

Does Natsume Sōseki present loneliness as a virtue in *Kokoro*?

Only three years of Sōseki's life were lived outside the Meiji Era. During this historical period of remarkably rapid modernisation, the long-engrafted national condition cultivated during more than two centuries of self-imposed isolation was increasingly exposed to the outside – a foreign modernity. Only sixty-one years after those *kurofune* imposed the imperatives of global trade, the forty-seven year old Sōseki completed the serialised *Kokoro* and approached death. In *Kokoro*, he depicts a sorrowful modern world of isolated cerebral individuals, deracinated since their migration to the city (the narrator¹, Sensei, K) and a lonely rural man disorientated by the swift transition to new values (the narrator's father).

Sensei writes that “I felt as though the spirit of the Meiji era had begun with the Emperor and had ended with him”². In this paper, I first investigate the attitudes which Sōseki presents as responses to the end of the Meiji Period. Then I examine whether in *Kokoro*, Sōseki is consistently presenting K and Sensei's solitude, suffering and suicide as admirable, justified and noble. Subsequently I analyse the values privileged in order to make such a

¹ Hereafter, the term “the narrator” will be used exclusively to refer to the nameless student narrator of the first two parts.

² Sōseki, (1957), p.245.

presentation and I question the viability of Sōseki's interpretation of his own fiction.

Sensei and the narrator's father: Loneliness in time

Sōseki has his fictional contemporary Sensei write that “On the night of the Imperial Funeral I sat in my study and listened to the booming of the cannon. To me, it sounded like the last lament for the passing of an age”³. *Kokoro*, written after the onset of his ulcer condition, completed two years after the passing of the Emperor and two years before his death – his penultimate completed novel – also has the qualities of a swansong, a last lament. For Sōseki at this point, the end of an era must have seemed a fitting time for a pensive note of intropection. Sōseki seems in *Kokoro* to be striving to convey that the passing of the Meiji period is a genuinely sad event and that the isolation of those who felt they belonged to it – in *Kokoro*, characters such as the narrator's father and Sensei himself – is the expression of what is to Sōseki an understandable sense of bereavement and a palpable isolation tantamount to exile.

“Oh! Oh!” cries the narrator's father, and then, “Oh, His Majesty is gone at last. I too

³ Sōseki, (1957), p.246.

...”⁴. Later, in a delirious fever he questions of the spirit of the age, “Will General Nogi ever forgive me? ... How can I ever face him without shame? Yes, General, I will be with you soon”⁵. Whilst there is no wider implication that the father has a reason to feel shame in this context, it is suggestive that just as the general follows his master to the grave, the father should associate with the general’s passing, an obligation on his part to follow suit. It is perhaps Sensei who best puts this sentiment into words: “I was overcome with the feeling that I and the others, who had been brought up in that era, were now left behind to live as anachronisms”⁶. He hypothesises quite explicitly in jest that were he also to commit suicide, it would be “though loyalty to the spirit of the Meiji era”⁷. In the city when his wife mentions the word, Sensei is reminded of the existence of the concept “*junshi*”⁸ – “I suppose it had been banished to some remote corner of my memory”⁹ – and its communication resonates with an age of paramount honour and fealty. In the context of growing constructions of national identity premised on unity under the prominent imperial figurehead, these expressions of grief and loneliness which Sensei and the narrator’s father display take on a patriotic aspect and demonstrate a loyalty to the emperor with positive connotations.

⁴ *ibidem*, p.91

⁵ *ib.*, p.117

⁶ *ib.*, p.245

⁷ *ib.*

⁸ *ib.*

⁹ *ib.*

This generation is one which has been overtaken by modernity during a modernisation process so rapid that it rendered archaic the values of that era which conceived it. Shortly afterwards, in some remote corner of modernity, the urban / rural divide overlaps with the generation gap in the narrator's hometown where the inroads of modern communication are minimal: "In a place where dogs barked at the sight of a Western-style suit, the arrival of a telegram was a great event"¹⁰. Here, in the periphery of the "great metropolis"¹¹, the narrator finds himself unable to communicate his perception of the job market to his parents, for "The gulf between us was too great". Similarly, by way of framing the difficulties he has in communicating his reasons for suicide, Sensei writes, "You and I belong to different eras, and so we think differently. There is nothing we can do to bridge the gap between us"¹². Thus Sensei and the father are isolated by virtue of their socialisation into, and identification with, a bygone time and they can no longer freely communicate with the present.

