

Persecutor's Remorse: Mimetic Desire, Institutions, and Shūsaku Endō's Loving Gaze on
Persecutors

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“Man is a splendid and beautiful being and, at the same time, man is a terrible being as we recognised in Auschwitz —God knows well this monstrous dual quality of man.”

-Shūsaku Endō

“We are of the same spiritual race... and from childhood we were accustomed to examine our hearts, to bring light to bear on our thoughts, our desires, our acts, our omissions. We know that evil is an immense fund of capital shared among all people, and that there is nothing in the criminal heart, no matter how horrible, whose germ is not also to be found in our own hearts.”

- François Mauriac

“The principal source of violence between human beings is mimetic rivalry, the rivalry resulting from imitation of a model who becomes a rival or of a rival who becomes a model” (I See Satan, 2).

- René Girard

“Ordinary men are usually part of a social and moral network that helps them maintain their humanity toward others and prevents them from becoming involved in inhuman acts. In order to socialize them into becoming murderers, they have to be insulated from their original social network and an alternative network has to be created for the potential killers, composed of men like themselves, led by a genocidal authority.

- Dan Bar-On

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Introduction

Shūsaku Endō is a postwar Japanese writer whose corpus has brought him international renown. Known for navigating the tension between European Christianity and Japanese culture, he's often been called the "Japanese Graham Greene" (Johnston ix). However, scholars such as Van C. Gessel and Mark Williams have attempted to place Endō within his Japanese context instead of classifying him as simply a Catholic writer. They argue that Endō is part of the Third-Generation of Writers after WWII who are often critical of the institutions of Japan and who see personal identity as inseparable from the society in which one is raised.

This thesis is an attempt to further the discussion of Endō as a Third-Generation Writer by reading him in light of René Girard, especially Girard's claim that all human desires are mimetic. What emerges is a sociological dimension to Endō's work, particularly the way that characters interact with one another and how these interactions influence their behavior for better or for worse. Since most of Endō's stories deal with persecution, I will argue that the persecutors in his novels participate in collective persecution either because they are subconsciously imitating mediators whose values they emulate, or because they desire to belong to their social circles and institutions and are threatened by such groups if they are unwilling to conform. I will also show how Endō's narrative technique of including multiple perspectives and narrators leads his readers to empathize with these misunderstood persecutors. Additionally, I will discuss how the death of those who have been persecuted can lead the persecutors towards feelings of remorse, an idea which is related to Girard's theory of the "scapegoat mechanism," which emphasizes how central the role of the virtuous mediator is in leading persecutors from remorse to repentance.

Endō and the *Daisan no shinjin* Writers of Postwar Japan

To contextualize Endō as a Japanese Catholic writer alone is to oversimplify Endō's entire corpus. Williams rightly notes that Endō's readers must consider his Japanese context thoroughly, especially his emergence out of the *shishosetsu* (I-novel) tradition as a *Daisan no shinjin* writer.¹ Gessel and other scholars often characterize the *Daisan no shinjin* writers as those who write with "a feeling of chronic weariness, a stupor both physical and spiritual" (*Sting* 5). The postwar "Third-Generation Writers," the *Daisan no shinjin* novelists, wrote with "an inevitable layer of irony between author and quasi-autobiographical protagonist, a layer that was largely lacking in the I-novels of the self-confident prewar generation" (5). While the pre-war generation wrote exclusively from the subjective experience of a single narrator, the *Daisan no shinjin* writers often include multiple narrators to highlight the way in which the protagonist fits within a larger society. As Williams states, "One aspect, which distinguish[ed] the literature of the *Daisan no shinjin* from their precursors in the pre-war *shishosetsu*, was the emergence, in the former, of a truly 'socialised self'" (28).² The *Daisan no shinjin* writers may have been more aware of societal changes because of the war, and while the I-novelists experienced the stability of life before the war, the *Daisan no shinjin* writers experienced "[r]apid industrialization, increased social mobility, a weakening of the traditional family system, and the effects of a disciplined but increasingly dogmatic education [which] tore these future writers from their

¹ The I-novelists include writers who deal directly with subjective perspectives of their own experiences. They often add biographical material to their writing, and the stories they write are directly related to their own lives, either literally or allegorically. They do not simply write autobiographies, however, but they often write from their own experiences, blurring the lines between fiction and nonfiction; the voice of the narrator is fixed, and its purpose, argues Edward Fowler, is to imitate real life (291).

² Williams contrasts this socialized self with the pre-war *shishosetsu* characters, "who remained, on the whole, isolated from social interaction[.] There is a concern for the social implications of their scenarios in the works of the *Daisan no shinjin* that leads to portrayal of protagonists who accept their status as insignificant entities in a much broader social spectrum" (28).

roots” (Williams 6). Thus, stability gives way to instability as these postwar writers cope with uncomfortable and even oppressive changes. On the one hand, the *Daisan no shinjin* writers would criticize the society they inhabited; on the other, they also realized how crucial society is in constructing the self and how the self is inseparable from the society.

Nonetheless, the *Daisan no shinjin* writers did not break completely with their predecessors; they continued to weave themselves into the novels they wrote, but the confident self of the I-novelists is contrasted strongly with the fractured, multiple selves of the *Daisan no shinjin* writers.³ As Van Gessel puts it, “The ‘I’ of this new fiction has ceased to be a local god of sorts—the Self, in fact, has fallen so far from grace that his personal convictions are no longer to be trusted, much less exalted” (68). Williams argues that this is, perhaps, an attempt by the *Daisan no shinjin* writers to counter the overly confident tone of the pre-war I-novelists (23). Virtually all of Endō’s narrators and protagonists deal with moral dilemmas caused by the instabilities of having multiple selves and voicing disagreements with society’s values. These conflicting ideas are often resolved once the characters reconcile with “the voice of the narrator’s doppelgänger,” or more specifically, the Other within these narrators and protagonists (23)⁴.

Mark Williams and the Reconciliation of the Selves

Williams argues that the conflict facing Endō’s protagonists and narrators stems from Endō’s own desire to clarify his own Catholic faith as a Japanese author (33). Specifically, Endō saw the conflict between depicting the world as truly evil, which could draw his readers deeper

³ This stability/instability contrast is most prevalent in differences in narrative voice. While I-novelists often project a confident and unified voice for their protagonists, the *Daisan no shinjin* writers often undercut this confident voice with a moment where the protagonists realize how unstable the self and the institutions around them are.

⁴ Endō’s interest in Jungian psychology plays itself in many of his novels, most notably in *Scandal*, where the protagonist sees an actual doppelgänger, his “shadow” self who acts on his own accord and destroys the protagonist’s reputation.

into sin after they've experienced a taste of evil, and propagating Catholic doctrine, which would subject his characters and novels "to artifice and distortion, [and] the work [would cease] to be literature in the true sense of the word" (qtd. in Williams 36). Thus, Endō's Catholicism led him to other Catholic authors like Dostoyevsky, Francois Mauriac, and Graham Greene, who "sought to explore human nature" by way of human psychology (39). Williams also recounts Endō's fascination with the Jungian process of "individuation," whereby the conscious and the unconscious selves recognize one another to create a "whole" person (43). Embedded within this exploration of the unconscious is Endō's belief that the unconscious self hints at the existence of the supernatural: "The Catholic author views this world as a shadow of the supernatural world, and even, whilst observing human psychology, he will detect, behind this 'second dimension' psychology of Freud, Bergson, and Proust, the 'third dimension'... As a result, the Catholic author can conceive as reality the introduction of the supernatural world into the world of human interaction..." (39). Therefore, Endō's protagonists often journey towards the process of individuation, which is also a journey towards the "supernatural world" itself:

Gradually convinced during the course of the novels of the need to acknowledge this other self as an integral part of their whole being, Endō's protagonists come increasingly to accept that their earlier faulty or incomplete perception of themselves and others was the result of failure to come to terms with this 'other self'... The overall effect, however, is that of an adventure of reconciliation. (55)

Williams is correct to point out that Endō's protagonists often seek to reconcile with the unconscious; on the other hand, Endō, like his fellow *Daisan no shinjin* writers, also points to the importance of social institutions and how these influences can change or destabilize the "I." This social dimension of Endō's stories is often glossed over by Williams as a means for the

characters to recognize the unconscious within them; however, this attempt to read the novels psychoanalytically may fall short as it potentially ignores much of the imitative nature of desire within the novels. This is especially true when it comes to Endō's characters who are persecutors. While Williams blames repression as the source of the characters' violent behavior, he often focuses solely on the characters' conflict within themselves rather than seeing that the conflict is caused by the characters' relationship with others.

Mimetic Desire and its Role in Creating Subconscious Persecutors

René Girard's thesis in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* is that all human desires are imitative. As Chris Fleming summarizes, "Girard describes desire as mimetic because of what he sees as the overriding importance of imitation in the constitution of our desires; fundamentally, he suggests, we learn what to desire from copying the desires of others" (10). Thus, while it may seem that desires emerge internally when people encounter metaphysical or material objects that they are drawn to, for Girard, this understanding overlooks the social dimension of desire: "To say that our desires are imitative or mimetic is to root them neither in their objects nor in ourselves but in a third party, the *model* or *mediator*, whose desire we imitate in the hope of resembling him or her" (qtd. in Fleming 10).

Since Endō, like the *Daisan no shinjin* writers, believes that society and its institutions play a monumental role in constructing the self, their novels reveal the way in which their characters are drawn, sometimes without realizing it, towards actions that they may deem immoral. This is especially true when it comes to acts of violence and persecution, actions which are prominent in many of Endō's novels. The persecutors in Endō's works often commit persecution after being led, subconsciously, by mimetic desire, which is cultivated by their mediators. These mediators can range from a single individual to large institutions, and their size

determines how much control they have over the desires of the persecutors. Using mimetic desire as the foundation for reading Endō allows us to look beyond the psyches of individual characters and to see, instead, how their desires interact with one another and engender persecution.

Additionally, since sociological commentary is important to many *Daisan no shinjin* writers, analyzing how such relationships work on a collective/institutional level helps to contextualize Endō accurately alongside his contemporaries. Endō's novels, therefore, explore not only the reconciliation between the unconscious and the conscious selves, but the sociology of evil as well, especially how individual relationships and institutions motivate the characters to become purveyors of evil.

Thus, I will attempt to chart how three of Endō's novels, *The Sea and Poison*, *Silence*, and *Kiku's Prayer*, which deal directly with collective persecution, reveal the role of mediators in leading each "weak" character towards acts of violence. My first chapter will be an extended response to Williams' thesis in *Endō Shūsaku: A Literature of Reconciliation*, showing how Williams overlooks the sociological dimension of Endō's novels and how the relationships featured in these three novels play a role in creating the mimetic pull that his characters experience towards persecuting behavior. My second chapter will map out Endō's critique of institutions in the three novels referenced above as it relates to mimetic desire, especially the way in which institutions are "centers of desire" that threaten banishment towards the "weak" and lure them with the hope of success and belonging. My third chapter shows the way in which Endō's narrative technique allows readers to empathize with such "weak" characters, to see them as individuals plagued by past traumas and present guilt, and how the death of those persecuted can lead these persecutors towards remorse. Nonetheless, Endō shows how such persecutors

never move on from remorse unless they are led by another mediator—a mediator of virtue—who shows compassion to them and leads them towards repentance, confirming the central role of mimetic desire in his novels. As I hope to demonstrate, the importance of mimetic desire in Endō's works confirms his place among the *Daisan no shinjin* authors; his characters truly become “socialised selves” and can only be understood as a product of the relationships with which they surround themselves.

Chapter One: Unconscious Imitators: Mimetic Desire in Endō's Novels

Chapter One lays out the foundational argument that Endō is attentive to the role that mimetic desire plays in shaping the unconscious of his characters. This chapter, then, serves as a rebuttal to Williams' thesis that Endō's novels are mainly about the unconscious Other, a "voice" that seems to break through from the characters' interior state. Williams rightly notes that Endō's protagonists, especially those who are prone to violent behavior, often deal with conflicting emotions and may even seem like they have multiple selves. Nonetheless, he overlooks how central the characters' surroundings are, especially their relationships, in creating this psychological tension. Thus, I will argue that the violent behavior and conflicting emotions are often engendered by mimetic desire, specifically by the mediators whom these ambivalent persecutors wish to imitate, leading them towards acts of evil.

The first part of Chapter One is a brief summary of Williams's thesis in *Endō Shusaku: A Literature of Reconciliation*, followed by an extended critique of his argument—pointing out some of the crucial elements related to the sociological dimension of Endō's work that Williams glosses over. Beginning with *The Sea and Poison*, I argue that Suguro's relationship with Toda, who serves as Suguro's mediator, is crucial for fashioning him into a persecutor; Toda's role as a competent doctor is what molds Suguro's own aspirations into becoming "strong," leading him to participate in the vivisections of WWII prisoners and becoming a persecutor. The second part of Chapter One analyzes *Silence* and the shifting picture of Rodrigues' paternal Christ towards a more maternal one, exploring the ways in which this shift owes much to how Rodrigues views his mentor, Ferreira. The excruciating doubt that Rodrigues feels also depends on mimetic desire, particularly the way in which Rodrigues confronts his expectation of a glorious martyrdom, which he associates with "strong" Christians, with its gruesome reality. Lastly, I close with the

different types of mimetic desire represented by the various relationships featured in *Kiku's Prayer*, specifically the difference between external mediation, whereby the mediator serves as an idol or an inspirational figure, and internal mediation, whereby the mediator serves as a rival or an obstacle to desire. While Kiku sees the statue of Santa Maria at the Ōura church as a saint to be followed (external mediation), Ito Seizaemon's relationship with Hondo leads to destructive behavior and hatred towards himself and others because Hondo prevents him from attaining his desire (internal mediation).

Contextualizing Endō's Unconscious: Jungian or Girardian?

Mark Williams's *Endō Shusaku: A Literature of Reconciliation* provides a good corrective to scholars who wish to read Endō's novels purely as "theological tracts." Williams rightly notes that Endō's portrayal of the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious selves is prevalent in virtually all of Endō's novels:

The Endō protagonists are engaged in a remorseless quest, a search for greater understanding, not merely of the motivating force behind their seemingly impulsive behaviour, but, by extension, of the relationship between their conscious self—the persona that they have traditionally presented to society—and this 'other self', symbol of the unconscious being in which such actions appear rooted. (23)

Williams supports his thesis by citing how much Endō was influenced by the Western authors he studied in France, particularly Catholic authors who "look at the innermost recesses of human existence... they must scrutinise the secrets, the sins and the evils within the soul of their characters" (qtd. in Williams 37). Furthermore, Williams points to Endō's interest in Jungian psychology, particularly Jung's belief that when both the unconscious and the conscious are heeded, the "whole" man or complete "Self" harmoniously emerges—an unrepressed and

balanced self with a healthy psyche (45). This tension between the conscious and the unconscious, for Williams, shows up in the dichotomies found within Endō's novels, dichotomies such as East/West or strength/weakness, and even sin/salvation (53). Williams concludes by saying, "Once more, the task for Endō as novelist was to present this vision of the divided self in literary terms and, as suggested by the number of Endō's characters, especially in his later novels, who find themselves confronted by [another self], Endō too found himself increasingly drawn to portrayal of this tension through examination of the concept of the *doppelgänger*" (54). This divided self will remain divided as long as the characters repress their unconscious selves, which can ultimately lead to violent behavior.

While Williams is correct in his interpretation that Endō's novels are filled with the unconscious Other, the idea that Endō's protagonists often repress these desires, which inevitably leads to evil may be incomplete. A stronger understanding of this dynamic lies in Williams's earlier discussion of how the *Daisan no shinjin* writers are aware of the socialized self and how helpless they are in the midst of the larger society. There is ample evidence that the source of violence in Endō's novels arises from these helpless characters who become envious of the strong and powerful. This conflict is crucial in fostering the persecuting tendencies within Endō's characters. Thus, a Girardian model, which reveals a different understanding of the workings of the unconscious, is perhaps more helpful for our discussion for why Endō's protagonists commit persecution.

In *Desire, Deceit, and the Novel*, Girard argues that mimetic desire is at the heart of every human interaction. Girard begins his book by using Don Quixote and Amadis, his mentor in *Don Quixote*, as an example of how the nature of desire is triangular: it always includes a subject, an object, and a mediator: "Don Quixote has surrendered to Amadis the individual's fundamental

prerogative: he no longer chooses the objects of his own desire—Amadis must choose for him. The disciple pursues objects which are determined for him, or at least seem determined for him, by the model of chivalry” (1-2). He critiques fiction which portrays desire as a “straight-line” from the subject to the object, a trait he associates with novels during the Romantic period. This “straight-line” structure is deceptive, according to Girard, because it betrays the mimetic nature of desire; the mediator’s role is always essential in imparting desire in the subject—the mediator, in essence, controls what the subject desires (2).

