

Portrayal of Orientalism in Shusaku Endo's *Silence*

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Abstract

This paper aims to show that Shusaku Endo portrayed and criticized Orientalism in his novel *Silence* (1966). The paper begins by noting the experience of otherization that Endo faced in France that influenced his critical engagement with Orientalism. Following this, the paper defines the term 'Orientalism' to provide a baseline for its subsequent arguments. Finally, the paper examines the portrayal/critique of Orientalism in *Silence* in four dimensions – the epistolary Orientalism of Rodrigues'; the underlying Oriental current that supersedes the priest's religious mission; Endo's authorial comments in the "Prologue"; and his partial portrayal of *Silence* as an Orientalist misadventure. Each of these dimensions have been seen from a theoretical lens, based on the text itself, which proves Endo's superb critical understanding of the Orientalist discourse. Ultimately, the paper aims to rekindle the snuffed critical discourse on Endo and his brilliant chef d'oeuvre, *Silence*.

Keywords: Orientalism, history, Japanese literature, colonialism, imperialism.

Introduction

Although an internationally renowned name in the last three decades of the twentieth century, Shusaku Endo (1923-1996) is now an almost neglected author in contemporary, non-Japanese reading circles of Japanese literature. An important postwar author, Endo wrote in a literary period crowned by jewels like Kenzaburo Oe¹, Enchi Fumiko, Kobo Abe, Banana Yoshimoto etc². Yet, whereas the works of these authors continue to enjoy international fame today, Endo's corpus seems to have receded from the active focus of readers and critics from outside Japan. That, however, does not mean that Endo's work is any less worthy. In fact, our contemporary world has much to learn from his literature. At the same time, his literary craft is in not lacking in any parameters, his prose is fast, almost gliding off the page. Yet, such speed does not come at a cost of attention, as Endo is able to hold on to readers' concentration – almost wraps it tightly – and succeeds in delivering his meaning effortlessly. Both of these features are evident in his 1966 magnum opus *Silence*.

Silence is so praiseworthy because it is successful in invoking within the readers a deep re-analysis of accepted notions of history, religion, politics and personal principles. On the surface, *Silence* is a story of a doomed Christian mission to Japan during the height of the anti-Christian persecutions in the country. However, the meaning of the novel is deep and layered – it is a critique of traditional notions of martyrdom, a protest against those in power who paint rosy images of sacrifice that are not in tandem with bloody ground realities, a

condemnation of religious hatred and socioeconomic exploitation, as well as an appeal to perceive and practice one's principles just the way one wants it, without guilt arising from altering of dogma. The garb of the novel is Christian, its meaning wholly human. For example, the same critique of martyrdom in the novel applies, *in toto*, to political martyrdom as well. We, as humans, have always celebrated and held onto our political martyrs, no matter where we find ourselves on the political spectrum. We celebrate our martyred 'national heroes' and observe holidays on their birth or death anniversaries, a practice not totally different from a Christian feast of a saint or a Hindu puja of a particular deity. Thus, the concerns of Endo in *Silence* are human in nature. His questions are human questions, about the way human beings look at martyrdom and the way they try to honour their own principles despite adverse situations.

To present this critique of our traditional notions of martyrdom, one needs to historicize the problem. In other words, one must analyze the historical roots of the issue since history has also shaped the way martyrdom is seen today. This is what Endo also does. Doubting history is a feature of postmodernism but Japanese literature has been problematizing history since the Modernist period. The short stories of Ryunosuke Akutagawa³ is a good example of this. Thus, Endo is treading familiar waters here. Problematizing history means to visit past events with questions that challenge monolithic understandings of history. It is to present "alternative renderings of the past...[that]...problematized the very mode of historical discourse" (Dhar 94). However, historical problematization is not a linear road. Focussing on one historical issue inevitably calls to attention other, related phenomena. For *Silence*, that related phenomena is the issue of Orientalism. Thus, it is the subject of this paper as well. This paper aims to show that Shusaku Endo, in his novel *Silence*, portrayed and critiqued Orientalism. The paper begins with a discussion of Endo's personal experiences of Orientalism and racism which went on to shape his critique of the same. Following this, the paper defines Orientalism and uses it as a base to make subsequent arguments. Returning to the novel, it delineates Endo's portrayal and critique of Orientalism, and concludes by discussing if *Silence* also portrays an Orientalist adventure gone wrong. The aim of the paper, ultimately, is to encourage a continuation of critical attention to Endo's corpus and especially to the many layered subtexts of *Silence*.

