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PROCEEDINGS

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Panel Session 1 (F-108)

Marketing practices in the Asia Pacific

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Title: The spiritual thirdspace and silent faith: Reading the parallax between Buddhism and Christianity in the movie “*Silence*” (2016)

Abstract:

This paper suggests that the movie *Silence* (2016) by Martin Scorsese can be (re)contextualized to mean that the Jesuit priests Ferreira and Rodrigues find a spiritual thirdspace for their faith that was violently suppressed by the dominant Buddhism in Edo-era Japan. To survive amid banal violence, suffering and pain and to encounter the psychological breakdown that is incurred by the Buddhist inquisitor, they seek for an alternative spiritual entity of assimilation and dissimulation that paradoxically juxtaposes with trampling (fumi-e) or the denouncement of faith and identifying with God’s silence that preserves it. When God abandoned man by giving him the full freedom of his existential freewill, only man has to decide what to do in God’s profound silence. It can be suggested that these two priests experience a true Heideggerian “out-of-joint” situation (Zizek, 2010) and reach the true meaning of Christianity i.e. God has forsaken man forever and man has to decide what to do to continue his faith under extremely difficult circumstances. The thirdspace identified here is different from Catholic, Christian beliefs and practices as well as from Buddhist doctrinal rituals. Rodrigues preserves his faith silently, like his mentor Ferreira, and the silent faith becomes the true epistemological element that Buddhism (or any other religion) cannot kill. This paper also identifies that this movie is of higher semiotic significance where the suppressed Christian soul of Rodrigues is symbolically returned to him by his wife in the last scene which establishes a transcendental connection with his suppressed faith and God. What is suppressed becomes the truth of his faith; a state that transcends the limits and boundaries of both Catholicism and Buddhism. When she clandestinely places the cross in his hands in the final episode avoiding the eager eyes of guards, it can be read that despite the two “un-meeting” spiritual contradictions in these two religions, man can help each other to reach their mutual spiritual destinies. When Christianity is seen from Europe as a missionary endeavor and when its experience of Japanese cruelty culminate, a “shift in perspective against its background” (Zizek, 2006) occurs that never returns its gaze. Both Ferreira and Rodrigues do not look back at their European origin and seek guidance after the “roots were cut” by the Inquisitor. This transposition of locations that prevents returning gaze can be termed as parallax that re-establishes the true Christian faith in these two priests.

Key words: Silent Faith, Spiritual Thirdspace, Loss of Origin, Transcendental Truth