

The Serpent and the Self:

Identity and Self Discovery in Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and the Story of *Dōjōji*

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Abstract

Dōjōji and the *Kegon engi Emaki* are two stories that are often studied with a psychoanalytical approach. The transformation and resolution of these tales are often interpreted as men reconciling this inherent fear that they have of women and the power they possess. This misogyny is also seen as a reflection on the role of women within a greater Buddhist context, which offered little opportunities for female enlightenment. This paper sets out to look at these narratives in a different light by exploring the relationship between the portrayals of female transformation in these stories and its applications to Haruki Murakami's novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

At first glance the two narratives might share little in common, there are similarities. Throughout Murakami's novels he has a clearly defined concept of the self as divided into two parts. There is the self that we know to be ourselves and then there is the other self, the self that observes. Although this unknown self may seem unimportant, given our own unawareness, disrupting these two selves is something that has drastic consequences. As we see in Murakami's novels, his characters must go on a journey in order to resolve this defiled self. This portrayal of the self is similarly reflected in these stories of female transformation, where this disruption can be seen as the transformation itself. Not only do both narratives follow a similar arc of disruption, journey, and resolution but there are also shared themes of sexuality as well as a similar relationship between the physical versus metaphysical world.

Although taking a psychoanalytical approach is certainly an interesting way of looking at the story of female transformation in the *Kegon engi Emaki* and *Dōjōji*, it is also possible to see Murakami's sense of self at play throughout these narratives of female transformation. In both cases this unconscious self is brought into the open and there is a resulting transformation in an attempt to achieve resolution.

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Introduction:

Like many authors during the postwar period of Japan, Haruki Murakami struggled to find a new Japanese identity in the newly formed landscape of post-World War Two Japan. They did this by attempting to figure out what it meant to be Japanese, having gone from the extreme nationalist and imperialist identity during the war, to the defeated survivors of a war ravaged country. One key aspect of this search for a meaningful identity was defining what being Japanese meant for those who might not have lived through the war but are still very much affected by it. Whereas others authors such as Kenzaburo Oe deal with this definition in terms of an exclusively Japanese Identity, Murakami is reaching for something deeper. There has been a lot written about how the role of identity in Murakami's work and its role in establishing a Post-World War Two Japanese identity but there is the opportunity for more broad applications within Japan's own literary discourse. An example of in earlier Japanese literature is the story and Noh play, *Dōjōji*.

Introduction to Dōjōji

As we see *Dōjōji*, the image of a distraught woman transforming into a snake out of anger and passion for the young monk that spurns her, as well as the resulting pursuit and his eventual brutal murder is a striking image. This narrative of female transformation is one that speaks volumes about conceptions of female power in a Buddhist context. Its blatant negative portrayal of its protagonist is something that even others in history have attempted to address, as seen with

the *Kegon engi emaki*, which despite shared thematic elements, has a drastically different ending. Whereas *Dōjōji*'s protagonist using the power gained by transformation for evil, the *Kegon engi emaki* demonstrates how this power of transformation can also be used for good.

Writers such as Susan Klein have looked at the story of *Dōjōji* and how it relates to perceptions of women in Buddhism, and how this applies to women as a whole in a psychoanalytical context. Though a psychoanalytical lens, the transformation into a snake is a phallic symbol and the protagonist's transformation is that of a woman turning into a living phallus. Despite the tremendous power gained through transformation the tale's ultimate message in both the story and its greater psychoanalytic narrative is that women are in need of containment and control, because otherwise these powerful women are dangerous. As Susan Klein argues, this narrative of a distraught woman's powerful transformation that is ultimately overcome by the power of Buddhism is a reflection the overarching misogyny present in women's roles within a Buddhist context¹. Since articles and books like Klein's *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, this psychoanalytical approach to *Dōjōji* has become the norm when discussing *Dōjōji*. Despite this *Dōjōji* can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Introduction to Haruki Murakami

Modern Japanese author Haruki Murakami, author of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* or *Negimakidori Kuronikuru* as well as a wide variety of other novels

¹ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in the Noh Play Dōjōji*

and short stories has a very well-developed and unique concept of the self that is reflected throughout his works. His conception of the self as split between conscious and unconscious parts and is something that is echoed again and again throughout his books. Murakami explores this through these narratives of characters coming to terms with this previously unknown self through metaphysical journeys. According to Murakami, the self consists of two parts, the conscious physical self, and the unconscious metaphysical self. The conscious self being the self that we know and live with every day, the part that we identify as “us” and the unconscious self being the part of ourselves that we don’t know about or see but what is doing the observing. Although this other self may seem unimportant, it is a key aspect to our being. As we see in Murakami’s books, this disruption of the metaphysical self has consequences and is a driving force throughout his novels. This idea of the dual self is featured throughout his novels and is illustrated through the experiences of his characters. His books often deal with characters who have somehow found their unconscious self violated, often through sexual means and they spend the novel searching for resolution. Despite these shared themes, this disruption and resulting search is portrayed in a variety of ways. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland at the End of the World*, this is done through two split narratives of two different men, who turn out to be two separate parts of the same person. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* the protagonist Toru Okada’s search for his missing cat and wife find him musing at a bottom of a well in hopes of better reaching himself and by extension his wife who is trapped in this other dream world. As we see in *Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and

in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the disruption of this self is often traumatic.

Despite the associated trauma, resolving this other self is the key to becoming a complete person. At the end of Murakami's novels his characters don't go back to their old lives as if this disruption never happened, but rather, they emerge from these journeys with a greater understanding of themselves.

Psychoanalytical Interpretations of the Self

When looking at interpretations of the portrayal of the self in *Dōjōji*, most authors discuss it as it relates to a psychoanalytical perspective. The serpent makes a very clear phallic symbol and the story can be seen as clear reflection of the fear men have over women, and the desire to reconcile the powerful women in their lives despite their lack of phallus. The traditional Lacanian approach views men as growing up fearful of their powerful mothers, and this fear is something reflected throughout society as a whole. As a result, we see this fear reflected throughout various works, including the early Buddhist *setsuwa*. It is easy to see how this fear of women is reflected in the narrative of *Dōjōji*. Despite the powerful transformation of the story's protagonist, we still see this threat resolved in the traditional Buddhist context. By having the power resolved by Buddhism, we see how this threat is also quelled. Although this is a valid and certainly interesting way of looking at the female transformation in *Dōjōji*, there are other ways of interpreting the self. When looking at the self as seen through the transformation in *Dōjōji* there is a similar narrative of internal disruption and resolution as seen in Murakami's works.

