

Inner Horizons

Towards Reconciliation in Endō Shūsaku's *The Samurai*

Mark Williams

MUCH HAS BEEN made of the various debates incited by the Japanese author, Endō Shūsaku's novel, *Chinmoku* (Silence, 1966; trans. 1969). More specifically, several critics have highlighted the controversy, especially in Catholic circles, surrounding the novel's purported sanctioning by a "silent" God of the decision of Endō's protagonist, Rodrigues, to apostatize, however reluctantly, in the face of the uncompromising demands of the Tokugawa shogunate.¹

Equally well documented, especially in the Japanese literature, is Endō's response to such criticism. In a series of public lectures and interviews following publication of the novel, Endō attempted to challenge the "misreadings" upon which such interpretations were based, arguing vociferously that, far from condoning apostasy, the novel actually points to a deeper level of faith within Rodrigues after his public act of disavowal than in the seemingly unquestioning commitment to proselytization of the Christian gospel evidenced by the protagonist at the outset. Also frequently raised in these discussions is the series of articles, published in 1966 and 1967,² in which Endō appeared to dwell on the issue of religious acculturation—and, more specifically, on the image of Christianity as a sapling whose roots were destined to wither and die in the "mud swamp" of Japan—that had dominated the discussions of *Silence*.

In short, discussion in the aftermath of *Silence* tended to focus on Endō, the "Japanese Catholic novelist." The response was entirely predictable, the author victim of his own public acknowledgement of concerns regarding the validity of the very concept of a "Christian literature" raised in several of the articles with which he announced his arrival on the literary scene in the late 1940s.³ The author's sense of unease is encapsulated in the following admission,

As a Christian, a Japanese and an author, I am constantly concerned with the relationship and conflict created by these three tensions. Unfortunately, I have yet to reconcile and create a certain unity between these three conditions in my mind, and, for the most part, they continue to appear as contradictory ("Nihonteki kanjo," 146).

The tension for Endō was clear: the image of himself as an author torn between "the desire of the author to scrutinize man" on the one hand and "the Christian yearning for purity" (Endō 1950, 94) on the other exacerbated by the writer's perception, also frequently discussed at the time, of a vast gulf between the "monotheistic" West and the "pantheistic" East.⁴

The intensity assumed by the debates inspired by *Silence* helped to project Endō into the international literary limelight. In this paper, however, rather than reworking

this familiar territory, I intend to focus on an aspect of the author's art largely ignored in the critical literature concerning the novel and yet, in many ways of far greater relevance to Endō's subsequent literary direction: the division of the human composite into the conscious and unconscious realms. For Endō, imbued with the literary vision of Mauriac, Bernanos and the other French Catholics who had represented the focus of his study both at Keiō University and during the almost three years he subsequently spent studying at the University of Lyons in the early 1950s, such consideration was integral to any consideration of "Christian literature," as evidenced in the following statement,

The Catholic author views this world as a shadow of the supernatural world, and, even whilst observing human psychology, he will detect, behind the "second dimension" psychology of Freud, Bergson and Proust, the "third dimension" of which Jacques Rivière happened to make mention. As a result, the Catholic writer can conceive as reality the introduction of the supernatural world into the world of man, even if the non-Catholic reader is apt to misinterpret this as a distortion of reality (Endō 1947b, 27).

The relationship between Christianity and the "third dimension" of man's being had been broached and, in a subsequent essay, Endō stressed the distinction between this and the other levels of consciousness,

The mind is the first dimension, the unconscious behind the mind is the second dimension. And to describe man's inner self, we must probe further to the third dimension...the territory of demons. One cannot describe man's inner being completely unless one closes in on this demonic part (Endō 1974, 184).

The vision at this stage would appear to be that of the unconscious as a realm of chaos, one which consequently cannot be grasped

or analyzed with any degree of confidence. As noted earlier, however, the challenge for Endō was to reconcile such an interpretation with his instinct, as Christian, to seek within his creations the potential for salvation. Once more, it was to Mauriac—to the "Rembrandt-like glimmer of light...the light of God's grace" (Endō 1947b, 25) which Endō discerned in the latter's fiction—that he turned for literary impetus.

In thus attributing a series of roles and functions to the unconscious, in coming to perceive it as both "the territory of demons" and "the place in which God works and has His being" (Endō 1985, 33), Endō's evolving view of his task as both Christian and novelist is clearly evidenced. More specifically, the depiction confirms his burgeoning vision of religion as "more than the product of the intellect...as the product of the subconscious transcending all intellectualization and consciousness" (Endō 1985, 30).

Reassessment of Endō's earlier corpus in the light of the author's often-cited conviction that "it is not possible to consider literature and religion without resort to the concept of the unconscious" (Endō 1985, 21) reveals a series of protagonists depicted as struggling to come to terms with often unfathomable and seemingly irrational impulses born of their unconscious. The technique is subsequently epitomized in the novel *Silence*—where it is crucial to the portrayal of Rodrigues, not as ultimately succumbing to the torture, psychological as opposed to physical, to which he is subjected, but rather as engaged in a journey of self-discovery—a journey that leads to his ultimate acknowledgement that, for all his public act of apostasy, his faith lives on. By the end of the novel, therefore, far from abandoning Christ, he "love[s that man] now in a totally different way" (298): Rodrigues' faith is now clearly depicted as born, not of conscious reasoning but of undeniable, if ultimately unfathomable, promptings from the unconscious.

Identification of Rodrigues as arriving at a deeper level of self-awareness as a result of confrontation with this voice *de profundis*—"the voice of silence" as Endō describes it in a recent work—has represented a constant refrain in the author's numerous essays inspired by the critical response to the novel.⁵ More relevant to any assessment of the author's determination to probe the inner horizons of his creations than such retrospective authorial pronouncements, however, is Endō's decision, "inspired, in part at least, by the dearth of emphasis on the unconscious in the reviews of *Silence*," to devote himself to study of the vision of the human duality espoused in the writings of the psychologist, Carl Jung.⁶

As suggested by the above, the decision was the result of no sudden whim. Years spent depicting characters engaged in ever more concerted attempts at reconciling aspects of their being initially portrayed as in direct opposition had resulted in a growing fascination with the Jungian depiction of the human composite. Equally significant for the purposes of this paper is the extent to which Endō continued to seek to root his vision very firmly in his own Christian tradition. An interview of the time offers clear evidence of an author who shared with Jung a vision of the unconscious as "the medium from which religious experience seems to flow" (Jung (c), 293),

The confrontation of my Catholic self with the self that lies underneath has, like an idiot's constant refrain, echoed and re-echoed in my work. I felt I had to find some way to reconcile the two (Mathy 1967, 592).

The critic does not have to search far to detect similarities between such comments and the attempt by Jung to depict a fusion of the conscious and unconscious, also initially posited as in a state of diametric opposition, into one integrated individual.

Equally, it does not require much stretching of the critical imagination to equate the process whereby the individual attains a state of wholeness with the manner in which Rodrigues gradually achieves reconciliation with his own inner being. Defining this as the "process of individuation," Jung described the concept in the following terms,

Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed or injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way, too—as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an "individual." This, roughly, is what I mean by the individuation process (Jung (a), 288).

Having established the dichotomy, however, Jung stressed the need to avoid taking a stand in which the individual becomes wholly identified with one or the other pole. As a result of being possessed of both flesh and spirit, reason and emotion, what is needed is a balance in which a reconciliation between previously opposing forces has been effected. In short, the onus remains on the individual to come to terms with his/her shadow being and, in so doing, to effect a reconciliation between this and the persona that s/he had presented in public to date. As Jung argued,

Because of [man's] more or less complete identification with the attitude of the moment, he deceives others, and often himself, as to his real character. He puts on a mask which he knows is in keeping

with his conscious intentions, while it also meets the requirements and fits the opinions of society, first one motive and then the other gaining the upper hand (Jung (b), 465).