Endo's Experience in France:

Usually one would not expect a portrayal/critique of Orientalism in the works of a Japanese author. This is simply because Japan does not have a postcolonial culture. Rather, Japan – following Meiji Restoration⁴ in 1868 – saw itself as an imperialist power, equal to that of Britain, France or Portugal. The Japanese victory over Qing China in the First Sino-Japanese War intensified such feelings as it was the "epochal event that aroused and fostered Japanese militarism and imperialism. Henceforth, Japanese foreign policy would take a much more aggressive, chauvinistic turn" (Hane 107). That imperial aggression was further manifested in Japan's sound victory over Tsarist Russia (in Russo-Japanese War), colonization of Korea and Manchuria, and occupation of large chunks of Asia Pacific and Indochina during the Second World War. There is remarkable similarity between how the colonizer-bourgeoisie of Europe and Japan perceived their respective colonies. Imperial Japan otherized Koreans and Chinese people the same way the Europeans otherized Africans. For example, the Japanese imperialist

ethnographers commenting on Korea “quickly insinuated differences between the two peoples. They branded Koreans as ignorant, lazy, and incapable of initiating progress” (Wei). These otherizations of the colonized people were nothing but forms of Orientalism. Such notions of Orientalism in Japan were only deconstructed after the defeat in the Second World War, although the political right in the country still holds on to those views.

It is therefore that Endo’s critique of Orientalism becomes so important. Through literature, he was able to break the influence of dominant colonizer culture and identify as well as critique the Orientalist notions of supremacy and otherness. Of course, his stay in Lyon (France) was pivotal in making of this consciousness. In this city, he faced the Orientalism of the West. Being a Japanese student in France, at the aftermath of the Second World War, Endo faced “experiences of racial interpellation in the trams, trains, shops and restaurants of Lyon” (Hill 103). Such experiences must have caused the writer to contemplate the matter seriously, and in many of his short stories, Endo kept critiquing the racism faced by the Japanese expat in Europe. Indeed, Mathy identifies that the “theme of distance that separates East and West is constant in [Endo’s] work and is enunciated more clearly than ever in the novel *Chinmoku* (Silence)...” (58). However, the understanding of Orientalist discourse is not haphazard in *Silence* but rational. Hill argues that Endo and Frantz Fanon were in Lyon at the same point of time and that Endo read the Algerian psychoanalyst’s works in the same city:

[Fanon and Endo] wrote about colonialism and color, and in remarkably similar ways [utilizing] a critical phenomenology to contrast abstract conceptions of race and color with the lived experience of it, then went on to explore the psychological consequence of that experience for themselves and others. (96)

This explains Endo’s critical understanding of Orientalism and the same can also be seen in *Silence*.

Orientalism:

However, before proceeding further, we must define what is meant by ‘Orientalism’. Orientalism is a term associated with the postcolonial theories of Edward Said. According to him, “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident” (Said 2). Such distinctions, however, are not based in truth. Rather, they are constructs that enabled the West to form (mostly negative) opinions about the East (Kulkarni and Chaskar 226). Thus, Orientalism also falsely:

...explained the behaviour of Orientals; they supplied Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics [...] Orientalism is better grasped as a set of constraints upon and limitations of thought than it is simply as a positive doctrine. (Said 42)

Orientalism enabled the imperial powers in the West to garner inspiration from and also justify their colonization of the Orient. In practice, Orientalism was a tool to see the East as a

location of the exotic, the unnatural, the uncivilized. Equally, Orientalism argued that the East was inferior and needed to be subjugated. Countless colonizers⁵ set out on adventures to record and conquer the mysterious East based on this very idea of Orientalism. *Silence* also tells the story of two such Western missionaries who arrive in Japan. Although their appeal is religious, their interactions with the Japanese people quickly highlights their Orientalist bias, a feature portrayed and criticized by Endo.