Dōjōji and the Kegon engi Emaki

Although *Dōjōji* has several different retellings, at its core is the tale of a woman who when spurned by a monk, transforms into a snake and kills him. The story first appears as a Buddhist morality tale, or *setsuwa*². These morality tales worked as a sort of Buddhist Aesop's fables, and illustrated the best way to live a Buddhist life; these stories were made to fulfill a variety of purposes and were written for a variety of audiences. The *Konjaku monogatari* version, where the story originally appears, of the story ends with the moral, "you see, therefore, the strength of the evil in the female heart. It is for that reason that the Buddha strictly forbids approaching women. Know this and avoid them."³ Given this moral, it is reasonable to assume it was written by monks and circulated amongst other monks, as a way of warning men, especially younger monks to stay away from women, because of the danger that they present to a good, Buddhist life.

Original Telling of Dōjōji

Dōjōji can be originally found in two *setsuwa* collections, the *Konjaku Monogatari Shu* or "Tales of Times Now Past," attributed to Minamoto Takakuni and published as "How a Monk of the Dōjōji in the Province of Kii Copied the Lotus Sutra and Brought Salvation to Snakes," dated around 1120 and in *Dai Nihonkoku hokekyokenki* (also known as the *Hokkegenki*), believed to be written by a priest Chingen, dated around 1040-43. The original *setsuwa* tells the story of

² Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives*, 44

³ Marian Ury, *Tales of Times Now Past*, 96

two monks, one young and good looking and the other elderly. On their journey they stay at the home of a young widow, who lusts after the young monk and his good looks. She tries to seduce him by sneaking into his room in the middle of the night and teasing and fondling him. The monk, unsure of how to handle the situation says that he cannot sleep with her now because he needs to remain pure for the pilgrimage, but he will come back for her when he returns. Of course this is a lie and on his return he takes a different route in hopes of avoiding the woman. The woman, heartbroken dies in her bedchamber, but as her maidservants are mourning, a 40-foot long snake emerges from her chamber and goes out in pursuit of the young man. When he realizes that he is being pursued races to the Dōjōji temple and is hidden under the bell. When the snake reaches the temple, realizing where the monk is hidden, she wraps herself around the bell and beats her tail against it. She then leaves, and the bell bursts into flames. When the other monks raise the bell, only the charred remains of the young monk are left. After some time, the young monk, now a serpent appears in the dream of a head priest. He explains that he was reborn into this body and is now the husband of the evil serpent woman and begs the priest to copy the Lotus Sutra on his behalf in order to release the pair from their suffering. After this is done, the monk and the woman appear to the priest and thank him, explaining that they have been reborn into separate heavens.⁴

Since its original publication there have been several retellings. In the *Dōjōji engi emaki*, which is what influenced the later Noh play, the widow is

⁴ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 297

rewritten as a young innkeeper's daughter and the transformation now takes place in the river that she needed to cross to reach the temple. The Noh version takes place after the events in *setsuwa* at the temple when they are reinstating the bell with a reading of the Lotus Sutra. Only the head priest remembers the original events, and for reasons unknown forbids women from being on the premises during the ceremony. Then a *shirabyoshi* dancer⁵ comes offering to perform a purification dance for the bell. Claiming that because she isn't an ordinary woman she should be able to enter; she manages to enchant a temple worker, who then lets her enter. She proceeds to perform a dance that puts the monks to sleep and moves to attack the bell by jumping inside of it, causing the bell to crash into the ground. This wakes up the monks. The head priest upon realizing what happened gathers everyone and retells the original story, with some slight variations. The priests then unite in raising the bell by chanting prayers. After they do this successfully, they proceed to exorcise the now emerged serpent, which finally ends with her diving back into the depths of the river.

As mentioned, there are many variations, and with these variations come different endings, such as the Noh play, where the woman is killed at the end of the play and doesn't obtain enlightenment. This is contrasted to the original Buddhist tale, she winds up achieving salvation. As Susan Klein discusses in her article these differences are rooted in the perception of women. As she mentions, the view of women in the *setsuwa* is "profoundly negative. Women are

⁵ *Shirabyoshi* dancers were entertainers and occasional religious specialists who were also known for cross-dressing.

psychologically and biologically determined to a weakness of will that keeps them from being able to control their passions; women by their very existence are an inevitable obstacle to men's spiritual progress."⁶ Compared to the generally progressive views of women's enlightenment in the Kamakura and Muromachi period when this *setsuwa* was written, its misogynistic tone is somewhat surprising. As Klein points out, one explanation of this, especially when looking at the *Konjaku Monogatari*, is that this was in fact meant to serve as a cautionary tale for young monks, probably as a result of issues with the monks interacting with women.

Other Stories of Female Transformation

Dōjōji is not the only story involving female transformation, in Monika Dix's article *Saint or Serpent? Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Buddhist Narratives*, Dix compares the narrative in *Dōjōji* to that of another story, the *Kegon engi Emaki*. In the *Kegon engi Emaki* a woman named Zenmyo turns into dragon in order to help a monk with this journey back to Silla. The story shares a distinctly similar narrative structure to that of *Dōjōji*. Zenmyo falls in love with the monk Gisho when he stops at her house to beg for alms. She originally tries to seduce him and like *Dōjōji* he rejects her. Unlike *Dōjōji* where she then turns into a serpent out of jealousy and rage the monk's rejection of Zenmyo prompts a religious awakening. She then vows to follow her teacher and provide for his needs. Later, when Gisho returns, he avoids passing her house perhaps

⁶ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 299

out of doubt of her sincerity. When Zenmyo realize this she runs to the harbor in hopes of catching him. Realizing that she was too late, she calls on the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, she vows to protect his ship with her body and transforms into a dragon that sees the ship safety back to Silla.⁷ Despite the similar narrative structure and themes of female desire, the results are distinctly different, the *Kegon engi* providing a means of feminine desire being used for good. There is a clear indication that the author of the *Kegon engi Emaki* was well aware of the original *Dōjōji setsuwa* when writing the story as seen by the ending.