Girard’s theory of mimetic desire conflicts with the psychoanalytical model of repression as the fundamental grounds of violence. As Eugene Webb argues, the cause of violence according to mimetic desire is “ontological lack”:

Freud’s basic assumption was that human beings have straightforward, virtually instinctual desires that become problematic when they clash with societal norms; the result is that we “repress” them (that is, we bury them in our “unconscious”) so that they continue to drive us but in ways that, because they are unconscious, become muddled and put us in conflict not only with others but also with ourselves.

Girard’s study of literature convinced him that the truly great imaginative writers penetrate to a deeper level of insight into human psychology at which they come to realize that desire is not straightforwardly object directed in the way Freud assumed and that it stems rather from a sense of deep ontological lack, for which the desirer hopes to compensate by imitating a model who appears, at least, to enjoy ontological plenitude.

(148)

Indeed, as Girard himself admits, his notion of the unconscious “differs from the Freudian unconscious in that there’s no great treasure or mystery to be found in my unconscious. It is, you

might say, a purely negative unconscious. Enmeshed in ritual, we see nothing. Insight only comes when we are jolted out of ritual practice, or out of our habits” (qtd. in Bertonneau 19).

As I will demonstrate, Girard’s thesis is applicable to Endō’s novels especially, for his characters do not have desires that emerge out of nowhere; in fact, their desires are intertwined with their mediators, the people they look up to the most.

The Allure of Toda’s Cigarettes: Mimetic Desire in *The Sea and Poison*

Williams’ reading of *The Sea and Poison* offers a promising, Jungian interpretation of the novel; nevertheless, Williams does miss some crucial elements in the story, particularly how mimetic desire affects the characters’ motivations and desires, especially in fashioning persecutors. The novel follows the perspective of Suguro, who is working with a medical team at the University Hospital. Since the novel’s beginning, the narrator hints at Suguro’s characteristic kindness, for he constantly wishes to go the extra mile for his patients, even when they are on the verge of death. Toda, another intern in the medical team, is pessimistic about Suguro’s endeavor and is more utilitarian in his medical practices. His character seems to be a foil to Suguro, telling Suguro right away that his methods are over the top: “Cut the sentimentality! Do something for one and so what? Look, the wards and the private rooms are filled with poor bastards who don’t have a chance. Why this fascination with one old lady?” (33). Suguro is scolded for being weak as Toda compares him to the student nurses—for Toda, pity is wasted in a field where doctors must see their patients die every day (33). The crucial distinction between the two is obvious, and the juxtaposition of the two characters as foil has been observed by Williams (82).

Nonetheless, Williams does not discuss the relationship between these two characters in detail, but instead, chooses to analyze the unconscious of each individual separately. Williams claims that the change in Suguro’s thinking is due to the “promptings of [Suguro’s] unconscious”

(80). The interpretation is convincing due to Suguro's frequent reference to his dreams, which seems to point to the powerful operations of the unconscious: "In his dreams, [Suguro] saw himself in the dark sea, his figure a battered husk swept round in the current" (qtd. in Williams 81). This, Williams points out, is evidence for Suguro "struggling to come to terms with aspects of his inner being—of a man engaged in a process of spiritual awakening" (81). Later, as Suguro's conscience wrestles with the existence of God and a final judgment, Williams points to how, instead of answering the question straightforwardly, Suguro recites a poem which he learns from Toda. This poem seems to be evidence of the unconscious barging itself in, "accusing" him of his role in killing the prisoners of war: "The more Suguro is troubled by this verse, the more its role as an object of his subconscious religious devotion is established" (82).

And yet, Williams downplays the relationship between Toda and Suguro by focusing on their individual psyches separate from one another. Williams' analysis overlooks the "socialized self" typical of the *Daisan no shinjin* writers. Admittedly, there is danger in ignoring the psychology of each character and reading the novel allegorically, viewing the characters in the story as representations of a contrast between Western and Japanese medicinal practices.⁵ While Endō's sociological critique is present in the novel, to ignore the characterization of each individual and their psyches is to ignore Endō's attempt to understand the interior states of man. Nonetheless, a balance exists between the micro-level (Suguro's and Toda's separate consciences) and the macro-level (an allegory of East vs. West) of the story. By looking at the interactions between Toda and Suguro in particular, the novel reveals the motivation behind Suguro's shift in attitude, especially the regression he undergoes as he is slowly overcome by

⁵ See, for instance, Hans-Peter Bruer's "The Roots of Guilt and Responsibility in Shusaku Endo's *The Sea and Poison*." *Literature and Medicine*, vol. 7, 1 Jan. 1998, pp.80-106.

mimetic desire. In short, he becomes a persecutor not because he represses his unconscious but because of his desire to inhabit a particular social world.

Suguro's compassion at the beginning of the novel marks him as different from his coworkers, prompting his desire to belong. Williams discusses how Suguro is, at first, distinct from the medical team that he is working for: "Unlike Dr. Asai, his immediate superior, and the other interns, all of whom look on patients with complicated symptoms as representing 'good opportunities' for research (p. 41), Suguro is portrayed from the start as feeling a stronger sense of attachment to patients as individuals" (80). Suguro's difference is seen as a weakness, which fosters a desire for him to become like the "strong" medical team. The contrast between Suguro's weakness and the medical team's strength is most prevalent in Suguro's relationship with Toda. For instance, the poem that Suguro recites throughout the novel, which seems to be a product of his unconscious, does not come from within him; rather, he learned it from Toda, which Williams himself admits (81).

Suguro is personally mentored alongside Toda, who is cold-hearted but is more successful at being a doctor than Suguro. This perceived sense of inferiority means that Toda, as the mediator, embodies what Suguro aspires to be. While Suguro is "country-bred," Toda was the star of his college and was at the top of his class (50). Suguro seems to lack the taste for novels and poems, while Toda is the one who teaches him the aforementioned poem. Toda is seen as a wise elder, giving advice to Suguro when he first arrives: "Toda took his white coat from a hook on the wall and, giving Suguro the benefit of a fraternal, elder admonishing younger smile, walked out of the room with it over his arm" (33). Toda's condescending tone towards Suguro signifies his superiority; he diminishes Suguro's practices by calling him "gentle" and "sentimental" (33), and the novel explicitly notes Toda's condescension towards Suguro

whenever he speaks to Suguro: “The withering smile of condescension with which Toda always imparted wisdom to Suguro was a trait dating back to college days” (48). Suguro recognizes that he will never be as great a doctor as Toda, and he would be more comfortable practicing medicine somewhere rural rather than in a city where hospitals tend to be more competitive (36). He is constantly self-conscious about his own passivity, so much so that he imagines the eyes of an officer accusing him: “What’s the matter with you, afraid?’ those eyes asked. ‘How can a young Japanese be so weak?’” (147).

Suguro is drawn slowly by a desire to become stronger, to become like Toda, a status he eventually and regretfully gains after he takes part in the vivisections: “Was it because he was drawn along by Toda? Or was it because of his headache and the nausea and the churning in the pit of his stomach?... ‘It’s all the same’, Suguro kept thinking. ‘I was drawn into it because of the blue charcoal flames maybe. Maybe because of Toda’s cigarette. Because of one thing, because of another, what does it matter? It’s all the same’ (76). Suguro’s imitation of Toda means giving up his own kindness and compassion, traits that Toda sees as wasteful in an environment where people will inevitable die anyway: “There’s no room, as Toda had said, for pity I a doctor in a world such as this. For it would do no good at all and could, in fact, do harm” (33). Thus, as Suguro becomes more and more like Toda, he is also abandoning his kindness to become “stronger.”

By the end of the novel, Suguro’s imitation of Toda becomes even clearer. Suguro, who was not a smoker, fixates much of his energy on Toda’s cigarettes. After observing Toda smoking throughout the story, he finally picks up the habit of smoking himself, to Toda’s surprise (165). The two become more and more alike by the end of the novel, revealing the crucial role that imitation plays in the story. After the vivisection, Suguro finally becomes aware

of his own unconscious desire to passively imitate those around him. While Suguro attempts to justify himself by claiming that he was simply standing back passively during the vivisections, the voice of remorse continues to taunt him, saying, “That’s it! You’ve hit it there! You didn’t do anything at all. The time the old lady died, this time too – you didn’t do anything at all. You’re always there. You’re always there—not doing anything at all!” (150) Suguro recognizes his own passivity and realizes that being “strong” comes with a cost. The strength that he desires means a willingness and a “courage” to experiment on people, treating them as “pillars of medical science” (51) as Toda does. The choice to allow these experiments does prove Suguro’s strength and bolster his chances of belonging; however, since the choice is a morally corrupt one, Suguro cannot help but think that retribution will soon come (166). Suguro ultimately becomes remorseful about imitating Toda and realizes that this guilt will follow him for the rest of his life.

Williams also analyzes Toda’s own backstory to examine Toda’s attempts at repressing his unconscious: “The fear of having the contents of his Shadow perceived by a fellow human being is very real for Toda—and leads to an increased determination to fathom his own unconscious being for himself” (83). At the heart of the story, however, is Toda’s relationship with his father. He is frustrated that he cannot become as successful as his father was: “My father was a doctor, and he had opened a surgery not far from the school. And these teachers, with their tight-collared jackets, were no doubt in awe of a great personage like a doctor and of the plate with M.D. on it” (104).⁶ Toda conceals this desire to become like his father, however, especially when he is around Suguro. This attempt to hide his desire is what Girard calls “the hero’s

⁶ The trauma associated with Toda’s past will be explored in detail in Chapter Three, although it is worth mentioning Toda’s relationship with his father and how foundational mimetic desire is in creating helplessness and trauma for Toda, both of which lead him towards persecuting behavior.

askesis,” or “a strategic withdrawal or concealment of desire [which] effects a projection of self-sufficiency or autonomy that attracts the desire of others” (Fleming 24). Suguro’s desire to imitate Toda does not stem from his desire to gain a material object. Rather, it is Toda’s “strength” and independence that Suguro wants. As Girard argues, “Mimetic desire makes us believe we are always on the verge of becoming self-sufficient through our own transformation into someone else” (qtd. in Fleming 24).

Suguro’s role as a persecutor ultimately brings him to remorse, and for this reason he has been compared to many other characters as well who similarly fall prey to their passive imitation of the strong. John Netland compares him to the character of Gaston in *Wonderful Fool*, a character whose naïveté gets taken advantage of by the Japanese around him.⁷ Indeed, Williams sees *The Sea and Poison* as a primer for Endō’s later, more mature works where the unconscious becomes more explicitly referenced. And yet, these novels point to how the social world with which characters must interact are just as important to note as the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious selves.

From Glory to Compassion: Mimetic Desire and the Shifting Picture of Christ in *Silence*

Endō’s most critically-acclaimed novel, *Silence*, has often been the focus of theological scrutiny. The novel is seen by many scholars as a narrative that deals with existential questions concerning doubt or an exploration of the theology of cross.⁸ Others see *Silence* as the beginning

⁷ See Netland, John T. “From Cultural Alterity to the Habitations of Grace: The Evolving Moral Topography of Endo’s Mudswamp Trope.” *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2009, pp. 27–48. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44314617.

⁸ See, for instance, Toshihiro Takamura’s “Sebastian Rodrigues in Shusaku Endo’s *Silence* as a Theologian of the Cross,” who argues that the whole point of the novel is to juxtapose the theology of the cross with the theology of glory: “What Endo is trying to accomplish is not a prescription for salvation; rather, he is describing an individual’s life in faith that eventually comes to embody the axiom *sola gratia* and that exemplifies what the cross does to this particular theologian of glory named Sebastian Rodrigues” (24).

of Endō's attempt to recontextualize Christianity for the East, giving it a more maternal spirit by portraying a Christ who suffers alongside His people. Gessel, for example, in "Hearing God in Silence: The Fiction of Endō Shusaku," states that throughout the development of Endō's corpus, the "God in [Endō's] creative conception no longer sits on the paternal seat of judgment but stands alongside his suffering, weak characters as a compassionate mother who wishes to convey her love and support for them even as they disappoint her through their failings... God has to be softened so that His shouts do not puncture the fragile eardrums of His children" (159). As stated, Endō's novels are filled with autobiographical details, and Gessel claims that Endō's version of the "maternalized" Christ is inspired by his mother, who "brought him, all unwitting, into the Church" (160).⁹ Endō's relationship with his mother in regards to Christianity is important to note, for just as Endō learned to desire a maternal Christianity because of his mother, Rodrigues learned to desire the same from his own mentor, Ferreira, who is foundational in shifting his picture of Christ.

The novel is, undoubtedly, a psychological exploration of Rodrigues' state of mind. Yet, as Williams is also quick to point out, both Kichijirō and Father Ferreira play a very important role in bringing Rodrigues to where he is psychologically (110). These relationships should not be dismissed, for indeed, the central plot of the novel is Rodrigues' attempt to find and dispel the rumors about his mentor, Fr. Ferreira, a plot which brings with it the demise and salvation of Rodrigues himself. Furthermore, one of the central subplots in the story is Rodrigues's own

⁹ Many scholars have also drawn a connection between *Silence* and Endo's biography of Christ in *A Life of Jesus*, which contextualizes Christ to suit a more Japanese audience. Endo himself explicitly states, "In brief, the Japanese tend to seek in their gods and buddhas a warm-hearted mother rather than a stern father. With this fact in mind, I tried not so much to depict God in the father-image that tends to characterize Christianity, but rather to depict the kind-hearted maternal aspect of God revealed to us in the personality of Jesus" (1).

journey with Kichijirō, a man whom he sees as an embarrassment to the Christianity he knows. It is also due to mimetic desire that Rodrigues is able to imitate Fr. Ferreira in his apostasy, and to see that the way to reach the Japanese is the way of the *kakure*, the Hidden Christians. This shift in Rodrigues's thinking transforms Kichijirō's apostasy from an act of cowardliness to an act that allows him to remain hidden with his fellow Christians.

In the beginning of the novel, Rodrigues views Kichijirō with disdain, believing Kichijirō to be an embarrassment to the Christian religion. Rodrigues is attentive to Kichijirō's physical characteristics, his dog-like mannerisms (77) and other qualities that Rodrigues is disgusted by: "The stench of his filth and sweat was wafted toward the priest. Could it be possible that Christ loved and searched after this dirtiest of men? In evil there remained that strength and beauty of evil; but this Kichijirō was not even worthy to be called evil. He was thin and dirty like the tattered rags he wore" (123). Throughout the novel, Kichijirō repeatedly apostatizes by stepping on a graven image of Christ. His desire to confess afterwards often seems disingenuous to Rodrigues, and his habit of apostatizing is seen by Rodrigues as cowardly (43). Kichijirō himself recognizes Rodrigues's condescension and is often ashamed of his own inability to become like the "strong" martyrs, who give up their lives for Christ. He is aware of what Rodrigues values—strong Christians like Mokichi and Ichizo, who died for their Christian belief: "Father, you don't trust me... no one trusts me.... Mokichi was strong—like a strong shoot. But a weak shoot like me will never grow no matter what you do" (82). Kichijirō's character as a coward directly opposes the values that Rodrigues held—those of courage and strength.