Rodrigues' Letters:

Sebastian Rodrigues – the Portuguese priest who, along with Garrpe, arrives in Japan with the aim of restarting missionary work in the country – is the principle character of *Silence*. After separating from Garrpe, it is his actions, interactions, experiences, inner states etc that the author puts under the spotlight. The first part of the novel constitutes also of letters that Rodrigues sends back home. Epistles are an important feature of Oriental discourse. For people associated with colonial ventures “correspondence was an occasion to use the reputation of the epistolary form to command people and places into existence, to invent and to corroborate their past” (Jokic 111). Thus, the Orientalist epistle contributes to the perceived distinctions between the cultures of East and West.

Endo is aware of this and thus he portrays his character engaging in Orientalism from the very first epistle. For example, Rodrigues describes the city of Macao (China) in his letter as:

The Chinese houses stretch out like dust. But anyhow, no matter how many towns and cities of our country you imagine you can never get a picture of what it is like [...] The only things here that might recall our own country are the governor's palace, the Portuguese warehouses and the cobbled roads. (Endo 16-17)

This is a typical Orientalist description. Rodrigues is anxious to establish a distinction between the West and the East. The Eastern town is “like dust” (Endo 16) not at all similar to any “towns and cities of our [Western] country” (Endo 16). The only things that are familiar are instruments of Oriental subjugation – the governor's residence (symbolizing colonial imperialism)⁶ and warehouses (symbolizing colonial trade). Similarly, a rainy Macao disturbs Rodrigues – “The rain makes this wretched town even more wretched [...] the Chinese, huddled in little houses that looked like dog-kennels, left the dirty streets so deserted [...] As I look at such streets I think (I wonder why?) of the mystery of human life – and then I grow sad” (Endo 18). Describing Chinese architecture as “dog-kennel” (Endo 18) is a basic way to dehumanize the East, a *modus operandi* of any Orientalist discourse. However, Rodrigues' contemplation about the mystery of life is important here. Orientalism allows the Occident to perceive the East as a mystery. The East is a question for the West to solve and thus Rodrigues, conditioned by the same discourses of Orientalism, engages into the same ‘problem-solving’, even though he does not consciously know why. Endo is aware of such Orientalist doctrine that influence the Western mind, and he portrays – and thus criticizes – Orientalism.

Continuing the same atmosphere of mystery, Rodrigues exoticizes a totally normal evening in Macao:

The servants have just marched through the courtyard. In the rooms of Garrpe and Santa Marta the light is extinguished. Truly, this is the end of the earth [...] I am at the end of the earth, in a place you do not know [...] Certainly my being in this utterly remote and unknown Oriental town is like a dream. Or rather [...] it is a miracle. (Endo 25)

Rodrigues' assertion that Macao is "the end of the earth" (Endo 25) is quite interesting. Geographically speaking, the city of Macao occupied a central position in the maritime route between India, China and Japan. That is precisely the reason why Portuguese colonized the area, trying to capitalize on the Nanban trade route (Goa-Macao-Nagasaki route). Rodrigues himself takes the advantage of the route to secretly land in Japan. So, what is he talking about here? The 'end of the world' is a familiar trope in Orientalist cartography. By labelling the East as the edge of the world, Europe could see itself as the centre. It was also a way to exoticize the Eastern people since at the 'end of the world', civilization was not to be expected. Endo is aware of this Orientalist centre/periphery dichotomy and thus he critiques it by portraying Rodrigues indulging in it.

Endo has also criticized Orientalism by switching the focus of attention during certain interactions between the priests and the Japanese peasants. It is most clearly seen in Rodrigues' third letter. Meeting with the Japanese Christians – who have been forced to hide their religious practices under severe state repression – Rodrigues and Garrpe begin to administer spiritual services. However, Orientalism still intrudes in Rodrigues' mind and he comments:

Truth to tell in spite of myself I cannot help laughing when I hear the mumbling Portuguese and Latin words in the mouths of these ignorant peasants [...] The sacrament of confession they call 'konshan'; heaven they call 'parais'; hell is 'inferno'. Not only are their names difficult to remember, but their faces all look the same... (Endo 38-39)

This, frankly racist, attitude is quickly turned over its head by Endo. Rodrigues cannot keep holding onto it because the scales are eventually tipped and the priests find themselves on the receiving end. Since they are in hiding, it is the poor Japanese peasants who deliver what provisions they can spare for the priests, but:

You couldn't imagine how wretched it is – a few fried potatoes and water. And while Garrpe and I gulf it down, the two [Japanese] women look on, laughing with evident satisfaction.

