and Sanshirō is “tired of life,”<sup>89</sup> tired of all the novelties and the characters that are exactly like from Ibsen’s book.

In Sōseki’s lifetime, Japan went through severe changes that could be felt in the politics but also in the day-to-day life. The continuing westernization of the nation brought about not only economical changes but also a crisis of identity.<sup>90</sup> Universities were melting pots where the old met the new in the form of literature.<sup>91</sup> The previously analysed novels also mention it, however, *Sanshirō* is the novel most attentive to the impact of foreign influences on education and popular fashions in academia at that time.

As a coming-of-age novel, *Sanshirō* presents the readers with a young character entering university in the capital city, leaving behind his previous life in a province. He encounters new friends and new romantic interests. Characters entering his life represent new experiences and new learning for Sanshirō. Thrown into the stimuli of his new academic surroundings, Sanshirō enthusiastically absorbs the teachings at the university only to abandon his efforts later in the novel. Romantically, he does not make any progress from the beginning of the novel. Identically to the case of sharing a room with a female traveller on his way to Tokyo, he does not take his chance with Mineko, which results in her marrying someone else. Hence, we may say that despite the fact

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<sup>89</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 4, E-book.

<sup>90</sup> In Mineko’s words, we could describe people as stray sheep.

<sup>91</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 306-308.

that the novel is about growing up, Sanshirō, the main character, remains the same in spite of the changes surrounding him.<sup>92</sup>

In the following paragraphs, the focus shifts from the novel as a whole to the characters. Concerning the topic of the thesis, Professor Hirota is the essential character, since he is an active member of the academia with years of experience and influence on his young followers. As for the students, the problem of labelling them as intellectuals or not differs from case to case. For most of them, we shall state that they are potential *intellectuals*, keeping their young age in mind.

### **3.1 Sanshirō Ogawa (小川 三四郎, Ogawa Sanshirō), first year student of Literature**

The main character of the novel plays the role of the unconcerned viewer, slowly developing ties to the other characters. He guides the reader through the story as a neutral link. At the same time, he represents the old, slow ways of Japan that are still alive in the province at that time. His struggles with adapting to the life in the capital lead him to become close with Professor Hirota. As a whole, Sanshirō is rather passive throughout the story. His enthusiasm dies out toward the end and he allows himself to be swayed by the actions of his friends.

Over the course of the first few chapters, the reader is presented with foreshadowing of the rest of the novel. Sanshirō leaves the rural province, excited to enter the world of academia. He misses his opportunity for romance, as he does later in the novel.<sup>93</sup> On the train, he attempts to read Bacon but puts it away, possibly a hint at his future approach to his studies.<sup>94</sup> The train is also where he first encounters Professor Hirota who shares peaches with him, a homely atmosphere that is to be repeated as Sanshirō visits the professor's new house frequently later in the novel.

Sanshirō is no big thinker. He mostly allows himself to be carried away by the events around him. He absorbs thoughts of others, but he rarely expresses his own

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<sup>92</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 326.

<sup>93</sup> Perhaps, the term “stray sheep” applies to him even in this sense.

<sup>94</sup> Sanshiro also aimlessly reads books in the library in search for a book that no one has read before, but without any success.

opinion. Since he is only a first year student baffled by the world, it is hard to consider him one of the discussed *intellectuals*. There is potential in him, however unfulfilled throughout the novel.

### **3.2 Sōhachi Nonomiya (野々宮 宗八, Nonomiya Sōhachi), a graduate student working at the Faculty of Science**

Nonomiya, who is seven years older than Sanshirō, is a graduate student working at the university and also a cousin of Sanshirō's acquaintance and Sanshirō's first encounter in Tokyo. As that, he is Sanshirō's only contact with his home (except for letters). Besides that, he also seemingly represents Sanshirō's romantic rival. Sanshirō imagines Nonomiya is courting Mineko; however, that is proven false towards the end of the novel with appearance of the new character.

Nonomiya devotes most of his time to the study of the pressure exerted by a beam of light. The experiment takes place in a cellar with a complicated machine, a process that is hard to understand for anybody willing to hear his explanation. The study itself is based on a real theory, while the character of Nonomiya is inspired by Sōseki's friend (more on this later on).