These values that Rodrigues esteemed, which he believed Christ exemplified, are directly related to his relationship with Fr. Ferreira. Rodrigues categorizes Fr. Ferreira as one of the great saints like Francis Xavier, who ventured forth into Japan to share the Gospel in unreached and

dangerous territories. Christian martyrdom becomes not only an entry point into the story, but it reveals a tendency that Rodrigues has to idolize the martyrs of the church. Since the beginning of the novel, Rodrigues's admiration for Ferreira is made clear through the mental contrast Rodrigues gives between martyrdom and the pitiful state of those who apostatized: "For these three men, Francisco Garupe, Juan de Santa Marta and Sebastian Rodrigues, it was impossible to believe that their much admired teacher Ferreira, faced with the possibility of a glorious martyrdom, had grovelled [sic] like a dog before the infidel" (17). It is no surprise that these young missionaries desire to go to Japan, for their desire to leave home, even if it means giving up their lives, is an imitation of the courageous martyrs they have in their minds and to achieve something similar to their mentor, Fr. Ferreira. Consistently, Fr. Ferreira is seen as a mythical figure in many passages; Rodrigues, Garupe, and Juan de Santa Marta describe Ferreira in admiration and did not believe that he apostatized:

And this same Ferreira was now somewhere in Japan. Had that face with its clear blue eyes and soft radiant light—had it been changed by the hands of the Japanese torturers? This was the question they asked themselves. They could not believe that this face could now be distorted because of insults heaped on it; nor could they believe that Ferreira had turned his back on God and cast away that gentle charity that characterized his every action. Rodrigues and his companions wanted by all means to get to Japan and learn the truth about the fate of Ferreira. (9)

With this picture of their mediator in mind, they are willing to follow him and understand the truth about him by imitating his experience. Interestingly, Rodrigues's picture of Christ, especially the description of Christ's blue eyes, matches with Ferreira's own physical characteristics. During evening prayer aboard the ship to Japan, Rodrigues "felt the face of Christ

looking intently at him” and notes the features of Christ’s face: “The clear blue eyes were gentle with compassion; the features were tranquil; it was a face filled with trust” (113). It is the picture of Christ standing firm as a strong figure that he imagines: “In his imagination every day he had dramatically pictured the scene as being like the meeting of Pilate and Christ—the crowd howling, Pilate perplexed, Christ standing silent” (114). This striking similarity linking the features of Christ and of Fr. Ferreira shows that Rodrigues, perhaps unconsciously, has equated the two; they are both mediators who inspire him to long for glorious martyrdom.

Williams, however, sees Rodrigues’s journey to Japan almost exclusively as a symbol of his psychological journey to reconcile his conscious and unconscious selves (114). Up to the moment of Rodrigues’s final apostasy at the end of the novel, Williams argues that Rodrigues has attempted to shut up the voices of doubt emerging from his unconscious. Thus, Williams sees Fr. Ferreira’s attempts to convince Rodrigues as a symbolic battlefield comprised “of the voices of God and the Devil...” (115). The two opposite voices are reconciled within Rodrigues’s mind when he steps on the *fumie*, and Williams hints at how the Christ on the *fumie* is what guides Rodrigues to bring them together: “For the author intent on exploring the various facets of the inner being of his creations, the [*fumie*] is indeed powerful: in thus electing to focus firmly on the compassionate qualities of this ‘companion’ figure, Endō is better placed to approximate an image of Christ as a positive force which envelops both the individual and his Shadow being, and leads him in the direction of the light” (123). *Silence*, to Williams, is, first and foremost, a “convincing examination... of human psychology” (129).

Williams’s analysis, although helpful, neglects to note how Rodrigues’s faith begins to erode; his inner voice does not foster doubt on its own, but his faith is violently shaken when he faces his first martyrs in Japan. Mokichi and Ichizo, the first to be captured in the village for

being Christians, were bound to crosses and endured the waves of the sea crashing into them repeatedly until their lives drained away. This ugly martyrdom contrasted so strongly with the glorious martyrdom that Rodrigues had in mind that he begins to question if his mediators were simplistic caricatures:

They were martyred. But what a martyrdom! I had long read about martyrdom in the lives of the saints—how the souls of the martyrs had gone home to Heaven, how they had been filled with glory in Paradise, how the angels had blown trumpets. This was the splendid martyrdom I had often seen in my dreams. But the martyrdom of the Japanese Christians I now describe to you was no such glorious thing. What a miserable and painful business it was! The rain falls unceasingly on the sea. And the sea which killed them surges on uncannily—in silence. (60)

Thus, Rodrigues becomes disillusioned with his initial desire for a glorious martyrdom. He comes to face, not a representation of the mediators he had in his mind, but the flesh and blood martyrs that he thought he aspired to be. And yet, the martyred Japanese Christians do not match Rodrigues's initial picture of martyrdom, and his desire to become a martyr slowly deteriorates, causing his existential crisis. This crisis is represented by Rodrigues's attempt to navigate his directionless life through attempted conversations with a silent God.

After seeing the martyrs being killed repeatedly in front of him, Rodrigues becomes desperate for answers from his glorious Christ, who remains silent. Once Rodrigues sees how undesirable his object of desire, he becomes disappointed and begins to search for new mediators. Girard calls this a "pseudo-masochistic" tendency, an impossible search for an ultimate mediator who has no ontological lack, since the object of desire has become a disappointment (Fleming 24). Nonetheless, the moment he meets Ferreira again is the moment

his glorious picture of Christ becomes a *dohansha* figure, the Christ who walks alongside the weak. The picture of strength which he associated in his mind with his mentor Ferreira now becomes a different kind of strength—a strength-in-weakness that Ferreira defends and embodies. To Rodrigues’s surprise, Ferreira chides him for being weak and selfish for not apostatizing: “Don’t disguise your own weakness with those beautiful words... You make yourself more important than them. You are preoccupied with your own salvation... It’s because you dread to be the dregs of the Church, like me” (169). After Rodrigues’s apostasy, he realizes that his picture of Christ has shifted, from a figure of strength to that of weakness; he reflects on this change by comparing this new Christ with his former understanding of a glorious one: “And yet... I know that my Lord is different from the God that is preached in the churches” (175).

This change in attitude also shows itself in how he deals with Kichijirō. Rodrigues finally realizes that Kichijirō’s apostasy and Fr. Ferreira’s apostasy are really one and the same: “There are neither the strong nor the weak. Can anyone say that the weak do not suffer more than the strong?” (191). In short, Rodrigues comes to recognize that the strong and weak are one. This recognition did not occur only because he reconciled his unconscious and conscious selves, but also because his picture of Christ shifted after he re-encounters his mentor. Williams also notes this “rapprochement” in the relationship between Kichijirō and Rodrigues: “Coming after the protracted psychological torment to which he has been subjected, the volte-face is crucial, representing as it does the ultimate textual evidence of an erosion of the distinction between ‘strength’ and ‘weakness’ at the psychological level...For Rodrigues, such distinctions are no longer straightforward” (126). This change, however, seen from a Girardian perspective, can be accounted for not because Rodrigues has allowed his unconscious to liberate itself from his

conscious self, but because Rodrigues's shift in desire allows him to see Christ the way his mediator sees Him; that is, Rodrigues's picture of Christ is borrowed from Ferreira.

Saints and Sinners: External and Internal Mediation in *Kiku's Prayer*

Kiku's Prayer serves as a good continuation of how central mimetic desire is to the plot of Endō's novels. His attention to the multiplicity of narratives and the ways in which they intertwine mimetically has developed significantly from his earlier works. *Kiku's Prayer* was translated into English in 2013, fourteen years after Williams published *Endō Shusaku: A Literature of Reconciliation*, which is why Williams does not address the novel in his work. But the novel confirms a Girardian reading by beginning right away with a mimetic relationship—Kiku and her cousin, Mitsu, are playing together, and the narrator notes, “In her childhood, Mitsu always walked behind her cousin Kiku, played the way Kiku played, and did everything Kiku told her to do” (4). Kiku is seen as the elder in the relationship, the mediator which Mitsu seeks to imitate: “For her part, Kiku took on the role of Mitsu's protector and always shielded her younger cousin from rough hooligans and wild dogs” (4). Even when Kiku volunteered to move to Nagasaki as a maidservant, Mitsu followed along: “If Kiku's going, so am I,” she answered without hesitation, as if it were only natural. Since their childhood, she'd formed the habit of following Kiku in everything” (30). The first part of the story also reveals tensions within Kiku's community, especially their fears of “Kuros,” or Christians, who they thought were dangerous people. This tension is important in characterizing Seikichi, with whom Kiku soon falls in love. Seikichi is the first to formally introduce Kiku to Catholicism, which allows her to form a mimetic relationship with an icon of Mary.

Part of *Kiku's Prayer* is a chronicle of Kiku's mimetic relationship with the statue of Santa Maria at the Ōura Church. As Kiku comes to understand more of what the Christian faith

is, she is introduced to the statue of Santa Maria when she begins working for the European missionary, Petijean. At first, she does not see the point of revering the statue of Santa Maria, or what the ontological status of a saint means, and so she becomes jealous when Seikichi seems more devoted to the statue than to her: “An inexpressible anger welled up inside her. Her rival was nothing more than an idol, but it made her unbearable jealous that Seikichi could look at another woman in such a way” (92). Though she saw the statue of Santa Maria as an obstacle at first, Seikichi soon explains to her what the statue represents when he gives her the medal of Mary that belongs to him: “It’s the mother of Lord Jezusu. She’s called Maria... If you pray with all your heart to her, she’ll listen to you, no matter what it’s about” (104).

The medal soon becomes Kiku’s most prized possession; the image of Mary becomes beautiful to her, and after Seikichi and the other Christians are arrested, she begins to pray to Mary herself every night (137). The ontological distance between Kiku and Mary begin to widen; when Seikichi is arrested, Kiku runs to the church and “*look[s] up* at the statue of the woman, her eyes brimming with resentment,” while the statue “*look[s] down* at Kiku with wide eyes... [listening] carefully to Kiku’s prayers of anger, of protests, and of curses” (148, emphasis mine). This hierarchy of relationship mirrors Suguro’s relationship with Toda in *The Sea and Poison*; rather than leading Kiku to sinful actions, however, the relationship between Mary and Kiku is born out of shared suffering: “The one [Mary] loved, like Seikichi, had been arrested and beaten, had bled, and had died on a cross... Kiku did not know that just as she herself was doing now, this woman had also once wept in pain and torment (148).

On the other hand, Ito Seizaemon’s relationship with Hondo, his superior, is one that is filled with envy and violence. Ito and Hondo were born and raised similarly, and while Ito remained a low-ranking government official, Hondo began to supersede him in rank. Ito, while

drinking with his coworkers, remarks, “This fellow named Hondo that I worked with—he’s not all that bright, but since he has good luck, he wound up as an official at Foreign Affairs. And I’ve heard rumors that some high-and-mighty took note of him and soon he’ll be heading to America as an interpreter. And then there’s me...” (267-8). While Ito seems to credit luck as the distinguishing factor between the two of them, that “[t]he unlucky ones, no matter how hard they struggle, can never crawl out of the muck” (268), he secretly knows that “Hondo was the type who looked to the future, and while [Hondo] was assiduously studying foreign languages, [he] remained oblivious to the shifts and flows in the times and carried on, being far too much devoted to his official duties. Those differences had now created a wide gap between the two of them” (214). Ito did not revere Hondo, for he knew that Hondo was an ontological equal to him, that they desired similar things, and that Hondo had taken from him what he wanted: “Ito could not stand the thought that Hondo was now of such stature that he could amuse himself with first-class geisha at first class houses while he was stuck here in the mountains enclosing Tsuwano, swatting away mosquitoes as he slept with this flat-chested whore” (248). Hondo himself also remarked on this difference, noting that Ito is a “pathetic soul” and that “it’s because of [Ito’s] good nature that he’ll never amount to anything” (214).

Just as Endō juxtaposes the strong and the weak in *Silence*, so does he in *Kiku’s Prayer*. Ito subconsciously associates Hondo with the Christians—both are stronger than him and could endure what he could never endure himself. As his underlings exclaim that the tortured Christians were “idiots” for not giving up their faith and going back to their families, Ito replies, “They’re no idiots. They’re a strong bunch... If I were forced into their position, I could never be as strong as they are” (268). The strength of the prisoners’ commitment to their God was compared to “a woman [who] gives her heart to a man” and how “she’ll give up absolutely

everything and put her whole body and soul into it” (268). Ito is, of course, also referring to Kiku, who has given up her body for him in exchange for an extra ration of rice for Seikichi. Ito, in his desire to become like Hondo, wishes also to leave for Tokyo, to be where Hondo is and to take back what’s he believes properly belongs to him: “Ito was thinking of the impressive standing of Hondo Shuntaro. His heart was transfixed by the hope that if he ended up in Tokyo or Yokohama, his luck might change for the better, just as it had for Hondo” (269). Nevertheless, Ito must continue to cope with his lot and the awareness that he will never gain the object of his desire—he can never become as strong as Hondo because he is born weak.

The difference between the two pairs of relationships in the story is the ontological distance between subject and mediator. For Kiku and the statue of Santa Maria, the ontological distance is significantly more than the gap between Hondo and Ito since Mary is a venerated figure who guides Kiku along, creating what Girard calls “external mediation.” This is comparable to the relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho. As Girard argues in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, “The valet never desires what his master desires. Sancho covets the food left by the monks, the purse of gold found on the road, and other objects which Don Quixote willingly lets him have. As for the imaginary island, it is from Don Quixote himself that Sancho is counting on receiving it, as the faithful vassal holds everything in the name of his lord” (9). Thus, since the ontological distance between the two is far enough and the subject realizes he can never attain the status of the mediator, “The hero of external mediation proclaims aloud the true nature of his desire. He worships his model openly and declares himself his disciple” (10).

In contrast, Ito sees in Hondo someone who is vastly similar to him, especially in their upbringing, and yet, Hondo ultimately takes away what Ito cannot have: “in internal mediation this impulse [for the object] is checked by the mediator himself since he desires, or perhaps

possesses the object” (10). Consequently, because the mediator becomes an obstacle to desire rather than an inspirational figure, he becomes “an object of hatred” (10). Internal mediation also affects how the subject views himself as well, for “[t]he person who hates first hates himself for the secret admiration concealed by his hatred. In an effort to hide this desperate admiration from others, and from himself, he no longer wants to see in his mediator anything but an obstacle” (11). This explains Ito’s hatred for himself, and how his frustrated desires ultimately lead him to more violent behaviors towards Kiku and the Christians whom he sees as possessing something he can never have.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, mimetic desire plays a foundational role in interpreting Endō’s novels. The mimetic relationships filling each of his stories motivate each character to move in the direction of their mediators, leading them to violent behavior. While Endō is aware of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious selves, expanding the definition of the unconscious according to a Girardian model to include the habits and rituals of imitation that Williams overlooks allows us to see Endō’s *Daisan no shinjin* roots—his characters become helpless selves in a society where they are unconsciously imitating those around them. In most cases, however, Endō’s characters are pulled into violent behavior rather than virtuous action; the mimetic pull towards evil often seems stronger than the pull towards good. This can be explained by the institutions featured in each of Endō’s novels, which provide a stronger collective pull than individual relationships.

Chapter Two: Bought with a Price: Endō's Critique of Institutions as "Centers of Desire" and Perpetuators of Violence

The postwar writers of Japan dealt with questions of morality and ethics after a war that seemed to defy both. The *Daisan no shinjin* writers felt conflicted with the institutions that they formerly trusted, which had turned into a propagandistic machine narrating the "mythos" of Japan (Gessel 8).¹⁰ Following the war, nationalism became the ultimate virtue for the Japanese government. Public schools began demonizing individualism in the West by indoctrinating their students about the dangers of forsaking the collective for the individual. Japan also brought "militaristic ideology down to the personal level and glorif[ied] patriotic death" (11). Individuals were expected to give up their lives in war for their country.

Since Endō also experienced this propaganda alongside his contemporaries, it is no surprise that he is wary about these nationalistic ideals. He, along with other *Daisan no shinjin* writers, was hesitant to accept the idea that sacrificing individuals for the sake of the collective was noble. He was also aware of Japan's past and what had resulted from an abuse of these ideas; thus, many of Endō's stories criticize the Christian persecution during the Tokugawa Shogunate, when the spirit of nationalism reigned at the expense of individual lives. The greater good for Japan during the Tokugawa Shogunate meant banishing and torturing Christians for the sake of a unified national ideal.

¹⁰ This propaganda found its way into Japanese schools. As Gessel explains in *Ōe and Beyond*, "Thus when history was taught, it was the mythical history of Japan as a country literally descended from the gods and thereby morally superior to the nations of the West. Geography was also distorted to give the students the impression that Japan had an inevitable mission of leadership to perform in the East Asian sphere" (9).

Endō's critique of institutions in and of Japan, then, follows from Girard's idea that individuals are prey to mimetic desire; they are drawn by mimetic pull towards behaviors that are outside of their control, especially when that mimetic pull is strengthened by multiple mediators. This chapter analyzes Endō's criticism of certain institutions as "centers of desire," specifically the power they wield to manipulate the desires of insiders by offering success and belonging or by threatening them with banishment or death. Thus, Chapter Two is a continuation of the argument that mimetic desire plays a pivotal role in motivating the unconscious of Endō's characters and forging them into persecutors, but it pays special attention to the ways that institutions can create multiple mediators with a stronger mimetic pull than individual mediations and fashion scapegoats out of individuals or groups.