The vision of man confronting his own shadow being was to have far-reaching implications for Endō's subsequent art. It is on this aspect of the author's literary design—on the increasingly concerted attempts in Endō's post-*Silence* fiction to depict characters forced slowly but surely to acknowledge their own inner horizons—that the focus of this paper will rest. More specifically, this study will examine the more pronounced portrayal of the process of reconciliation of oppositions effected through the portrayal of characters engaged in their own process of individuation in the novel, *The Samurai* (1980; trans. 1982), a work whose superficial similarities with the earlier *Silence* have tended to mask the increased significance that it affords to the realm of the unconscious in effecting such reconciliation.

Before turning to an examination of *The Samurai*, however, let us turn to a brief consideration of the short story, "Kageboshi" (*Shadows*, 1968; trans. 1993),⁷ a work which, though rarely discussed in the critical literature, nevertheless throws considerable light on the heightened narrative focus on the human duality evidenced in the later novel. Written after the initial furor inspired by *Silence* had dissipated, the story provides invaluable evidence of an author in search of more explicit focus on the unconscious promptings behind the actions and reactions of the characters that populate his literary creations.

INTO THE SHADOWS

As suggested by the title, "Shadows" represents the most overt reference in Endō's corpus to date to the concept of the dual-faceted nature of the human composite and

appears to build very deliberately on the aforementioned heightened self-awareness evidenced by Rodrigues in the conclusion of *Silence*. In the portrayal of the narrator-protagonist writing a letter to his former priest recounting various episodes, mostly unsavory, from his youth, the narrative design in this latest short story provides the author ample scope for examination of the Shadow-being that lurks within both parties. More specifically, with the priest initially established as a symbol of purity, the narrator is early identified as a detective seeking to fathom the "real" person behind the former's public mask. As he begins his letter, therefore, the protagonist, an aspiring author, is aware of a certain quality about the priest's personality with which he has yet to come to terms. As such, despite frequent attempts to deploy the figure of the priest as a central figure in his novels, the narrator is forced into the following confession,

Even though you're... a crucial character, virtually every story I've written about you has been a failure. I know why. It's because I still didn't have a firm grasp of who you are (30).

The desire to unveil the "real you" persists, however, fanned by a recognition that even this "pure" priest is as subject to carnal feelings as the protagonist himself. By the end of the story, there is evidence, in the altered assessment of the priest's psychology, that he has succeeded in this task,

I can no longer think of you as a dynamic missionary brimming with confidence and conviction, nor as a man, standing between lighted buildings and apartment houses where washing hangs out to dry, who looks down on life from a higher position and passes judgment upon it. Instead, I think of you as a man whose eyes are now no different from the sad eyes of a dog (56).

The object of the protagonist's concern is now seen, quite literally, as a mere shadow

of his former self, reduced, in the eyes of society, to the role of disgraced priest following an affair with a Japanese woman on whom he had taken pity. To the protagonist himself, however, the distinction between the priest's latest persona and his inner being, his Shadow, is now clearly formulated, enabling him to accept, with no apparent perception of contradiction, the strong indications that his mentor's faith is, in fact, as strong as, if not stronger than, before. The image of the priest at the conclusion of the story as he "quickly and inconspicuously crossed [him]self" (57) is a powerful symbol, not so much of a renewed faith born of hardship, but of a persistent faith, shaken only at the conscious level, but resolute throughout at the level of the unconscious.

The portrayal of a faith firmly rooted in the priest's unconscious can be seen as an attempt to render explicit the nature of the journey upon which Rodrigues had embarked in the earlier novel. In retrospect, moreover, depiction of the narrator obliged to acknowledge a greater complexity to the priest's being than he had earlier been willing, even able, to countenance is readily identifiable as precursor of the more overt examinations of characters increasingly disturbed by this shadow being—in the form of confrontation with their own doppelgänger—in Endō's later novels, *Sukyandaru* (Scandal, 1986; trans. 1988) and *Fukai kawa* (Deep River, 1993; trans. 1994).⁸ Less susceptible to immediate parallels and yet integral to appreciation of these later works as building on the probing of the inner worlds of the protagonists in the earlier novels, however, is the novel *The Samurai*. In the remainder of this paper, I shall identify this work as the author's most powerful literary exposition to date of the individual engaged in the resolution of oppositions initially posited as irreconcilable. Examining the "processes of individuation" upon which the two main protagonists are engaged, I shall highlight the essential role

exercised by unconscious forces in the creation of the "living human beings" ("Shūkyō to bungaku," 117) that must needs represent Endō's primary focus as author.

IN SPIITE OF THEMSELVES

In view of the similar historical time period (early seventeenth century) and subject material (the challenge confronting both foreign missionaries to Japan and the native Japanese to whom the "alien" religion was being introduced during Japan's "Christian century"⁹) evidenced in both *Silence* and *The Samurai*, comparisons between the two novels are inevitable. Moreover, in persisting with the fundamental question of "Where is God as His people suffer?," Endō here remains faithful to the issue that had pervaded, not merely *Silence* but so much of his corpus to date. In *Silence*, the question had been entrusted in large measure to Rodrigues, whose growing concern over the perceived silence of the God he sought to introduce to the Japanese had presaged a heightened awareness of a deeper dimension of his being at which God speaks to him with an intensity he had never previously experienced. In *The Samurai*, this same question is addressed. Here, however, its ramifications are pursued, not merely by the Spanish missionary, Velasco, whose initial self-assurance and confidence are challenged in a far more subtle manner than that evidenced in the earlier portrayal of Rodrigues, but also, more objectively, by Hasekura, the junior ranking samurai who travels to Spain and Rome via Nueva Espana at the behest of his feudal lord. Both men take part in a mission with the ostensible goal of procurement of trading rights with the outside world for the local hegemon, Lord Shiraishi. Ultimately, however, both emerge as hapless victims of political machinations beyond their control.

The two men are brought together, in typical Endō manner, as a result of a decision

to which neither is privy and which they are powerless to oppose. From the moment their paths cross aboard the *San Juan Baptista* at the outset of the mission, however, their destinies are linked and, during the four years they subsequently spend in their ultimately fruitless attempt to convince the Western powers of Japan's suitability as a trading partner, they come increasingly to manifest a common concern for the same question that had so tormented Rodriques: "How can one place ultimate trust in a God who remains silent in the face of the seemingly meaningless suffering of His creations?"

Again, as in *Silence*, the only hint of an "answer" emerges at the very end of the novel. By this stage, both men await execution: Velasco for having defied the shogunate's exclusion order that applied to all foreigners but was particularly vigorously enforced in the case of those committed to proselytization of the Christian gospel; the samurai for having converted, however expediently, to the alien faith and then fallen victim of a changed political landscape on his return to Japan. And it is only then that the two men acknowledge the same deeper dimension to their being, one that can attribute significance to their seemingly meaningless deaths. For Velasco, it is only following his decision to return to Japan, fully aware of the consequences, from the relative safety of Luzon and his consequent inevitable arrest that he acknowledges this inner being. Here for the first time, he comes to grips with the absolute difference between his own human ambitions and the will of God. It is only now as he awaits death that he comes to experience a previously unconscionable degree of love towards his fellow man (epitomized by the care and concern he evidences to his cellmate, a priest from the Jesuit order that the Franciscan Velasco had previously despised). For Hasekura, too, it is confrontation with a death that, to the end, defies comprehen-

sion at the level of logic (the text throughout has been at pains to stress the depiction of the samurai as guilty of no greater crime than blind obedience to the orders received from his superiors) that elevates him to a greater level of consciousness: as he awaits his summons, he too experiences a renewed capacity for love—towards his family, his fellow envoys and retainers and towards Velasco—that affords meaning to an otherwise meaningless destiny.