As for his free time, Nonomiya spends it reading foreign books, visiting galleries and engaging in discussions with other scholars i. e. at a dinner for literary men organized by Yōjirō. He is quite well-known in foreign academic circles, hence his name is known even to the experts in the field.<sup>95</sup> Yōjirō describes him as a “lighthouse”<sup>96</sup> that “shines in far-off foreign countries, but down at the base of the lighthouse, in Japan, he's pitch dark, no one knows who he is.” According to his words, Nonomiya was a student of Professor Hirota and a “devoted scholar” who “has published a great deal.” As his research engages him the most, he leaves an impression

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<sup>95</sup> Natsume *Sōseki*, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 9, E-book.

<sup>96</sup> This metaphor alludes to “a well-known Japanese proverb for missing what is close at hand while focusing on what is far away, ‘It's darkest beneath the lamp,’ in which the word for ‘lamp’ is synonymous with the word for ‘lighthouse,’ the meaning Sōseki uses here.”

Natsume *Sōseki*, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 4, E-book.

on Sanshirō that “he too must hurry into a full-fledged career and make his contribution to the scholarly world.”

### 3.3 Yōjirō Sasaki (佐々木 与次郎, Sasaki Yōjirō), a first year special student

The first character to guide Sanshirō around the university campus, the embodiment of the new and fast era, Yōjirō is a confident and outspoken young man that has “just started taking courses at the University as a special student after graduating from a private college.”<sup>97</sup> Since anything new arouses his interest, he immediately takes interest in Sanshirō, invites him for a meal and explains to him the particularities of the university life.

As for Yōjirō’s studies, he cannot be described as a devoted student of anything. He does not pay attention in classes nor does he stick with anything long enough.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, his undeniable enthusiasm pushes him forward. In his belief that Professor Hirota possesses a great mind, Yōjirō has chosen him as his mentor and moved in with him. The professor expresses on several occasions that he would appreciate it if Yōjirō concentrated his efforts in a more meaningful way. He describes Yōjirō as a “paper lantern,”<sup>99</sup> meaning that he could “throw a little light around where he sits” and do some useful research.

Yōjirō could be considered the most productive when he follows the professor around and writes texts celebrating him. The most prominent is the case of an essay published in a magazine called *Literature Revue*. The essay itself is filled with skillfully written expressions but lacks coherence. Titled “The Great Darkness” after a nickname Yōjirō gave the professor for his mysterious air, the essay is reportedly one of many that Yōjirō has published in the magazine under various pen names.

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<sup>97</sup> Natsume *Sōseki*, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 3, E-book.

<sup>98</sup> In professor’s Hirota’s words: “He can’t keep his mind on any one thing. He’s like that little stream near Dangozaka: shallow and narrow, the water constantly changing. There’s no discipline to what he does.” Natsume *Sōseki*, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 7, E-book.

<sup>99</sup> Natsume *Sōseki*, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 4, E-book.

In this particular essay, Yōjirō argues for the employment of a native Japanese professor teaching foreign literature at the university. Reaction to the essay include the organization of student protests against foreign lecturers of literature as well as a reactionary piece in another paper proclaiming the efforts to be a manipulation led by Professor Hirota in order to gain employment at the university. Although a native professor is hired towards the end of the novel, Professor Hirota is not the one chosen for the vacancy, not to mention that Sashiro is assumed to be the author of the incriminating text. The incident is inspired by a real event in Sōseki's life and will be described further in this text.

As mentioned previously, Yōjirō's enthusiasm is undeniably powerful and irresponsible.<sup>100</sup> It stirs him to action and inspires other people to follow him (but it is worth mentioning that those closest to him do not have much of a choice in the matter). He himself explains his passion the following way:

“We young men are the ones who hold today's literary power in our hands, so we have to take the initiative to make every word, every phrase, count. The literary world is undergoing a spectacular revolution. Everything is moving in a new direction, and we must not be left behind. We have to make the new trends go the way we want them to, or it's not worth being alive. The way they throw the word 'literature' around, you'd think it was garbage, but that's just the 'literature' you hear about in places like the University. What we mean by literature, the new literature, is a great mirror of life itself. The new literature will have to influence the movement of the whole of Japanese society.”<sup>101</sup>

