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YASUNARI KAWABATA AND NEO-SENSUALISM IN JAPANESE LITERATURE ON THE SILK ROAD

Svetlana GRUBOR

Philological Faculty, University of Belgrade

Svetlana.grubor83@gmail.com

Abstract

The early twenties in Japanese literature and art were marked by the rapid development of various modernist trends. There were many different literary movements in those years, but among them all, two groups of modernist views stood out: "new art" and the most interesting phenomenon in Japanese modernist literature of the time, so-called "neo-sensualism" known as "The Literature of Feelings".

From the point of view of Japanese neo-sensualists, literature should not be merely a copy of objective reality; in their opinion, literature is always the fruit of subjective impressions, feelings, author's doubts. One of the most significant representatives of neo-sensualism is Yasunari Kawabata, who has taken a special place in this group of young artists. Unlike the others, he did not abandon national artistic traditions, classical ideas, and images about beauty. Neo-sensualists have much in common with traditional Japanese aesthetics. The characteristics of neo-sensualism, the freshness and expressiveness of metaphors, the focus on the nuances of human feelings and emotions are the hallmarks of classical Japanese literature, especially poetry, but they were proclaimed innovative at that time.

This was the reason why Kawabata's novella "The Dancing Girl of Izu" published in 1926 was considered a typical work of neo-sensualism. A story of first love, in which the word "love" was never mentioned, but coloured by subtle nuances of feelings of joy, confusion, restlessness, pain, gratitude. Created in the tradition of classical Japanese literature, it was the first significant work in which the distinctive features of the artist Kawabata's style – honesty, gentleness, delicacy and serenity – are manifested.

Keywords: *Japanese literature, modernist trends, neo-sensualism, Yasunari Kawabata, The Dancing Girl of Izu.*

Introduction

Isolated from Western European countries, Japanese literature focused on preserving national and cultural traditions of Japan. With the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, it became



increasingly in touch with the world of Western culture ideas. The path taken by Japanese literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century largely reminds of the Western path of literary development. The trends that are more or less close to the analogous Western movements of naturalism, impressionism, surrealism, existentialism also exist and thrive in Japanese prose.

Japanese literature is dominated by the concept that the term "modernist literature" refers to the various avant-garde and "art for art's sake" movements which took place between 1924 and 1931. Under the literary movements of modernism, the trends that existed in the 1920s and 1930s such as neo-sensualism, the school of "new art", intellectualism and neo-psychologism were considered. All these movements were created by the process of urbanization that was accelerated after the Great Canto earthquake (1923). Modernist writers strived to reflect and depict urbanized, rapidly changing middle-class life with the help of a new language and new writing techniques. In addition to this concept, modernist literature was also developed beyond "the art for art's sake" literature, which opposed the ideas of proletarian literature.

In 1968, during the celebration of Meiji Restoration, Yasunari Kawabata became the first Japanese writer to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. The rationale was that he was awarded the Nobel Prize "for his narrative mastery, which expresses the essence of the Japanese mind with great sensibility ". The Nobel Committee highlighted his 3 novels, "Snow Country", "Thousand Cranes", and "Old Town". Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese Nobel laureate, is a writer who paved the way for the popularization of Japanese literature outside the Land of the Rising Sun.

Literary critics have long debated which culture would be more appropriate to attribute Yasunari Kawabata's broad creative heritage – to Japanese or to Western. In fact, he was a self-made author, having no analogy either in the East or in the West.

Yasunari Kawabata was born on June 11, 1899 in Osaka into an educated and wealthy family. His father, a doctor, died when Yasunari was only two years old. The boy's mother passed away one year after his father's death. He was raised by his maternal grandparents. From his childhood, Yasunari dreamed of becoming a painter, but at the age of 12 he decided to become a writer, and in 1914 he began writing an autobiographical story, published in 1925 under the title "The Diary of a Sixteen-Year-Old". At the beginning of his literary career, Kawabata accepted and loved the ideas of Western modernism and, along with other writers, he founded a trend in Japanese literature called neo-sensualism (reminiscent of Western intuitionism).