Parallels with the earlier *Silence* are marked, the comparisons seemingly supported by the use to which the author has put the factual material unearthed during the course of the research he conducted in the Christian archives before embarking on each of these projects. With *The Samurai*, as with *Silence*, the author's examination of the records relating to Shikura Tsunenaga, historical inspiration for Endō's latest protagonist, was painstaking and it was the profound sense of empathy with the historical figure that the author came to experience as his investigation proceeded that stimulated his literary creativity. For Endō, as novelist, however, more interesting than those details he was able to unearth were the series of inconsistencies and discrepancies—and, more significantly, the gaps in the documentation he discovered there.¹⁰ As historian, Endō would have been driven to seek to place on record such lacunas. As author, however, he seeks, not to expose these shortcomings nor even necessarily to remain faithful to the various facts surrounding Shikura's mission. Instead, in the manner adopted in the earlier *Silence*, Endō builds on the various "factual" accounts in the creation of a "truthful" record of the samurai's ultimate destiny. For, as he was to acknowledge at the time,

I have no intention of writing down *jijitsu* (facts); if I did, the result would no longer be a novel. Rather, to write a novel is to record *shinjitsu* (truths), not facts. Thus, having examined those

around me, I analyze them...and gradually the character germinates. At the same time, however, I obviously take certain traits from various people: for example, my portraits of my wife are actually an amalgam of various traits stemming from my observation of various wives. The art of creating a novel is to use "truths" to reconstruct "facts": real "facts" themselves are totally unimportant to the novelist (Endō 1980, 15–16).

As Endō was quick to discover, historical records concerning Shikura, as with those concerning the models for Ferreira and Rodrigues in *Silence*, appear to come to an abrupt halt, in this case following the samurai's dutiful return to Japan after a mission that had lasted some four years and had resulted in Shikura's baptism by the King of Spain's personal chaplain in Madrid. Opinions as to subsequent developments in the life of Endō's model vary: as Gessel acknowledges in his "Translator's Postscript," some records claim he apostatized shortly after his return to Japan, others that he refused to recant and suffered a fate similar to that endured by Hasekura, and yet others suggest that, in a manner reminiscent of the Kakure Christians, he went through with a public act of disavowal of the faith whilst secretly continuing to adhere in the privacy of his own life (Gessel 1984, 270). To Endō, however, all this represented idle speculation. Of far more interest was the fact that here was another example of a man forgotten by history, another opportunity, as novelist, to depict the individual in his attempts to come to terms with the perceived silence of God. In so doing, in seeking the creation of a protagonist who experiences the true meaning of this silence, Endō once more brings his powers of literary imagination to bear on the creation of a character who, in terms of psychology, personality, ideals and lifestyle, projects the essential "truths" surrounding the historical Shikura into those periods in which the

archives lapse into silence. In this way, in thus breaking the "silence of history," Endō sought to encapsulate the spirit of a man who would otherwise have remained enshrouded in the oblivion of uncertainty.

When viewed in this light, similarities between the two novels would seem overwhelming. What such parallels fail to acknowledge, however, is the increased emphasis afforded by the later work to the process of self-discovery that accompanies the portrayal of the physical journey upon which the protagonists are embarked. Yes, the physical hardships of the journey to Rome and back are vividly depicted by Endō: the agonies and uncertainties they are forced to endure in the face of repeated rejection are clearly reminiscent of the suffering experienced by Rodrigues. Beyond that, however, *The Samurai* probes deeper into the implications for their own self-awareness of their respective journeys—those operating at the level of the unconscious. The resulting drama may not stand up to close historical scrutiny. As fictional narrative, however, it represents a "true record of a spiritual voyage" (Gessel 1984, 271), one with which the author himself could more readily identify. The shift of emphasis was acknowledged by Endō in an interview with the critic Kaga Otohiko offered shortly after publication of the novel,

With *The Samurai*, I had no intention of writing a historical novel. I was inspired by the biography of Shikura and have referred to that, but this is my "I-novel" (*shishōsetsu*). It is a reconstruction effected within my inner being and is thus far removed from a historical novel in the strict sense of the word (Endō and Kaga 1980, 201–202).

The degree of authorial identification with his protagonist—the sense that "Shikura and I were as one" (Endō and Kaga 1980, 200)—represents a significant shift from the

more detached narrative perspective of *Silence*. In view of the form in which the narrative is structured, moreover, it is hardly surprising that much of the critical discussion of the novel in Japan has focused on the task of identifying the parallels between the journeys, both physical and spiritual, undertaken by Endō and his fictional construct, Hasekura. To jump from this to a reading of the novel as *shishōsetsu* is, nevertheless, a major leap of logic, one that is seemingly belied at the narrative level—by the splintered view of events afforded by juxtaposition of scenes in which Hasekura's perspective alternates with sections drawn from the diary of Velasco. This splintered narrative perspective is maintained throughout the novel and, although it may represent neither a radical innovation for the author¹¹ nor be particularly influential in determining the pace at which the narrative unfurls, the cumulative effect is nevertheless pronounced, ensuring as it does that Hasekura will never achieve the privileged status of the prototypical *shishōsetsu* hero.

Velasco's role in this regard is clearly paramount. Not only does the frequent insertion of extracts from the missionary's diary highlighting the process whereby he is drawn inexorably to empathize with the Japanese envoys provide a forum for alternative views on events as they unfurl that is patently lacking in the *shishōsetsu* model, but in thereby ensuring that the sensibilities of a single hero will not come to dominate, these extracts also raise important questions as to the samurai's qualifications as a reliable and authoritative narrator-cum-storyteller.

Significantly, however, the task of bringing into question the perspective volunteered by the samurai is not restricted to Velasco. Equally telling, though considerably more limited, are the contributions to the overall narrative development of two others whose perspectives intrude, if only briefly, as a welcome foil to those offered by

Hasekura and Velasco. The first of these, Yozō, retains to the end his status as loyal and trusted retainer to the samurai. In offering a view of events that frequently presages that subsequently to be adopted by his master, however, his perspective serves an invaluable anticipatory function which, by its very perspicacity, serves to augment the sense of dramatic irony surrounding events at the conclusion of the novel. The other perspective that contributes to the multi-consciousness narration so integral to the novel is that provided by the renegade Japanese monk encountered by the mission in the hamlet of Tecali as they journey across Nueva Espana towards the port of Veracruz. Here is a man who, for all his public renunciation of his faith, clings powerfully to his conviction that, "no matter what the padres may say, I believe in my own Jesus" (120). And it is on those, admittedly rare, occasions when the narrative focus shifts to incorporate this, the most objective view of the events in question, that the true extent of the distance, psychological rather than physical, to be traveled by both the samurai and Velasco is best attested.

Deprived of these alternative views on events—without the suggestions of authorial identification with Velasco's unwavering conviction that, having once turned to Christ, man is never abandoned by Him, with the Tecali monk's belief in an intensely personal Christ whose influence on believers is powerful if imperceptible, and with Yozō's instinctive attraction to the miserable figure on the cross—the danger of over-identification with the samurai's vision of events might indeed intrude. As a result of the expanded range of perspective and points of view afforded by these alternative eyes, however, the novel achieves a balance, a symmetry that is absent from the Rodrigues-dominated narrative structure of the earlier *Silence*.

Such balance is carefully crafted; its dramatic impact dependent, less on the diver-

sity of viewpoints thereby introduced and more on the manner in which the varying perspectives, including as they do seemingly irreconcilable attitudes and responses, are subsequently carefully fused. The reconciliation may never be overtly highlighted; in the sense of unity thereby induced, however, the technique is integral to the process of rapprochement, born of the unconscious, whereby the traditional basis upon which the various oppositions established at the outset of the novel are founded is slowly but surely undermined. As noted earlier, the process whereby these eventually come to be perceived, not as irreconcilable opposites, but as elements of a dynamic tension in which the one is only definable in terms of the other lies at the heart of the narrative design of *The Samurai*. Let us turn then to a consideration of the opposition most consistently undermined by this narrative process—that between East and West.