In summary, what Yōjirō's explanation hints at is that there is a significant foreign influence on Japanese literature, the norms of literature are changing and it is the young generation who plays the major role in the movement. Japan is adopting Naturalism at that time in its own original way and every effort counts, since “writing anything, however modest, [is] better than not writing at all.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>When his interest is aroused, he is not concerned with the question of money. He borrows from anyone and forgets to return his loans. On the other hand he is ready to pay for his friends anytime. When it comes to money and his actions, he does not concern himself with possible future consequences.

<sup>101</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 6, E-book.

<sup>102</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 7, E-book.

Yōjirō is also the one who mentions the thought of everyone being just like an Ibsen character. He explains that “people just don’t act freely the way Ibsen’s characters do. Inside, though, something is usually bothering them,”<sup>103</sup> which means that the Ibsen essence is internal but not external. In Yōjirō’s words, he is not the only one thinking that. This statement is essential in terms of analyzing the novel as a whole. Yōjirō sees that his contemporary generation is dissatisfied and is not afraid to speak out about the fact.

### 3.4 Chō Hirota (広田 萁, Hirota Chō), professor of English at the First National College

Professor Hirota is a living link between the old Japan and the new Japan, as well as, due to undeniable similarities, the embodiment of Sōseki’s presence in the book. He sports a “thick moustache on a long, thin face,” and appears to be around forty years old.<sup>104</sup> Reportedly, he is a bachelor teaching at the First National College for more than twelve years. Although English is his professional field and he is well-versed in foreign matters, he has never been abroad. Yōjirō, his admirer, frequently follows him around and describes him as a philosopher.<sup>105</sup>

The first encounter with the professor occurs on the train Sanshirō takes to travel to Tokyo at the beginning of the novel. He offers peaches to Sanshirō as well as his opinion on peaches in general. In his view, peaches are the “fruit of immortality.”<sup>106</sup> Throughout the novel, the professor’s theories on everything flow out of his mouth just as spontaneously as this statement.

There are occasions in the book where Professor Hirota appears to be a defeated man. He feels that the foreign influence has forced itself into Japan and that Japan is

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<sup>103</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 6, E-book.

<sup>104</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 1, E-book.

<sup>105</sup> “In school he only teaches English, but what’s interesting about him is that the man himself is made of philosophy.” Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 4, E-book.

<sup>106</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 1, E-book.

approaching an irreversible change where the original state will no longer exist.<sup>107</sup> He himself enjoys the privilege of being able to read foreign books. Yet his passive stance towards the movements in society at that time suggests that he prefers the way Japan used to be.<sup>108</sup> He cannot move forward with the flow yet he cannot move back, he is stuck in between the two forces of the traditional and the new.<sup>109</sup> Despite that, he is highly individualistic, indifferent to what others might think of him.<sup>110</sup> According to Yōjirō, he is full of contradictions.

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<sup>107</sup> He assumes that Japan as it was is about to change irreversibly (possibly it will not be the same country again): “We Japanese are sad-looking next to them [Westerners]. We can beat the Russians, we can become a ‘first-class power,’ but it doesn’t make any difference. We still have the same faces, the same feeble little bodies. Just look at the houses we live in, the gardens we build around them. They’re just what you’d expect from faces like this. [...] Japan is going to perish.” Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 1, E-book.

<sup>108</sup> “Hirota recognizes the inevitability of change, but is dubious about Japan’s chances of surviving the brutal competition of the twentieth century. He says that he prefers the new generation, whose members pretended always to be acting on behalf of someone other than themselves, whether their ruler, their country, or society as a whole.” Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 327.

<sup>109</sup> The professor likens the Japan society to a modern brick building standing next to an old lighthouse from another era: “The two of them together looked absurd, but no one noticed. It just didn’t bother anyone. This was representative of Japanese society.” Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 4, E-book.

<sup>110</sup> His unique approach to the question could be defined in his words as following: “Even bigger than Japan is the inside of your head. Don’t ever surrender yourself—not to Japan, not to anything. You may think that what you’re doing is for the sake of the nation, but let something take possession of you like that, and all you do is bring it down.”