It was during this period that the famous novel, "The Dancing Girl of Izu", was written, describing what he experienced as a high school student when he lived with his distant relatives in Tokyo's Asakusa quart. This Kawabata's extraordinary novella was published in the "Bungei Dzidai" magazine, which he founded together with Yokomitsu Riichi, and where he worked as a member of



the editorial board in 1925. As a pearl of neo-sensualism, "this novella is the first extraordinary example of Kawabata's dazzling eloquence, but also of restrained, gentle prose at the same time. With the *Dancing Girl* Kawabata masterfully revives the experiences of his early youth, both sad and sensual". (Marković, 2009:8).

At the same time, in his works Kawabata is no less active in his effort to comply with the national literary and cultural tradition, whose ideas will become dominant in his future work.

Neosensualism in Japanese Literature

The early-1920s in Japanese literature and art were marked by the rapid development of various modernist trends.

Two groups of modernist ideas stood out:

- "new art", and
- "neo-sensualism", the most interesting phenomenon in Japanese modernist literature of that time.

Neo-sensualism arose under the influence of European modernist trends (Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, etc.), as well as the principle of the "L'art pour l'art" aesthetic movement ("Art for Art's Sake"). It united young enthusiasts around itself, creating the avant-garde literary trend "neo-sensualism" known as "Literature of Feelings" or "School of New Sensuality".

The most prominent representatives of this trend who had a significant influence on the entire later literary avant-garde of Japan (and beyond it – on the world literary avant-garde) were its founders, Yasunari Kawabata, and his creative counterpart – the antipode, Yokomitsu Riichi. The works about them and their biographies portray them as traditionally opposed, calling Kawabata the "writer of the moon" (for some "feminine sentimentality and wonderful sadness"), and Riichi Yokomitsu the "solar writer" (for "masculine rudeness and courage"). This movement also Writers Teppei Kataoka, Kameo Ciga, Taramako Ito, Kanesaku Ishihama, Shigesaku Sasaki, Micuzo Sasaki, etc., also belonged to this movement.

Neo-sensualists accepted the quotations of one of the most representative writers of this literary school, Yokomitsu Riichi, one of the main theorists of this movement, that "man does not accept the outside world, but only his own understanding of that world, which means that art cannot represent objective reality, but only its subjective feeling".

In his doctoral dissertation, SuJiuGao, states Jokomucu's words, about his understanding of neo-sensualism:



“I believe that futurism, stereo-school, symbolism, structuralism, modernism and part of factualism----all of these belong to neo-sensualism.”

This shows that Japanese neo-sensualist literature is the result of a synthesis of various Western modernist literary schools. Because of their dissatisfaction with literary state and the existing social order, Japanese non-sensualist writers advocated the spread of advanced art and the new literary trend and introduced the "stylist revolution" in order to renew forms and expression skills.

Neo-sensualism propagated a symbolic way of expression: in metaphors and symbols, which were the kind of art that could help the authors peek into the existence and significance of the smallest hidden forms and feelings with the help of some minor hints and symbols, while expressing simple reality. That little mysticism is an indicator that symbolizes the vast inner human life. The particular joy they felt in this art form was due to their psychological function, their mental state and mood. (SuJiuGao, (2006). Therefore, in literary creativity the emphasis is placed on expressing one's own feelings and subjective emotions, as well as on the role of subjectivity and direct perception, rejection of utilitarianism and negation of some realities of life. In these methods of literary creation, symbols and hints which revealed human relationships and life values were commonly used through the expressed feelings.

The literary trend neo-sensualism incorporates the aesthetic principles of various literary movements:

- concreteness and truthfulness from realism,
- intuitive achievement of world unity from symbolism,
- the idea of emotional cognition of the world from sensualism,
- mental suffering as an object of presentation from expressionism,
- the inevitability of formalizing expressive means from constructivism.

From the point of view of Japanese neo-sensualists, literature should not be merely a copy of objective reality; in their opinion, literature is always a fruit of subjective impressions, feelings, author's doubts. Yasunari Kawabata has a special place in this group of young artists. Unlike others, he did not abandon national artistic traditions, classical ideas, and the ideas of beauty. Neo-sensualists have a lot in common with the traditional Japanese aesthetics. The characteristics of neo-sensualism, the freshness and expressiveness of metaphors, the focus on the nuances of human feelings and emotions are the hallmarks of classical, Japanese literature, especially poetry, but they were proclaimed innovative at that time.

For neo-sensualists, “time anxiety” was a premonition of the "downfall of humanity." Passively



accepting reality as it is, they concentrated all their efforts in the search for artistic methods of expression, but could not formulate "time anxiety" in its typical forms. Since the neo-sensualists were finally in a position to embrace reality, they could not understand the sheer severity of the "time anxiety" issue; for them it was a symbol of the "downfall of humanity".