In *The Samurai*, as in *Silence* and several of the earlier novels, the East-West divide is initially carefully constructed—here through the deliberate crafting of the “Eastern” samurai and the “Western” missionary as contrasting figures. Achieved at the narrative level by the above-mentioned juxtaposition of sections entrusted respectively to the first-person and alternative narrators, this is reinforced by the implicit contrast between the small village (and the tight community this encompasses) that represented the extent of the samurai’s horizons to date and the vast world to which Velasco had been exposed. Equally, however, the contrast between the two men is embodied in the personal traits attributed to each man. In complete contrast to the depiction of the self-indulgent, often aggressively ambitious Velasco, therefore, lies the portrayal of the samurai, seemingly devoid of worldly ambition and content to eke out an existence for himself and his family in the marshlands of northern Japan.

Introduction to Velasco’s worldly ambition and vanity is immediate—in the depiction of the missionary, still convinced of his own worth despite incarceration by the shogunate authorities. As he sits in his prison cell at the outset of the novel ruminating on the future, his conclusion betrays all the pride he had previously brought to bear on his work in Japan,

If his life were spared, it would be because the statesmen of this country still had need of him. Up until now, they had used him as a translator whenever emissaries had come from Manila, and in fact there were no other missionaries left in Edo who had his fluent command of Japanese. If the covetous Japanese wished to continue their profitable trade relationship with Manila or with Nueva Espana far across the Pacific Ocean, they could not afford to dispense with him, since he could serve as a bridge for their negotiations. “I am willing to die if it be Thy will,” the missionary thought, lifting his head proudly like a hawk. “But Thou knowest how much the Church in Japan needs me” (17).

Thereafter, Velasco is equally quick to attribute his subsequent release to divine acknowledgement of the role he has to play in the future attempts at proselytization in Japan,

Thou knowest my abilities Thou hast need of me, and for that reason rescued me from prison....The missionary sensed that he could use their greed to benefit the missionary cause (26).

Contrasts with initial portrayals of the samurai could not be more pronounced. To be sure, Hasekura may have the status of samurai and thus purportedly stand at the apex of the Tokugawa social order. But from the beginning, the text is at pains to emphasize his position as low-ranking samurai and his consequent inability to influence the events in which he becomes

embroiled. For Hasekura at this juncture, Yato, the village in which he had been born and spent his entire life represents the entire world; his determination never to betray his ancestors and relatives living there is a paramount influence on his actions. The image of a man totally caught up in this small world is readily discernible in the depiction of Hasekura, desperate to maintain the aura of communal harmony to which he was accustomed in the face of his uncle's concerted efforts to restore the family to its former glories,

Without a word of reply, the samurai took some dried branches from the pile beside him and broke them for the hearth. As he listened to the dull snap of the branches, he tried his best to endure these familiar complaints from his uncle. He was mute, not from any lack of thought or feeling. It was simply that he was not accustomed to allowing his emotions to show on his face, and that he did not like to disagree with anyone (11).

The contrast with Velasco remains implicit, but after the two men have come together aboard the ship that will transport them across the Pacific, it is exacerbated by the latter's explicit denunciation of Hasekura as the least attractive of his companions,

Hasekura Rokuemon appears to be more a peasant than a samurai, and is the least impressive of all the envoys. It has not yet been decided whether we shall go to Rome, but I haven't the slightest idea why Lord Shiraishi encouraged me to take along Hasekura if we do. The fellow cuts a sorry figure, and he lacks Matsuki's intelligence (59).

Equally effective in the establishment of this opposition is the genuine incomprehension evidenced by Hasekura and his fellow envoys at the missionary's seemingly blind devotion to the miserable figure they discern on the crucifix that is never far from Velasco's side. To Hasekura, this figure

epitomizes all that is unfathomable about the West, his attitude—more that of incredulity than of deep-rooted resistance—apparent in the following narrative depiction,

The row of beads was made from seeds, and a crucifix dangled from one end of the string. The naked figure of an emaciated man had been carved on the crucifix. The samurai gazed on this man, whose arms were outstretched, and whose head drooped lifelessly. He could not understand why Velasco and all the other foreigners called such a man, "Lord." To the samurai, only His Lordship could be called "Lord," but His Lordship was not a wretched, emasculated figure like this. If the Christians really worshipped this emaciated man, then their religion seemed an incredibly bizarre sort of heresy (83).

The opposition is by now firmly established. Significantly, however, it is precisely at this point—with the antagonism between Velasco and Hasekura seemingly absolute—that the process of fusion comes to the fore, as the contrast between the two men is slowly but surely eroded, the two gradually reconciled to the point where both are enabled willingly to share the same tragic destiny. And once more, it is at the level of the unconscious that the first signs of challenge to the construct are evidenced. Let us examine this process of fusion in terms of narrative developments in the portrayal of, first, Velasco, and thereafter, the samurai.

VELASCO: BURNING AMBITION REVISITED

First indications that there is more to Velasco than meets the eye assume the form of deliberate narrative subversion of several of the purportedly unquestioning self-assessments offered by the priest himself. His prayer from his prison cell, "If Thou hast need of me no longer...Thou mayest summon me at any time. Thou knowest bet-

ter than anyone else that I am not at all attached to this life" (18–19), for example, is pronounced with apparent conviction. Such selflessness is, however, undermined by the undeniable ambition and self-serving attitude offered by the narrative immediately before and after this prayer, the effect of such juxtaposition being to bring into question whether Velasco actually succeeds in convincing even himself of his willingness to sacrifice his life for his Lord. Such suggestions of self-deception become more pronounced as the narrative unfolds, the purported altruism behind his determination to become Bishop of Japan consequently subject to increasing suspicion. As he discusses the impending mission with Lord Shiraishi, for example, and catches himself about to ask for that position in return for his services as interpreter for the envoys, Velasco struggles to justify his ambition,

For a moment [Velasco] was ashamed of his pride, yet at the same time he told himself, "I do not seek advancement out of selfish interest. I wish to have the position of Bishop so that I may set up a sturdy last line of defense in this country that seeks to proscribe Christianity. I alone can do battle with these cunning, heathen Japanese (35).

Once more, the depiction is of Velasco struggling to resist the promptings of his unconscious. Again, the issue of whether he convinces himself of his own logic is the subject of intense narrative scrutiny, the challenge to the initial portrayal of Velasco consequently enhanced.

As long as Velasco seeks to resist the promptings of his unconscious, however, there can be no suggestion of his coming to terms with this more complex being behind the stereotype as introduced at the outset. First to see through to a greater depth to the missionary than he is willing to acknowledge, therefore, is not Velasco himself, but those with whom he interacts. Significantly, the

first such insight is offered by Matsuki, Hasekura's fellow envoy whom Velasco had typecast as "the most intelligent of the four envoys" (59) following their first meeting. In response to Velasco's persistent attempts to convince the envoys of the efficacy of baptism even if "their only motive was to benefit their business" (73), Matsuki responds pointedly,

You're quite a schemer, Lord Velasco. You play upon their greed and make them into Christians (73–74).

What has long been evidenced implicitly has now been explicitly acknowledged and the reader subsequently encounters a series of individuals ready to offer equally percipient assessments of the missionary. The Viceroy the mission encounters in Mexico, for example, is in no doubt as to the hidden agenda behind Velasco's supposedly selfless attempts to secure the baptism of the envoys out of missionary zeal, concluding their brief encounter with the penetrating remark,

You seem to have chosen the wrong profession, Father. You should have become a diplomat instead of a missionary (104).