By allowing his narrative to encompass two pivotal suicides (General Nogi Maresuke's and Sensei's) which he has Sensei profess will be difficult to appreciate in

¹⁰ ib., p.109

¹¹ ib., p.94

¹² ib., p.246

contemporary terms, Sōseki seems to be appealing to potential kindred feelings of nostalgia and traditionalism amongst his older readers. If this appeal is genuinely heartfelt on Sōseki's part, it would imply that not only is there a patriotic pride to be derived for him from feelings of loneliness and loss at the death of an emperor, but also by the same token that there is a virtue to being anachronistic and lonely in the modern age.

K and Sensei's suffering

If responses of loneliness, grief and in extreme cases suicide at the passing of an era are presented as at least understandable by Sōseki even if not in the latter case endorsed, what attitudes does his writing exhibit towards the self-imposed loneliness of characters such as K and subsequently Sensei? The portrayal of the effects of isolation in *Kokoro* is marked by a use of metaphor by Sōseki uncharacteristic in this work. It is not merely a change in his living conditions – in which regard Sensei feels that he has raised K “from the bottom of a dark valley to the top of a sunlit mountain”¹³, but also a change in his lifestyle – whereby Sensei witnesses him “gradually emerge from his fortress of books, and to see his heart beginning to

¹³ ib., p.175

thaw”¹⁴ – that enables Sensei to talk of the end of K’s isolation as a process of enlightenment.

Sensei writes: “I decided to leave the piece of ice out in the sun, and wait until it had melted and turned into warm water. Then, I thought, he would begin to see the error of his ways”¹⁵.

This socialising and civilising process, bringing light to the cold, dark places of the social periphery is premised upon the existence of another structure of values: “when loftiness is merely in one’s point of view, then one is hopelessly handicapped as a human being. I decided that what he needed, above all else, was humanizing”¹⁶.

Thus, the problem of K’s solitude as it is presented in *Kokoro* apparently resides in its effects upon the human heart as the eponymous symbol of one’s essential humanity and capacity for love. Sensei writes of the effect that living “the silent life”¹⁷ had had upon K: “I could not help thinking that his heart, like a piece of iron, had gone rusty from disuse”¹⁸. Later, he describes: “It was as though his heart was encrusted with a layer of black lacquer, so thick that no warm blood could ever penetrate through it”¹⁹. The solution to this icy, rusty, enamelled barrier, is a return to material comforts, social interaction, pseudo-familial security,

¹⁴ ib., p.180

¹⁵ ib., p.176

¹⁶ ib., pp.179-180

¹⁷ ib., p.178

¹⁸ ib.

¹⁹ ib., p.188

and “the atmosphere which the presence of women seems to bring about”²⁰, in the context of the home of Okusan and Ojōsan. In an echo of the manner by which Sensei had made a transition from having sat “silently at my desk and, like a cat, watched the movements of others in the house”²¹ to the tipping point whereby “the flowers in the alcove ceased to displease me”²², K too is able to reach a point whereby he no longer scorns “taking pleasure in useless small talk”²³.

Yet despite K’s isolation generally having negative connotations in this work, Sōseki still has, I would claim, a residual awe for two affective approaches to life. The first is for the person who isolates themselves from society in a kind of “splendid isolation” – to borrow the foreign policy term coined by *The Times*²⁴ and associated with Salisbury – a person whose natural endowments or personal pilgrimage necessarily set them apart from the masses to such an extent that they deem it fit to impose a cordon sanitaire between society and themselves. K would be such a person for Sōseki.

Whilst K is dysfunctional as an individual, in socialising, in managing relations with his two sets of parents and in responding to the vicissitudes of the courtship process, his

