



November 21 (Thu), 2019, 18:30h

Image(-Text) correlations in the works of Natsume Sōseki

Introduced and contextualized using the example of *Yōkyoshū*

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Even though the first publications of Natsume Sōseki's (1867–1916) works were illustrated and had visual elements, the research on Sōseki focuses mostly just on the text. Nevertheless, Sōseki's entire oeuvre shows from the beginning to the end a deep but shifting image-text relation that has to be introduced and placed into the historical context, taking the artists (Natori Shunsen, Noda Kyūho, Asai Chū, Hashiguchi Goyō, Nakamura Fusetsu, and Tsuda Seifū), publication type (newspaper, book, pocketbook) and genre into consideration. This approach can thereby identify a network of artists and intellectuals, as well as places and visual ideas.

The Anthology *Yōkyoshū* (*Drifting in Emptiness*, 1905) is Sōseki's work par excellence showing the correlation between image and text, as well as exemplifying the artistic flow of the *Fin de Siècle* (~1880–1919), the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and the collaboration between writer and artists. Both the artists Hashiguchi Goyō and Nakamura Fusetsu illustrated the first book publication of *Drifting in Emptiness*, each with 7 frontispieces/illustrations in different styles. Sōseki himself judged their work with praise: "I think the most interesting thing is that the style of your images [Goyō] and Fusetsu's do not overlap in the least. Maybe that is because your personalities are so different. Thanks to both of your illustrations, my collection of stories has become a great work" (Sōseki zenshū [SZ] 22, 479-480).

My presentation aims to give an overview of the material and the illustrations, while also analyzing particular image and text examples, thereby giving Sōseki also a visual standing in the discourse about Modernity and the *Fin de Siècle*.

Kevin Schumacher is a PhD Candidate at the University of Munich with a scholarship from the German Institute for Japanese Studies and the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. He studied Art History and Japanese Studies as a double degree in Munich, Fukuoka and Seoul, and is currently working on the image-text correlation in the works of Natsume Sōseki.

About:

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