We have heard of another instance where [a woman] caught in the raging flames of angry jealous, along with the road of attachment between men and women, became a snake and chased after a man. The [two] cases are not the same. That [Dōjōji woman] was caught in the power of passionate desire and actually became a snake Her sin of attachment was deep. In this case, [Zenmyo] received the blessing of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas because of her earnest vow, and instead became a dragon. This was because of her belief in the Buddhist teachings and respect for the virtue of a profound teacher⁸

Both Klein and Dix point out that given the closeness of these two narratives and the obvious reference to the original *Dōjōji* tale at the end of the story, there is a clear attempt on behalf of the author to create a more positive image of women⁹.

As Monika Dix writes,

Considering this direct reference to the *Dōjōji engi emaki*, it seems clear that the compiler of the *Kegon engi emaki* was trying on purpose to counter the negative image of women and the female body in the *Dōjōji* story by showing how women can play an important positive role supporting not only the male Buddhist clergy, but also becoming guardians of the Buddhist Law, and even saints. The moral of the story in the *Kegon engi*

⁷ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 299

⁸ Tanka, *Kegon engi*, p 52

⁹ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 302

emaki demonstrates that the power of feminine desire, even in the demonic form of the dragon, can be transformed by the Buddhist teachings into a power for good¹⁰

Despite the apparent positive ending of the *Kegon engi Emaki*, Dix argues that both the serpent-woman in *Dōjōji* as well as Zenmyō's transformation into a dragon, are portrayed in a negative light, both characters possessing a lack of control over their passions, unlike their male counterparts.¹¹ The idea of women lacking control is not exclusive to *Dōjōji* or *setsuwa* as a whole, and the idea of women as capable of transformation is a common theme in Japanese Buddhist texts.

When discussing female transformation *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi Emaki* are often looked at as a pair because they share such thematic similarities despite their different endings. This is partly because there are clear indications that the *Kegon engi* was intended to serve as a response to the original *Dōjōji* story, as illustrated by the ending as well as thematic similarities. In *Dōjōji* we see this woman transforming out of sexual frustration and anger at rejection and using that power to enact revenge, and in the *Kegon engi* we see a woman demonstrating the same power but instead of using it to destroy, it is used to assist a monk. Zenmyō does this calls out to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas asking for assistance to help her take the snake self inside her and use it for good. Because of her pure motives the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas answer her by allowing her to turn into a dragon. This subversion of the serpent self allows her to use the

¹⁰ Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent, Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives*, 51

¹¹ Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives*, 48

defilement believed to be inherent in women and signified by the snake for good, in this case to help a monk.

Women's Role in Buddhism

Throughout traditional Buddhist thought, women have held a very complex role. In Buddhism it was believed that only men could achieve enlightenment because women were believed to have various physical limitations inherent to their gender. As a result, women were not only believed to be less capable but were also seen as hindrance to their male counterparts. Narratives like *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi emaki* could easily be seen as Buddhism's triumph over lustful women, but the relationships at play are often not that simple. As Monika Dix argues, the woman and the monk are linked. Not only is he reincarnated as a snake as well, but they are both saved by the priest's intervention.¹² Although this may appear to serve as a happy ending, authors such as Susan Klein and Monika Dix argue that by having the story end with enlightenment serves a way to contain these powerful women within a Buddhist context.

The Role of Female Enlightenment in Dōjōji

Although the original purpose of *Dōjōji* may have served as a warning to monks, these tales shed an interesting light on the subject of female enlightenment. Women were traditionally believed unable to achieve Buddhist enlightenment because of the five obstructions. The five obstructions being the

¹² Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives*, 54-55

five states women were unable to achieve due to their physical limitations. As Monika Dix describes “these obstructions were corporeal, not spiritual; it was physiology that rendered women unfit, unable to conform to the thirty-two primary and eighty secondary marks of the Buddha.”¹³ Because of this, women did not have a role within Japanese Buddhism, being unable to achieve enlightenment. As a result, there have been many responses to this in an attempt to create a space for women within this patriarchal Buddhist context. One way of working around these physical limitations was the belief that women could transform into a male body, or *henjo nanshi*, before achieving enlightenment. By transforming into a man women are able to achieve enlightenment, being no longer female-bodied. This is a belief that is reflected in several *setsuwa* and featured in part of the Lotus Sutra with the story of the Dragon King’s Daughter.

Other ways involved reimagining the portrayal of female characters in these *setsuwa*. As a result, *Dōjōji* and similar tales became a way of providing a different perspective on female enlightenment and their role in Buddhism as a whole. For example, as we see in the original version of *Dōjōji* the woman turned snake does actually achieve enlightenment. Both *Dōjōji* and in the *Kegon engi Emaki* provide what could be seen as female Buddhist heroines. Despite these positive images, Dix and Klein point out this is still within a very patriarchal Buddhist context.

¹³ Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent Engendering the Female Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives*, 49

The Psychoanalysis of Female Transformation

Many authors have dealt with the significance of the snake, and its use in such a negative portrayal of women. As mentioned previously, there is a clear tension between these narratives of powerful women and their inherent misogyny. As Rebecca Copeland writes in her chapter *Mythical Bad Girls* in the book *Bad Girls of Japan*, “by tying the snake irrevocably to the female, the Dōjōji tale and later myth constructions denied this image its earlier ambiguity and strength and created it as an object to be controlled and destroyed.”¹⁴ As Copeland Klein and Dix write, there is a clear agreement among psychoanalysts that aligning the female body with the snake is meant to create a phallic figure. Although the phallus is traditionally seen as the source of power, these women still are powerless. As Copeland writes, the women in these narratives are not actually giving her the power of the phallus but “on the contrary woman becomes the object possessed, the object that marks its possessor (invariably male) as powerful.”¹⁵ Klein goes on to corroborate this evidence by saying

The woman’s body, the embodiment of lust, is transformed into a living phallus... we can see the masculine desire being projected onto the female body, a projection that enabled men to deny those negative aspects of their own sexual nature which had to be eliminated for enlightenment to occur: the woman as female snake (that is simultaneously phallic and female) embodies the animal nature of both masculine and feminine sexuality. The “pure” monk is a passive victim of feminine passion: the danger of sexuality