²⁰ ib., p.180

²¹ ib., p.150

²² ib., p.148

²³ ib., p.179

²⁴ Ying Wa College, History Department A-level history notes: ‘More Questions on World War I’; available at: <http://www.yingwa.edu.hk/history/hkal/notes/ww1/ques_ww1-2.doc>, p.12, retrieved March 14th 2003

solitary devotion to “the true way”²⁵ derives no small degree of residual respect from Sensei, who has in turn been adored and idolised for half of the work by our narrator. Sensei writes: “he would later feel compelled to put into practice what he had maintained in his argument with me. In this respect, he was really quite frightening – and very impressive”²⁶. The lacuna of evaluative analysis truly opens up in the aftermath of K’s death. I maintain that it is only by an emotional lapse into cathartic grief that K’s suicide could connote an act of tragic nobility of soul, rather than unfortunate maladjustment on K’s part. Sensei writes that “Finally, I became aware of the possibility that K had experienced loneliness as terrible as mine, and wishing to escape quickly from it, had killed himself”²⁷. Certainly, Sensei betrayed his vulnerable friend at a time when he was helping to steer him away from a path of self-destructive asceticism. Yet K’s suicide cannot be given the legitimising level of tragic dignity it receives from Sensei without undermining the leitmotif in this work which privileges the humanised heart. This work treads an awkward tightrope of ambivalence between describing eccentricity and fundamentalism as the deleterious phenomena manifested by a soul divorced from the moderating influences of wider human intercourse,

²⁵ *ib.*, p.166

²⁶ *ib.*, p.178

²⁷ *ib.*, p.240

and a residual awe for one who chooses such a path as an authentic expression of their own gravitas.

The second affective approach to life which Sōseki seems to privilege is of those who would throw their arms up in the air in masochistically self-perpetuating despair when faced with an unfortunate situation. For Sōseki, a person such as Sensei who spends a lifetime in regret and self-punishment has a certain nobility. I would aside that it may have become, for whatever reason, less socially acceptable in the present to dwell in remorse over situations which cannot be changed. The residual awe that Sōseki holds for Sensei is foregrounded by that which the narrator feels for Sensei, who seems set apart from the moment he is first seen on the beach in the company of a “Westerner”²⁸. By means of this framing effect of the disciple’s respect for his master we too, as readers, are encouraged to take interest in the enigmatic man. Just as we are implicitly encouraged by Sensei to be non-judgemental regarding the junshi of General Nogi – “Perhaps you will not understand clearly why I am about to die, no more than I can fully understand why General Nogi killed himself”²⁹ – we are being prompted by the end of the novel to attribute a moral grandeur of operatic amplitude to the trials undergone by Sensei, a nobility we confer upon him when we

²⁸ ib., p.3

²⁹ ib., p.246

see that like Nogi he has suffered for so long in silent solitude.

Underlying Sensei's warnings in the first section of the work against the narrator forming too deep an attachment with him, there would seem to be an implicit warding off of homosexuality. Before the narrator initially observes the unclothed Sensei over a number of days, making arrangements to engage him in conversation and ultimately pursuing him into the sea, we learn that he was lonely enough that each summer he would sit and listen to the cicadas, fall into a "strangely sorrowful mood"³⁰ and "stay absolutely still, thinking of my own loneliness"³¹. Sensei is sensitive to this loneliness in the narrator, and later observes "Your heart has been made restless by love for quite some time now. ... Did you not come to me because you felt there was something lacking? ... But being the kind of man that I am, I cannot help you to rid your heart of that feeling of want"³².

This reading of Sōseki finds Sensei as the unwilling heterosexual, who tells his young protégé "You must remember that there is guilt in loving"³³, whilst he half-heartedly forbears the narrator's attentions: "That you will eventually go elsewhere for consolation is a fact I must accept. Indeed, I even hope that you will, but ..."³⁴. Sensei sees it as his duty to

³⁰ ib., p.99

³¹ ib.

³² ib., pp.26-27

³³ ib., p.27

³⁴ ib.

show the young man that this courtship is a phase: “it was a step in your life towards love. The friendship that you sought in me is in reality a preparation for the love that you will seek in a woman”³⁵. Yet, until the narrator spends time with the enchanting Shizu (formerly “Ojōsan”), he, like K³⁶ and Sensei³⁷ before him, cannot overcome his innate misogyny. Although the narrator speaks of “an instinctive yearning for women”³⁸, when actually involved in face to face interactions the narrator describes feeling “a kind of repulsion”³⁹.