'Are we really so queer?' exclaimed Garrpe once, flaring up in anger 'Is our way of eating so funny?'

They didn't understand a word he said, but burst out laughing, their faces crumpling like paper. (Endo 39-40)

This is the Orientalists getting a taste of their own medicine. Rather than exoticizing the Japanese, here they themselves get exoticized. The peasants turn over the imperial gaze, perceiving the practices of the Westerners as 'strange'. Of course, Garrpe and Rodrigues do not like it, which illustrates Endo's point that being subjected to exoticizing is not a pleasurable experience. At the same time, this reversal is also used by Endo to challenge a basic premise of Orientalism – the strangeness of the East. Oriental/Occidental 'strangeness' does not exist and neither the East nor the West is strange. What is 'normal' for one may

strike 'strange' for the other, but it is only a matter of subjective perspective and not objective ontology or essence. Thus, building up a worldview – Orientalism – on basis of definite strangeness of the other is also equally dubious, and this is hinted at by Endo in the above scene.

There are other examples of Orientalism in the letters as well but pointing them all out is beyond the limits of the paper. However, from the above we can sufficiently say that, through Rodrigues' letters, Endo has portrayed and criticized Orientalism in the novel.

The Primacy of the Oriental Mission:

Rodrigues and Garrpe arrive in Japan to restart the missionary work in a country where the newly united state has unleashed violent repression against Christians; as well as to find Ferreira – the legendary Catholic priest in Japan – and seek reasons for his abandoning of Christianity. However, this spiritual mission is often supplanted by an underlining Orientalist mission. Endo is very careful to portray this. For example, the Superior in Macao – Valignano – is initially sceptical of the priests' mission since many such earlier attempts have ended in disaster. However "Valignano [...] was finally moved by our pleading [...] and consented to our secret mission to Japan. So now the die is cast" (Endo 16). "*Alea iacta est*" or variously translated as 'the die is cast' is a famous quote that, according to Plutarch, was said by Caesar before crossing the Rubicon with his army (270). This crossing was a military action that began armed hostilities between him and Pompey, otherwise known as the Roman Civil War. By using the same phrase as Caesar, Rodrigues underlines the fact that he sees Japan as an Oriental space to be conquered by him, Garrpe and Marta – the conquerors. This fits very well in the armed colonial ventures taking place in the East at the time. This is also not an isolated thought since Rodrigues refers to the military again while comparing the Japanese Christians who come to him as "an army marching through the parched desert and then arriving at an oasis..." (Endo 53).

Apart from this, Orientalism also prevents Rodrigues from properly dispersing his spiritual duties. There is a poignant baptism scene described in Rodrigues' third letter. The poignancy centres around the fact that the village of persecuted Christians, for the first time in many years, are able to baptize one of their children from an actual priest, and that too in secret to avoid state attention, using only makeshift equipment:

It was late at night and we were secretly baptizing a baby that had been brought along by Omatsu [...] It was our first baptism since coming to Japan, and of course we had no candles nor music in our little hut – the only instrument [...] was a broken little peasants' cup [...] for holy water. But it was more touching than liturgy of any cathedral to see that poor little hut with the baby crying and Omatsu soothing it while one of the men stood on guard outside. I was thrilled with joy as I listened to the solemn voice of Garrpe as he recited the baptismal prayers. This is a happiness that only a missionary priest in a foreign land can relish. (Endo 47)

"This is a happiness that only a mission priest in a foreign land can relish" (Endo 47) immediately ends the poignancy of the scene. It is a brilliant addition by Endo to critique the Orientalist attitude. For Rodrigues, the religious importance of this baptism is not the cause of

joy. Rather, the fact that a missionary is able to do so in an Oriental space – “foreign land” – contributes to his pleasure. Here, Orientalism supersedes religious duty. Moreover, the use of the word “relish” is quite interesting. “Relish” indicates a kind of consumption. We relish in delicious food or earthly pleasures. This is not a word that should be readily found in a religious context. Rodrigues’ use of this word is Endo’s criticism that Orientalism, for the West, is a kind of consumption and pleasure-making, allowing the Occident to relish in the mirth of superiority. Once again, it is related to the idea of conquest of the Orient, as the Orient is the location of that consumption and mirth. Thus, Endo criticizes Orientalism by showing how it continuously casts aside the actual religious purpose of the mission.