¹⁴ Rebecca Copeland, “Mythical Bad Girls,” *Bad Girls of Japan*, 26

¹⁵ Rebecca Copeland, “Mythical Bad Girls,” *Bad Girls of Japan*, 27

associated exclusively with feminine is reinforced by the moral... which implies that it is the woman's blind passion alone that causes the tragedy¹⁶

Because of the inherent misogyny and phallic symbolism narratives such as *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi Emaki* are frequently looking at through a psychoanalytical lens. When Sigmund Freud first developed psychoanalysis it had a very male dominated approach, especially when looking at his famous Oedipus complex. Since then, psychoanalysts such as Jacques Lacan and Luce Irigaray have looked to reevaluate how psychoanalysis is used. When authors such as Susan Klein or Monika Dix look at narratives of female transformation as seen in *Dōjōji* or the *Kegon emaki*, they draw off of a preexisting psychoanalytical framework developed by Lacanian and Freudian analysts. This framework is then used to look at the transformations throughout these stories (especially the application of an all-powerful demonic woman as seen in *Dōjōji*) as a retelling of the fear of an all-powerful mother. The reason for this fear comes from the challenge of establishing one's individual and autonomous identity separate from this frightening mother figure that all young boys struggle with. Because of this these boys grow into men unconsciously envisioning a mother that satisfies all needs in a "mindless union" but by the very nature of this union simultaneously threatens and overwhelms the precarious subject and gender identity of a young boy. This simultaneous desire and fear affects how men view all women. This is a modified view of Freud's idea of an all-powerful mother. But according to Freud, the tension comes from the young boy's realization that his mother does not in fact possess a

¹⁶ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 114-115

phallus despite the apparent power she possesses. Because of the symbolic significance of the phallus, the boy assumes that the all-powerful mother is believed to be phallic. When he realizes this is no longer the case, he becomes aware of the mother's "castration," or the idea that women are inherently powerless in patriarchal society. This creates an obsession that is need of reconciliation. Because women are believed to be inherently weaker than their male counterparts in this patriarchal context, all women become this defiled and uncanny maternal figure and as a result, must be excluded, thus becoming this "other." Julia Kristeva then goes on to argue that many religious practices concerning women involve the purification of this abject other in an attempt to reconcile these Oedipal fears of being overcome by this powerful mother figure.¹⁷ As Klein goes on to point out, the exorcism in *Dōjōji* mimics this idea of how this other, feminine is cast as this radical evil in need of suppression. Klein argues that "the angry women ghosts and demons who are exorcised in plays like *Dōjōji*, *Aoi no Ue*, and *Momijigari* might thus be said to represent a return of the repressed (with vengeance in her heart.) We can see then, how a pragmatic hostility toward women (who as sexual temptation were considered obstacles to spiritual progress might be supplemented by unconscious fears of women as uncontrollably powerful, to create the phallic serpent-woman of the *Dōjōji setsuwa*."¹⁸ The conflict surrounding the all-powerful mother is believed to be at the core of

¹⁷ Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. By Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pg 64

¹⁸ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 304

narratives of the demonic feminine and the reason that these narratives exist.¹⁹ Because this idea of the demonic feminine maps so well onto this internalized fear of the mother, it is a common framework when discussing *Dōjōji*. Not only does the snake provide an excellent phallic symbol, but the very narrative can also be read as a reflection of this psychoanalytical conflict. Monika Dix also makes a lot of points similar to Susan Klein in her article. Dix mentions the same idea of these uncanny women and the associated tension. As Dix points out, psychoanalysts like Melanie Klein and Nancy Chodorow focus on the root of the demonic feminine as seen in a young boy's relationship with an all-powerful mother figure. The young boy simultaneously desires reunion with his mother while also fearing her. This differs from Freudian and Lacanian analysis which sees the root of this trope as within discovery of his mother's castration, which leaves her powerless in a traditional patriarchal society. Julia Kristeva's argument bears similarities to these interpretations of the demonic feminine.

The monk's successful victories over the serpent woman in the *Dōjōji* and over Zenmyo in the *Kegon engi Emaki* appear to bear out Kristeva's argument... The jealous angry, and defiled heroines in both Buddhist *setsuwa* who undergo a transformation from 'demonic' to 'enlightened' being who became protectors of the Buddhist law, might thus be said to represent a return of the repressed with the strength of evil within the female heart. This analysis shows how a pragmatic hostility toward women, who according to medieval Japanese Buddhist ideology were seen as vessels of sexual temptation and therefore obstacles to enlightenment, might be supplemented by unconscious fears of women as uncontrollably powerful, to create the serpent woman in *Dōjōji*²⁰

¹⁹ Susan Klein, *Desire and Enlightenment in Dōjōji*, 303

²⁰ Monika Dix, *Saint or Serpent*, 53

As we see, this fear is something easily mapped onto the narrative of *Dōjōji*, through the story we see the monks facing these women, who turn into phallic symbols. This creates a dissonance between these men's perceptions of women and the power they now hold. In order to resolve this fear, they have the serpent woman contained through the power of Buddha, thus further emphasizing the patriarchy within Buddhism.

What authors Susan Klein and Monika Dix overlook when applying this framework is the ability to view these narratives of email transformation in a different light. While it is very common, and a very worthwhile viewpoint to see the female protagonist in *Dōjōji* as well as more general depiction of female transformation as yet another application of this recurring struggle that men and the patriarchy have with women, there are other meaningful ways of looking at these stories. In both *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi Emaki* these women find a source of power within their selves that they were not previously aware of. In both cases it is fueled by strong emotions of heartbreak and anger. Although this self is very powerful there is a strong need for resolution because of internal conflict brought out by this transformation. These protagonists then search for reconciliation, in *Dōjōji*'s case by originally killing the man that spurned her and by fulfilling what her original goal of assisting the monk in the *Kegon engi Emaki*. In both stories we have two selves at play, the woman that they knew to be themselves, and this self that was released when they were wronged and left unable to achieve their goal. In both stories conflict is signified by female protagonist literally transforming into this other self, which in this case is illustrated by the snake or dragon. In the original

story of *Dōjōji* as well as the *Kegon engi* these stories end with their female protagonist achieving success that they wouldn't have been able to achieve had they not undergone the transformation in the first place. Narratives such as *Dōjōji* or the *Kegon engi Emaki* lend themselves well to looking at misogyny in a Buddhist and psychoanalytical context, and it is really easy to focus on the negative, but what is sometimes neglected is the fact that the women in these stories do ultimately achieve enlightenment, something that wouldn't have been achieved had these transformations never happened. By having the protagonist of *Dōjōji* transform, and having her actions lead to enlightenment the story can be seen in a more positive light, and provide a rare opportunity to discuss female enlightenment in Buddhism.