First, the chapter outlines how Girard applies individual mimetic relationships to collective groups and how certain institutions prey on the weak who wish to belong. I will indicate how current models in social psychology confirm the ways that certain institutions are functionally similar to Girard's ideas about collective groups when it comes to persecution, that is, they mask individuality and uphold collectivism above many other values. In the second part of Chapter Two, I will apply these concepts to the three novels mentioned above. In *The Sea and Poison*, Suguro's passivity is used by the hospital's medical team, which threatens him with banishment and leads him to partake in the vivisections on WWII prisoners, a scapegoat ritual which eases the tension of competition and war. I will then analyze *Silence*, particularly Endō's critique of the Japanese government during the Tokugawa shogunate and how it tormented Rodrigues psychologically, convincing him that he's to blame for the tortures inflicted upon the Japanese Christians. Additionally, I analyze Endō's critique of the Catholic Church's tendency to universalize sins, particularly apostasy, applying it to all situations without considering its effects

on individual lives. The chapter ends with an analysis of the bureaucracies found in *Kiku's Prayer*, particularly the way in which the Japanese government treats the tortures inflicted upon Christian scapegoats as a bureaucratic necessity. Endō also seems to implicitly criticize the Catholic Church for her opportunistic attitude, using Japan's mistreatment of Christians as a means of interfering with Japan's politics. I will finally analyze the character of Hondo in *Kiku's Prayer*, who becomes the face of the Japanese government itself, climbing the ranks of success at the expense of both Ito and the Christians whom he treats as utilities for success.

Girard and the Scapegoat Mechanism

To understand the nature of institutions and how they function as “centers of desire” in Endō's novels, we must first acquaint ourselves with Girard's ideas about collective persecution. Building on his work concerning mimetic desire, Girard's thesis in *The Scapegoat* chronicles the persecutions that were recorded in Greek and Roman mythology, which he claims are fictional versions of real-life persecution stories. These stories are often mythologized to hide not only the persecutors' identities, but also the injustice that happens to the victims. Girard uses Oedipus as an example of a scapegoat who is victimized by his community. The narrative of *Oedipus Rex* reveals that Oedipus has slept with his mother and slain his father, causing the contamination of Thebes. Thus, eliminating Oedipus from Thebes becomes a necessity, even a duty, and the chorus laments the tragic circumstances surrounding his persecution. Girard claims that this is the story of persecution, a trope that's repeated throughout other mythologies as well, for there is no concrete reason for Oedipus to die, and there is no way to prove that Oedipus actually plagues the community. Nonetheless, the community believes that it has been plagued, and something must be done. Eliminating Oedipus seems like the only reasonable option. This trope of scapegoating individuals and groups is used by the institutions found in Endō's novels as well.

Girard claims that the Passion story is functionally similar to many other persecution narratives.¹¹ During Jesus' persecution, Peter is roped into the crowd of persecutors, and his desire is transformed to that of the crowd's:

A fire in the night is much more than a source of heat and light. As soon as it is lit, people arrange themselves in a circle around it; they are no longer a mere crowd, each one alone with himself, they have become a community. Hands and faces turned toward the fire and in turn are lit by it; it is like a god's benevolent response to prayer addressed to him.

Because everyone is facing the fire, they cannot avoid seeing each other; they exchange looks and words; a place for communion and communication is established. (150-51)

This community, Girard claims, inspires Peter to imitate the persecutors, and to become one of them, Peter must "[make] Jesus his victim in order to stop being the sort of lesser victim that first the servant girl and then the whole group make of him... So he tries to conciliate his enemies by allying himself with them against Jesus, by treating Jesus as they want and in front of them, exactly as they themselves treat him" (154).

Girard carries his explanation further in *The Scapegoat*, noting Peter's betrayal of Jesus during the passion narrative as an example of how groups of people can strengthen the subject's desire for the object. When a subject encounters multiple mediators desiring the same thing, his desire to fit in the group overpowers his resistance; thus, Peter's prompt denial of Christ in front of the bystanders serves as a model of how his desire to belong, coupled with his fear of being victimized, coerce him to partake in Christ's persecution (155). Similarly, this interaction

¹¹ However, the difference between the Passion Story and other persecution narratives is how blatant the Passion Story is about the injustice of Christ's persecution. This relationship between the sacrificial act of Christ and the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

between a group of mediators and a single subject is prevalent in many of Endō's works. The group of mediators has morphed into institutions, which hold the power to influence desires, fashion scapegoats, and lead individuals toward persecuting behavior by threatening them with banishment or death.

The “Site” of Evil: Contextualizing Evil in Social Psychology

Confirming Girard's idea of how collective mediators can foster violent behavior, social psychologists have determined that social situations are better indicators of how people will act than looking at those individuals' innate qualities and previous behavior.¹² These studies argue that violent tendencies are developed and conditioned by the “architects of genocide and their societies” (Bar-On 839) instead of being born out of individual desires. Moreover, new findings suggest that such individuals must comply with the institution's ethic, believing that the institutions are upholding righteous values. As Alexander Haslam and Stephen D. Reicher reflect on Zimbardo and Milgram's studies, they conclude that “individuals' willingness to follow authorities is conditional on identification with the authority in question and an associated belief that the authority is right” (1).

While many individuals voluntarily align their desires with their respective institution, many are coaxed or threatened into becoming part of the group. As Dan Bar-On points out, fear (“staying out of trouble”) is a common motivator for many individuals who are pressured to commit acts of persecution (841). In keeping out of trouble, these individuals become conditioned to live in a community where persecution is normative. They begin to believe they

¹² See, for example, *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil*, 2nd ed., which builds on Zimbardo's Stanford Prison experiments and Milgram's obedience studies: “Classics such as Zimbardo's prison study (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973) and Milgram's obedience studies (1963, 1974) serve to remind us that given certain circumstances, the “situation” can induce ordinary, even good, people to commit very destructive deeds” (Tangney et al. 299).

are simply being obedient to their respective institutions, and a sense of individual responsibility and morality begins to fade. Bar-On explains that this conditioning process happens frequently, especially during wartime:

Can quiet citizens suddenly become perpetrators, without a long socialization process?

There are several such known cases, especially when the social atmosphere has already legitimized genocidal acts... These individuals had not been trained to carry out genocide, but could participate in murderous acts willingly, because they had been exposed long enough to the genocidal atmosphere of their society. A society steeped in genocidal acts can become genocidal at large, without the socialization mentioned earlier.

(841)

Such perpetrators of violence then perpetuate the ongoing mechanism of persecution, ensuring that collective persecution continues because they passively accept violence as normative and in order to avoid trouble themselves.

Thus, collective violence is possible because participants are conditioned to believe that they are not individually responsible; they are simply following the orders from their authorities. Interesting research addressing this phenomenon is present in Mina Rauschenbach et al's work on collective violence. Researchers asked respondents whether they felt responsible for the violence they committed against outsiders and noted that "[t]hey tended to recontextualize their involvement as dependent on the collective they were affiliated to and to frame their agency as a function of their membership in groups" (228). Rauschenbach et al conclude, "Being faithful to the State and the system is 'the basics of your life' and constitutes another utterance emphasizing the extreme constraint imposed by ingroup loyalty, viewed as an absolute necessity in the face of imminent group danger. Ingroup loyalty becomes the expression of an ultimate morality that no

other moral instance could question” (229). This fear and ingroup loyalty are likewise common motivators for many of Endō’s protagonists who partake in collective persecution.

Endō was intrigued by the nature of collective persecution, especially the way in which institutions can become formative sites for creating murderers out of seemingly normal people. He kept a journal during his visit to Auschwitz and published it as an essay called, “On Seeing Auschwitz Concentration Camp.”¹³ In it, he describes his reading of Merle’s *Death is My Trade*, which is a fictional biography of Rudolf Hoss, a commander who oversaw the extermination of Jews at Auschwitz. Endō is especially astonished at the relative normalcy of Hoss’ life, a commander whose job was to find a place to bury the bodies that were carried out of the gas chambers. As Endō recounts, “the pages that shocked me the most were not the ones describing the gas chambers and mass murders. They were the scenes when the main character returns home on Christmas Eve in 1941 after discussing the mass killings in the gas chambers, plays the good father, pats his children on the head, gives them sweet, and then talks with the invited guests about Bach” (331).

Rather than focusing on how cruel men like Hoss are, Endō actually relates them to his own people and himself: “We should not regard them as gruesome people. The Japanese soldiers who participated in the nanking massacre, too, were probably good husbands and fathers at home... They were no different from us; I mean we ourselves are they” (331). Endō seems to believe that anyone can become a persecutor if placed under specific conditions, an idea supported by contemporary social psychology. The passivity which social psychologists ascribe to individuals who give up their individuality to avoid trouble or who uphold collectivism as the

¹³ Translated into English by Justyna Kasza in her work, *The Hermeneutics of Evil in Shusaku Endō: Between Reading and Writing*.

ideal virtue is a recognizable trait in many of Endō's protagonists—a weakness of character which leads them to perpetuate collective violence. However, the blame does not lie solely with those who were born weak, but on the institutions, which prey on these weaknesses by utilizing them for violent causes.

The Weakest Link: Passivity as Perpetuation of Violence in *The Sea and Poison*

A notable example of how weakness and passivity are preyed upon by institutions is the hospital's progressive attempt to impel the weak-willed Suguro into performing the vivisections of WWII prisoners. The plot of *The Sea and Poison* primarily centers on who is going to be the new Dean of the Medical School, a position that the entire medical staff covets. Dr. Hashimoto, called "Old Man" by Toda and Suguro, is eyeing the position and is competing against Dr. Kando, the "Chief Surgeon of Second Surgery" (35). Suguro's passivity in the face of this competition is demonstrated by his apathetic response towards the whole affair: "Though he did understand something of the situation, he had no inkling whatsoever that what would emerge from it would have a profound effect upon his own future" (36).

Still, Suguro's nonchalance will prove to be his demise, for Suguro's patient, an old lady who is known as the "welfare case" in the hospital, is soon asked to undergo an experimental operation for the sake of research, which will bolster the Old Man's chances of becoming the new Dean. Suguro is disturbed by the news, and Toda attempts to comfort him by normalizing these actions: "Oh come off it! Killing a patient isn't so solemn a matter as all that. It's nothing new in the world of medicine. That's how we've made our progress!" (51). Since the patient will soon die anyway, Toda sees her inevitable death as an opportunity for her body to serve a utilitarian purpose: "she becomes a living pillar upholding the temple of medical science" (51). This "greater good" as a justification for unethical behavior is common in institutional violence,

and Suguro's willingness to comply shows how he is slowly giving up his own values to embrace the values that the institution upholds.

Another patient whose operation the Old Man saw as an opportunity for personal advancement is Mrs. Tabe, who was "a relative of Dean Osugi" (48), the dean who previously held the seat before he passed. Toda knows that this operation, which was moved forward to February, is another opportunity for the Old Man to display his surgical skills and secure the position as the new dean. Unfortunately, during the operation, the Old Man decides to use a new technique as an opportunity for research, which leads to a drop in her blood pressure and, soon after, her death (62). To cover up for this failed operation, Asai, who directly works under the Old Man, orders the nurses to cover her up with bandages. They wheel the patient back to her recovery room and wait until morning, forbidding Mrs. Tabe's mother and sister from visiting (64).

Suguro, ordered by Asai to guard the door, becomes progressively compliant with the unethical behaviors practiced by those in his hospital (65). For instance, Suguro's patient, the old woman who was deemed as the "welfare case," had her operation postponed, as her death during the operation would've further tarnished the Old Man's reputation. Although she died a natural death, her end affected Suguro tremendously, and he saw no further need to fight against the injustices of the hospital: "From now on... for myself, for the War, for Japan, for everything, let things go just as they like" (72). It may be easy to blame one individual for the hospital's unethical behavior rather than the entire medical team, for the Old Man seems to be responsible for instrumentalizing collective persecution thus far. And yet, the corporate identity of the hospital as an institution remains with or without him—at one point in the story, Asai remarks that he'd like to eliminate the Old Man because he "doesn't have what it takes anymore" (54).

The institution ultimately takes on an identity of its own. While each individual may play a seemingly insignificant role, the evil of the institution as a whole reaches far beyond what one could imagine, for it is willing to eliminate anyone who may obstruct its purposes. For instance, as Chief Nurse Oba remarks, a nurse may simply be there to “carry out what the doctors direct and keep her mouth shut” (161). Even this seemingly insignificant action, however, perpetuates violence, for by keeping their mouths shut instead of speaking out, they are allowing injustice to remain.

The novel’s climax is the hospital’s experimental vivisection on American WWII prisoners, to which Suguro finds himself a part of. Since the competitive tension within the hospital for the Dean’s position needs abating, the experimental vivisection seems like the perfect opportunity for the medical staff to unite themselves under. As Fleming explains, “Girard argues that the reintroduction of order at the social and then cultural level involves a non-conscious intensification and polarization of violence itself—an intensification and polarization directed at a randomly selected victim” (47). Since the war looms in the background of the novel, the hospital finds itself uniting under the spirit of nationalism. Before the scenes of the vivisection, both Suguro and Toda hear the air raids and bombs from enemy aircrafts followed by the “voices of those dying from the raid” (125). The narrative makes evident the spoils of war, and the medical staff finds someone to blame for the deaths they see. Even the officers guarding the hospital see the vivisection as an opportunity to dine on “American liver,” “thanks to the prisoners” (129). The symbolic of gesture of dining is significant here, particularly the way in which eating together at a table signifies a community gathering as one. What the community is gathering together for in this occasion, however, is the “American liver,” signifying a common enemy that they’re uniting against. As Fleming argues, “[M]imesis, which functions to divide

people among themselves... can and does reunite them *in fact* at a certain point by virtue of a rapidly emerging mutually endorsed enmity directed at a common enemy” (47). This is done so that the rivalry within the community does not turn violent, for the act of collective persecution becomes cathartic in appeasing the violent urges that the medical staff feels towards one another.

Indeed, after the vivisections, the cathartic experience of murder is equated to the orgasmic experience of intercourse; as Suguro notes, “But it was not just [Lieutenant Murai] whose eyes were red. Actually, all of them had faces flushed with blood and covered with sweat—the sort of look which follows upon sexual intercourse” (149). The aftermath of the vivisection contains a scene where the officers are celebrating together, where “loud voices of men singing military songs” are heard that’s reminiscent of “harbor festivals” (162). One of the officers even requests that the liver be cut up for the occasion: “The medical officers are going to have a little fun with the junior officers by having them try some of it” (163). Thus, the vivisection does not happen solely for the purpose of experimentation; its significance lies in its potential to become a cathartic experience, a scapegoat ritual to ease the tensions of war and the medical staff’s competition.

During the vivisection, Suguro’s character is comparable to Peter’s, whom Girard understands as aligning himself with the persecutors by tacitly permitting Jesus to be crucified. Suguro’s passivity at the small, unethical events within the hospital meant that he was liable to become passive with major unethical decisions as well. A recurring picture in the novel which indicates the slippery slope of forsaking one’s responsibility is the image of a hole that’s slowly being dug out. Suguro often notices the old man who digs trenches around the hospital, and remarks offhandedly, “What is he doing, this old man... but repeating the same action again and again? ... He had been digging in that same spot for over two weeks now... digging, refilling,

digging, refilling” (67). This old man was ordered to cut down a poplar tree, and he was also responsible for burying Suguro’s patient (72), demonstrating symbolically how Suguro is responsible for digging her grave. After Suguro participates in the vivisections, he reflects on the poplar tree that used to stand next to the hospital:

He looked down at the ground, and in some grey furrows cut in the earth he saw the severed roots of the poplar. It had been cut down at last, the job that had taken the old workman so long to accomplish was finished... Suguro gazed vacantly at the stumps. Suddenly he thought of the old lady – the old lady carried out beneath the falling rain inside a wooden crate. The poplar tree was gone. The old lady too was gone.” (152)

The image of “digging” recurs at the end of novel also, when the nurses are ordered to dig trenches surrounding the hospital to bury the bodies of the WWII prisoners who had been experimented on by the medical team. These actions show the way in which individuals are responsible for burying bodies, that they are responsible for normalizing murder, and that they are hiding from their personal responsibilities by reminding themselves that they are simply doing their jobs. As Suguro reflects on his role as a doctor for a large institution, he muses on how small he feels: “There were about one hundred patients. About how many nurses and other employees were there, he wondered. He had the feeling that he was a cog on one of the gear wheels turning here, whose movements he had no way of understanding. ‘There’s no figuring it out,’ he muttered to himself. ‘It doesn’t pay to think about it’” (52). Suguro’s attempt to evade his responsibility for murdering WWII prisoners through vivisection is why he feels he will be condemned by a God in the end. On the other hand, Endō is also sympathetic toward Suguro, noting the ways in which the weak-willed could be roped into a plot they did not ultimately understand.