Members of the group felt that the new literary expression should be fresh and that it should poetically enlighten the essence of the feelings expressed; that feelings should be extremely perceptual and sensual; that reality should be expressed with subtle feelings, suggestiveness and refined symbols, in such a way to express the significance of inner life artistically; that art must have an inevitable character, and that expressions must have a poetic rhythm and a lively sensibility; that perceptivity must be refined almost to a morbid and decadent state, but that it must have intellectual elements.

"However, there was a danger that their efforts would be separated from the core life force and turned into a kind of decadent fun. In any case, they preached "new life" and "new literary art" They promoted dynamic art - with the main aim of clarifying the personality of the writer himself, and their creativity was coloured by a certain nihilism". (Razić, 1989: 113)

Most trendsetters of this movement were a little more than twenty years old, and they all considered themselves figures on the rise. The basic principle of the neo-sensualists is that literature should be designed to reproduce subjective feelings, to reach the crux of the matter. They criticized the proletarian literature for the limitations and lack of artistic transposition and the desire to express feelings and emotions. One of the main goals of this movement was to redefine the subject-object relation through the assessment of a feeling.

The source of neo-sensualists' inspiration was the work of European modernist writers, especially Paul Morand and his famous work "Open All Night", James Joyce and American writer Gertrude Stein.

Kawabata And Neo-Sensualism

Like many young writers, Kawabata is also obsessed with the desire to create something completely new, something different from anything known before.

The ideas of these young writers are expressed in several theoretical essays, one of which was written by Kawabata himself, entitled "The New Aspirations of the Avant-Garde Writers"¹, published in 1925 in the journal "Literary Age" ("Bungei didai"), a newsletter by the neo-sensualists. In these essays, new opinions were presented, refined sensibility, new expression techniques and new style were recommended.

¹ "Comment on Recent Tendencies of Contemporary Writers"



In his essay Kawabata emphasizes the priority of feelings over the lifelessness of a narrative language. He stands for a different type of writing – unfinished speech, in order to give the reader the space to form a complete picture of values close to their own personalities and experience of the world, as Ljiljana Marković points out “that instead of syntactically perfect sentences, the narrator himself or his heroes should sometimes speak unfinished, fragmentary language”. She also points to Kawabata's aspiration to "focus on highlighting the need to create a new language that will replace the existing one" and that it is "clear that he promotes the language of the new Japanese novel and prose in general, which would be able to directly transmit and transpose a complex state of human thoughts, feelings and sensory experiences”. (Marković, 2015: 218)

Referring to this essay, Cheung states that Kawabata claims it was necessary to escape from the "prison" of grammar that focuses on the epistemic subjects represented and controlled by the outside world. In contrast, Kawabata argues that human subjects establish different approaches to the outside world – for example, through their feelings and memories that group perceptions into different combinations and heterogeneous units. As the focal point of perception, human subjects are the spot where the existence of the outside world is felt without a clear awareness of who is feeling and what is being felt. Not only the old principle of objectivity, but also the principle of subjectivity must be replaced by something new. Kawabata is looking for new styles and ways of expression that suit neo-sensualism. The thoughts that appear in the minds of a creator do not follow grammar and syntax rules but seem like free, intuitive associations full of disorder and confusion. But when they are translated into conversation or written text, the order that transforms ideas and unrelated images into words and characters is established through choosing and classifying. Kawabata criticizes the traditional perception of the outside world by rationally allocating one's perceptions into classes of impressions and memories that are based on a self-conscious model of the person's identity (Cheung, 2008: 146).

Kawabata himself was strongly influenced by neo-sensualism some ten years after writing this theoretical work. Some of his most significant works that characterize this period of courageous trying out various expressive possibilities are: *The Dancing Girl of Izu* published in 1926, *The Spirit of the Rose* (1927), *Needle, Glass and the Frog* (1930), *The Crystal Fantasy* (1931), *The Funeral Hero* (1923) and *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* (1930).