Equally perspicacious in his analysis of Velasco's actions is the Bishop of Sevilla, who after welcoming the missionaries and the envoys he has brought from Japan, declares,

"My son," the Bishop looked steadily into Velasco's face, "you are too impassioned. You must examine your heart to be sure that in the future your passion does not do damage to your soul" (143).

At this stage in the novel, such assessments are entrusted to relatively minor actors in the unfolding drama. Concurrent with these explicit analyses, however, the narrative comes increasingly to focus on signs of Velasco acting in contrast to the stereotypical character attributed to him at the outset. Embroiled in an Indian rebellion between

Cordoba and Veracruz, for example, Velasco's courage and powers of leadership are clearly at stake. Loath to proceed, the "forced smile" he betrays in response to the taunts of cowardice offered by Tanaka, now firmly established as the most intrepid of the envoys following Matsuki's premature return to Japan, is immediately picked up by the narrator: "It was the first indication of weakness they had ever seen in the missionary" (129). Almost immediately, however, the group is surprised by an Indian woman emerging from the shade of an olive tree begging for assistance for her dying brother—and Velasco's response is equally unexpected, this time in its compassion. Now it is Tanaka and the other envoys who wish to distance themselves as quickly as possible from any signs of trouble, and it is Velasco who, quietly but firmly, reminds them of his "calling as a Christian padre" (131) as he departs, at considerable risk to his personal safety, to administer the last rites.

The incident represents a significant turning point in the narrative portrayal of Velasco, and there follow increasing suggestions of a man slowly but surely confronting the realities encompassed by his inner being. A passage from his diary shortly after arrival in Spain betrays just such a flash of genuine insight, acknowledging as it does a growing recognition that peace of mind will only come following acceptance of unconscious forces at work on his being. Aroused from sleep by a wet dream, the missionary resorts to his only recourse at such moments, prayer. His own narrative at this point, however, betrays all the pain of growing self-realization,

As I prayed, I was suddenly overcome by a terrifying sense of despair. Drop by drop I tasted the poison seeping through my soul, and I felt as though I had just discovered my own ugly face in a mirror. The lusts of my flesh, my hatred for the Jesuits, my almost arrogant confidence in my work in Japan, my thirst for con-

quest—one after another they surged up to from the depths of my soul, to the point that I could no longer feel that the Lord would listen to my prayers and my petitions. I felt as though He were pointing a finger at me, showing me the abominable ugliness of the selfish ambition that lurked behind my prayers and my aspirations (139).

By this stage, Velasco's powers of resistance are clearly under attack, and there now follows a series of assaults on his public facade from a variety of unconscious sources. First of these is the voice that whispers at his ear, a well-worn image in Endō's literature of the individual wracked by his inner being,

A voice sounded in Velasco's ears. "What are you trying to achieve? To baptize men who do not believe in the Lord, for your own benefit is a blasphemy and a profanation. It is an act of arrogance, and through the sacrament of baptism you heap the sins of unbelievers upon the Lord" (146).

Velasco's initial response is to seek to "exorcize this voice" (146), but the more he resists, the more he is brought face to face with stark reality. At the same time, he is increasingly subjected both to "a searing pain in his chest" and also to "a voice laughing" at him, two more common symbols in Endō's oeuvre of conscious manifestations of the pangs of the unconscious. It is around this time, however, that Velasco is obliged to defend his mission in the face of a concerted attack from Father Valente, representative of the Jesuit order that stands between Velasco and his ambition to receive appointment as Bishop of Japan. To Father Valente, the issue is clear-cut, the divide between East and West unfathomable,

The Japanese basically lack a sensitivity to anything that is absolute, to anything that transcends the human level, to the

existence of anything beyond the realm of Nature: what we would call the supernatural....

Their sensibilities are firmly grounded within the sphere of Nature and never take flight to a higher realm. Within the realm of Nature their sensibilities are remarkably delicate and subtle, but those sensibilities are unable to grasp anything on a higher plane. That is why the Japanese cannot conceive of our God, who dwells on a separate plane from man (163).

Significantly, the task of advocating a less than absolute divide—the potential for meaningful dialogue between East and West—is now left to Velasco, earlier symbol of Western intransigence. His earlier vision of a clear opposition is now clearly tempered, his vacillation increasing in direct proportion to the uncertainty evidenced by Hasekura and the other envoys. Initial attempts to deny the existence of such wavering inevitably founder, his ambiguous feelings exemplified in his less than enthusiastic response to the baptism of the three remaining envoys, an occasion that, in theory at least, represents the fulfillment of all his prayers. Far from a surge of joy, Velasco experiences mixed emotions on this occasion,

I was seized by the growing, hollow feeling that everything I had done was crashing down around me like an avalanche. I felt as though I were seeing before my very eyes all my labors come to naught, all my plans stripped of meaning, and everything I had believed in turning out to be solely for the sake of self-gratification (179).

Velasco is now approaching the point where he can no longer deny the existence of such instinctive, involuntary responses and such recognition comes in the acknowledgement of a growing sense of cama-

raderie with his traveling companions. The jealously guarded distance has now evaporated, to be replaced instead by recognition of a distinct empathy born of shared experience,

This all seems very strange. Before we set out, and throughout the entire journey, I felt as though I were walking a different path from each of you. To be honest, it seemed as if we never communicated with one another. But tonight for the first time I feel somehow that we have all been bound together by a single cord. From now on you and I will be pelted by the same rains, buffeted by the same winds, and we will walk side by side down the same path (184).

A diary entry of that time reveals a similar bond,

It was as though a friendship had been forged between the betrayed and the forsaken—a mutual sympathy and a mutual licking of wounds. I felt an affinity with those Japanese that I cannot describe. It was as if a firm bond of solidarity that I had never felt before had formed between the envoys and myself. To be honest, I had employed many stratagems up until then, dragging them about by the nose to achieve my own private purposes and taking advantage of their weaknesses....That icy distance that once separated us seemed to exist no longer (186).

Such emotions may strike Velasco as “strange” at the conscious level but, hounded by an awareness of the pain and suffering his reckless ambition has caused to others, Velasco at this point is almost ready to beg the envoys’ forgiveness. And it is only now, having experienced the pain of humiliation and defeat, that he is able to act as bearer of true love in a way which had been denied to Father Velasco, the confident emissary of the Christian gospel depicted at the outset of the novel.

The distance already traveled by Velasco in his journey of self-discovery is considerable and, once more, this increased understanding, both of his fellow man and of himself, is deliberately juxtaposed on to a similar rapprochement that occurs, during the course of the novel, between Velasco and his God. His ambition now largely dissipated, Velasco now finds himself pleading, as miserable sinner yet confident in his new-found belief that this is the will of God, that the Council of Bishops authorize his return to Japan.

In keeping with the model established with Rodrigues, there are, inevitably, still those occasions when Velasco manifests outward signs of despairing of God's presence alongside him, the most poignant being the entry in his diary as the mission beats a weary retreat across the Atlantic,

It is all...because of Thee. If Thou hadst not brought such a result, our voyage home would have been filled with joy, and the ship would have rung with the voices of Japanese singing hymns to Thy praise. But Thou didst not desire that. Thou chocest to forsake Japan (207).

Far from focusing on Velasco in the depths of despair, however, the narrative at this stage highlights the cathartic effect of such an honest admission—and within a page of recording such concerns, Velasco is driven to acknowledge,

When I finished writing the letters, my heart was strangely at ease. The realization that the flames of passion which had been my reason for living had now burned themselves out brought me a tranquility I had not known since our departure from Rome (208).