At the end of the novel, when Suguro discusses the guilt he feels for participating in the vivisections, Toda refuses to acknowledge his responsibility in committing murder: “You and I happened to be here in this particular hospital in this particular era, and so we took part in a vivisection performed on a prisoner. If those people who are going to judge us had been put in the same situation, would they have done anything different?” (166-67). Toda captures the way in which institutions attempt to mask personal responsibility—committing murder becomes just another day at the hospital, obeying orders given by those who are higher in rank. Nonetheless, even Toda himself knew that he was mythologizing something that he could not avoid; the truth of how he was involved in a murder remains: “Toda felt an indescribable sense of weariness and stopped talking. Explain as he might to someone like Suguro, what good would it do?” (167). The attempts to evade responsibility, to cover up the evil of the incidences, echo the stories of collective persecution that Girard relates. This attempt to recreate the story of Mrs. Tabe’s death—that she did not die because of the operation, but that she died on her own—is an attempt to mythologize and evade the true story of collective persecution.

The hospital functions as a “center of desire” by fostering competition and enticing each doctor to climb the social ladder of success. Those who are apathetic towards the whole affair nonetheless ensure that the institution functions smoothly. Each individual is drawn in by either the promise of success, as Toda, Asai, and the Old Man are, or they are drawn by the need to belong by working for something that’s bigger than themselves, as Suguro is.

However, while the hospital in *The Sea and Poison* is an example of how institutions can mask individual responsibility and collective guilt, other institutions, such as the Japanese government and the Catholic Church in *Silence*, can manipulate individuals in other ways. In

Silence, these institutions threaten insiders with death for obedience, or they can psychologically torment individuals until such individuals give in to the institutions' needs and desires.

Breaking the Strong-Willed: Tokugawa Nationalism and the Catholic Church in *Silence*

Set within the context of the Tokugawa Shogunate, when nationalism reigned, it is no surprise that *Silence* serves as an anti-institutional critique. Gessel has written extensively on this topic, aligning Endō with many of the *Daisan no shinjin* writers in their distrust of institutions after the war. Reflecting on the fumie scene in *Ōe and Beyond*, Gessel writes,

In rejecting Japanese institutions—whether they choose, depending upon the climate of the times, to maim or merely to transform—as well as Western institutions—which come across as equally willing to persecute the individual who does not conform to their notion of what is right—Endō is as much a product of his experience during the war as he is of his religious conversion. Like others of his generation who have become writers and cast a cynical eye on the parade of “isms” that have captured the attention of the Japanese masses over the last several decades, Endō seems unwilling to offer his unconditional allegiance to any. (45)¹⁴

Endō's cynical outlook towards institutions stems mostly from his experience of the war: “As one after another of his contemporaries was called up for military service, he was asked whether his own choice, when that day arrived, would be to serve Japan's divine emperor or to follow the enemy's God” (40). This dilemma, of course, bothered Endō significantly, and this significant

¹⁴ Gessel confirms this interpretation with his analysis of *The Samurai*, wherein two characters are betrayed by both the institutions of the Church and the Japanese government: “Endō's rejection of both native and imported institutions makes the closing martyrdoms of Hasekura and Velasco that much more poignant and that much more balanced. If nothing else, *The Samurai* offers a clue that Endō's intentions as a writer are not to bring the West to its knees but to hammer all human institutions into abject prostration” (47).

tension between Japan and the Church recurs throughout *Silence* and many other novels as well: “It is not difficult to imagine the skepticism, fear, and distrust aroused in any young man—particularly a young man who had already persuaded himself that he was a physical coward—toward a country that demanded such choices be made by the weak of spirit” (40).

This psychological tension plays itself out in the characters in *Silence* as well. For instance, the amount of psychological torture that Rodrigues faces is brought upon him, in part, by how the Japanese government tortured its Christians and blamed him for it. Throughout the novel, Rodrigues is shocked by how silent God is in the midst of persecution; his plea to God is an attempt to call out for God to act against injustice: “Could anything be more crazy? Was this martyrdom? Why are you silent? Here this one-eyed man has died—and for you. You ought to know. Why does this stillness continue? And you avert your face as though indifferent. This... this I cannot bear” (119). In an attempt to manipulate Rodrigues and break his will, the Japanese magistrate, Inoue, blames him for the suffering of the Japanese Christians, demanding him to “[a]postatize!... Now if you are really a father at heart, you ought to feel pity for the Christians. Isn’t that so?... It is because of you that they must suffer” (84-5).

The interpreter who is working for Inoue repeats similar sentiments after Rodrigues sees his partner, Garrpe, drowning in an attempt to save the Japanese Christians from being submerged themselves: “Father, have you thought of the suffering you have inflicted on so many peasants just because of your dream, just because you want to impose your selfish dream upon Japan. Look! Blood is flowing again. The blood of those ignorant people is flowing again” (134). This reiteration of blame is an attempt to manipulate Rodrigues into complying with what the Japanese government needs: to create a unified Japan without Christian influences from Europe. Thus, Endō’s critique is aimed at the Japanese government for its cruelty, transforming each

guard into what Rodrigues sees as “animals” or “beasts” while he is blamed for their actions:

“There, fast asleep like a pig, opening his big mouth [the guard] could snore just like that...

Moreover this guard did not possess any aristocratic cruelty; rather was it the cruelty of a low-class fellow toward beasts and animals weaker than himself. This fellow had not the slightest idea of the suffering that would be inflicted on others because of his conduct” (165).

On the other hand, Kichijirō is coerced into apostatizing on pain of death. The limited options that he was given, along with his own weakness of character, meant that he had to comply with what the Japanese government wanted to him to do. One of the respondents in Rauschenbach et al.’s article on instances of collective persecution, like Kichijirō’s, felt that the options the persecutors gave him were to kill or to be killed. Rauschenbach and her colleagues explain that this illusion of choice ultimately forces them to commit persecution: “The striking feature of these descriptions is the implied lack of choice and sense of passiveness. Speakers present themselves as puppets submitted to the contingencies of the conflict. Actions are described as necessary, almost automatic reactions to sudden, uncontrollable, unverifiable, or unidentifiable elements” (226). Rauschenbach et al. conclude, however, that “[f]ear and uncertainty, rather than anger and hate, are emphasized as central motives for their involvement in alleged criminal activities” (231). Fear and uncertainty are, for Kichijirō as well, the main motivators driving his betrayal of Rodrigues as well as his apostasy. For instance, when Rodrigues calls him to confess his apostasy, “...Kichijirō grovelled [sic] like a whipped dog and struck his forehead with his hand in token of repentance. This fellow is by nature utterly cowardly and seems quite unable to have the slightest courage” (43). These actions indicate that he is genuinely afraid rather than violent in nature, and his fear is used by the Japanese government to get him to comply, further showing how such institutions prey on the weak.

The Japanese government, however, isn't the only institution that Endō blames. At the end of *Silence*, Rodrigues's abandonment of his commitment to the Catholic Church operates not just as a critique of Japan, but of the ways that certain institutions can and ultimately do corrupt the particularities of each human being by universalizing codes of conduct. For Endō, it is the Catholic Church which universalizes the act of apostasy as an act of sin while overlooking the particularities of individual lives and the nuances of each situation. As Rodrigues reflects on his journey towards self-abandonment, he thinks about his own torturous journey to Christ compared to that of his superiors:

‘What do you understand? You Superiors in Macao, you in Europe!’ He wanted to stand face to face with them in the darkness and speak in his own defence. ‘You live a carefree life in tranquility and security, in a place where there is no storm and no torture—it is here that you carry on your own apostolate. There you are esteemed as great ministers of God. You send out soldiers into the raging turmoil of the battlefield. But generals who warm themselves by the fire in a tent should not reproach the soldiers that are taken prisoner...’ (175)

This criticism is drawn from Endō's own experiences with the Catholic Church in Japan. During wartime, Endō felt distant from the church after he disagreed with the church's support for the war:

Although Endō dealt little with the issue in his fiction, his distrust of the church as an institution started during the war, when he thought the Catholic authorities in Japan had buckled under pressure from the government and compromised the purity of their teachings—particularly the prohibition on killing in the Sixth Commandment—by allowing Japanese Catholics to serve in the military. (Gessel 40)

This decree to allow Japanese Catholics to serve in the military overlooks how individual Christians will react to the idea of killing; both the Catholic Church and the Japanese government as impersonal institutions are far removed from the realities of war, which only individuals can experience and endure.

In *Silence*, therefore, both institutions fall under the author's condemnation, for in their attempts to universalize rules and psychologically manipulate individuals, they become responsible for the acts of persecution perpetrated by individuals: "Church and government become no better than self-perpetuating bureaucratic monsters that thrive by trampling upon the individual... [T]he novel seems to suggest that a person could get along just fine in this world, realizing personal goals and finding sources of hope and consolation, were it not for all those social structures designed solely for the purpose of robbing him of everything" (46). This criticism of both the Japanese government and the Church for their attempts to push their own ethic is extended in *Kiku's Prayer*, where even more sinister forms of scapegoating are necessary for the success of these institutions.

The Show Must Go On: Strategic Scapegoating in *Kiku's Prayer*

In *Kiku's Prayer*, the theme of how institutions prey upon the weak and utilize insiders' hunger for success is extended. *Kiku's Prayer* provides an additional bird's eye view of collective persecution by detailing the debates between Japan and other nations concerning Christian persecution. Endō points to the way that nations conduct conversations around the issue of torture, how cold and calculated their use of language seems with an attitude of disregard concerning individual lives that could be affected.

For instance, the novel is transparent about the way that France and the United States discuss Japan's misbehavior and use it as a pretext to influence Japan's politics: "And yet the

decision by the Nagasaki magistrate to imprison Kirishitan peasants and force them to apostatize gave Christian nations such as the United States and France an excuse to interfere in Japanese affairs and fanned their animosity toward Japan” (143). Even Petijean, the missionary priest in the story, recognizes France’s attempts to use Japan’s abuses for its own gain: “Potent Western nations had invaded the countries of Asia. Petijean could not deny that. His own homeland of France had actually been more active in occupying parts of Africa. The justification used for the invasions was that that they were efforts to bring modern civilization and culture to primitive lands, and the Christian church had been tacitly complicit in their actions” (149). Petijean sees the marriage between the church and governmental affairs as potentially dangerous, for the church may, as Endō thought it did, give up its values to serve the interests of the nation:

But if he were an Asian from one of the plundered countries who had had his pride deeply wounded, Petijean would surely have sensed hypocrisy in the attitude of the Christian church for granting unspoken approval to all this, turning a blind eye, and conveniently benefiting from all the coercive tactics. Without question, it had been a grave error, even a sin, on the part of the Christian church. (149)

This extended critique by Petijean mirrors Endō’s own position in critiquing institutions as a manifestation of evil; in this case, the church has forgotten about how individual lives will be impacted by her attempts to colonize nations.

Similarly, the Japanese government is ruthless in its treatment of the individual Christians in the story. After being captured for disobeying the State, the prisoners are put into a room of nine-by-nine feet: “They were given only a paltry amount of food. With forty-seven bodies crammed into an eighty square foot cell, there was no room to lie down. They were driven to the verge of madness inside the hot, suffocating enclosure” (136). Even after the Christians had

apostatized, they are still kept in prison “as a means to persuade those who had yet to abjure their faith” (135). They are then put into tiny, three-foot cells (221), whipped (262), thrown into frozen lakes (261), and their children are lit on fire (265).

The governmental debates about the issues of torture, however, especially in regard to its rightness and wrongness and whether other nations should intervene, seem cold and distant compared to the descriptive details of the torture these Christians endured. The torture scenes are juxtaposed with a bird’s eye view of the abstract and distant discussions of torture, not unlike a newspaper report: “In the fourth month, the new government in Tokyo, in receipt of a report from Sawa Nobuyashi, held one of their frequent council meetings in the presence of the emperor and finally set out a policy for dealing with the Urakami Kirishitans” (175). The cold, reportorial voice of the narrator, as opposed to the earlier, more gruesome and detailed voice, shows how the institution’s enactment of torture required a different method of discourse. The Japanese government only describes the tortures in Japan as “Japanese internal affairs...” which should not be “interfere[d] with” (206). Torturing Christians is seen as necessity for a “national revitalization of Shinto and its shrines,” which would support the emperor in his rule of a unified Japan (206). Rauschenbach et al. argue that this method of discourse is often used by perpetrators of violence to “elude blame and responsibility”: “The use of abstract, ambiguous, and imprecise language is a strategy to deflect the interlocutor’s attention to ingroup rather than outgroup suffering. It possibly also reflects an attempt to dehumanize the outgroup by refusing to acknowledge its suffering” (230).

While the outgroups in this situation include the Japanese Christians, who refuse to obey the nationalistic spirit that the emperor promoted (197), the ingroups, guards who are ordered to torture the Christians, are still sympathetic towards those tortured. Nonetheless, they are pulled

by a stronger desire to uphold the nationalism which they've been taught. One elderly official, after inflicting a series of tortures, tells the Christians, "Seeing you so skinny and shaking, naturally we're moved to compassion. We'd like to give you something to eat. We wish we could offer you some winter clothing. But we have orders from our leaders that we can't show you any form of mercy until you reject the heathen teachings" (201). Surprisingly, he begins to plead with the Christians: "Stop being so endlessly stubborn and making things difficult for us. All you have to say is 'I've had a change of heart'... and look here, we'll give you all the warm rice you can eat. We'll move you to another temple right away and give you warm bedding to sleep in" (201). Yet, after the compassionate plea and the scenes of torture, Endō employs another set of reports which contrasts torture with business: "While the prisoners groaned from cold and starvation in Tsuwano... In the ninth month of the preceding year, the new Meiji era was ushered in. Kyoto, which had been the capital city for many long years, was replaced by Edo, whose name was changed to Tokyo" (204). The details of torture fit awkwardly before the national affairs that did not seem to involve the lives of individuals, but it also affirms how national affairs do affect individual lives in drastic ways.

These national affairs affect not only the Christians, but also Hondo and Ito, who are captured by the "center of desire" of the Japanese government. While the Christians are being tortured, Hondo can only think of how he will, in the future, rise in rank and become a translator in France or America, boasting of how he will travel by steamship and journey across the world (210). When he is asked by Oyo, his geisha, when the Christians will be pardoned, he "mutter[s] disinterestedly," "Not even I know the answer to that. I can't imagine it will happen in the next two or three years" (210). For Hondo, "The fate of someone as inconsequential as the Urakami Kirishtans held no interest for [him], who was ascending the ladder of success step by step. They

were nothing more than a gang of malcontents who had risen in opposition to the new government” (211).

While Hondo is simply happy to celebrate his ascent towards higher ranks separated from the day-to-day tortures of the Christians, Ito must perform the tortures himself in obedience to his commanding officers. Even after Ito remains loyal to the Japanese government in his tasks, Ito is still dismissed for harshly treating the prisoners, a command he was ordered to perform: “This is unfair! From the very beginning, wasn’t it on orders from the higher-ups that I interrogated them harshly?... The officers in Tsuwano did even worse things than I did, throwing them in the icy water and shoving them in that three-foot cell!” (291). While his superior understands the injustice that Ito faces, he recognizes their powerlessness in the face of these institutions, which do not care for individuals and their plight: “Clearly [it’s unfair]. But this is what our superiors have decided, so petty little bureaucrats like us can’t do anything about it” (292). The institution must preserve its own values, and it cannot be distracted by the “petty affairs” of individuals.

Although Ito appealed for mercy from Hondo so that he would be granted forgiveness from the higher-ups, Hondo is uninterested in meddling with these issues since they do not concern his career. When asked what he was going to do, Hondo simply replied, “Nothing. When it comes right down to it, the man is just not the lucky sort... I’m a busy man. It’s too late for me to be worrying about someone like Ito” (292). In the end, Hondo lived happily without a second thought for the tortures that the Christians endured, for “neither Hondo nor Oyo spent any further time discussing the Kirishitans in Tsuwano, much less Ito. Those people no longer had anything to do with their lives” (292). Hondo has been engulfed completely by the desire that the Japanese government has placed in front of him; the bait that the institution dangles in front him

is the bait of success. He becomes the face of the institution itself, working for its success while disregarding individual lives. Ito, along with the other Christians, have simply become the scapegoats that must be eliminated for the institution to function smoothly.