It is suggested by Takeo Doi of Sensei that, “like Nogi, he is loyally following his beloved into death. ... He is unable finally to express in writing his feeling that K is beckoning to him from beyond the grave”⁴⁰. Doi may be going beyond the bounds of fidelity to the text in interpreting this attraction between Sensei and K, but his reading demonstrates that whether or not it is the loneliness of Sensei’s “guilt in loving”⁴¹ which destabilises his behaviour towards K in the critical stages of their psychological tussle, it is evident that the foundations of textual meaning are challenged by the residual awe which Sōseki’s characters hold for the lonely man tormented by his principles. I shall quote at greater length an earlier

³⁵ ib.

³⁶ ib., p.180: “he had come to regard them with contempt”

³⁷ ib., p.154: “women, after all, were idiots”

³⁸ ib., p.38

³⁹ ib.

⁴⁰ Takeo Doi, *The Psychological World of Natsume Sōseki*, trans. William Jefferson Tyler (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.125

⁴¹ Sōseki, (1957), p.27

quotation in which Sensei is writing about K: “In this respect, he was really quite frightening – and very impressive. He would willfully proceed to his own destruction. But however one looked at him, he was certainly no ordinary fellow”⁴². Even despite the proliferation of narrative frames, there is an abiding sense in *Kokoro* that for Sōseki, choosing self-imposed isolation is indicative of some underlying strength of character and is therefore, albeit not a virtue in terms of humanising the heart, certainly still an impressive quality.

A viable lament?

Even some years after having arrived in Tokyo, both K and Sensei remain irredeemably maladjusted protagonists. K becomes estranged from his foster family and petulantly feels disinherited by his father and step-mother⁴³ and so subsequently teaches in a night school⁴⁴ – alongside intense studying – in order to pay independently for his university education; with the consequence that a year and a half later, the narrator judges that “this continual strain was affecting his physical and mental condition”⁴⁵. Whilst Sensei mentions

⁴² ib., p.178

⁴³ ib., pp.170-171

⁴⁴ ib., pp.169-170

⁴⁵ ib., p.172

“two or three” of his other friends⁴⁶, he later elaborates that “When I think about it, my acquaintances in those days were all rather odd”⁴⁷. The relationship between Sensei and K is sustained in an implied isolation: “We feared Tokyo and the people in it. Nevertheless, when we were in our little six-mat room, we would talk contemptuously of the whole world”⁴⁸. Sensei’s relationship with K prior to and during this time mirrors the narrator’s relationship with Sensei, in as much as that it revolves around a respect and even awe for book-learning that goes largely unquestioned. Both Sensei and K feel themselves separate from the rest of the world, with a similar sense of superiority to that air which accompanies the narrator to his rural origins and prompts him to say of his mother, “That was the extent of her understanding of my friendship with Sensei”⁴⁹. The dynamic of both relationships is exclusive and not conducive to being communicated to others precisely because the dynamic does not bear much scrutiny. Parity of respect and mutual affection is cast aside in favour of the pleasure of adulation on the one hand and the privilege of being in the company of someone whom one blindly reveres on the other.

As for K, he says that he has no friends, and Sensei confirms this “K indeed had no

⁴⁶ ib., p.158

⁴⁷ ib., p.187

⁴⁸ ib., p.165

⁴⁹ ib., p.94

friends”⁵⁰. Lacking any outside checks and balances, Sensei and K are able to spiral around each other with the effect of reinforcing K’s extremism, alternately through Sensei’s “reverence”⁵¹ for K’s “concentration of mind”⁵², industriousness⁵³ and intelligence⁵⁴; as well as by K’s reactions to Sensei’s rebuttals, in adopting “a position more extreme than ever before in order to prove his consistency”⁵⁵. To throw a sop to an all-consuming loneliness with this strictly hierarchical relationship creates an imbalance for both characters – just as it does later for Sensei and the narrator – since adulation encourages both K and Sensei to be complicit in overlooking the long-term unsustainability of their approaches to life.

The nature of K’s asceticism is alluded to more often than it is detailed, but does involve a denial of worldly comfort – such as depriving himself of heat when cold⁵⁶; it encompasses austerity in one’s living conditions – “he had been living, until then, in a squalid, damp room which faced the north”⁵⁷; and a lifestyle of study to the exclusion of “useless small talk”⁵⁸. Despite the ameliorating and moderating effects of the time that K spends socially interacting with Okusan and Ojōsan, it is still this background of isolated

⁵⁰ ib., p.201

⁵¹ ib., p. 165

⁵² ib.

⁵³ ib., p.176

⁵⁴ ib.