Natsume Sōseki, *Sanshirō*. (London: Penguin Books, 2009), chapt. 1, E-book.

He is ready to offer his opinion on anything, yet he has not written any book, only essays.<sup>111</sup> Yōjirō dubs him the “Great Darkness,” since he is a mysterious man unknown to the world despite having a great deal to offer. Hence, Yōjirō decides to lead a movement to gain the professor a teaching position of Foreign Literature and shine a little light on him himself. The plan, however, turns against him in the end.

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<sup>111</sup> Possibly, he might be working on a bigger piece and Yojirō hopes he finishes it before his death.

## **Kokoro (こころ, 1914)**

Kokoro belongs to the last literary works Sōseki wrote. As such, it is undeniably different in style and tone when compared to the previously analyzed works. It is more grown up, serious, perhaps even depressing. The novel is divided into three main parts. The first section of the storyline covers the encounter between the anonymous first person narrator and Sensei, an older man that he has chosen as his mentor. The second part is again narrated by the young man. As he visits his hometown to prepare for his father's death, he receives a letter by Sensei informing him of Sensei's death. The third part is the letter itself containing a detailed confession of Sensei's reasons for being the person he was, in first person narration.

In regards to the topic of this thesis, we shall focus on the character of Sensei only.

### **4.1 Sensei (先生), the narrator of the third part of the novel**

The very first time Sensei appears in the second chapter. He is spotted by the narrator while in company of a Westerner before taking a swim in the sea. He immediately rouses the narrator's interest. The narrator himself is not sure what sparked his curiosity in the first place, except for the foreigner's presence. Despite the source of the respect he feels toward the man remaining unknown, the narrator calls the man Sensei almost from the very beginning.

Sensei lives a rather reclusive life with his wife. At first, his home suggests that he has no financial problems and lives a comfortable life. However, he does not have any guests other than the narrator himself, who is quite persistent about visiting Sensei. Throughout the novel, the reader learns that Sensei's reclusiveness is based on a conscious decision. After following Sensei on his regular visits to a grave, we learn about a heartbreaking story of a betrayed friendship. Ashamed of his failing as a human being, Sensei has opted for a life filled with regret. "Sensei, another of Sōseki's 'idle intellectuals,' has spent a wasted life because of his guilt over having stolen the woman his best friend loved."<sup>112</sup>

When it comes to his productivity as a scholar, it cannot be stated that Sensei published or wrote anything else apart from the confessional letter. He is a university

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<sup>112</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 339.

graduate but is not employed. However, as a major influence on the narrator, it is essential to consider Sensei as the one worthy of being called an *intellectual*. The narrator certainly admires him and is deeply affected by him, yet he only offers descriptions of their meeting that hint at Sensei's deep sorrow. As Sensei cannot be described as very talkative in those descriptions, we can only guess from the conversations how he influences the narrator. His admiration for Sensei and surprise that he is not known to others is summed up in the following:

“Sensei's name was quite unknown in the world. I seemed to be the only person who was in a position to really respect him for his learning and ideas. This fact always troubled me. He would never discuss the matter, simply saying, ‘There's no point in someone like me opening his mouth in public.’ This struck me as ridiculously humble.”<sup>113</sup>

The topics of conversation, which we could assume made the narrator ponder, cover death and suicide, love, money, trust in humanity, etc. However, since the narrator does not often mention it, we can only conclude that those conversations made him think about Sensei himself. The narrator even admits that he often fails to understand the intellectual questions.<sup>114</sup> The reason why Sensei brings up these topics, it is because those are the thoughts that haunt his mind. He does not consider himself to be a good thinker; he is only still questioning his past.

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<sup>113</sup> Natsume *Sōseki, Kokoro*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), chpt. 11 . E-book.

<sup>114</sup> “I freely acknowledge that Sensei taught me much about intellectual questions, but I admit there were also times when I failed to gain what I sought from him in matters of the mind. Conversations with him could be frustratingly inconclusive.” Natsume *Sōseki, Kokoro*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), chpt. 31 . E-book.