The transition effected at this point is clearly depicted in far less dramatic terms than those attributed to Rodrigues as he confronts the *fumie*. The effect on the character concerned, however, is equally marked. The Velasco to emerge from this confrontation

with seemingly overwhelming despondency possesses a renewed faith which, whilst still a far cry from the orthodoxy traditionally associated with his religious order, manifests a concern for his fellows that is rooted in genuine empathy. Examples of the reinvigorated Velasco less concerned with the dictates of his order than with his desire to stand alongside the envoys in times of need now come to proliferate, his release from the straitjacket of rigid dogma nowhere more apparent than in his response to the suicide of Tanaka who succumbs to the outward failure of the mission. Velasco's justification of his decision to accord Tanaka the trappings of Christian respectability is telling,

The Church does not allow the sacrament for the dead to be performed for those who take their own lives. But at that moment I no longer cared about the regulations of the Church. I knew the anguish of Tanaka's journey. I knew what had been in the hearts of Tanaka and Hasekura and Nishi as they persevered with their hopeless mission (213).

The effect of this and other depictions of the caring Velasco is pronounced, their role in preparing the narrative ground for the missionary's ultimate act of empathy—his decision to forsake the relative security of Luzon for certain capture and death in Japan—highly influential. Seen as a "rational" response to the impulse towards self-preservation, Velasco's decision can only be portrayed as illogical. Far from an impulsive, unconsidered act, however, the resolve is clearly justified—not at the level of conscious reasoning but as an equally convincing response to unfathomable, yet undeniable promptings of the unconscious. Such justification is paradoxically enhanced by Velasco's inability to comprehend his own impulse,

Japan. The storms of persecution have raged, and you exhibit only enmity

towards God. Then why am I drawn to you? Why do I seek to return to you? (246).

Velasco's willingness to obey such impulses in defiance of his own conscious reasoning is now absolute, the consequent portrayal of integrity correspondingly enhanced. His reaction to his subsequent, inevitable arrest provides perfect testimony to this renewed positive approach to his circumstances,

I shall calmly accept this fate which God has ordained, just as a fruit absorbs the mellow light of autumn. I no longer consider my own imminent death a defeat....Soon another missionary will stand on the stepping-stone that is me, and he will become the next stepping-stone....

I feel as though the Lord gave all those setbacks so that he could force me to look this reality in the face. It is as though my vanity, my pride, my haughtiness, and my thirst for conquest all existed for the purpose of shattering everything that I had idealized, so that I could see the true state of the world (252, 254).

Armed with such renewed conviction, Velasco can display an optimism that belies his current miserable circumstances. Neither the death in agony of Father Vasquez, the Dominican priest awaiting execution with Velasco, nor the arrival of Father Carvalho, whose mere affiliation to the Jesuit order would have been sufficient to arouse the ire of the earlier Velasco, can shake such new-found hope. The self-depiction in the final testament Velasco writes from his cell is testimony to the distance the missionary has placed between his current self and the ever-confident man depicted at the outset of the novel,

With each passing moment now I sense my final hour pressing in upon me. Blessed be God, who sends the rains of

love upon this rocky, barren land. I hope that each of you will also forgive me my sins. I committed many errors in the course of my life. Like an ineffectual man who tries to resolve everything with one single effort, I now await my martyrdom. May God's will be done in the trackless lands of Japan just as His will is done in Heaven (263).

The ground for such new-found serenity in the face of martyrdom has been carefully prepared, explicit textual acknowledgment of the missionary's enhanced capacity for love essential to an understanding of the final section of the novel. Taken at face value, Velasco's reaction to news that the envoys, Hasekura and Nishi, have been executed ("a smile of delight appeared on Velasco's blanched lips" (266)) would appear remarkably reminiscent of the initial, stereotyped Velasco. Far from a display of pity for the poor, innocent pawns condemned to death for embracing a baptism for which he was directly responsible and which he had always recognized as expedient, here is Velasco seemingly oblivious to the destiny of his companions. By now, however, the paradox has been exposed, enabling Velasco's smile to be interpreted, not as a sign of callousness, but of joy at the realization that their faith had indeed taken root and delight both at the strength and boldness of their witness and the anticipation evident in his response, "Now I can join them" (266).

The image of Velasco as he walks to the stake, therefore, is of a man convinced that in accepting his fate, he is conforming to the will of God. The portrayal is important for, in emphasizing the self-conviction manifest by the missionary to the end, the narrative provides powerful evidence that, for all the distance he has indubitably traveled in his journey of self-discovery, Velasco remains fundamentally unchanged: there is a consistency of portrayal here that, whilst accommodating growth, retains the

essence behind the public facade. Significantly, Velasco has not suddenly and unconvincingly been endowed with qualities which he did not possess at the outset of the novel. Instead, the very qualities initially cited as signs of weakness—single-minded determination, blind ambition, etc.—have come to be seen as the source of his ultimate salvation. The transposition of Velasco from figure of ridicule to powerful witness is now complete, the symbolic fusion of the traditional opposition between strength and weakness thereby effectively sealed. The process is precisely that as depicted by Gessel,

There is a different reward, one filled with anguish and humiliation, that Endō's God offers to those who can strip themselves of the ego that surrounds them like a protective shield. When they abase themselves and share the burdens of another human being, God shatters His silence and speaks, using the lives of these individuals as the instrument of communication (Gessel 1989, 256).

The comment encapsulates the process of individuation upon which Velasco is engaged. For Hasekura, the psychological direction in which he is traveling may differ; the end result, however, is remarkably similar. Let us turn then to consideration of the journey towards greater self-realization as undertaken by the samurai.

THE SAMURAI: UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE?

As noted above, initial portrayals of Hasekura content with his lot in the marshlands appear uncompromising. Following the shattering of this tranquility with the order for him to participate in the mission to the West, however, it is not long before some of the painful lessons he is obliged to confront begin the process of shattering his early sense of security. Not surprisingly, the primary instigator in the fundamental reassessment of human nature which is forced

upon the samurai is Velasco, whose apparently contradictory behavior is a source of increasing confusion to Hasekura. One moment, he appears to have the interests of others entirely at heart—as, for example, when he voluntarily shares his own dry clothes with those whose own provisions have been saturated in a storm. The next moment, however, he is “watching with composure” (80) as one of the sailors is flogged as punishment for stealing a watch and several pieces of gold from the captain's cabin. As the narrator observes at this juncture,

The samurai could not bring himself to believe that this Velasco and the Velasco who had shared his clothing with Yozō were one and the same man (80).

Already, Hasekura is betraying signs of awareness of a division within the priest—of a greater complexity to his being than was initially apparent. Thereafter, the more the two men keep each other's company, the more the samurai's uncertainty as to Velasco's true intentions intensifies. On one issue, however, Hasekura remains steadfast: the Christ whom Velasco invokes at every opportunity remains a distant concept, one with which he has neither the desire nor the ability to empathize. It is in these terms that the significance of the contribution of the renegade monk the envoys encounter in the hamlet of Tecali is best appreciated.

Overwhelmed by Velasco's portrayal of Christ as a figure of awe and majesty and confused by the seeming discrepancy between this and the pitiful images of Christ on the cross which he actually encounters on his travels, Hasekura's inability to reconcile the two is hardly surprising. Such equivocation, however, only serves to heighten the force of the alternative interpretation offered by the monk as he seeks to account for his continuing adherence to the creed despite his public disavowal of the faith.

Pressed by the envoys to account for this apparent inconsistency, he explains,

I don't believe in the Christianity the padres preach....I believe in my own Jesus. My Jesus is not to be found in the palatial cathedrals. He lives among these miserable Indians (120).

The image of the intensely personal relationship with Christ is clearly reminiscent of that to which so many of the earlier Endō protagonists had aspired, its effect on the confused samurai immediate. Not only does the monk's portrayal of a weak but compassionate Christ cast an element of doubt on to the previously unquestioned depictions routinely offered by Velasco, to date the samurai's only source of information on the subject, it also inspires a telling reappraisal of the nature of his own journey. The blind obedience to his lord's wishes that previously had represented his sole motivation is here being challenged for the first time, his consequent assertion that "this is a journey we have to make" and his realization "that he had changed" (122) suggesting a growing acceptance of unconscious promptings that represent an equally powerful guiding force behind his actions.