A similar attitude can also be observed in the priests’ initial assessments about Inoue – the Governor of Chikugo province and the then “architect of the Christian persecution” (Endo 15) in Japan. Rather than devising ways to operate secretly so as to avoid harm personally as well for the congregation, the priests dream of a confrontation – “And so to imprint on our memories the name of this Japanese whom we would undoubtedly meet after landing in Japan, we repeated the unfamiliar sounds again and again: I-NO-U-E” (Endo 15). Their attempts to memorize the name ‘Inoue’ is akin to an audience memorizing the name of a negative character of a show. It is akin to an Orientalist fantasy where the white man confronts the evil Oriental, defeating them in battle. This is hardly surprising because Orientalism sees the East as “a theatrical stage” where “figures” (Said 63) like Inoue appear representing (falsely) the nature of a diverse group of population. This Orientalist fantasy, ultimately, becomes a bane for the priests as Inoue proves to be a much complex foe whose evil supersedes the stock-character Orientalism demands it to be. Thus, Orientalism becomes their own undoing, which is also the author’s critique here.

Thus, in these ways, Endo has portrayed and criticized Orientalism in the novel.

The “Prologue”:

Apart from Rodrigues, *Silence* also has an omnipotent narrator. This narrative voice is sometimes used by Endo to make authorial comments. Among other things, his comments also portray and critique Orientalism. One such example is the novel’s “Prologue”. Endo is aware of how the West perceives the periphery. Thus, he is careful to portray that Orientalist centre/periphery dichotomy in the novel. In the “Prologue”, for example, he shows how the news of Ferreira’s apostatizing was seen in the West for its political meaning as well:

...in the Europe of that time the fact that Ferreira had been forced to abandon his faith in this remote country at the periphery of the world was not simply the failure of one individual but a humiliating defeat for the faith itself and for the whole of Europe. Such was the way of thinking that prevailed; and so after all sorts of troubles and difficulties, Father Rubino and his four companions were finally permitted to set sail. (Endo 6)

“Such was the way of thinking that prevailed” (Endo 6) firmly indicates the Orientalist attitude, as Orientalism is a mode of thought that limits one’s knowledge. This Orientalist thought does not allow the West a spiritual analysis but a firmly political one – the apostatizing of a priest in Japan is seen as an affront to the political supremacy of Europe.

Endo therefore uses the phrase “periphery of the world” (6) quite consciously – Europe saw Ferreira’s abandonment as the defeat of the Occidental centre at the hands of the Oriental periphery. “And so” (Endo 6) Father Rubino and his group was permitted to travel to Japan. This “and so” here is an important choice by the author. He wants to show that Rubino coming to Japan is a direct result of Ferreira’s apostatizing. The permission given to Rubino is less out of worry about the persecuted Japanese congregation but more out of the anxiety to restore Occidental supremacy.

Hence, Rubino’s journey is quite like an expedition; and this is the same kind of expedition which Rodrigues and his group also embark upon. It is also seen in the type of transportation that Rodrigues and his associates choose to come to the East. They choose *Santa Isabella*, a ship headed for Goa. However, the description that Endo provides of their departure is quite interesting: “On March 25th, 1638, the Indian fleet sailed out from the river Tagus to a salvo of guns from the fortress of Belem. On board the *Santa Isabella*, were the three missionaries who [...] had boarded the commander’s ship” (Endo 9). This is a portrayal of a ship that is heading out for conquest. It is not seen as a passenger or commercial vessel as it sets sail with military honours (artillery salute from a fortress). Moreover, Rodrigues’ group decided to travel in the commander’s vessel – symbolic of fashioning themselves as the conquerors. Thus, Endo shows here how the group’s travel to the East is mired with Orientalist ideas.