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle

The Search for Identity in Japanese Postwar Literature

Despite his very western style, his writing does have distinctly Japanese roots. He, like many authors of the postwar generation such as Kobo Abe and Kenzaburo Oe wrote in response to the new Japanese landscape. One key aspect of this response is the question of what does it mean to be Japanese post-World War Two. This discourse of what it meant to be Japanese is a big question and one that is still being dealt with, from Kawabata Yasunari's 1968 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, *Utsukushii Nihon no Watashi* or "Japan the Beautiful and Myself", to Takashi Murakami's superflat movement. Kawabata's speech epitomized what people thought about when they thought about Japan.

Not only did he appear in a traditional Kimono and his speech reflected the traditional Japanese collective identity, one tied to falling cheery blossoms and *mono no aware*. He spoke about Zen Buddhism and enlightenment and was in many ways presented his perfect image of a scenic Japan. Since then authors having been reacting to this image in a variety of ways, the most direct is Oe Kenzaburo's Nobel Prize speech, *Aimai Nihion no Watashi* or "Japan the Ambiguous and Myself", which served as a response to Kawabata's speech. While Kawabata found comfort in all things traditionally Japanese, Kenzaburo spoke about The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and other western literature, and how it provided an escape for him during World War Two. How people dealt with the war is something reflected in a variety of Japanese author's works. Haruki Murakami deals with similar issues in his writing, which addresses distinctly Japanese themes, such as Japan's involvement in World War Two. Murakami, like many Japanese authors born in the postwar generation is trying to address the idea of identity, especially as it applies to this postwar, modern Japan. As Stretcher writes,

It is important to understand this as a generation-specific problem. Murakami belongs to the leading edge of the first generation to be born in the postwar period, without memories of hardship in the Second World War or participation on the reconstruction of Japan following it. Unlike the previous generation, which understood hunger and deprivation and could define itself in terms of affluence via its own participation in the efforts of the rapid-growth era, Murakami's generation... did not understand affluence as a goal in itself, and thus could not identify itself in those terms²¹

Unlike other authors who only address identity through the Japanese experience,

²¹ Matthew Stretcher, *Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki*, 264-265

Murakami is trying to get at something deeper than just what it means to be Japanese. He is reaching for a more universal concept of the self in many of his works in an attempt to define the human self.

Murakami's Depiction of the Self

Murakami's conception of the self involves spilling the self into two separate parts that together make up what we see as the self. As Jay Rubin writes in his article *The Other World of Haruki Murakami*, Murakami enjoys contrasting "existence" and nonexistence" or "being" and "nonbeing" and the parallel worlds that develop.²² Through these dual forms of existence, Murakami allows his characters to go on these journeys of self-discovery that are a definitive aspect of his books. He does this by creating two external worlds that mirror the dual selves. The self is spilt into the metaphysical self and the physical self. The physical self is the self we see and know every day; it is the part of us that holds our physical appearances, our likes and dislikes and the things that make up our perception of what is us. The metaphysical self is the part of yourself that is doing the experiencing and that holds all the data that makes up you. As Matthew Strecher puts it,

Identity for Murakami is always a combination of two primary elements: the conscious self- the person we know as ourselves in daily life; and the unconscious "other," a mysterious alter ego who dwells in the depths of our unconscious. These two sides to our identity ideally share the task of identity formation, but perform different roles. The conscious self, as might be expected, encounters new situations and acts upon them, providing experiences to be processed by the unconscious "other;" the inner self or "other" then processes these experiences into memories that are stored in

²² Jay Rubin *The Other World of Haruki Murakami*, 494

the unconscious. In simple terms, the conscious self tells the unconscious other what it sees, and the unconscious “other” tells the conscious “self” what that means in light of previous experience.”²³

These dual selves are then mapped onto two separate worlds, the physical and metaphysical world. This two world approach is his way better illustrating this concept of the two selves. Like the two selves, these two worlds aren’t completely separated and there is interaction between them. As we will see these two selves and associated worlds play a very important role throughout his novels, and when disrupted it can have drastic consequences.

As mentioned, core to his idea is the idea of the known physical self and the unknown metaphysical self. This metaphysical self is wrapped up in the distant “other world.” The most apparent example of this self is in his book *Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, which takes this interplay of two worlds to a new level, by actually having dual narratives portraying mirrored protagonists. Like many of his stories there are two worlds at play, in this case, a slightly altered version of our own world in the 1980s and then a fantastical walled town. As mentioned, these two worlds reflect this two sided self but *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* takes these dual themes to a new level, by actually creating two protagonists who each represent one half of the whole self. These two worlds are made to reflect the two protagonists. This story, like his other works reflect on our inability to know even our own being and the search for that understanding in light of that realization. As Jay Rubin writes in *The Other World of Haruki Murakami*, “Murakami’s “other world” is far away, deep within the

²³ Matthew Stretcher, *Haruki Murakami’s The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle A Reader’s Guide*, 42

wells of the mind, bound up with nostalgia and memory, a place of linkage, where all the gaps between self and other, self and self are gone.”²⁴ Despite Murakami’s two world approach, these worlds aren’t separated. As seen with the well in *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, there is a connection between the two worlds and through this connection is where resolution lies.

As mentioned, despite these separate selves, they aren’t entirely separate entities, and they aren’t completely inaccessible from the other and we see how these two worlds interact through his novels. This flow between the conscious and unconscious selves is something that is echoed in Murakami’s own writing style. As Jay Rubin writes, “Unlike traditional novelists, Murakami stubbornly insists that the images in his work are not symbols and that he himself does not understand their “meanings.” They come out of his unconscious, he says almost like automatic writing, and any reader’s interpretation is as valid as his own.”²⁵ This approach to his own writing is something that is mimicked throughout his works and in fact, this interaction is instrumental to the resolution of his stories. It is only when characters find this other self; through the interaction of these two worlds can these characters truly be at peace.

