

Kokoro by natsume soseki

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Natsume Soseki has written Kokoro in such a way that the reader be acquainted with Boku and Sensei. Through them, Soseki believed that a person's actions should be coming from their true emotions and not by what others perceive of it. A person should always do things in accordance to what he thinks is right and not by merely considering what the people dictates to him. Sometimes people tend to live up to what the people tell them because their reputation is at stake. Just like the planned graduation party of Boku. Even though Boku did not want to have a party, his parents insisted because his father has a reputation to maintain in their community.

Kokoro was also written in such a way that there is a special connection between Sensei and Boku in being able to see their imperfections by means of their shallowness. Despite the two characters having different worldly views, they still found company in each other's presence. Boku is somewhat a person who wants to know who Sensei really is and Sensei was not the type of person who would reveal the real him.

The style of the first part of Kokoro resembles that of a detective novel, and helps first to establish the reader's curiosity towards Sensei. Narrator Boku provides no self-introduction and no adequate explanation for his interest in Sensei. Instead, he continuously feeds the reader small 'clues' - pieces to the puzzle of Sensei - to gain the reader's curiosity.

"I cannot tell you why," Sensei said to me, "but for a very good reason I wish to go to that grave alone. Even my wife, you see, has never come with me." [End of passage]

Sudden breaks in narrative are often used to leave these clues hanging, helping to compound the suspense felt by the reader. Additionally, despite having already experienced all the events he describes, Boku chooses to present them in the original chronological order and to narrate his original thoughts regarding each event.

“ I wondered also why Sensei felt the way he did towards mankind.”

Revealing his thoughts and experiences in this manner assists Boku in linking with the reader, as it constructs between them a shared interest towards Sensei. Soseki seeks to direct this interest, as evident in the sentence:

“ Had I been curious in an impersonal and analytical way, the bond between us would surely not have lasted.”

This explanation of the nature of Boku’s curiosity can be interpreted as a suggestion to the reader; in order to complete the puzzle of Sensei, the reader needs to explore Sensei on a more personal level – not simply to analyse from a third person perspective, but rather to attempt to interpret Boku’s regard for Sensei by examining the similar attitudes and values that the two espouse.

In the third part of Kokoro, Soseki switches to a new narrative frame, and we read Sensei’s letter through the eyes of Boku. Sensei directly addresses Boku in the letter – driving us as readers even closer to Boku, as we try to interpret Sensei’s words through the mindset of Boku.

Contrastingly, despite the title ' My Parents and I', part two of the novel serves to distance the reader from Boku's family. As readers, our interest draws to a peak when Sensei agrees to tell Boku about his past. However, Sensei does not, and instead Boku's father's illness forces Boku to leave for home. This is frustrating for Boku, and for the reader, as is revealed in the passage:

'... there was much that I did not know about Sensei. He had not told me about his past, as he had promised. I could not be content until he was fully revealed to me.' Even as Boku's father lies on his deathbed, Boku's thoughts wander towards Sensei – physically represented by his moving back and forth between his bedroom and his father's bedroom.

In the process of affiliation with Sensei and Boku, the reader is exposed to the two characters' disdain towards external appearances and opinions. Both Sensei and Boku show their disregard for academia. Boku shows little regard for his diploma – he ' pretends his diploma is a telescope' surveys the world outside his window in it, and then throws it down on his desk. Similarly, Sensei does not know where he put his diploma. In contrast, Boku's parents hold Boku's diploma in the highest regard. They scold Boku for not having taken better care of the diploma, and display it in the house.

Boku's narration shows that he also is not interested in the appearance of things. He tends to observe, conclude and investigate on it. Just like what happened when he saw Sensei at the beach centre. He overlooked at Sensei's appearance and focused his attention more on his behaviour thus

speculating Sensei's state of mind. " He was always aloof and [...] seemed totally indifferent to his surroundings".

Sensei bears a similar disregard towards appearances to others and describes it: " I used to consider it a disgrace to be found ignorant by other people. But now, I find that I am not ashamed of knowing less than others ...". Sometimes people tend to pull themselves down because they think they know less about things. But come to think of it, even though a person does not graduate high school or college, it means that he is more ignorant than those who have graduated. People know different things and not all individuals can learn everything.

With these, it forms a sharp contrast with Boku's parents. The parents of Boku have a high regard for the physicality of things while Sensei and Boku do not. Boku's parents seem to relate the physical aspect of a thing with its value just like the diploma. For them, being able to have a diploma is something that should be cherished, treasured and be well cared of. While for Sensei and Boku, a diploma is somewhat like a representation of the knowledge acquired while in the university. A diploma is just a paper, nothing more, nothing less. What is important are the learning obtained during the years studying in the university.

In conclusion, Kokoro is a classic example of presenting two characters that may turn out to be indifferent from one another at first but later on saw their similarities. Even though these two characters obviously come from different generations, they still were able to find a common ground. These two started out as complete strangers and tended to avoid the fact that they

needed each other's company but in the end, it just proves that no matter the distance of two persons, they still are close when always remembered.

Bibliography

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