## Sōseki as an *intellectual* and his presence in his works

Sōseki's presence in his works cannot be denied. Firstly, there are certain points in his fiction that correspond with his life. As a scholar himself, who published frequently on various topics and influenced other writers, it is essential to state that Sōseki himself was an *intellectual*. Secondly, except for *Sanshirō*, all of the analyzed novels are written in the first person narration, which enables both the reader and the author to experience the story more closely. It would only make sense if Sōseki were to incorporate aspects of himself into his works through this method.

Sōseki's childhood was not an easy period for him. He received meticulous education in the Chinese classical tradition and, since he was born before the Meiji Restoration of 1868, it meant that the roots of his whole life were set in the more traditional Japan. Throughout his young years he moved between several adoptive families, while his biological parents were still alive, making him unable to recognize his own parents upon returning home. "Undoubtedly the conflicting emotions produced in the boy accounted for much in the hypersensitive, suspicious side to Sōseki's character that revealed itself with increasing intensity as he grew older."<sup>115</sup>

His university years were spent studying at the English literature department at Tokyo Imperial University. The university would be where he was exposed to various philosophical movements, literary theory and other branches of sciences. His university years also mark the beginning of his writings and are followed by him teaching at Matsuyama Middle School in Ehime Prefecture.<sup>116</sup> After marrying, he was employed at the Fifth Higher School in Kumamoto<sup>117</sup> and few years later he would be ordered to travel to England as an official overseas exchange student.<sup>118</sup>

The period of his studies in England was a breaking point for Sōseki. His focus in studying literature shifted from literary works to works of science. In his journals, we can notice that he was struck hard by colonial discrimination from the mouths of

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<sup>115</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 306.

<sup>116</sup> That would be where *Botchan* takes place.

<sup>117</sup> The place where Sanshiro attended school before moving to Tokyo.

<sup>118</sup> Natsume Sōseki, "Introduction," in *Theory Of Literature And Other Critical Writings*, ed. by Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). E-book.

Westerners (whom he scorned himself) and grew contemptuous of Western society. Upon returning from England, Sōseki was facing a personal crisis following the treatment he received there.<sup>119</sup> “Sōseki was repelled especially by commercialism and emphasis on money he detected everywhere around him.”<sup>120</sup> Moreover, if we take into account his stomach ailments, his age and the beginning wave of *Nippon shugi* (Japanism) gaining strength in Japanese *intellectual* circles, it is no wonder that even Sōseki, who frequently criticized Japan, had little positive words to say about England in his diary.<sup>121</sup>

Shortly after publishing his first fiction,<sup>122</sup> he became well-known in Japanese literary circles. Despite that, his employment at Tokyo Imperial University came as a surprise to everyone, especially to Lafcadio Hearn,<sup>123</sup> who was a professor at the university at that time and whom Sōseki replaced as a teacher of literature. Due to Hearn’s popularity, a few protests against Sōseki’s strict educational methods followed. He managed to gain favour of the students after teaching Shakespeare, only to be struck again by tragedy. A student of his committed suicide. Although there is no way of proving it, Sōseki presumably blamed himself, as he had scolded the student in question just a few days before the incident, not to mention that many of his students failed university altogether.<sup>124</sup>

Sōseki later took up a job at *Asahi* newspaper under a contract that allowed him to devote his time to writing anything he would like. “He continued to think of himself as a scholar, however, and he surrounded himself with a dozen young ‘disciples,’ some of

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<sup>119</sup> Likewise.

<sup>120</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 309.

<sup>121</sup> Keene, Donald, *Modern Japanese Diaries: The Japanese At Home And Abroad As Revealed Through Their Diaries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 213-214

<sup>122</sup> A series of short stories „Tower of London“ (London Tou) and „I Am a Cat“ (Wagahai wa neko de aru).

<sup>123</sup> Lafcadio Hearn went by a Japanese name Koizumi Yakumo. Under this name, he is mentioned in *Sōseki’s* *Sanshiro*.