Kawabata significantly differs from the mainstream of this group with his emphasis on classical style, in his sober loneliness and elegiac tone, in the fact that he weaved a special world of gentle and subtle sensuality, metaphorical suggestiveness, deep impressions and symbolism. He mainly focuses on highlighting the need to produce a new language that would replace the existing one, a lifelessly real narrative language. Kawabata believes that instead of grammatically perfect sentences, the writer should sometimes use unfinished, fragmentary sentences, in order to capture the described character, his world and his dynamic understanding of life thoroughly. In other



words, Kawabata fights for the unity of subject and object, for the integration of the world, man and art.

On the other hand, he deeply respected literary tradition of Japan, considering himself its advocate. Over the years, the tendency to move to more traditionalist works in the national vein became more intense in his works. Even when he began a new novel, he was wearing a kimono and wooden sandals, minded as a samurai before the fight, although in everyday life, he preferred a fully European type of clothing.

He felt the powerful influence of Western modernism and learned a great deal from Joyce and Prust (flow of consciousness techniques). He was deeply interested in European culture, especially the works of painters in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, etc.), European Impressionists (particularly the works of Paul Sezane). Even as a child he wanted to become a painter, but eventually he consciously devoted his life to literature and became a professional photographer and journalist.

Simultaneously, even the Western avant-garde technique received a true Japanese sound in Kawabata's works. But a number of his innovative ideas did not belong to any cultural context: they were an expression of his individuality.

In his early childhood he lost his parents and his grandmother, and afterwards the closest person in his life was his grandfather, whose image was projected in his work "The Diary of a Sixteen-year-old". After his grandfather's death, he lived in one boarding secondary school until he left Osaka to enroll in the elite Tokyo First Grammar School.. He initially studied English literature at the university, but later switched to Japanese classics.

He began his literary career even before graduating from the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1924. He became known for his short stories and most of all for his autobiographical novella "The Dancing Girl of Izu", which he wrote in 1926.

On the one hand seeking to preserve the tradition of Japanese literature, and on the other speaking against naturalism and the proletarian-communist tendencies in Japanese literature of the time, Kawabata began writing works that critics call "haiku in prose". Of course, it was not about formal signs of versification (the number of syllables in a verse), but about ideological and aesthetic principles of creativity: short form, hint of incompleteness, lack of direct moralizing, specific descriptions or expressive features of the storyline and instantaneous impression.

Kawabata devoted a special role to the allegorical and suggestive: the pictures he created were not primarily related to historical and cultural heritage, but to extracting the unconscious and suppressing common sense (the influence of Freud and French surrealists from the Breton School),



letting readers' imagination to intensely experience and evoke living emotional experiences, expanding and updating images of comprehension and understanding of the world.

Certainly, the degree of suggestion in the perception of a text depends directly on the readers' education, mental ability and personal experience. As soon as they read something from Kawabata's work, some of the readers are immediately delighted and begin to relive and feel the cascades of associations, while others initially underestimate the value of his creativity and need time to enjoy an inexplicably pleasant taste of subsequent experience.

When speaking seriously about the direction of neo-sensualism, we must bear in mind that there was neither unanimity of opinion among its creators, nor a serious theoretical basis. What is interesting about this trend is that some of its features have much in common with the traditional Japanese aesthetics. In particular, the characteristics of neo-sensualism, the freshness and expressiveness of metaphors, the focus on subtle nuances of human feelings and emotions are the hallmarks of classical Japanese literature, especially poetry, but they were proclaimed innovative at the time.

This was the reason why Kawabata's novella "The Dancing Girl of Izu" was considered a typical part of neo-sensualism. It originated in the tradition of classical Japanese literature. It immediately attracted the attention of Japanese literary critics and made the author popular with readers. In fact, it was his first significant work in which the distinctive features of the artist's style were manifested – honesty, tenderness, delicacy and serenity.

This is is a story of first love, in which the word "love" was never mentioned, but it is coloured with subtle nuances of feelings of joy and pain. Occasionally, there are flashes of intense outbursts of confusion, restlessness and gratitude. There are many striking expressions that reveal a great artist such as:

„I could not bear the silences when the drum stopped. I sank down into the depths of the sound of the rain.“ (Kawabata,2013:7)

„The dancing girl's most beautiful feature was her sparkling big dark eyes. The curve of her double eyelids was unspeakably lovely. Next was her flowerlike smile. In her case, the word "flowerlike" was absolutely accurate.“ (Kawabata,2013:12)