⁵⁵ ib., p.178

⁵⁶ ib., p.179

⁵⁷ ib., p.175

⁵⁸ ib., p.179

self-mortification which seems ultimately to inform K's attitude towards love. Upon confronting the strength of his love for Ojōsan, K cannot but see the emotion as a "passion"⁵⁹ to be controlled. Whereas the Shinshu sect that K was born into discouraged celibacy⁶⁰, it is an indicator of the fundamentalism of K that – as Sensei observes – he started "showing signs of moving away from the doctrines of his family's sect" in secondary school, and managed to reach a position by his second or third year of university⁶¹ whereby "everything had to be sacrificed for the sake of "the true way". Even love without bodily desire was to be avoided. Pursuit of "the true way" necessitated not merely restraint of appetite, but total abstinence"⁶². When a person in sway to such ideas is driven to enact their logical conclusion in suicide – admittedly with the compounding effect of a friend's betrayal – it is certainly unfortunate, but to what extent is it compellingly tragic? One might suggest that K serves to illustrate how tragic figures who do not realise their errors are more pitiful than pitiable.

Let us consider Sensei's circumstances in perspective. In *Kokoro*, "Sensei" lives in the desolate aftermath of an act he committed during his youth as a university student. Haunted by the guilt which he feels for his friend K's suicide and nursing misanthropic

⁵⁹ ib., p.215

⁶⁰ ib., p.214

⁶¹ ib., p.172, p.215

⁶² ib., p.215

resentment against his uncle's embezzlement of his inheritance, Sensei chooses to live a life of seclusion: "Killing myself seemed a just punishment for my sins. Finally, I decided to go on living as if I were dead"⁶³. Sensei experiences a twofold isolation – rooted in mistrust of both himself and others engendered by the betrayals he enacted and experienced, but compounded by an inability to share his burden with others. Despite his wife Shizu's⁶⁴ attentions, he lacks the courage⁶⁵ to confide in her since he does not want to "taint"⁶⁶ her with the knowledge, and instead her affection for him only serves to remind him of his hamartia: "The sight of her face seemed always to bring back haunting memories of K"⁶⁷. Thus he experiences profound loneliness – "I was very lonely. Indeed, there were times when I felt that I stood completely alone in this world, cut off from every other living person"⁶⁸.

Is Sensei's lifelong feeling of guilt justified, or is his judgement questionable? Could it be seen as evidence of instability stemming from an inclination towards isolation? In short, can the life of misery that Sensei chooses after K's death be framed as a self-indulgent wallowing, a submission to a maudlin disposition? Given the strength of love which K felt for Ojōsan, it seems inevitable that having been unable to reconcile these feelings with his

⁶³ ib., p.243

⁶⁴ ib., p.17

⁶⁵ ib., p.240

⁶⁶ ib., p.237

⁶⁷ ib.

⁶⁸ ib., p.240

firmly held spiritual convictions – convictions which would be regarded as sound in the context of a monastic life – that he would kill himself in order to avoid being tempted to violate further the tenets of his discipline. Not only his suicide note⁶⁹, but also his words upon having been called to account over his spiritual inconsistency, could be interpreted in this manner: “Then he said suddenly: “Am I prepared ...?” Before I could say anything, he added: “Why not? I can will myself ...””⁷⁰. This line of reasoning would exonerate Sensei. In this defence, in following the dictates of his free will into suicide, K was simply the victim of his own “stubbornness and forbearance”⁷¹, or, more charitably, of having psychologically invested so deeply in his strict religious practices that his self-worth had become inextricably linked to “the true way”⁷². As Sensei writes, “One might say that his past was his life, and to deny it would have meant that his life thus far had been without purpose”⁷³.

On the other hand, an appreciation of the validity of Sensei’s tormenting feelings of guilt – an appreciation upon which one’s engagement with this novel depends, from the gradual revelation of clues about the enigma of the man, to a supposedly legitimising culmination in the tragic weight of crushing guilt which grants Sensei and his disciple their

⁶⁹ ib., p.230

⁷⁰ ib., p.217

⁷¹ ib., p.218

⁷² ib., p.215

⁷³ ib., p.218

pathos-laden nobility as chroniclers – depends upon the claim that Sensei, in reminding K of his fundamentalist pre-dispositions, was guilty precisely because he was acting from selfish motives of attaining Ojōsan for himself. This argument is strengthened by the assumption that if only Sensei had behaved differently, K might have continued to be successfully weaned off his infatuation with the kind of fundamentalism that would persuade him to take his own life. I would consider this the strongest point to be made that could justify Sensei's torturous feelings of culpability and therein surely lies the complexity of the real moral dilemma at the centre of this work of fiction.