One of his major works is *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Published in 1994 and translated in English by Jay Rubin in 1997, the story revolves around one man, Toru Okada and the search for his missing cat Noboru Wataya (named after the novel’s antagonist, and Kumiko’s successful brother), and his wife, Kumiko.

²⁴ Jay Rubin, *The Other World of Haruki Murakami* 497

²⁵ Jay Rubin, *The Other World of Haruki Murakami*, 493

The book starts with Toru searching for his lost cat with the assistance of two psychics, Malta and Creta Kano. Over the course of his search he meets his neighbor, May Kasahara, a morbid high school girl who is never in school, Lieutenant Mamiya, a war veteran Toru meets through Mr. Honda, another old family friend and psychic, and Nutmeg and Cinnamon Asakasa a mother and son who Toru winds up working with. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* follows the same concept of two worlds. There is the physical world that Toru lives in and then the metaphysical world where that unknowable self lies. In this case it is represented by a nice hotel. In this case the two worlds are very fluid, with Toru getting calls from a mysterious woman in that hotel world. The major conduit between the two worlds is a well, where Toru spends most of the book meditating in. As Jay Rubin writes in his novel *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*,

If the well is the passageway to the unconscious, the water at the bottom represents the contents of the psyche. When Toru goes down into the dry well, he takes on the role of its water, becoming almost pure psyche. In the darkness, he all but loses track of physical existence and becomes pure memory and imagination, floating in and out of consciousness, unsure of where he ends and the darkness begins. Only the wall against his back seems to provide a barrier between the physical world and the deeper darkness he seeks. But when Toru passes through the wall and he discovers his fears concentrated in a place known only as Room 208.²⁶

As we see in this quote, Toru is trying to find himself in what he perceives to be darkness, but he soon learns that it isn't darkness on the other side, but another realm. It is through accessing this other world that Toru can resolve the main tension of the book, which is that of Kumiko's disappearance, which is also tied with the loss of both Kumiko and Toru's selves.

²⁶ Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*, 208

At its core, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is the story of Toru Okada and his quest to resolve his relationship with his wife, who goes missing. The book opens with a phone call from a mysterious woman who wishes to talk to Toru in order to reach an understanding. At his wife's urging, he then meets Malta and Creta Kano, psychics and sisters to assist with the search for the cat. As mentioned, the cat shares his name with Toru's brother in law, Noboru Wataya. Noboru Wataya is a successful politician who Toru inexplicably hates, as the book goes on it comes out that he has a history of sexual assault, having violated both Creta Kano and Kumiko, among his other crimes. May Kasahara is his morbid high-school aged neighbor who doesn't attend school and works surveying bald men on the street. She ultimately winds up trapping him in the bottom of a well, a key part of his journey. He also meets Lieutenant Mamiya, a World War Two veteran whose experience during the Japanese occupation of Manchukuo during World War Two witnessing a man being flayed and then spending several days trapped in a dried up well is something that Toru reflects on throughout the book. After receiving a blue mark on his cheek during his experiences in the well, he meets the enigmatic Nutmeg Asakusa and her silent son Cinnamon, who he starts working for using the mark as a sort of therapy. Each of these characters contributes to his search for his wife, who as we discover is captive by this other world of self, which is finally overcome when Toru Okada ventures into this other world. To what extent this world interacts with the real world is unclear, though in the real world Kumiko kills Noboru Wataya while he is in the hospital.

Toru, Kumiko, and Creta all have lost themselves at the hands of the books

antagonist, Noboru Wataya. Kumiko and Creta have both have that self physically removed, whereas Toru's seems to be closely related to the strange connection that he and Noboru Wataya share. Creta tells Toru of her experience of the "defilement" that she suffered at Noboru Wataya's hands. Who, by physically reaching into her body, Noboru manages to spilt her in two, and draws out the physical manifestation of that core.²⁷

Out from between the two cleanly split halves of my physical self came crawling a thing that I had never seen or touched before. How large it was I could not tell, but it was as wet and slippery as a newborn baby. I had absolutely no idea what it was. It had always been inside me, and yet it was something of which I had no knowledge²⁸.

Not only do we see what exactly occurs when this aspect of the self is removed, we also see Murakami's "black box" in action. As Creta says, it is something that had always been a part of her but she had no awareness of its existence. Kumiko reports a similar experience with Noboru, and this is why, in order for Toru to rescue his wife he needs to find herself in this other world.

Murakami's Sense of Self

As mentioned, like many Japanese authors, Haruki Murakami is dealing with issues of identity. Murakami does this by working with interplay between two selves which he represents through dual worlds. By doing this Murakami can portray both the physical and the metaphysical, and the interaction between the two. This allows for us to accompany the protagonist on their journey of

²⁷ Matthew Strecher, *Haruki Murakami's Wind-Up Bird Chronicle A Reader's Guide*, 43

²⁸ Murakami Haruki, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, 303

self-discovery while also allowing us to share the experience, it brings ones thoughts and emotions into the open by storing them in a literal place. This then allows us to interact and discover these feelings alongside the protagonist. As Matthew Strecher writes in his reader's guide, *Haruki Murakami's Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is Murakami's hero's desire to find their core identity after experiencing some disruption in self. This search comes with certain associated risks, and the core is seen to reside safely deep inside one's own mind. Murakami has been known to describe this core as a "black box" which like a flight data recorder is designed with the sole purpose of protecting that information at all costs. It can only be corrupted by opening it.²⁹ Although this might be a strange way of perceiving the self, it does a good job of illustrating Murakami's perception of the self. As Strecher writes, the "black box" "may seem like an odd metaphor for human identity, but it is an appropriate..."³⁰ This black box makes up part of everyone's self, and serves as a representation of the two self that he talks about. This flight recorder may seem insignificant, but as we see throughout the narrative of his books, it is an important part of ourselves that we might not be aware of. Despite this, as we see with Creta and Kumiko, disruption of this self has monumental consequences.

Although many of Murakami's stories may read as journey of the minds, with the actual physical world being somewhat unimportant, the physical world does have a significant role. Not only do his characters, and by extension

²⁹ Matthew Strecher, *Haruki Murakami's The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle A Reader's Guide*, 43

³⁰ Matthew Strecher, *Haruki Murakami's The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle A Reader's Guide*, 43

Murakami, pay very specific attention to brands, from clothing to perfume to music and Scotch, but we also see the metaphysical playing a role in the physical world. In Murakami's world both are needed, and one can't exist without the other in the same way the metaphysical self could not exist without the presence of the physical self and vice versa. It is also the reason for such trauma when the metaphysical self is disrupted. The codependence of these two worlds and selves is illustrated in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* through the books resolution, the book doesn't end with his characters after having discovered themselves leaving the physical world. Nor can they simply ignore the metaphysical world, because when it is disrupted, it has serious effects not only on one's self but on their actual world as well.