Therefore, the “Prologue” sets the tone for portrayal and critique of Orientalism for the rest of the novel.

***Silence* as an Orientalist Adventure Gone Wrong:**

All of these beg the question – is *Silence* a portrayal of an Orientalist adventure gone wrong? It is partially true. Firstly, we must note that Rodrigues – and other priests – travel to Japan and keep notes, via letters chiefly, of their experience of travel. Rodrigues’ letters can be cited in this regard as a travelogue. However, the act of travelling is not an innocent activity. Travellers are bound by, what Larson and Urry termed, the ‘tourist gaze’ which is “constructed through signs which a culture perceives and interprets according to its own value system” (Katan 91). The result is that the tourist is unable to understand local culture and “...ends up distorting, generalising or simply deleting much of what is abroad” (Katan 92). This tourist gaze also influences any recordings of the tourist’s travels, and Rodrigues’ letters suffer from the same issue. Added to this tourist gaze, for a traveller during the colonial times, is also the Orientalist gaze. Lowe argues that for the eighteenth century Orientalist travelogues:

the trope of travel allegorized the problems of maintaining cultural institutions amidst challenging othernesses, of establishing cultural standards and norms in the context of heterogeneity and difference. In this way not only did the literary theme of travel serve to express the eighteenth-century colonial preoccupation with land and empire, but also travel as a representation of territorial ambition became a predominant discursive means for managing a national culture's concern with internal social differences and change. (31)

The same can also be said for similar travel texts produced even before the 1700s, for Orientalism dates back since before the eighteenth century. Rodrigues' Japanese travelogue is certainly an attempt to establish norms and, as discussed in earlier sections, has an Orientalist territorial ambition. Thirdly, the idea of an adventure must also be studied. An adventure is always about imposing one own's significance on the surrounding entities. The adventuring self is posited in the centre while anybody and anything else is seen as an inferior other. Rodrigues also sees his mission to Japan as an adventure. The biggest indication of this is Rodrigues' 'hero complex'. Rodrigues has a complex where he sees himself as a hero of the suffering community of Christian Japanese and continuously compares himself with the Christ. Whenever he faces any kind of danger he thinks of the many threats that Christ faced and then compares both of their predicaments. Such comparisons abound in the text and are too many to illustrate here. While such comparisons are necessary for an activist of any movement in order to strengthen their will, resolve and inspiration, Rodrigues' comparisons are so on-the-nose and so frequent that it becomes quite clear that he is trying to *see himself* as Christ rather than taking inspiration from Him. It places Rodrigues as an adventurer, who must – like Christ – deliver the Japanese from evil.

Endo is aware of these three ideas and he coalesces them in his portrayal of Rodrigues. However, to critique Orientalism, he shows how quickly the notions of the Orientalist adventure dissipates when faced with reality. Rodrigues comes to Japan as a conquering adventurer but concrete ground reality soon forces him to surrender his airs of superiority. For example, when the authorities torture and execute two leading Christians of his congregation – Mokichi and Ichizo – Rodrigues sees the very real pain and suffering that are quite different from the Church's (and his) ideas of a glorious martyrdom. Furthermore, the fear of a government raid forces him to flee the village. Such challenges make him question his adventure – "...why on earth do we remain in this country at all? We did not make that long journey [...] just to flee like this from one hiding place to another. It was not to hide in the mountains like field mice, to receive a lump of food from destitute peasants and to be confined [...] What had happened to our glorious dream?" (Endo 79). The "glorious dream" of an Orientalist adventure, thus, is challenged by actual reality. Oriental reality (as opposed to Orientalist perspective) poses a challenge to the status of the adventurer. Thus, far from being a hero, Rodrigues is eventually seen "crouching with fear and trembling like a wild dog" (Endo 127) while being transferred to Yokose-no-Ura by the authorities. Added to all this is the fact that – being persecuted by the feudal state in Japan – Rodrigues begins to doubt his own faith. Although he is able to reconcile his beliefs later, the existence of the doubt is a challenge to the accepted narrative of Orientalism, where the Occidental adventurer is always self-assured. Thus Endo critiques Orientalism here.