However, even were we to grant that the intention behind Sensei's behaviour is where his guilt lies, that being as it may, the question of Sensei's subsequent self-punishment (a lifetime of angst and self-imposed isolation, then suicide) should still be asked: do his reactions of remorse and sorrow reflect a proportionality of transgression and are they founded in a level of nobility in Sensei's character which, for us, elevates the reactions beyond the masochistic, morose and sentimental? Nobility of character is a highly subjective measure and evidently, for many of the readers of *Kokoro*, the overall answer to this question has been yes and the moral evaluation has fallen on the side of aesthetic fulfilment.

Conclusion

Certainly one of the difficulties in ascertaining in *Kokoro* Sōseki's intentions as an author derives from its palimpsest of narrative layers. The text evinces a tri-partite structure wherein all of our information about K comes from the manic depressive Sensei himself via an account which is framed by a narrator who would seem to revere if not adore his surrogate father-figure. Nonetheless, the following impressions have been perceived as accruing from within this attitudinal matrix and in their support it is asserted that purely in terms of focus, a certain disposition is privileged in this work: Sōseki has chosen three particularly unhappy and lonely figures as his central protagonists, two of whom commit suicide. There are also three peripheral figures – the narrator's father, Okusan (ante-Sensei)⁷⁴ and Shizu – who are also to varying degrees unhappy and lonely for sustained periods of time.

It seems that there is an implicit pride taken in some of the misery and isolation experienced by Sensei and the narrator's father, since the passing of the Meiji figurehead presents an opportunity to indulge in cathartic nostalgia as an expression of patriotism.

⁷⁴ ib., p.157

Sōseki depicts these two characters' values as being incommunicable in contemporary terms and yet of a worth which should not be, or at least is not, evaluated – as with General Nogi's junshi in this text which lapses into a lacuna of judgement.

K's self-imposed isolation and subsequent loneliness is metaphorically depicted as a problem by Sōseki via Sensei, but it is also apparent that Sensei is being required to communicate something of the awe-inspiring and admirable nature of K's condition. If Sensei can be made to show a K who is maladjusted in uniquely vulnerable ways, then Sensei's possible complicity in his suicide will appear more artistically convincing as a source of guilt. We have been encouraged by the narrator for half of the text to regard Sensei as a source of wisdom and so although Sōseki's generating in the reader a vicarious admiration for K's solitude, suffering and suicide may not be consistent with the motif of the humanised heart, it is consistent with Sōseki's aesthetic interests. Is K's maladjustment and thus loneliness presented as a virtue? Not quite. In the text, the strength of the extremist personality traits underlying the loneliness are a problem which, possibly due to the requirements of the narrative, Sōseki too is left appearing to have some residual awe for.

In the figure of Sensei, Sōseki seems to privilege a masochistic self-imposed isolation in one's own misery. The nobility of character demonstrated by dwelling in

remorseful loneliness – in the instance of General Nogi, for thirty-five years – on an indiscretion committed in one's youth, is pivotal to this narrative endeavour's credibility and its emotive engagement of the reader. The homosexual undertones to the pair of exclusive relationships formed by the central three characters suggest that whether or not Sōseki intended it, his text presents one kind of lonely suffering as a virtue: seeming to admire both the narrator and Sensei's – and possibly K and Sensei's – lonely and tormented denial and repression of their homosexual feelings.

I suggest that irrespective of how Sōseki would seem to be framing K and Sensei, the facts which mark their actual trajectories through the text illuminate a maladjusted, arrogant and fearful pair whose unequal relationship serves – perhaps also including an extra final nudge from a self-interested Sensei – to reinforce K's fundamentalism with the ultimate consequence that his unsustainable ideological approach to life overwhelms him. I would conclude by suggesting that whilst the moral dilemma fictionalised in this text is a complex one, it ought not to prevent us from asking whether Sensei's response to the pitiful suicide of K does not in fact want for both proportionality and manifest nobility of character.

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