„This exchange had an echo of simplicity and frankness. Hers was a child's voice expressing her sentiments without censure. I, too, was able to meekly consider myself a nice person. Refreshed, I lifted my eyes and surveyed the brilliant mountains. I felt a vague pain behind my eyelids“.
(Kawabata,2013:16)

Many admire the end of the story when a young man goes his own way, carrying the memory of



the young dancer with him:

„The lamp in the cabin went out. The smell of the tide and the fresh fish loaded in the hold grew stronger. In the darkness, warmed by the boy beside me, I let my tears flow unrestrained. My head had become clear water, dripping away drop by drop. It was a sweet, pleasant feeling, as though nothing would remain.“ (Kawabata,2013:19-20)

The little dancer is still a child, so she neither refuses nor gives back love. Her emotional state is not essential to experiencing this story. The young man shows a female figure with the values he can worship from a distance:

Suddenly a naked woman ran out from the rear of the dark bathhouse. She stood at the edge of the changing area as if she might come flying down the bank. She was shouting with her arms outstretched. She was stark naked, without even a towel. It was the dancing girl. When I gazed at her white body, legs stretched, standing like a young paulownia tree, I felt pure water flowing through my heart. I breathed a sigh of relief and laughed out loud. She's a child—a child who can run out naked in broad daylight, overcome with joy at finding me, and stand tall on her tiptoes. I kept laughing with delight. My head was clear as though wiped clean. I could not stop smiling.

The dancing girl's hair had been arranged too elaborately for her age. She had looked seventeen or eighteen. What's more, she had been dressed like a young woman in her prime. I had made a ridiculous mistake. (Kawabata,2013:8)

Elements of ancient Japanese aesthetic categories, such as *furju*, *yugen*, *wabi*, *sabi*, etc., can be observed on the novella "The Dancing Girl of Izu".

The specificity of the *furju* is reflected in conveying a sense of beauty and is linked to the philosophical position of separating a person from the vanity of life with a desire to indulge in aesthetic enjoyment in nature. *Furju* is in the transience of life, in which a man seems to float without being able to stop the moments that elude him.

A simple story about the youthful experience of the young student watching the life of a group of travelling actors reveals the theme of growing up, the first encounter with the reality of life. At the end of the story, when the main character cries, Kawabata describes his condition very movingly:

„I felt a lovely hollow sensation, as if I could accept any sort of kindness and it would be only right.“ (Kawabata,2013:19)

There is an interesting conversation between the hero of the novella with the boy when he answers the question:

"Have you had a death in your family?"

"No, I just left someone." (Kawabata,2013:19)

He said it openly, probably feeling that the boy was not yet an adult and could not understand this. Understanding life's truth is not always a joyous revelation for a man. Parting in tears is not something embarrassing. Besides sadness it carries some joy of living with it.

Simultaneously, through the vision of his character, Kawabata reveals to us the relation of society to the artists' status. We see how hard their lives are and how dedicated they are to their art. Despite the hardships and humiliating attitude that society has towards them, they maintain their purity and high moral character.

Despite her youth, the image of a dancing girl of Izu, a very young girl who somehow represents a reflection of adult female characters, is a symbol of the purity of high art.

"The Dancing Girl of Izu" is a jewel of all Kawabata's work. The story is so simple but nostalgic with so many layers and depth. There is hardly a better story to start travelling into the world of genius like Kawabata.

Expressions in the spirit of neo-sensualism can be encountered in all parts of Kawabata's works, including the later period, but this expressiveness, as noted above, heralded new modes of artistic expression, characteristic of Japanese classics.

The closeness of neo-sensualism to classical Japanese aesthetics, expressed in the desire to penetrate the essence of matter and phenomena, to feel the blink of every moment in a person's life, attracted Kawabata. With his characteristic youthful enthusiasm, he actively collaborated with a group of non-sensualist writers. (Gerasimova, 2012: 71).

Kawabata's affiliation to neo-sensualists was conditional due to the fact that he did not share their views that life is full of tragic absurdities, because everything is governed by senseless and absurd coincidence. He did not share their views on the meaning and purpose of art either.

The school of neo-sensualism did not last long, only for four years. The lack of serious theoretical programmes, as well as the crisis of modernism in the 1920s, contributed to its collapse in May 1927, but Kawabata's fascination with modernism at that time was not over. He was attracted to the establishment of a direct and detailed process of healmental life. The principle of total commitment to empathy helps in discovering the inner world of each individual.