Finally, Endo also subverts the Orientalist narrative. Rather than conquering the Orient, Rodrigues – the Occidental adventurer – is forced to surrender to the East.

This subversion is first seen in Ferreira. Ferreira, whom Rodrigues meets in captivity, has apostatized. Moreover, he was forced to take a Japanese name – Sawano Chuan – and was involved in writing a condemnation of Christianity or *Gengiroku*. Rodrigues, at the end of the novel, met the same fate. Thus, the rosy narratives of Orientalist supremacy are thwarted by ground realities. Moreover, as the novel progresses, Rodrigues realizes that his presence in Japan is only bringing more pain and suffering to the peasantry. His missionary work is powerless to defeat the reign of terror unleashed by the feudal state on the Christian peasants.

Rather, his adventures end up drawing the state's attention to the hitherto underground Christians and thus bring danger on them. Ferreira was the first to understand this and hence his declaration to Rodrigues – "You understand nothing. And the crowd that comes for sight-seeing to this country from the monasteries of Goa and Macao calling themselves apostles – they understand nothing either" (Endo 200) – actually hints to this very fact. Finally, Rodrigues understands this when he is brought at the infamous Nagasaki pit. Realizing the monstrous suffering of Christians in the pit, suspended there to slowly die, he understands that he must apostatize in order to alleviate the people's pain. Thus, at last, analysing the concrete ground realities, Rodrigues apostatizes and puts a full stop to his adventures in Japan. This totally collapses the binaries upheld by Orientalist adventure narratives, where the Occidental hero always triumphs over Oriental decadents. Hence, Endo has criticized Orientalist narratives here.

However, it must be noted that the element of Orientalist adventure is not the main focus of Rodrigues' path to, and eventual, apostatizing. Rather, Endo uses Rodrigues' apostatizing to communicate one of the (two) central meanings of the text – that abandoning dogma does not mean betrayal of one's principles. Rodrigues and Ferreira *needed* to apostatize in order to save the people from painful torture and death. If they held on to dogma, the people would have suffered. Hence, by abandoning dogma they did not abandon the faith, but rather realigned their beliefs according to concrete ground realities.

However, since Orientalism keeps trying to supplant Rodrigues' duties of faith, as shown above, Endo's critique of Orientalist adventure, although not the main meaning here, nevertheless establishes itself quite well. Indeed, the author must be praised for being able to provide two meanings in one single element. Thus, Endo has portrayed and critiqued Orientalism in the novel.

Conclusion:

Thus, we can sufficiently argue that Endo has portrayed and critiqued Orientalism in his novel *Silence*. A number of different ways have been utilized by him to create this portrayal, such as Rodrigues' epistolary narrative that is filled with hints of the character's Orientalist attitude. This attitude becomes a primal factor which continuously challenges the religious centrality of his mission, which is another way in which Endo critiques Orientalism. Apart from this, Endo also sharply contrasts rosy Orientalist narratives with real ground reality, the confrontation between the two resulting in the collapse of the former. This is seen in Endo's portrayal of Rodrigues' time in Japan as an Orientalist misadventure. Finally, the authorial comments in the novel's "Prologue" also ground the portrayal and critique of Orientalism.

All such critical portrayal is the result of Endo's experiences in France as well as his own erudition, both of which allow him to be precise in his descriptions and lucid in his meaning.

Endnotes:

1. Winner of Noble Prize in Literature 1994.
2. It is to be noted that although contemporaries, the literary styles of these authors were vastly different.
3. Perhaps we should also note here that Endo was a recipient of the prestigious Akutagawa Prize.
4. Meiji Restoration was a capitalist revolutionary war that ended seven hundred years of feudal rule in Japan. Curiously, it began with an exact opposite goal – to save feudalism from capitalist-imperialist aggression of colonial powers from the West (Hane 63).
5. Consider, for example, Anquetil-Duperron and R.F. Burton. The problem was widespread enough for Thackeray to criticize it in his novel *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan* (1855).
6. Interestingly, both during the timeline of *Silence* as well as throughout Endo's lifetime, Macau (or Macao) remained a Portuguese colony; liberating itself and becoming a part of China only in 1999.

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