<sup>124</sup> *Sōseki*, Natsume, “Translator’s Note,” in *Sanshirō*, translated by Jay Rubin (London: Penguin Books, 2009). E-book.

them former students, as he produced a prodigious stream of publications (including two sizeable tomes of literary theory and criticism based on his University lectures) before joining Hearn in Zōshigaya Cemetery in 1916.”<sup>125</sup>

In his final years of life, Sōseki was more serious and so are his literary works. His health was only deteriorating and the gradual change in his humour is mirrored in his texts. “The early novels are marked by a humour derived in part from the professional raconteurs who carried on the traditions of old Edo, in part from English literature, especially of the eighteenth century, Sōseki’s special field of interest. Humour lingers in his work at least through the first trilogy, though the tone of the novels grows progressively darker. The style of the late works is an almost transparent medium for the dark and bitter events related.”<sup>126</sup>

As for the way Sōseki appears in the previously analyzed works, we shall discuss that in the following section. On the whole, we would be only guessing in most cases, but it is undeniable that every author puts a part of themselves into their works. In some cases, the input of the author’s persona is more visible.<sup>127</sup>

In *I am a Cat*, we could argue that the cat itself or the character of the elderly teacher of English are the author himself, humouring his own faults. The narrating I is extremely suggestive of the author’s input of his own personality, but there is no other argument supporting this statement. The profession of Mr. Sneaze also hints at Sōseki’s presence, although highly caricatured.<sup>128</sup> However, “unlike the scholars of literature that

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<sup>125</sup> Likewise.

<sup>126</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 306.

<sup>127</sup> Many of *Sōseki*’s works are written in “confessional mode” as a first person narration, which suggests author’s presence. “Literary confession, however, should not be confused with an act of confession, for in this case it is the form itself that produces the ‘inner life’ that is confessed.” Kōjin, Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 74.

<sup>128</sup> According to Keene, “*I Am a Cat* enjoyed instant popularity because of the effective satire *Sōseki* directed at himself and his friends. *Sōseki* appears, in a conspicuously caricatured form, as the cat’s owner.”

appear in his novels, such as Prof. Kushami and Sanshirō, Sōseki himself had an unusually keen interest in the sciences and was also aware of its monstrous ability to intervene in social affairs outside its status as thought.”<sup>129</sup> Another instance of Sōseki’s presence in *I Am a Cat* is when Sōseki mentions himself in the novel, again in a self-deprecating tone.<sup>130</sup>

Another fact worth mentioning is that Sōseki did not take only himself as a model for the character in his books. In *I Am a Cat*, he portrays his protégé Terada Torahiko as Avalon Coldmoon, both of whom are physicists.<sup>131</sup>

The whole setting of *Botchan* is set in Matsuyama, where Sōseki taught. He himself denied the novel being based on real events and real people,<sup>132</sup> however that does not exclude the possibility that he was inspired by the people there to write the novel, relating himself to *Botchan* through first person narration. There is also a possibility of Sōseki being Redshirt, as he himself jokingly admitted.<sup>133</sup> “Most of this novel is fictional, but indirectly at least it conveyed Sōseki’s feelings of awkwardness at being at school where he was not only the best-educated teacher, despite his youth, but drew a higher salary than even the principal.”<sup>134</sup> “As with the *Botchan* protagonist,

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Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 312.

<sup>129</sup> Nagayama Yasuo, *Ōgai no okaruto, Sōseki no kagaku* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999), 11.

<sup>130</sup> The characters in the novel discuss *Sōseki*’s poetry and proclaim him to be a fool for not caring whether his poems have any meaning.

Natsume Sōseki, *I Am A Cat*, (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), Vol. 2 Chpt. 3, E-book.

<sup>131</sup> Natsume Sōseki, “Introduction,” in *Theory Of Literature And Other Critical Writings*, ed. by Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). E-book.

<sup>132</sup> Natsume Sōseki, “My Individualism,” in *Theory Of Literature And Other Critical Writings*, Edited by Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). E-book.

<sup>133</sup> Likewise.