Conclusion

Throughout the three novels featured in this chapter, Endō acknowledges that every individual is responsible for his sin. Still, Endō also acknowledges that many individuals are often weak rather than “evil,” that social contexts are more determinate of people’s actions than their innate characteristics, especially when it comes to collective persecution. These institutions use their collective power to lure insiders with the hope of success or to threaten them with banishment or death. Meanwhile, the institutions mentioned are also willing to fashion scapegoats, sacrificing the lives of groups or individuals that obstruct the path to the institutions’ desires.

While this isn’t true for all institutions, the institutions which Endō focuses on are institutions that commit unethical practices at the expense of lives; they often mask individual responsibility and manipulate the weak to fulfill their goals. In all three novels, each institution becomes “centers of desire” by drawing individuals towards a state of what Martin Heidegger calls “being with” (qtd. in *Scapegoat* 150). Each “passive” character, Suguro, Kichijirō, and Ito are isolated and vulnerable. Their desires to “be with” their respective institutions overpower their individual desires for good. According to Girard, the preceding isolation which these characters experience is also what Peter felt after Jesus is arrested: “Jesus’ arrest seems to have destroyed any possible future *being with Jesus*... [Peter] is dispossessed and destitute, reduced to a vegetablelike [sic] existence, controlled by elemental reflexes... Elbowing [his] way to the fire and stretching hands toward it with the others is to act like one of them, as if one belongs with

them” (150). Undergirding the threats that these characters receive is their desire to belong.

Kichijirō’s words, then, capture the isolated state he shares with Ito and Suguro. After pointing to the strength of Mokichi and Ichizo, the two Japanese martyrs who died for their faith, Kichijirō voices how distant he feels from his own Christian community: “Father, you don’t trust me... No one trusts me... I have nowhere to go. I’m just wandering around the mountains” (81-2). These “centers of desire” readily see this vulnerable state as an opportunity to draw the “weak” characters toward a space of belonging by involving them in collective persecution.

Endō’s views concerning the evils and injustices of the world, however, are not all bleak, for he hints at the possibility that compassion could overcome the mimetic lure of institutions. This compassionate gaze is embedded in his understanding picture of Christ—one who walks alongside the victims of suffering, and even the persecutors who find themselves in the grasp of institutions. Even though Endō is cynical towards both church and state, Gessel argues that Endō also provides an alternative: “Endō ultimately elected, I think, to create through his writing an image of a Christ stripped of ties to the powers of both earth and heaven, a Christ who can do nothing more than love, empathize, and forgive” (40). Endō clearly details in each of his works the power of compassion and sacrifice to reveal the scapegoat mechanism and lead these “weak” characters away from such powerful institutions.

Chapter Three: The Persecutor's Remorse: Compassion, Sacrifice, and the Possibility of Forgiveness

As argued in previous chapters mimetic desire plays a significant role in transforming many of Endō's characters into persecutors. The mimetic pull his characters experience can be sourced to the mediators found in each story—individual mediators who are mentors or aspirational figures, or collective mediators which use both fear and desire to draw people in. In collective mediation, these “centers of desire” require the creation of scapegoats to appease any interior conflict that may emerge,¹⁵ and they mask individual responsibility by pushing for a collective ethic that values obedience as the most important virtue.

The solution to the problem of collective violence, for Endō, lies partly with the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism—reminding individual persecutors that they are ultimately responsible for the murder they committed. This is frequently accomplished in his novels through a sacrificial figure, who gives him/herself up willingly and becomes a sacrificial lamb who suffers-injustice, signaling to the persecutors that their actions are unjustifiable. However, in Endō's works, revealing the scapegoat mechanism brings persecutors only to feelings of remorse; it does not bring them to repentance. In order to lead the persecutors away from such “centers of desire,” a mediator who offers forgiveness and compassion becomes necessary as a catalyst for the persecutor to change his heart and ways.

Chapter Three focuses on how Endō's narratives disclose the way to reverse the manipulation of certain “centers of desire.” Endō shows how individual acts of sacrifice on the

¹⁵ For Girard, these conflicts are caused by the proliferation of mimetic desire within the group and the “scandal” that emerges from individuals desiring the same object. As Palaver argues, “The spatial, social, and above all mental proximity of humans to one another in situations of internal mediation transforms mimetic rivalry into a sickness that can spread through the community [i.e. institutions] like a plague” (136).

part of a mediating figure who leads the persecutors toward virtue can lead them to repentance. Additionally, Endō is also concerned with giving voice to these persecutors. His technique of abruptly halting the narrative to provide the persecutors' point of view reveals their past traumas and present conflicted emotions. Oftentimes, this shift in perspective that Endō provides is followed by an offering of forgiveness from another character or an opportunity for the persecutor to move on.

The first part of Chapter Three summarizes Girard's argument that the Passion Story explores the scapegoat mechanism by blatantly narrating the injustices perpetrated through acts of collective persecution, and I argue that Endō's narratives follow the same structure as the Passion story. However, Endō also builds on Girard's thesis by attempting to show how sin and suffering are inseparable; thus, he blurs the line between the persecutors and victims in the story through his narrative technique. The second part of Chapter Three deals with Endō's narrative technique in allowing room for the persecutors' perspective in all three novels and how it allows his readers to become sympathetic toward the persecutors' plight. Suguro's perspective in *The Sea and Poison* switches to Toda's, revealing how Toda's past relationships and frustrated desires traumatized him and led him to seek a scapegoat for his frustrations. Rodrigues' confident first-person voice in *Silence* becomes more objective as he's captured until the narrative zooms out completely, showing more of Kichijirō's dreadful remorse and his inability to change. Petjean and Kiku's narrative gives way to Ito Seizaemon's own, who, despite being a minor character in the first half of the story, becomes central to the narrative at its conclusion with Endō's focus on his repentance. In each section, I will also analyze how the mediators of virtue are present in *Silence* and *Kiku's Prayer* but are missing in *The Sea and Poison*, leading to different endings in each novel; while Kichijirō and Ito find forgiveness through their

repentance, Suguro does not. In Endō's works, therefore, revealing the scapegoat mechanism alone may only bring persecutors to remorse. However, if these persecutors meet mediators who offer them forgiveness and the opportunity to lead a virtuous life, they can finally move on from their remorse to repentance.

The Passion Story's Role in Revealing the Scapegoat Mechanism

As argued in Chapter Two, Girard's argument concerning groups which perform collective persecution can be applied to the institutions found in Endō's stories: they both make scapegoats out of innocent victims and use the mimetic pull of the group to fashion persecutors out of the "weak." Similarly, in the Passion narrative, the pattern of the scapegoat mechanism is repeated—an innocent victim is blamed by the mob for plaguing the community, which leads to his elimination. What is different about the Passion narrative, however, Girard claims, is the Gospel's blatant account of unjust persecution. The Gospel writers, instead of attempting to justify the murder of Christ, demonstrate the unjust nature of collective persecution and its hidden scapegoat mechanism (*Scapegoat* 164). Since the Passion story has demystified the scapegoat mechanism by revealing what collective persecution looks like, Girard argues that collective persecution is no longer hidden and "justified" by the persecutors as before.¹⁶ While collective persecutions continue to exist today, they are now seen for what they are: cruel, unjust, and unnecessary. Similarly, many Endō protagonists seem well aware of how their involvement in collective persecution is unjustifiable.

¹⁶ Girard's views concerning sacrifice became more developed in his later years. Though he saw sacrifice as a "myth" that primitive religions made up to cover up the scapegoat mechanism before, he later admits that he misrepresented the sacrifice mentioned in the Bible, which is something like what Rebecca Adams, in an interview with Girard, calls "excessive desire on behalf of the Other..." or "desir[ing] life for the Other" rather than "a wish to scapegoat [one's] self" (30).

Not only has the Passion Story revealed the scapegoat mechanism, it has also made it difficult for persecutors to live without guilt since they are unable to justify their actions. Thus, persecutors often live in remorse, knowing full well that they are participating in murder or passively allowing it. This tension is counterbalanced in Endō's stories by the group's ability to mask individual responsibility and erase the guilt that may emerge from violent actions against scapegoats. Nonetheless, the conflict of emotions that persecutors often feel, along with their past regrets and traumas, are still fully on display in Endō's stories. Their feelings of guilt and shame often lead the persecutors toward more violent behaviors because for Endō, sin and suffering are two sides of the same coin. For Endō, sin is an attempt to escape one's suffering through violent means, but it is still ultimately a longing for salvation. Endō's attentiveness to the traumas that have been inflicted on their lives, or at the present suffering that accompanies their violent behavior, shows that he sympathizes with his persecutors.

The Persecutor as Victim: Endō's Fascination with the Relationship Between Sin, Evil, and Suffering

Endō's fascination with sin, evil, and suffering began early in his college career. Justyna Kasza argues that Endō first showed interest in the significance of evil while studying in Lyon, France (124). Endō was drawn by the horrific acts committed during times of war, especially when they are united with the human desire for evil: "I understood that the past is not separated from my own times. The terror and cruelty of Auschwitz or the brutality of the Japanese army in South-East Asia, all of these acts signify the contemporary human longing for the rituals of

[evil]” (125). Later, as Endō began reading Mauriac’s *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, he became more interested in how intertwined sin and suffering are:¹⁷

[Thérèse] had not tasted anything but bitterness and illusion from her husband [...] she was like a corpse lying on the bed without moving, looking out of the window at the innumerable bustling pine trees – she could do nothing but listen to the sounds of the unending night. And just once, when she tried to live and escape from that place, she brought her husband poison [...]. (111)

Because Thérèse was paralyzed by the numbness of her life, the suffering that she must endure, she naturally wishes for an escape. She sees the opportunity to kill her husband as a way for her to move beyond her suffering, to set herself free. Using this example, Kasza argues that for Endō, “sin and suffering appear inseparable” (111).¹⁸ Endō’s interest in the subject of evil ultimately led him to differentiate between pure evil and sin. Humans commit sin because they long for transcendence—what Endō calls the “unknown X,” which he associates with Jesus Christ. Thus, sin is a human attempt to escape one’s suffering and attain salvation. Evil takes over when humans no longer search for the “unknown X” and absolutely reject life itself, “the quality of rejection that consists of a longing to be lost in the endlessness of sleep” (qtd. in Kasza 186).¹⁹ This distinction between sin and evil is important, for the persecutors in Endō’s novels

¹⁷ Endō chronicles his relationship with Mauriac’s *Thérèse Desqueyroux* in *The Novel that I Have Loved*, where he travels through the settings of the book in France because he had a deep affiliation with Thérèse. The book could be considered as Endō’s memoir and his exploration of the relationship between sin, evil, and suffering.

¹⁸ While it seems that Thérèse’s murder of her husband may be engendered by suffering alone, Timothy Williams, in *Desire and Persecution in Therese Desqueyroux and Other Selected Novels by Francois Mauriac*, argues that mimetic desire also plays a significant role in her murder.

¹⁹ Thus, Endō sees evil as a desire for “a descent with no upwards movement, salvation[,] or biophilous disposition, [but] a secret longing for death and an attachment to dampness and impurity” (qtd. in Kasza 187).

are often plagued by the former and not the latter. Endō is, then, sympathetic towards sinners in pursuit of a better life—the weak who are lured by the “strong” or the centers of desire which promise them success.

This sympathetic attitude that Endō holds towards his characters is modeled by his narrative technique, a technique that many other *Daisan no shinjin* writers also employ.²⁰ This technique is one way to shift the readers’ attitudes toward the protagonist who may have been misunderstood or mischaracterized by the narrator; while the readers may begin the story with a feeling of disgust towards the protagonist, they later come to understand more of the protagonist’s plight and begin to sympathize with her.²¹ Endō adopts multiple perspectives in his stories to show the firsthand experience of living as a persecutor, who’s often filled with trauma and conflicting emotions. This technique ultimately allows his readers understand that evil is not simply in “them” but in everyone—that we can potentially become persecutors given the right circumstances. His persecutors and victims exist in the same universe, perhaps even in the same person, and both their cruelty and their suffering coexist together in the mystery which Endō calls “the monstrous dual quality of man” (qtd. in Williams 27).

²⁰ An example of another *Daisan no shinjin* author who uses multiple perspectives is Takahashi Takako, whom Mark Williams discusses in his essay “Double Vision: Divided Narrative Focus in Takahashi Takako's *Yosoi * Seyo, Waga Tamashii Yo.*”

²¹ Toni Bambara’s short story “The Hammerman,” for instance, employs a similar narrative technique. As Howard Sklar explains in “Narrative Structuring of Sympathetic Response,” the narrative is structured in such a way that the reader comes to understand more about the mystery surrounding the protagonist: “Beginning with the mystery that surrounds the unattractive figure of Manny, the narrative proceeds to make us wonder about him, then to appreciate his complexity, and finally to feel for him. Thus, the gradual disclosure of information about Manny produces a surprising recency effect that overcomes the negative first impression of the character and parallels the sympathy that the narrator experiences in the final scene of the story” (579).

The Remorse of Present Violence and the Trauma of Past Desires: Endō's Attentive Gaze in the *Sea and Poison*

While *The Sea and Poison* begins with the narrator treating Suguro as an Other because of his involvement with the vivisection, the narrative perspective of the novel changes multiple times throughout the story, allowing readers to sympathize with Suguro. The story begins with a narrator who is visiting Suguro in a small village. During his visit, the narrator observes, “There was a cold metallic chillness to that touch. More than that, there was an impersonal, unfeeling competency to it which seemed to deal with me not as a patient but as some sort of laboratory specimen” (20). This, of course, foreshadows the vivisections that Suguro is in which Suguro is participating, but it is also a prejudice that the narrator has against a person he cannot relate to. The narrator later finds out about Suguro’s participation with the Medical Team of Japan who performed vivisections on American WWII prisoners: “In general the purpose of the experiments had been to obtain such information as how much blood a man could lose and remain alive, how much salt water in place of blood could safely be injected into a man’s veins, and up to what point a man could survive the excision of lung tissue” (27). The narrator questions, in his mind, how a doctor like Suguro could continue living without signs of regret. He muses on a passerby at a coffeeshop, thinking, “Now, this father of a family coming in through the door, perhaps during the War he killed a man or two. But now his face as he sips his coffee and scolds his children is not the face of a man fresh from murder” (28). This observation plays on the caricature that’s often associated with murderers: senseless, cold-blooded psychopaths who do not fit in society.

This juxtaposition of a man sipping coffee with a picture of a murderer prefaces the story by attempting to place the location of evil—specifically, whether evil lives outside the narrator

or within himself. After the narrator treats Suguro as a mysterious coexistence of evil and normality, which he cannot comprehend, the narrator's perspective switches to Suguro's own, whose perspective takes up the majority of the story, allowing the readers to understand the conflicting emotions that accompany the life of a persecutor. This switch in the narrative gaze underscores how Endō sees Suguro's evil not as something that is inherent in him, but as something that he is controlled by, or something that he is a victim of. However, this does not justify Suguro's actions for committing wrongdoing. He, as well as Toda, knows that he is guilty for persecuting the WWII prisoners as scapegoats. Suguro's guilt, in fact, seems to follow him for the rest of his life. As the narrator in the beginning of the story mentions, Suguro continues to blame himself years after the vivisections, muttering to himself, "...Because nothing could be done. At that time nothing could be done. From now on, I'm not sure at all. If I were caught in the same way, I might. I might just do the same thing again. The same thing..." (30). While Suguro has committed wrongdoing, Endō's inclusion of Suguro's perspective allows the readers to sympathize with him instead of treating him as an unrelatable Other.

On the other hand, Suguro's perspective also creates another caricature of evil: his mentor, Toda, often employs utilitarian methods of dealing with his patients, treating them like test subjects for his experiments. His enthusiasm about the vivisections, moreover, can make him seem amoral. But as Endō allows Suguro to recount his perspective, so he also allows Toda to tell part of his story. Toda begins his narrative by divulging the distress that emerges from not fitting in during childhood, of feeling like he does not belong with his classmates. At first, Toda felt like he did not fit in because of his long hair, and because he came from out of town, he was addressed as "Master Toda" by his teacher rather than by his first name: "This was due to my

being the only one who wasn't a farmer's son" (104). Although he feels superior to his classmates and teachers (107), he also often felt alone and misunderstood.