Despite the associated trauma with disrupting this black box, this disruption is often seen as ultimately beneficial. After all, the book doesn't end with his characters reverting to life the way it was, but to face a new life having resolved the problems that previously plagued them. In this case, Toru gains the ability to understand Kumiko's' struggles and resolve their previously broken relationship.

Similarities

There are many similarities throughout the two stories, from the role of sexuality in the transformation themselves to a similar treatment of the interaction between these dual selves. Both stories are firmly rooted in physical realm despite the fact that the thrust of these stories involve quests of enlightenment. As we see in *Dōjōji*, the woman only achieves enlightenment after undergoing a very

physical transformation and truly disrupting the world as we know it. In Murakami this effect on the physical world is seen as a result of the traumatic violation of the “black box,” that the transformation disrupts people’s ability to interact with the physical world, and because of this, elements of this other world start to seep in. This is a similar approach to the transformation in *Dōjōji*, which is so key the protagonist’s journey. As we see in the original story, this physical transformation is what ultimately allows her to reach enlightenment, which is at its core, transcending the physical world.

Another key part of both transformations is the sexual element. As we see in both *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*, sexual desire plays a huge role in the narrative. The protagonist of *Dōjōji* transforms after being rejected by the monk she fell in love with. Similarly, Zenmyo transformed after the monk she originally tried to seduce didn’t believe that she truly changed. In both cases devastation and anger play an important role in these characters’ actions. In fact, the significance of sexuality in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi* is part of why the psychoanalytical approach is so commonly taken.

The theme of sexuality is not exclusive to these stories, and it has a similar significance in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Noboru Wataya’s ability to remove part of the self comes from performing an inherently sexual act, as seen by what he did to Creta and Kumiko. Like the *Kegon engi*, this sexual power can be used for good, as seen by the work that Toru does for Nutmeg and Cinnamon Asakusa. Through the mark on his cheek, he is able to provide spiritual comfort of sorts. This is also illustrated through his relations with Creta, which ultimately help

her address the defilement she suffered at Noboru Wataya's hands. Much like the negative and positive views of women's sexuality illustrated in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*, we see a similar contrast at play in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* as seen by the contrast between Noboru Wataya and Toru, which shares a similar contrast of good and bad sexual power in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*. This is also illustrated through the power that the protagonist of *Dōjōji* gains when she transforms. The protagonist, like Noboru Wataya is using the sexual power they possess to destroy people, in an attempt to establish dominance. This is contrasted not only with Zenmyo in the *Kegon engi* but through Toru Okada's actions as well. As Mathew Strecher writes in his reader's guide, there is a common theme of good, passive sexuality as demonstrated by Toru Okada, verses active sexuality, as demonstrated in the book's true antagonist, Noboru Wataya. Like in many of this other works, throughout *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* we see sexuality as a perpetual theme. As Strecher writes, "the purpose of these relationships is always to demonstrate the control which with Murakami's heroes handle their sexual drives, not to suggest that sex is bad, but that there is "good" sexuality and "bad" sexuality, and the morally superior character knows the difference. This, as we shall see, contrasts with the behavior of Noboru Wataya, for whom sexuality is a means to power and control,"³¹ we see sex used as a plot element, from the phone woman he perpetually hangs up on from the book's beginning, to his relationship with the Kano sisters, which also involves sexual relations with the younger sister, Creta. The phone woman is especially

³¹ Matthew Stretcher, *Haruki Murakami's Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, a Reader's Guide*, 28

interesting considering her ultimate role in the story

Early on we suspect a connection between this woman, pleading for mutual understanding with Toru, and his self-admission that he knows nothing about his wife. In fact, the “telephone” woman *is* Kumiko, but she is not the same woman Toru knows; this Kumiko is sexually charged, driven by uncontrolled (and uncontrollable) passion, It is not possible for Toru to recognize this, however, for this unconscious manifestation of Kumiko expresses her desire in terms so direct that Toru cannot associate them with this self-controlled wife. Thus he misses his early chances to “discover” Kumiko and save his relationship with her³²

It is only after he is willing to face his sexuality is he able to resolve his problems with Kumiko and save is relationship, which serves as the driving force of the novel. As Strecher writes, “The means to achieving this end will be the final showdown between Toru and Noboru and the quest for Kumiko/Noboru will thus conclude in a deadly battle between basic elements- good and evil- that is grounded in violence and sexuality, forcing Toru to decide how far he is willing to go in order to rescue Kumiko from the bonds that hold her.”³³ This idea of loss of self-control is something that we see in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*. It is only after his characters lose themselves are they able to find themselves again. As we see in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*, there is a similar portrayal of good versus bad sexuality, bad sexuality being the out of the control woman chasing down the monk in *Dōjōji*, and good sexuality being the application of this attraction to help the monk. In both stories we see a close relationship between sex and power. In both *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and these two stories we see this relationship played out. In both *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi* these women gain power through

³² Matthew Stretcher, *Haruki Murakami's Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, a Reader's Guide*, 29

³³ Matthew Stretcher, *Haruki Murakami's Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, a Reader's Guide*, 32

their sexuality, much how like Noboru Wataya gets his power.

As mentioned, there is a shared significance of active and passive sexuality in both stories. The active sexuality of the protagonist of *Dōjōji* versus the passive monk is in many ways similar to Noboru's active sexuality compared to Toru's passive sexuality. Creta views Toru's sexuality as an antidote to the defilement she suffered at Noboru Wataya's hands. Similarly Zenmyo's transformation is viewed in contrast to the protagonist of *Dōjōji*, one that is "good" and "bad." There is a similar contrast between Noboru Wataya and Toru Okada.

These similarities extend to the physical manifestation of this breach on both protagonists. As mentioned, Toru Okada develops as black mark, which while less drastic than the actual physical transformation of the protagonist in *Dōjōji*; both changes are rooted in a similar transformation. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the mark appears after he visits the strange hotel land and comes across real danger, in the form of a shadowy figure with a knife. Despite this, he still has a strange experience with the telephone woman.