<sup>134</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 309.

whose qualities of impetuosity, guilelessness, and moral integrity stand as thinly veiled self-reference, one can detect here similar qualities attributed to the author's boyhood persona."<sup>135</sup>

In *Sanshirō*, Sōseki's presence may be felt profoundly. He mentions Lafcadio Hearn by his Japanese name in the text and addresses the whole affair about Sōseki replacing him by turning the circumstances around. In the universe of *Sanshirō*, there are no protests in favour of a foreign teacher; instead, there are protests in favour of employing a native Japanese teacher. Sōseki himself is then portrayed in Professor Hirota, the teacher students promote as a possible choice for the position. He is a teacher of English as well, particularly at the First National College where Sōseki taught.<sup>136</sup>

As for *Kokoro*, apart from the connection between complicated family situations and adoption, or a possible legacy left to his disciples, it is arguable whether there is a link to Sōseki's life. However, there is a slight possibility that the character of Sensei represents his heavy conscience over the suicide of his student. "The despair of Sensei and his distrust of the world are traits easily associated with Sōseki's own nature, but it is not as an alter ego that he lives in the reader's mind."<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> marcus 63

<sup>136</sup> Natsume Sōseki, "Introduction," in *Theory Of Literature And Other Critical Writings*, ed. by Michael K. Bourdaghs, Atsuko Ueda, and Joseph A. Murphy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). E-book. .

<sup>137</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 340.

## Typical *intellectual* in Sōseki's works

The previously analyzed fictional characters can be divided into several categories. Using these categories, we shall discern the basic types of *intellectuals* in the selected works by Sōseki. Since “*intellectuals* whose mission is to examine everything are naturally prone to examine their own roles,”<sup>138</sup> we may state that through his works, Sōseki is examining himself and society, especially academia, itself.

### 5.1 Potential versus realized *intellectual*

The first distinction in terms of characterizations of *intellectuals* would cover the potential of a character to be realized as an *intellectual* and the characters that can be labelled with the term with confidence. On the whole, potential *intellectuals* prevail in the selected works.

In *I Am a Cat*, the cat could possibly become an *intellectual* if it was a human or if it was active in sharing its findings about the human world. Theoretically, we could state that the novel itself is the cat's *intellectual* legacy, since it is written as a memoir. The rest of the characters are more or less productive *intellectuals*. They publish, write or hold lectures (private or public). They actively discuss various topics.

In the case of *Botchan*, however, the characters are placed in an environment ideal for the birth of an *intellectual*, yet they all fail to meet the criteria. None of them, throughout the novel, actively devote their time to extracurricular activities that could be deemed *intellectual*. Therefore, their potential remains unfulfilled.

As for *Sanshirō*, the ratio of *intellectual* characters is balanced. The protagonist himself remains unsophisticated to the end,<sup>139</sup> therefore again not fulfilling his potential. On the other hand, the characters of Nonomiya and Hirota are well-respected scholars, actively productive in expressing their opinions, influencing other thinkers and interested in other fields of knowledge. Yōjirō also has a more active approach to the whole matter than Sanshirō, he writes essays and is interested in anything new. We could even say that he is halfway there and only needs experience.

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<sup>138</sup> The Social Science Encyclopedia, 2nd ed., s. v. “intellectuals”

<sup>139</sup> Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 326.

*Kokoro*'s Sensei is recognized as an *intellectual* by his own student due to their frequent conversations. He did not publish anything and his sole legacy is the letter he writes before his death.

## **5.2 Background for *intellectual* characters**

As for the background, all of the characters in question share an environment that allows them to have access to knowledge. In *I Am a Cat*, it is the house of Mr. Sneaze or the particular places of employment for each of the characters. In *Botchan* and *Sanshirō*, it is the school premises. In *Kokoro*, Sensei is described as an owner of a vast library and a university-educated man.

Curiously, unlike the author, none of the characters are said to have been abroad. They delve in foreign literature but have not tasted the real world described in their books.

## **5.3 Strong versus mild personality**

In general, we may also divide Sōseki's *intellectual* into groups based on the strength of their personality. First, there are the clearly stubborn or arrogant characters of Mr. Sneaze, Botchan, Porcupine and Yōjirō etc. Even *Redshirt* could be called stubborn in his efforts to benefit himself.

In terms of seriousness, the characters range from the Kidd to the joking Waverhouse, while the light-noted characters appear mostly in the older novels.