Toda sensed that his slyness meant that he was hiding an evil part of himself, and when he meets another boy who shares many of his characteristics, he couldn't help but think that "no doubt about it, here was one person able to see the bottom of my heart... It was no more than a matter of two boys sharing the same secret, in whom the same seed of evil was implanted..." (110, 108). As he grew older, Toda went to medical school and stole a butterfly from his teacher. No sooner had he done this that another medical student took the blame for stealing the butterfly; unable to bear the fact that someone else took the punishment in his place, he burned up the butterfly in his yard and thought of the student who chose to serve as his scapegoat: "The weary figure of Yamaguchi returned again and again in my dreams" (117).

The feelings of guilt and shame that he buried within soon became routine: he commits adultery with his married cousin, performs an abortion on his own maid whom he impregnated, and realizes that his actions are "distasteful" (123). Still, he is contemptuous towards his own conscience because he does not feel any lasting remorse and attempts to relate to his readers: "Aren't you too, deep down, unmoved by the sufferings and death of others? Aren't we brothers under the skin perhaps? Haven't you, too, lived your life up to now without excessive self-recrimination and shame? And then someday doesn't there stir in you, too, the thought that you're a bit 'strange'?" (124). The section ends with Toda realizing that one day he'll have to pay for his actions: "I thought at that moment that one day I would be punished. I felt with a sharp insistence that one day I would have to undergo retribution for what I had done so far in my life" (125). The feeling that he ought to receive retribution stems from how he "went on living unpunished as though [he] had never done anything wrong," something which "seemed

not quite right to [him]” (126). This narrative shift that Endō employs, once again, shows that there’s more to Toda than his utilitarian treatment of his patients; he is a man who harbors guilt and shame to the point that he becomes numb to the evils around him.

Toda’s trauma also stems, in part, from frustrated desire. The story of Toda’s upbringing is one of emptiness. Even after committing adultery, an act which signifies the successful theft of someone else’s desire, he exclaims, “I could never have imagined that the thing to which my curiosity and desire had been directed for so long would turn out to be such a dreary, empty experience” (120). This phenomenon of disenchantment is normal, according to Girard, for the subject never truly desires the object which he thinks he wants; he simply wants to become the mediator (*Deceit 2*). The numbness that plagues Toda, moreover, is reminiscent of Thérèse’s own in Mauriac’s novel, confirming Kasza’s insight that for Endō, sin and suffering are inseparable. Toda’s entire life is a search for what he calls the “pangs of conscience” (154). He feels guilty about not feeling guilty, which is its own form of guilt. He wishes to feel something in his heart, and he is willing to commit sin to feel something more: “The pangs of conscience, the stabs of guilt that I’ve waited for so long haven’t come at all. No dread at having torn away someone’s life. Why not? Why is my heart so devoid of life?... My heart is so odd that I feel nothing, no pain at all when I look at something that was part of a man whom I murdered” (155).

Additionally, although the nurse’s story seems extraneous when compared to the stories of Toda and Suguro, Endō’s inclusion of her narrative confirms how intertwined suffering and sin are. The nurse shows a similar pattern of hollowness in her life that is characteristic of a traumatized individual, which makes her susceptible to the desires of others around her.²² The

²² For instance, part of her narrative includes a section where she encounters a larger-than-life figure of Mrs. Hilda, whom she sees as a strong, independent woman—seeing Mrs. Hilda for the first time, the nurse remarks, “To my surprise all the nurses snapped to attention and came

nurse is constantly reminded of how she lost her son: “Just at that moment, a little boy about four or five came running out from the shadow of the building. His face was Japanese but his hair was light brown... I felt something stirring inside me. If my boy had lived, that’s just how big he’d be. Without thinking, I stretched my hand out to the boy” (94). Painfully, however, the nurse’s desire for the object, after being rekindled, is denied by Mrs. Hilda, who tells the nurse not to touch her son. Mrs. Hilda, at that moment, becomes her mediator and obstacle, raising what Girard calls a scandal.²³ The nurse recalls how she begins expressing violent tendencies to relieve the tension she felt through identifying a scapegoat:

I felt all the bitterness you might have expected me to feel towards a happy wife and mother... That night at my apartment, I felt my loneliness more than ever. When I was feeding the dog, I noticed her stomach was smeared with blood. Suddenly, I got mad and lifted my hand, and, even though she crouched in a frightened way and looked pitifully at me with her eyes, I hit her over the head again and again. (95)

Unable to truly relieve these tensions of desire, the nurse finds the perfect opportunity to participate in a scapegoat ritual. By participating in the vivisections, the nurse can finally relieve the frustrations of trauma by taking them out on human scapegoats (102).

Nonetheless, Endō does not attempt to diminish sin or to erase its consequences. Suguro recognizes after performing the vivisections that he and Toda will “some day answer for it... That’s for sure. It’s certain that we’re going to have to answer for it” (166). The narratives of

running, and this foreign woman with short hair wearing slacks walked right into the hospital. You got the feeling that she was a strong young man rather than a woman... To us nurses, she was just ‘really something’, that’s all.” (92-3).

²³ The nurse’s relationship with Mrs. Hilda is also confirmed to be mimetic in the story. She desires Mrs. Hilda’s husband simply because he belongs to someone else: “...but of course I wasn’t interested in him because he was somebody on a higher level but rather because he was the husband of this Hilda” (95).

Toda, Suguro, and the nurse, however, show that these persecutors are not just born with the hatred to kill, but that their experience of trauma or guilt led them to become more vulnerable to the mimetic pull of institutions surrounding the story. Through his narrative technique, Endō shows that, ultimately, evil does not live in a caricature of an Other, but is something that lurks within every one of his characters. Those who seem to be caricatures of evil are, in fact, often plagued by the trauma of their past or remorse their present actions, as Toda, the nurse, and Suguro are, respectively.

The novel's ending, however, does not provide the persecutors with the mediator they need. It is Suguro who is "[l]eft alone on the roof" (167), unable to move on. Although these characters are brought to feelings of remorse after they've murdered the WWII prisoners, they are unable to transcend their experience of remorse and receive forgiveness. The ending of *The Sea and Poison*, when contrasted with the endings of *Silence* and *Kiku's Prayer*, confirm the crucial role that mediators play in leading persecutors from remorse to repentance.

The Pride and Prejudice of Rodrigues: The Limits of Subjectivity in *Silence*

The narrative structure constituting *Silence* slowly expands, moving from a first-person epistolary form to a third-person limited narration. This narrative structure parallels Rodrigues's progressive awareness of how he views the Japanese Christians as inferior to himself and how his prejudices concerning Kichijirō are unfounded; as the narrative perspective expands, Rodrigues becomes more aware of the people around him instead of gazing only at himself. Yet, the epistolary form of the novel's beginning focuses solely on Rodrigues's perspective. The interior voice of Rodrigues, who often thinks of his life as "an analog of the story of Jesus Christ" (Washburn 207), is initially portrayed as a voice that's in control. Williams also notes Rodrigues's confident voice at the beginning of the story:

Fired by a seemingly unquenchable missionary zeal and enthusiasm to rescue the believers in Japan abandoned to a lonely existence as preservers of a proscribed religion, he appears possessed of the vision of an omnipotent and omniscient God that should be sufficient to equip him with the resilience required to defy all the physical pain his fellow man could inflict upon him. (110)

This sense of control, though, swiftly begins to deteriorate. As Washburn notes, “Once [Rodrigues] is captured, however, the loss of control is indicated in the rhetorical terms by the switch to a third-person narration in the second half of the work” (207-8). This shift allows readers to become aware of how Rodrigues has misjudged the Japanese Christians, for the readers begin to see that his psychological struggle is not the center of the story. It also allows Rodrigues to see that he is not the only Christian in his narrative who is carrying the cross of Christ.

Rodrigues, at first, sees the Japanese Christians as inferior to himself, treating them as primitives with simple faith. For instance, after giving the Japanese Christians his rosary and beads, Rodrigues writes, “I suppose it is not bad thing that the Japanese Christians should reverence such things; but somehow their whole attitude makes me uneasy. I keep asking myself if there is not some error in their outlook” (45). Because he views his mission to Japan as an opportunity to minister to the Japanese Christians, this perspective did not allow him to see that the Japanese Christians were sacrificing their lives on his behalf. As the interpreter later states, “How many times have I told you that it is the Japanese who have to die for your selfish dream. It is time to leave us in peace” (147). Later, however, as novel’s perspective shifts to third-person, Rodrigues begins to recognize that, rather than himself, it is the Japanese Christians who are true imitators of Christ: “He had believed in his pride that he alone in this night was sharing

in the suffering of that man [Christ]. But here just beside him were people who were sharing in that suffering much more than he” (167). Instead of taking on the suffering of others as a priest, his flock has been taking on his suffering for his glory. As detailed in Chapter Two, while this tactic is an attempt by the Japanese authorities to manipulate Rodrigues and to blame him for what the Japanese government is doing, Rodrigues’s suffering has also allowed him to widen his perspective, to see outside himself, a shift which parallels the narrative structure of the novel.

This shift in perspective is also linked with the breakdown of Rodrigues’s previous prejudices toward Kichijirō. Kichijirō, whose fear encumbers him throughout the novel, is seen as a coward and is often associated with animal-like characteristics. Rodrigues attempts to categorize Kichijirō multiple times throughout the story—he deems Kichijirō as someone who’s either not a Christian at all, or someone who’s untrustworthy and cowardly by nature. In his letter, Rodrigues records his initial impressions of Kichijirō, who is “reeling from excess of alcohol, a drunken man [who] staggered into the room... dressed in rags (16). Rodrigues also notices “a crafty look on his face, and as he spoke he would roll his eyes” (17). Kichijirō’s characteristics create a rhetorical distance between him and Rodrigues, for whenever Kichijirō is away, Rodrigues is always afraid that Kichijirō is going to betray him and Garrpe. For instance, when they first arrive in Japan, the readers are told that “Kichijirō went off to explore the situation” (26). Almost immediately, Rodrigues thinks, “He had not fled. Like Judas he had gone to betray us” (27). But when Kichijirō returns with the other Japanese Christian, Rodrigues continues to belittle him, writing, “He always looks just like a mouse ready to scamper off at the slightest thing” (27). Rodrigues is quick to mentally align-himself with the saints and Kichijirō with the weak: “Men are born in two categories... The strong and the weak, the saints and the commonplace, the heroes and those who respect them” (119). The glorious picture of Christ

Rodrigues has in his mind is often contrasted with the weakness of Kichijirō, causing him to further despise Kichijirō's cowardice. This is emphasized especially when Kichijirō betrays him for three-hundred pieces of silver, an act which allowed Rodrigues to characterize Kichijirō as a malicious Judas figure (100).

It is not until after Rodrigues's own apostasy that he recognizes the similarities between him and Kichijirō. This shift in awareness, as mentioned in Chapter One, stems from his confrontation with his mentor, Fr. Ferreira. Similarly, Rodrigues's attitude about Fr. Ferreira has also been transformed to one that is filled with compassion: "His feelings for Ferreira were not only of contempt and hatred; there was also a sense of pity, a common feeling of self-pity of two men who shared the same fate. Yes, they were just like two ugly twins... They hated one another's ugliness; they despised one another; but that's what they were—two inseparable twins" (177). Rodrigues's recognition of ugliness in Fr. Ferreira is also a recognition of his own ugliness; they are both flawed human beings, drawn and manipulated by what Inoue calls "the swamp of Japan" (187). While Rodrigues still characterizes Kichijirō as a Judas figure at the end of the novel, he has a newfound compassion for Judas as a betrayer, for he has also betrayed Christ in his apostasy, and he is thus also a Judas figure (190). He finally sees Kichijirō as a sympathetic figure: "I wonder if there is any difference between Kichijirō and myself" (175). This sympathy is what ultimately allows Rodrigues to hear Kichijirō's confession without any self-righteous reservations or feelings of contempt (191).

Rodrigues's realization that Kichijirō is a sympathetic figure allows both him and the readers to see that Kichijirō is not deserving of judgment for the mental torture he endures. As Rodrigues steps on *fumi-e*, he becomes associated with other "apostates" by both the Catholic Church and the Japanese government. While he is not condemned to death, he becomes a

scapegoat who “deserves” to be deemed a heretic. And yet, his condemned state allows him to see the suffering that Kichijirō and the other “apostates” must endure.

This compassionate attitude may not have arisen if Rodrigues did not expand his perspective and see the Japanese Christians as equal to him. For Endō, it seems that compassion can only happen once we can recognize ourselves in others. Interestingly, at the end of the novel, the narrative gaze shifts back to a more subjective view of the event’s aftermath as the novel takes on a form of records and sketches composed by a Dutch merchant in Japan. This subjective perspective allows the readers to recognize its limits, especially the ways that this limited perspective can create false caricatures of the characters in the story. For instance, both Rodrigues and Fr. Ferreira are known only as apostate priests. Okada San’emon and Sawano Chuan, respectively, are working for Japan to catch missionaries who smuggled in Christian goods. The Dutch merchant remarks, on Dec. 18th of the records, “I almost wish death on that rascal [Sawano Chuan] who ignores God; our Firm will only get in trouble because of him” (184). This disdain is ironic, since the readers are now familiar with Fr. Ferreira’s story, and while the readers might have condemned Ferreira for apostatizing before, they can now see the prejudices animating the subjective view of the Dutch merchant and would not be as quick to draw judgment on Fr. Ferreira as a figure who “ignores God” (184).

Silence, unlike *The Sea and Poison*, ends on a hopeful note as records hint that Kichijirō lived his life as a hidden Christian. In the Appendix, which contains the “Diary of an Officer at the Christian Residence,” the officer notes, “On searching [Kichijirō’s] pocket at the Enclosed Guardhouse, there was found in the amulet-case he wore hung from his neck an image to which the Christians pay respect, with St. Paul and St. Peter on one side and Xavier and an angel on the other” (197). Although the narrative of Kichijirō ends with his cross-examination, it is worth

noting that, unlike Suguro, Kichijirō seems to have found peace in the forgiveness that Rodrigues granted him and continued his life as a transformed individual. As the novel's ending itself suggest, after Rodrigues tells Kichijirō to “[g]o in peace,” “Kichijirō wept softly; then he left the house” (191). Thus, Rodrigues becomes not only a person who grants Kichijirō forgiveness, but he also becomes a mediator for Kichijirō, leading him towards a repentant life.

From Remorse to Repentance: The Conversion of Ito Seizaemon

Similar to *The Sea and Poison*, the narrative structure of *Kiku's Prayer* may, at first, seem erratic, but it is intentional in allowing the readers to sympathize with the persecutors in the story. Throughout most of the novel, Endō verbalizes many of the gruesome details associated with the torture of Christian prisoners. He shows how these scapegoat Christians are abused and mistreated in prison by the guards and institutions surrounding them. He is also attentive to the perspective of Kiku and the cruelty that she endures, especially the way she sold her body in hopes of easing Seikichi's suffering by bribing the guards. However, Endō does not simply focus on the victims, but allows the narrative of the persecutor, Ito, to disrupt the narrative of Kiku and the Christian prisoners. These perspectives allow both persecutors and victims to reveal what they must endure, which, in turn, allow the readers to relate to and sympathize with both groups.

Ito's horrendous actions may, at first, characterize him as the embodiment of evil. He attempts to humiliate the Christian prisoners in myriad ways:

Ito made the woman [one of the prisoners] sit on the bamboo-floored veranda and shouted at her... When he saw the startled look on the young mother's face and the fact that he had rendered her speechless, Ito was gripped by an urge to inflict even greater pain on her... ‘Take off the underskirt too!... Are you embarrassed? Lord Jesusu will hide your nakedness, so there's nothing to be embarrassed about.’ (244-5)

His mockery of the Christian prisoners, compounded by his manipulation of Kiku (233), illustrates Ito's vile nature. Nonetheless, such attempts to categorize Ito means ignoring the suffering that led to his violent behavior.