Yasunari Kawabata always strives to penetrate deeply into the essence of a person, arguing that a writer must explore the deep meaning of human life and truth about the universal nature of man. He also admires the school of psychoanalysis, believing that it would enable and allow him to understand



the movement of a human soul. The result was "The Crystal Fantasy" written with the stream of consciousness method.

All this is especially emphasized in his theoretical works. Two major of his theoretical works are "A Study of Novel Theory" and "An Introduction to Novel Theory." They are primarily interesting because of their orientation toward Japanese reader, since the characteristics of the literary process in Japan have determined a number of specific characteristics and problems of national literature which are not typical for other literatures. With Kawabata, operational concepts borrowed from Western theorists relate to the facts about history of Japanese literature and to the issues of particular relevance for its development.

There were unique avant-garde deeds in his work, and we should especially emphasize the story "The Crystal Fantasy", which he wrote under the influence of Joyce's novel "Ulysses". Using Joyce's "stream of consciousness" model, he re-creates life through one woman's fragmented memories of a bygone era. In the unregulated flow of her memories, in which reality does not refract, the inner world of the heroine is inspirational enough for an emotional experience of reality.

In "The Crystal Fantasy" Kawabata creates a subjective perception of the world on the model of Marcel Prust's spontaneous memories, when everyday things come to life in a subconscious image of the past (Gerasimova, 2012: 72). The spontaneous storage of events and impressions gives the writer an opportunity to escape from the futility, pointlessness and transience of life. Seemingly wasted time of events, urges and emotions is available in the unconscious segment of a being.

It is hard to say how long the heroine has been giving in to her memories and reflections and what takes up most space in her thoughts. Not only events or facts, but also experienced emotions come to life. The concept of time is blurred, and the blend of past and present emerges as timeless nature of the heroine.

Subsequently, in "An Introduction to the Theory of Novel", Kawabata noted that switching psychoanalysis to the field of art as a method of character discovery is not bad, but an over-reliance on psychoanalysis does not allow human life to show up in all its diversity. He wrote that the method of psychoanalysis allows to convey even the slightest flicker of the human soul, but if too much attention is paid to psychological details, one can lose sight of human life, and then there is a danger that the literary work will be of poor quality, that it will deal with unnecessary details. (Gerasimova, 2012: 73)

Conclusions

As elsewhere, Modernism in Japan was the product of both, a sense of fear and agitation experienced worldwide after the First World War as well as dissatisfaction with existing trends in the arts. The emergence of proletarian literature is the result of the spread of socialist ideas in many



countries of the world. In response to such tendencies, neo-sensualism arose, and its creators sought to promote a language in which the object was not separated from the subject, which, according to Kawabata's feeling, would preserve the natural unity of the world, man and art. "Kawabata and his comrades made a significant contribution to the creation of a new sensibility and new beauty in Japanese language that has thus grown and enriched itself." (Marković, 2015: 219)

Kawabata and other non-sensualists, probably because of their youth and scarce general knowledge and civilizational apprehension, or perhaps just such a scarce conception, were too turned on to modernize Japanese art and culture in order to realize the true value of its vast inherited treasury.

Some characteristics of neo-sensualism are rooted in traditional Japanese aesthetics and have much in common with features of traditional Japanese literature, which is especially emphasized in the freshness and expressiveness of metaphors, focusing its attention on subtle nuances of human feelings and emotions.

Citing Kawabata's attitude towards the inexhaustible values of the traditional culture of Japanese people, Ljiljana Marković emphasizes that this has changed over time, that he realized the mistakes from his young age. "When over time Kawabata realized it, it was as if all his life he had been trying to atone for his sin from his young age. Fortunately, he realized this relatively quickly. In view of this, it is simply incomprehensible to observe that he and his comrades from that early period overlooked even such obvious causations as the relationship between European imagism and Japanese literature, especially Chinese ideograms." (Marković, 2015: 219)

At that time Kawabata was writing stories that were very different from one another both in form and in content. Probably, the creation of such various works helped Kawabata to understand something that is of great importance for determining the attitude towards life, man and literature. Kawabata's creative demands and experiments are conditioned by striving to find the most important, without which art loses sense and becomes meaningless. Traces of neo-sensualism also permeate works from a later period that are full of meditation, full of reflections on life and death, the human soul, the beauty of nothingness, deceptive simplicity and deep melancholy.

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