Another approach to their division would concern the issue of reclusiveness. Talkative characters such as Waverhouse or Yōjirō would be opposed to socially reclusive characters as Mr. Sneaze, Coldmoon, Kidd, Squash, Nonomiya, Hirota and finally Sensei. By combining these polar types of characters, Sōseki creates deep conversations and realistic characters.

## **5.4 Ironically *intellectual* characters**

Apart from the unmarked meaning of the term, as we have stated in the introduction, another definition of the term exists. Connotative colouring of the term is

used ironically for individuals wasting their efforts in any intellectual activity. Sōseki's works may also be viewed from this perspective.

On the whole, the incidents in the older works of Sōseki are rather humorous and their intent is to ridicule the Japanese intelligencia in general, Sōseki himself included, as has already been stated. Only the background and circumstances change.

In terms of Sōseki's work we may observe a phenomena best described as idle *intellectuals*.<sup>140</sup> The term concerns *intellectual* characters living a comfortable life, almost without obligations. Their lack of business in life is compensated by discussions on various topics, wasting their time away in thought.

The group of *intellectuals* in *I Am a Cat* is an ideal representation of the term, with a hint of sarcasm in it. On the other hand, Sensei in *Kokoro* is also without any social obligations, however, there is no trace of humour in labelling him as such.

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<sup>140</sup> Term used by Keene.

Donald Keene, *Dawn To the West: Japanese Literature Of The Modern Era: Fiction*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 339.

## Conclusion

In works of Natsume Sōseki, readers may encounter a recurring type of fictional characters called *intellectuals*. The term has been used throughout history as a word denominating “thinkers,” however, there have been instances where the word has been associated with negative traits or used as an ironic commentary on one’s futile intellectual efforts.

Concerning the selected works of Natsume Sōseki, we may state that an ideal *intellectual* is in need of access to knowledge in the form of a library or any discussion-friendly institution. To define an *intellectual*, the character in question needs to be expressive in their opinions (by publishing or lecturing) in an active manner, usually influencing other characters. Those characters in Sōseki’s works follow his personal individualism. There are recurring personality traits in these characters such as stubbornness, expressivity, reclusiveness, and respect from at least one other fictional character. A typical category of an *intellectual* in Sōseki would be an *idle intellectual*, an individual using their intellectual abilities leisurely in their free time, living a comfortable life without any obligations.

The purpose of these characters is to generally caricaturize the Japanese society of Sōseki’s lifetime, especially his friends and the author himself. Apart from conveying Sōseki’s opinion on the changing Japan and individualism (typical topics of discussion when it comes to Sōseki), the characters of *intellectuals* often represent the author himself, his friends, or are used as commentary on incidents from Sōseki’s memory.

## Shrnutí

Tato práce se zabývá tématem postav intelektuálů ve vybraných dílech Nacumeho Sósekiho. V dílech Nacumeho Sósekiho se tento typ fiktivních postav pravidelně vyskytuje.

V úvodu je rozebrán termín “intelektuál” jako takový s ohledem na to, jak se význam tohoto slova měnil v průběhu dějin v závislosti na kulturním kontextu. Obecně se jedná o slovo označující “myslitele,” ale používá se i jako negativní označení nebo ironická nadsázka.

V rámci děl Natsume Sósekiho (dále Sóseki) se jedná o typ intelektuála, který má přístup k informacím skrze knihovny nebo instituce jako jsou univerzity a školy. K identifikaci těchto postav je potřeba, aby aktivně vyjadřovaly své názory (v psané nebo mluvené formě) tak, aby ovlivnili druhé (ideálně prostřednictvím publikací nebo přednášek). Tyto postavy v dílech Sósekiho často představují zosobnění jeho osobní teorie individualismu. Typickým Sósekiho intelektuálem je tzv. zahálčivý intelektuál, tedy jednotlivec, který svůj intelekt využívá ke zkrácení svého volného času, a který žije v pohodlí a bez závazků.

Sóseki tyto postavy využívá ke karikaturizaci japonské společnosti své doby, svých přátel, ale i sama sebe. Tyto postavy často zobrazují právě autora samotného i jeho známé a slouží jako prostředek k zpracování některých z jeho vlastních vzpomínek, ale také jeho názory na měnící se japonskou společnost a individualistické názory jako takové.

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