Armed with this alternative evaluation of the significance of the figure on the crucifix, Hasekura comes to show increasing signs of vacillation, his confusion augmented by his continuing inability to "understand why we had become so obsessed with that emaciated man with both hands nailed to a cross" (176). On the one hand, he starts to be troubled by the inevitable alternative "voice," the voice of temptation attempting to convince him of the innocuous nature of an expedient acceptance of the faith, "To help your mission, and to help your friends, why can't you become a Christian just for appearance's sake?" (170). Equally powerful, however, is the voice of rational consideration, the reluctance to abandon all that his

life in the marshlands of Japan had embodied, which argues,

"I...I have no desire to worship you," he muttered almost apologetically. "I can't even understand why the foreigners respect you. They say you died bearing the sins of mankind, but I can't see that our lives have become any easier as a result. I know what wretched lives the peasants lead in the marshland. Nothing has changed just because you died (173).

The conflict is disturbing, the desire to convince himself that "this is not me...this is not how I really feel inside" (177) indicative of a man struggling to come to terms with the contents of his unconscious being. Once more, the portrayal is reminiscent of a string of earlier Endō protagonists who, confronted with harsh, inner realities, engage in a desperate, and ultimately forlorn, battle to deny the very existence of such sentiments. And once more, the narrative focus is directed, very specifically, on the inherent paradox of the situation: the fact that the samurai's increasingly undeniable interest in the "alien" creed is born, not of a growing fascination with its physical embodiments, but of an enduring, and unmistakable lack of interest in, even aversion to its substance. For all the above-mentioned vacillation, therefore, Hasekura continues studiously to distance himself from all Velasco's attempts at persuasion, his antipathy towards the crucifixes that appear to confront him at every step if anything intensified in direct proportion to the lure to which he is increasingly subjected from his unconscious.

The impression of a widening rift between different levels of the samurai's being as he continues his journey is pronounced, the tension augmented by inclusion of parallel sections devoted to Velasco's perspective in which the missionary's growing confidence in the ultimate success of the mission is relentlessly addressed.

The indirect effect induced by these passages, suggesting as they do a distinct evolution in the samurai's approach to Christianity without recourse to specific depictions of the changing workings of his mind, is powerful, with a result that Hasekura's eventual decision to accept baptism in Spain retains the aura of improbability that distinguishes it from a rational, conscious resolve. Viewed as a response to Velasco's persistent entreaties, interpretation of Hasekura's change of heart may indeed appear as an improbable climb-down, the question of his apparently abrupt capitulation to the faith to which he had maintained a seemingly constant aversion never satisfactorily addressed. Missing from such reservations, however, is a recognition of the distance already traveled by the samurai at a deeper level and of his increasing affinity with the being introduced to him by Velasco but radically transformed in his mind by the quiet portrayal offered by the monk in Tecali.

The outward protestations of disinterestedness persist, however, and even following the baptism service (at which his public avowal of belief is juxtaposed with repeated attempts to convince himself that "this is not from [the] heart—it is for the sake of [the] mission" (175)), the outward determination to disavow all connection with "that man" continues. Interspersed between these self-assessments, however, runs the voice of more objective reason, a narrative voice that argues tellingly,

If this truly was a mere formality, there was no need to keep repeating the same words to himself over and over again (176).

The rapprochement is by now well advanced; all that remains is for Hasekura to come to a conscious recognition of a greater significance to this act than mere expediency. In the narrative that follows, this is mirrored in the increasing concern the samurai

directs at his fellow-travelers and, in particular, at his ever-loyal retainer, Yozō. More specifically, Hasekura's acceptance of stark reality is embodied in his growing acknowledgement of the steadfastness of his retainer as his ever-constant companion—and the corresponding narrative identification of Yozō with the "personal" Christ as extolled by the monk at Tecali. The more Hasekura comes to recognize in his servant an inner strength and constancy after which he himself is hankering, the more the image of Yozō is superimposed on Endō's well-worn portrayal of Christ, man's constant companion (*dōhansha*). As the samurai sets out, more in desperation than in expectation, for his meeting with the Pope, this quality is duly recognized in the narrative.

In his present state of despair, forsaken and betrayed from all quarters, the samurai felt that this servant who had attended him faithfully since childhood was the only man he could trust (202).

During the course of the subsequent abject return to Japan, such fusion of Yozō with the image of Christ is augmented by the deliberately restrained depiction of the relationship between servant and master. In so doing, the image of the retainer, not merely as physical but also as spiritual *dōhansha* is enhanced. Before the samurai is in a position to acknowledge his taint, however, he is still in need of more explicit reassurance. Once more, it is the monk at Tecali who provides the required exegesis—in attempting to account for the paradoxical need for Christ to be portrayed as a figure of misery,

Because He was ugly and emaciated, He knew all there was to know about the sorrows of this world. He could not close His eyes to the grief and agony of mankind. That is what made Him emaciated and ugly....Do you think He is to be found within those garish cathedrals? He does not dwell there. He lives...not within such buildings. I think He lives in the

wretched homes of these Indians....He sought out only the ugly, the wretched, the miserable and the sorrowful. But even the bishops and priests here are complacent and swollen with pride (220-1).

Hasekura's explicit response to this explanation is to maintain a due skepticism. By now, however, the earlier attitude of outright dismissal has clearly mellowed, his subconscious concern betrayed by the fact that "for the first time, the samurai asked the question in earnest" (220). As a result of such narrative subversion, the samurai's repeated protestations that he "can get by without thinking about Him" (p.220) are reduced in plausibility. Nevertheless, true to the tradition of emboldening the weakling, it is only following his return to Japan—and rejection by the very authorities who had sent him—that Hasekura is able to fully identify with this being, powerless yet compassionate.

Already, as Hasekura steps ashore after some four years at sea, there is ample evidence that all is not well politically. The reception accorded the returning mission is decidedly muted, attempts to debrief the envoys in the hope thereby of gaining political advantage over neighboring domains non-existent. For several months, however, the samurai remains oblivious, not only to the implications of this absence of curiosity, but also to the change effected on his inner being. Thereafter, in typical paradoxical manner, it is at the very moment when he starts to comply with his lord's command that he destroy the various Christian artifacts he has accumulated along the way that the truth finally dawns and he comes explicitly to acknowledge a degree of affinity with the haggard figure of Christ he had seen so often on his journey,

Again the samurai closed his eyes and pictured the man who had peered down at him each night from the walls of his rooms in Nueva Espana and Espana. For

some reason he did not feel the same contempt for him he had felt before. In fact it seemed as though that wretched man was much like himself as he sat abstractedly beside the hearth (242).

The carefully crafted distance the narrative had always placed between the samurai and "that man" is now finally eroded, the admission of a relationship far deeper than anything he had previously envisaged accompanied by a parallel recognition of all that "that man" had taught him,

[The monk in Tecali] had wanted an image of "that man" which was all his own. He had wanted not the Christ whom the affluent priests preached in the cathedrals of Nueva Espana, but a man who would be at his side, and beside the Indians, each of them forsaken by others. "He is always beside us. He listens to our agony and our grief. He weeps with us...." The samurai could almost see the face of the man who had scribbled these clumsy letters (243).

The image is now vivid, but in the ensuing narrative this assumes the form, not of a portrayal of Hasekura fired by a burning desire to emulate Velasco, but rather at his most content when in the presence of his ever-faithful retainer. At the same time comes explicit acknowledgement of the fusion that has occurred in his own mind between Yozō and the man whose presence in his life he can no longer deny,

The samurai was suddenly struck by the impression that his loyal servant's profile resembled that man's. That man, like Yozō, had hung his head as though enduring all things. "He is always beside us. He listens to our agony and our grief...." Yozo had never abandoned his master—not now or ever in the past (245).