Endō also allows his readers to see the narrative from Ito's perspective, especially the conflicting emotions that emerge out his self-hatred; he is disgusted by the way he takes advantage of his rank as a government official to abuse Kiku and the other Christian prisoners, yet his guilt leads him towards increasingly violent behavior. He constantly lies to Kiku about how she would make Seikichi's life better if she were to give her body up to him, all while using up her money to buy himself saké (243). The next day, however, he would become even more violent: "One strange trait of this man named Ito was the fact that even though the previous night he had been wracked with guilt and emotional pain, the very next day he would harness the same measure of pain and use it to torment prisoners" (244). Ito notes his own weakness in a passage that's very similar to Kichijirō's words, particularly the contrast between strength and weakness, a recurring theme in Endō's works: "As he watched the rain, Ito reflected that there are distinct categories of people in the world: the strong and the weak, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the glamorous and the wretched" (291). Ito's actions, while violent, are matched evenly by his disturbed conscience. Throughout the story, he seeks forgiveness repeatedly in his heart: "I couldn't help it... Those were the first words Ito had muttered to an ephemeral vision of Kiku. Can you forgive me?" (291). This repentance, however, is followed closely by the recognition of his own weakness and the fact that he cannot change: "Still, he knew full well that his own weaknesses would drive him back into the same sort of behavior, perhaps even as early as tomorrow" (291). Ito's recognition of his inability to change parallels with Endō's insistence on

the importance of mediators; just as it takes a mediator to lead Ito towards violent behavior, so also must a mediator lead him towards a life of virtue.

Ito's perspective allows readers to see his troubled conscience, how traumatizing his abuse of others is to his own body, and how remorse leads him to cope with his guilt through violent means. His outbursts of rage and drunkenness illustrate his self-hatred and weakness, two characteristics which allow the readers to sympathize with him. He even asks one of the prostitutes he meets at the Daruma House to spit in his face, simply because he believed that he's the sort of man "who ought to have his face spit into" (245). Thus, the readers see not only Ito's violent actions and behaviors, but also his plight, making him a difficult character to characterize as pure evil. The novel does not attempt to hide his sinfulness, but it also does not shy away from the sense of guilt that sin may cause. His guilty conscience every time he commits immoral actions attests to the cycle of sin and suffering: "He always drank sake in the same room on the second floor, and then he would pull Kiku, who sat silently pouring his drinks, into his arms. Wordlessly Kiku laid back, and Ito climbed on top of her. But when he was finished with her, he would leave with a strangely uncomfortable look on his face, as though he were ashamed of himself" (236).

Ito's troubled conscience leads him to a conversation with Petijeau, which hints at Endō's view that mediators who provide forgiveness can lead persecutors to repent. Petijeau tells Ito that his sin and his suffering are intertwined; his sin is a way of escaping the suffering he feels—a plea to God for His companionship (279). Petijeau tells Ito that God loves him more than He loves his superior, Hondo, a character Ito sees as "strong." Ito is surprised by this answer and replies, "You say this God of yours... loves me more than Hondo? A man who's tortured and inflicted pain on you Kirishitans? (279). Petijeau seems to see Ito's guilt as a plea for salvation;

Ito's continuation in sin is his way of calling for forgiveness: "You are suffering... But it's your jaundiced, wounded heart that God is trying to penetrate, not Hondo's. God has no interest in a man like Lord Hondo, who is inflamed right now with the lust for success. He is drawn instead to a heart like yours..." (279). Petijean then reveals how Ito's violent behavior towards a scapegoat will only lead to more suffering: "By inflicting pain on the Urakami Kirishitans, you're splattering your own body with blood... Pain will give birth to love among them. Without pain, Lord Ito... love cannot come into being" (279). This charitable acceptance and compassion that's demonstrated towards Ito sparks the beginning of his transformation—it is here that Petijean slowly becomes a mediator of virtue for Ito, a mediator who slowly leads Ito away from the life of a persecutor.

After showing the troubled perspective of Ito, Endō returns to the narrative of Kiku and the victims in the story, matching the suffering of the victims with the suffering of the persecutor. While Ito's guilt and remorse continue to engulf him, Kiku's "defilement" of her body is also causing her to descend into gloom. She recounts the times she has given herself over to Ito for Seikichi: "Each time she had found herself in Ito's arms, she had plunged another level. She had been plummeting to the depths of the earth, from which she would never be able to crawl her way back to Seikichi's world. This was still the most painful of all for Kiku" (250). Kiku's health begins to deteriorate and she contracts tuberculosis, yet she feels a sense of duty to give her body and all her money to Seikichi. She hears a voice from the Blessed Mother telling her to sacrifice herself for those who are suffering: "Kiku. Please help Seikichi. You haven't done enough yet. Those men are suffering for you, so there's still more for you to do" (255). Though Kiku "wanted to throw the words back at the Blessed Mother Mary," (255) she remains obedient and continues to sacrifice herself. Kiku does not perform her task without guilt,

however, for she realizes that by giving her body up, she is “defiling” herself (255). Kiku’s act of self-sacrifice, then, is a form of abjection that’s similar to Rodrigues’s stepping on the fumie—an abjection which imitates Christ in His own sacrifice (169).

Kiku, with nothing left within her, finds herself in a chapel with the statue of Santa Maria once more. While Kiku is at first bitter over how the Blessed Mother had done nothing for Seikichi, she realizes that, instead of being the all-powerful figure who could free Seikichi, the Blessed Mother is someone who walks alongside the suffering of her children, a *dohansha* figure like the Christ in *Silence*. Kiku prays to the Blessed Mother, and she hears a voice which compares her sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ: “Even though you gave your body to other men... you did it just for one man. The sorrow and misery you felt at that time... has cleansed everything. You are not the least bit defiled. You lived in this world in order to love, just as my son did” (286). Before Kiku loses consciousness, her attention is captured by the snow outside, and the voice continues to tell her, “And just as this pure white snow will conceal all the blemishes and lewdness and pains and sins of humanity, your love will obliterate all the filth from the men who have touched you... Come, fear not. Come with me...” (286). Since both Kiku and the Blessed Mother lost their loved ones, Seikichi and Jesus, respectively, their shared suffering erases any feelings of rivalry that Kiku feels and becomes something that unifies them.

Thus, Kiku’s sacrificial act not only cleanses her own “sins,” but it also in time allows Ito to see how she plays the role of a sacrificial lamb. While Ito does blame himself for his violent behavior towards both the Christians and Kiku, it is not until Kiku’s death that Ito realizes his role in killing Kiku and becomes aware of his need for forgiveness, telling his underlings, “Compared to her, you and I... we’re so much filthier than she was!” (288). While Kiku’s death provides clarity for Ito, especially the vileness of his actions toward her, this alone was not

enough to lead him to repentance. It is because of the offering of forgiveness from a father he meets in Akita, Fr. Houissan, that he finally turned his life around: “I concluded that Lord Jezusu had given up on me, but Father Houissan said that Lord Jezusu would never, ever abandon me” (307). Ito’s transformation does not free him from committing sins completely; he admits that he still deals with the same sins he struggled with before his conversion (307). Nonetheless, the compassion that Ito receives progressively transforms him, freeing him of self-hatred. Kiku’s sacrifice and the forgiveness he received will, as Seikichi says, “lead [him] toward a different life,” proving that Kiku’s death “was not without meaning...” (309). As Kiku’s death reveals the scapegoat mechanism metatextually to both the reader and Ito, Ito’s feelings of guilt and remorse become intensified. And yet, the forgiveness that Ito receives from Seikichi, Petijean, and Fr. Houissan allows him to cure his self-hatred. These mediators allow him to confess his sins freely, to own up to his flaws, and to live a life apart from the “center of desire” which controlled him beforehand.

Conclusion

Endō’s narrative technique, which is used by other *Daisan no shinjin* authors, allows the readers to sympathize with both the victims and the persecutors in his novels. This shift in perspective reveals how traumatized persecutors have been made by their past and present, loosening them from the “centers of desire” which lure them towards collective persecution. Nonetheless, the death of the scapegoats in each novel allows these persecutors to clearly view their wrongdoing objectively, leading them towards remorsefulness and a recognition of the forgiveness they need.

In *Silence*, Rodrigues’s involvement in the life of Kichijirō leads Kichijirō from someone who blatantly denies Christ to someone who constantly confesses his need for mercy and grace.

In *Kiku's Prayer*, Petijean, Fr. Houissan, and Seikichi all play the role of mediators, leading Ito towards a life of virtue. This mediator, however, is missing in *The Sea and Poison*, and the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism brings Suguro only to remorse. These three “weak” characters mentioned—Suguro, Ito, and Kichijirō—share similar traits; the main difference between them is the depth of their depravity, or how far they are drawn along by their respective “center of desire.” While Ito and Kichijirō both repent, Suguro remains alone in his remorse, unable to change his ways. Just as the protagonists needed mediators to lead them towards collective persecution, so too do they need mediators to lead them away, confirming the significant role that mimetic desire plays in Endō’s novels.

Conclusion: Imitating Christ in a Violent World

The crucial role of mimetic desire in the lives of the persecutors that fill the pages of Endō's novels cannot be overlooked. As I have shown, Endō's attentiveness to the mimetic nature of desire is closely aligned with his involvement with the *Daisan no shinjin* writers. By focusing on three novels which include scenes of collective persecution, *The Sea and Poison*, *Silence*, and *Kiku's Prayer*, I have sought to show how mimetic desire can influence characters toward both acts of violence and virtue. While looking at the personal unconscious of each character may be partially helpful, as Mark Williams does in *Endō Shusaku: a Literature of Reconciliation*, there is a tendency to read Endō's novels solely as psychological case studies, which can ultimately be limiting and too individualistic in its approach. Using Girard's theoretical lenses in reading Endō allows us to see Endō's sociological critique of institutions, his sympathy towards the weak who become prey to mimetic desire, and his hopeful solution to the problem of persecution.

In my first chapter, I analyzed the limits of Williams's psychoanalytical reading of Endō, showing the ways that it fails to account for the sociological dimension of the three novels. I argued that underlying each of the three featured novels is the triangular structure of desire—that is, desire always includes a subject, a mediator, and an object. Each character does not originate his or her own desires but is subconsciously imitating other characters who he or she deems as “stronger,” which leads those individuals to desire what their mediator desires.

In my second chapter, I applied the concept of mimetic desire to a collective group of mediators who, due to its sheer size, holds a stronger mimetic pull for such “weaker” characters. I also discussed how Endō and other postwar Japanese writers are critical of the aforementioned “centers of desire” because such sites ultimately hold the collective ethic above the individual,

and they lure the “weaker” characters in with the promise of success or the threat of banishment. They also fashion scapegoats to ease the inter-group conflict that emerges out of “scandal,” or the rivalry that is sparked when group members desire the same object.

In my third chapter, I showed how Endō’s attentiveness to the plight of those who are drawn by the mimetic pull of these “centers of desire” allows us to see how intertwined sin and suffering are, blurring the binary of “victim” and “persecutor.” I also showed how the deaths of the scapegoats demystify the scapegoat mechanism, as it allows persecutors to see their unjustified murder. Nonetheless, the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism to such persecutors can only lead to their impotent feelings of remorse; it is only through mediators who offer forgiveness and who guide the persecutors away from their respective “centers of desire” that repentance becomes possible. Thus, mediators are ultimately responsible for both violent and virtuous behavior; imitation and the desire to belong are at the heart of Endō’s narratives.

Additionally, Endō allows us to see that our caricatures of persecutors, although convenient, are simplistic because they do not account for the traumas these persecutors endure or the conflicting emotions they bear. For Endō, although persecutors and victims suffer differently, their suffering should be attended to equally. However, the question remains: what good is it to bear the suffering of others and serve as their companion when powerful institutions continue to perpetuate violence in the world? Such acts of compassion seem pitiful and powerless compared to the realities of collective persecution. This question implies that a refusal to fight back is a “weakness,” a Nietzschean view which sees life as an inherent struggle for “the will to power.” However, the Christian metanarrative involves an eschatological imagination, something which Lyle Enright has written about in regards to Endō’s novels. Enright quotes the Eastern Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart, who writes:

Christ was raised, and so the cross (every cross) is shown to be meaningless in itself; God is not there, and goes there only as the one who violates its boundaries. . . .

Rather than seeing the resurrection as a speculative (that is, dialectical) tension that eternalizes the cross, theology must recognize it as a reversal of the narrative of violence that makes the crucifixion seem meaningful. In the self-oblation of Christ . . . God indeed comprehends suffering and death, but only as a finite darkness exceeded — and conquered — by an infinite light; God’s infinity embraces death by passing it by as though it is nothing at all and by making it henceforth a place of broken limits. (qtd. in Enright 123).

Indeed, this may be where Endō and Girard differ. For Girard, the resurrection is structurally similar to other myths—the mob deifies the scapegoat after he has been killed because his death allows the society to regain its peace. The difference between the resurrection of Christ and other resurrection stories is that it reveals the unjust nature of collective persecution to His disciples (*I See Satan* 135). However, this difference falls short in revealing the eschatological dimension of the resurrection and undercuts its true meaning. As Kevin Madigan and Jon Levenson argue, Jesus’ resurrection “signified that the end time had begun. It portended that the general resurrection was near. . . . Those who believed in [Jesus] would, in the end, also share in the resurrection of Jesus in the splendor of the new aeon, the glory already borne by their heavenly Lord, King, and Christ” (24-5). This significance was understood by Jesus’ earliest followers that without it, the Christian faith would be meaningless (1 Cor. 15:14).

Consequently, collective violence becomes, not the end, but a passage towards the justice which God will institute: “The resurrection demonstrates the vacuity of violence and anticipates the justice of God promised within the resurrection, and derives itself not from the Cross alone

but from the ‘weight of glory beyond all comparison’ which St. Paul says suffering promises when considered in light of the resurrection” (Enright 123). Thus, Endō’s refusal to let his characters participate in what may be called “reverse scapegoating” may seem like a surrender or a weak acceptance of one’s plight without the hope of an eschaton. Nonetheless, seen from the metanarrative of the resurrection, what Enright calls the “hermeneutic of anticipation” (117), Endō rightly places scapegoating where it belongs. He mourns the evils of injustice, of collective persecution, all while knowing that it is the kingdom of God in the resurrection which will establish the justice we all long for.

The question is also addressed by Endō in *Deep River*, his last novel. In the final sections of the novel, the Japanese tourists note the nuns in Calcutta who care for the poor and dying Indians around the area by carrying their bodies to a “Home for the Dying.” One of the tourists is quick to draw judgment, saying that the nuns’ work is “pointless” and “futile,” that it’s “not going to get rid of the poor and the beggar throughout India” (215). When Mitsuko, a tourist who’s intrigued by this “futile” endeavor, asks one the nuns why she spends her life doing this, the nun replies, “Because except for this... there is nothing in this world we can believe in” (215). Thus, while individual acts of compassion and sacrifice may seem futile as an attempt to overthrow the powerful “centers of desire” of the world, it is, for Endō, the only hopeful answer to the problem of suffering when seen in light of the resurrection.

Embedded within this picture of compassion is Endō’s depiction of the mediator in his own life, the Christ who takes on the suffering of man and walks alongside him as his companion. All of Endō’s forgiving mediators who lead the “weak” towards virtue are simply types or shadows of the incarnate Mediator, who became man as an example for Christians to imitate. Understandably, many scholars who are familiar with Endō’s *Daisan no shinjin* context

are wary in classifying Endō simply as a Catholic author. Nonetheless, it is also worth pointing out that Endō's Catholicism affected every area of his life, and that most, if not all, of Endō's persecutor characters implicitly long for the companionship of Christ. They are essentially dialoguing with God in the same way that Rodrigues does through their sinful actions, which are ways of voicing their frustrations at their unfulfilled desires. But just as Rodrigues hears a voice correcting him, "I was not silent. I suffered beside you," (190) so Rodrigues recognizes that his suffering is not something he bears alone.

Similarly, the unnamed Japanese who lives among the colonized Indians in *The Samurai* claims that the reason Christ can become a mediating figure for the suffering is because "His entire life was wretched. He knows the agonies of those who die a miserable death, because He died in misery" (220). His life is a contrast to the powerful "centers of desire" around him because "He was not in the least powerful" (220). Rather than associating with the powerful of the world, even with those who construct "garish cathedrals" in His name but continue to neglect the suffering of individuals, "He lives... not within such buildings... He lives in the wretched homes of these Indians" (221). Endō's call for Christians to imitate Christ, then, in bearing the suffering of others, in being their *dohansha* figure, is the hopeful revolution that Endō longs to see for this violent world: "Those who weep seek someone to weep with them. Those who grieve yearn for someone to lend an ear to their lamentations. No matter how much the world changes, those who weep and those who lament will always seek Him. That is His purpose in living" (221).

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