

Motif in silence by shusaku endo



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Shusaku Endo, in his novel *Silence*, uses the recurring description of God's silence towards Sebastian Rodriguez in order to portray the feelings of abandonment that the Japanese Priests feel from God, which causes the reader to examine the effect these feelings have on the novel: the ambiance of despair. Throughout the novel, there is an ongoing motif of silence rendered by Endo. More specifically, Rodriguez often feels a sense of silence from God.

After entering Japan and secretly coming a priest for Japanese Christians, during a time in which Christianity was illegal in the country, Rodriguez begins to feel despair in his faith when he is captured.

He feels abandoned by God and even asks Him, "[w]hy have you abandoned us so completely?" (96). Rodriguez questions God, asking for an answer to why He doesn't stop the persecution in Japan despite the prayers to Him about the issue from so many missionaries and Christians. This scene of Rodriguez praying for answers portrays the idea that hope is lost for Japan.

These feelings of hopelessness and confusion bring about the loss of faith for Rodriguez in himself: "Will I turn out a failure?" (96).

He begins to feel that without God's reassurance "he could endure no more" (96). The silence from God towards Rodriguez' prayer is the motif of Endo's through which he illustrates that there must be something wrong with Japan, for God denies help for the struggling country. Additionally, Endo uses the features of the Japanese crowd in *Amour* to affirm that Japan is incapable of grasping Christianity.

When Rodriguez simply gives blessing to the crowd, it becomes alarmed, almost ashamed.

The crowd was not, in any way, welcome to Rodriguez: “ Stones from the hands of children skimmed past [Rodriguez’s] face” (97). The children’s reaction to the priest reflects the attitude of most Japanese during the time when Christianity was a crime. These Japanese, upset or unconcerned with Christianity, unwilling to take in the religion of Christianity, were another cause of the despair felt by Rodriguez.

All in all, End uses elaborate depictions of God’s silence in consideration to Rodriguez’ prayers, along with the attitudes of the Japanese people towards priests and Christianity to uncover that Japan is incompetent to attain a pure and reputable form of Christianity. This concept gives the idea that Japanese are shaping Christianity into their own religion; the reason for God’s refusal to their prayers and the cause of Rodriguez’ despair over End’s underlying message portrayed.