The transposition of Christ from figure of awe and splendor into a being who can

respond directly to the yearning “in the hearts of men for someone who will be with you throughout your life, someone who will never betray you, never leave you—even if that someone is just a sick mangy dog” (245) by means of a corresponding reappraisal of the narrative contribution of Yozō is now complete. The latter is now attributed with a strength that enables him to reassure his master even as the latter is led away for execution (“From now on, ...He will attend you” (262)), his membership of the category of “hidden saints” which Gessel sees as integral to Endō’s art now firmly secured. The following portrayal could have been written with Yozō specifically in mind,

Weaving their uncertain way among these calloused, uncaring figures are the “hidden” saints—those who are failures in the eyes of society but unqualified successes in the areas that really count for Endō: in the expressions of tenderness and concern for the pain of others (Gessel 1989, 267).

The question of Hasekura’s reaction to the cruel fate that awaits him remains unclear, however, portrayal of the scene in which Nishi and he embrace death deliberately avoided. The only indication that the samurai is now able to share the conviction expressed by his loyal servant comes in the portrayal of the former as he “stopped, looked back and nodded his head emphatically” (262). The scene is depicted with typical Endō restraint, the consequence of such lack of explicit detail being to shift the narrative focus away from the question of how he ultimately responds on to the boundless potential with which he is now endowed. Just as, in *Silence*, the narrative avoids reference to the ultimate fate of the Japanese peasants in the pit whose release is potentially secured with Rodrigues’s act of apostasy, so here the issue of primary literary concern is not Hasekura’s actual response in the face of death, but rather the strength of

character which he now visibly evidences and which keeps alive the possibility of death as a martyr. Having driven his protagonist *in extremis*, the sole concern of Endō’s narrator at this juncture rests solely with the potential for self-determination with which the samurai is now invested, his actual reaction at the moment of death consequently scrupulously avoided.

For all the narrative restraint, however, the portrayal of Hasekura finally united in death with Velasco provides invaluable support to the image of two men entirely acceptant of their inevitable destiny, not as a result of any dramatic change of heart, but simply through recognition of their own human weakness and their equally human need for a companion figure. The true nature of the journey upon which both are engaged—a psychological journey in which both are forced to confront their own Shadow being in the form of the voice of their unconscious—is thereby underscored, the initial perception of unfathomable distance between the two now entirely eroded. As both have journeyed towards the Self, both have come to confront a new dimension to their being and, in so doing, have been drawn inexorably closer to each other.

As Jung would have predicted, the process of reconciliation has not been devoid of pain—both men have inevitably striven to resist the subliminal voice that appeared to encourage them to act in ways that could never be sanctioned through logical reasoning. In ultimately coming to acknowledge the futility of such resistance, each may simply be bowing to the inevitable. In so doing, however, both men implicitly acknowledge this as an integral part of the process of individuation upon which each is engaged.

CONCLUSION

As noted at the outset of this paper, no discussion of *The Samurai*, is complete with-

out consideration of *Silence*, the novel on which the former appears so heavily indebted. Here, it is traditionally argued, was a further attempt by the “Japanese Christian author” to address the various tensions, the “trichotomy” (Endō and Yashiro 1986, 197), Endō has frequently cited as inherent in his position.

As argued in this discussion of *The Samurai*, however, in thus pigeonholing Endō—and in thereby perpetuating his reputation as the “Japanese Graham Greene”—the danger that all his work will be over-hastily characterized in conformity with this label is one that must be heeded. To be sure, the epithets may be useful as starting points for discussions of the focus of the author’s art. But without any attempt at a critical evaluation of the true import of such depictions, they are liable merely to lend credence to the stereotypical responses elicited by *Silence*. In short, we need to define our terms—and in this paper I have argued that these definitions must incorporate reference to the role exercised by the unconscious in the resolution of perceived oppositions.

Seen thus, the significance of *The Samurai* to an understanding of Endō’s oeuvre is hard to exaggerate. As a result of relentless focus on the process of self-discovery upon which the two primary actors in the drama are engaged, the author not only draws attention to an aspect of the earlier novel *Silence* largely ignored in the late 1960s; he also provides an invaluable link with the subsequent novels, *Scandal* and *Deep River*, works in which the focus on characters engaged in the struggle to come to terms with alternative facets of their being seems, at first glance, far divorced from the concerns embodied in the portrayal of Rodrigues in *Silence*.

The effect is the product of a narrative in which initially contrasting elements, symbolized at the textual level by the opposition between the “Eastern” samurai and the

“Western” Velasco, are gradually fused. Given the early focus on the apparent incompatibility of Hasekura and Velasco as traveling companions, the ground for their eventual reconciliation requires careful preparation. Endō does not stint in this task and, in attributing this ultimate rapprochement to the workings of a channel for effective communication ever-present at the level of the unconscious, the novel conforms to the author’s assessment of the work, cited earlier, as “a reconstruction effected within my inner being.” In so doing, it accords closely with the vision of an author who, a few years after completion of *The Samurai*, was to argue,

Over the past twenty years—especially since the writing of *Silence*—[and] as a result of continuous consideration of the concept of the “unconscious” in my literature, I am now convinced that meaningful communication between East and West is possible. I have gradually come to realize that, despite the mutual distance and the cultural and linguistic differences that clearly exist in the conscious sphere, the two hold much in common at the unconscious level (Endō 1989, 11).

[This article is based on a chapter from Mark Williams’ book, *The Fictional World of Endō Shūsaku* which will be published by Routledge (U.K.) in February 1998.]

NOTES

¹ For a discussion of these debates, see, for example, Takeda 1985 and Kazusa 1987. For brief summaries in English, see Johnston 1969 and Mathy 1967.

² In this regard, see “Awanai yōfuku” and “Chichi no shūkyō: haha no shūkyō.”

³ See, for example, the critical essay, “Katorikku sakka no mondai.”

⁴ See, for example, the essay “Kamigami to kami to,” in which this tension is specifically addressed.

⁵ See, for example, *Watashi no aishita shōsetsu*, in which Endō examines in detail the role exercised by unconscious promptings on the creation of the “living human beings” that populate the pages of his novels, and *Silences and voices: The Writings of Endō Shūsaku* in which the author expounds upon his claim that “in *Silence*, I was not writing of silence per se, but of the voice of silence” (99).

⁶ In private conversation, Endō commented on the paucity of criticism directed at this aspect of the novel and confirmed that his reading on the subject began in earnest in the late 1960s. For a detailed depiction of the author’s vision of the human duality that conforms closely to the Jungian model, see his *Watashi no aishita shōsetsu*.

⁷ An earlier translation of “Kageboshi” did appear in *The Bulletin of the College of Biomedical Technology*, Niigata University 1/1 (1983), but I shall be citing from the 1993 version (in *The Final Martyrs*), both because of its greater accessibility and because I regard it as a more accurate rendition of the original.

⁸ For discussion of this aspect of the novel, *Scandal*, see my “In search of the chaotic unconscious.”

⁹ The term, used by Boxer as the title for his seminal study of the early Christian missions to Japan, is generally taken to refer to events during the period 1549–1650. Both *Silence* and *The Samurai* are set in the 1620–30s, by which time the anti-Christian persecution edicts of the Tokugawa shogunate were being rigorously enforced.

¹⁰ See “Watashi no bungaku to seisho,” pp.15ff. for the author’s examination of the mistakes he discovered in the archives relating to Shikura.

¹¹ In this regard, one is reminded, for example, of the overtly vacillating narrative perspective evidenced in “Kiironi hito” (Yellow man, 1955) and *Watashiga suteta onna* (The girl I left behind, 1965; trans. 1994).

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