

〈崇高〉の衰微：  
『野菊の墓』における〈性欲〉の観念化と〈文学〉  
の成立 (重近啓樹先生追悼記念号)

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The Decay of the 'Sublime':  
The Idealization of 'Sexual desire' and The Birth of 'Literature'

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*Nogiku no Haka* by Ito Sachio is a literary masterpiece which tells of the tragic love affair between Tami and Masao. Tami is forced to marry another man, but continues to love Masao with all her heart, and eventually dies a tragic death. Yet, Masao's personal recollection of the story is inspired by sentiments, which are both sorrowful and pleasurable. Why then does Masao's narrative adopt a tone of narcissistic smugness?

The tragedy of Tami seems, at first glance, to be structured as a woman's narrative. The jealousy of the women around her and Masao's mother, who was prompted by that jealousy, serve to tear Tami apart from Masao. But these women are not necessarily the perpetrators of harm. What really brings about the tragedy is the male-centered gender order of modern society.

Masao, exempt as the second son from the authority and responsibility of the family's first born, is very in tune with the society of women; at the same time, he has a firm foothold in the world of men. Torn apart from Masao, Tami still devotes her heart to Masao, which leads to her physical enfeeblement. In the letters he writes to Tami in junior high school, Masao vows his love for her, in response to her continued love for him. Nonetheless, as he reflects, he enjoys academic success. After Tami's death, Masao shares his feelings of grief with the wailing women, and in this way they pardon each other for the sin of their obsession with Tami.

The modern gender order accords to man the public sphere, while woman is allotted the private sphere, in which her task is to care for the man. Women are locked into the subordinate private sphere, unable to escape. By contrast, Masao has access to the self-perfecting imaginary world, amputated from social reality. Into this imaginary world, he can release his feelings of love never fulfilled in reality; he seals them there, and continues to thrive in the real world. 'Sexual desire' is idealized, never maturing and always denied realization; in this way, it achieves purity.

'Poems' and 'pictures,' as they emerge in Masao's recollection are the repre-

sentation of the idealization. Masao's sexual desire is released into the ideal realm, framed by a picturesque landscape. His sexual desire is sublimated and continues to breath within the ideal, divorced from reality. The sublime, which embraces within itself the possibility of transcendence, decays. In this way, a literature comes into being which objectifies woman as "other", and confesses in a self-perfecting way, man's narcissistic sexual desire.