I felt the woman's tongue coming into my mouth. Warm and soft, it probed every crevice and it wound around my own tongue. The heavy smell of flowers stroked the walls of my lungs. Down in my loins, I felt a dull need to come. Clamping my eyes closed, I fought it. A moment later, I felt a kind of intense heat on my right cheek. It was an odd sensation. I felt no pain, only the awareness that there was heat there. I couldn't tell whether the heat was coming from the outside or boiling up inside me³⁴

Here we see how sexual attraction is a key aspect to this physical transformation. In the case of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, we see this between Toru's attraction to the "hotel woman" and the appearance of the black mark on

³⁴ Haruki Murakami, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, 249

his cheek, a key aspect to his eventual success. The role of the physical manifestation of the internal is something that plays a major role in Murakami's concept of self. This is reflected in *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi* who's transformations share a similar physical form, in this case, much more drastic than a mark on the cheek. As we see in both stories, the physical form does play an important role in unlocking this sexual power they possess. This is especially true of the mark on Toru's cheek. As Strecher writes,

There is much more to the mark... It signifies yet another kind of joining, through which the "telephone woman" has placed *something* inside of him. The mark is a new, embryonic consciousness, one that will live and grow in his cheek until it is "born" coincident with the completion of his quest. In short, the mark may be read as yet another manifestation of Kumiko herself, providing a living, real-world link to the unconscious realm in which she lies trapped. Like other such manifestations, it will disappear only when it is no longer needed, the point where Toru defeats his enemy.³⁵

Like with the transformation in *Dōjōji*, we see how the real world manifestation of this struggle plays an important role in the narrative.

Both stories present the same concept of the division of self. There is the self we know and can control, and the inner, unknown self. This self can be permanently marred when disrupted but this disruption is an important part of achieving enlightenment. Not only are these narratives similar, but they also serve as inversions of each other. In both *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi*, we see narratives of women transforming in attempt to actively pursue more passive men, in what ultimately serves as an attempt to save their selves and achieve enlightenment. Conversely, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* we see one passive man's pursuit of

³⁵ Matthew Stretcher, *Haruki Murakami's The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, A Reader's Guide*, 31

one woman who has transformed and like the monk, finds himself also changed.

Although there are many of these more superficial similarities between these narratives of female transformation, deeper connections exist. Although psychoanalysts look at this transformation as it applies to misogyny in a Buddhist context, Murakami's dual self could also be seen at play. In both the *Kegon engi Emaki* and *Dōjōji* we see these women undergo transformations tied to them discovering this part of the self that they weren't previously aware of, in both cases it was awakened by rejection of a male monk and transforming that pain and hurt into physical transformation. Although this invoked a very negative reaction and result in *Dōjōji*, in the *Kegon engi* Zenmyo undergoes a Buddhist spiritual awakening. Both Zenmyo and the protagonist of *Dōjōji* in an attempt to explore and reconcile this new self undergo literal transformations, much in the way that Murakami's protagonists enter a new world as part of their own self exploration and reconciliation. In fact, much like Kumiko's need to kill Noboru Wataya in order to regain her self, the protagonist of *Dōjōji* has the need to kill the monk who spurned her, thus triggering the same self discord that Noboru Wataya inflicted on Kumiko. And much like the characters in Murakami's books, the journey is a necessary part to becoming a whole person, in the context of Buddhism that is getting closer to enlightenment, in Murakami's work it is gaining a deeper understanding of oneself.

Conclusion

As we see throughout *Dōjōji*, the *Kegon engi Emaki* and *The Wind-Up Bird*

Chronicle there are shared themes around sexuality and desire and its role in transformation. It also addresses the power struggle at play between transformation and sexuality. In both cases we see the power gained from unleashing the sexual self, as well “good” versus “bad” depictions of that power. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* this is illustrated through the contrast between Noboru Wayata and Toru much like the contrast between between the protagonist of *Dōjōji*'s acts of destruction and Zenmyo's calls to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This power dynamic is illustrated in *Dōjōji* through its protagonist, a woman overcoming a monk, who within a Buddhist context has more power. This power dynamic is reversed when she uses this sexual power, what is originally seen as a hindrance to enlightenment in order to overcome the monk. Similarly we see Noboru Wataya and Toru Okada's dynamic shift as Toru gains a better understanding of his sexuality. When articles are written about *Dōjōji* and its protagonist's transformation they often focus on the role that transformation plays from a psychoanalytical perspective. Despite this there are other ways of looking at the transformation. One way of looking at the transformation of the protagonist in *Dōjōji* is in terms of its resemblance to Murakami's concept of spilt self. Both of these stories, at their core, are about these characters' loss of identity, and the need to reconcile this by embarking on a journey. In *Dōjōji* this is triggered by the monk's rejection of the protagonist, and from there we her transformation, in an attempt to reconcile this she chases down the monk and kills him. Similarly, Zenmyo, after being ignored by the monk she swore to protect, invokes the Buddhas to help her transform this sexual power into a dragon, thus reconciling

her feelings for the monk. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* that loss may be literal removal of a part of the self, but it does share similarities with the extreme loss of control that occurs in *Dōjōji*.

Although there are differences, both narratives are about some form of greater understanding. At the end of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* Murakami's characters don't go back to their old lives as if nothing happened, they move on, with a better understanding of themselves. Similarly, in both *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi* these women achieved a place in Buddhism that they wouldn't traditionally possess. In *Dōjōji* this is through the protagonist's literal enlightenment. In the *Kegon engi* we see her aiding a monk. In both cases they gained something they wouldn't have been able to obtain had they not undergone these transformations. Both stories are about struggling with identity, but they go about it in different ways. Murakami is looking to create a universal concept of the self, and resolving human struggles with identity. *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi* engage in a similar exploration of identity as it applies to women's place in Buddhist discourse. Because women are believed to be unable to achieve enlightenment due to their physical limitations, women struggled to find a place within Buddhism. These physical transformations are one way of addressing this.

When authors such as Susan Klein and Monika Dix write about stories of female transformation such as *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi Emaki* they often take a psychoanalytical approach, this is because psychoanalytical approaches were seen as a way of looking at these stories from a more universal and feminist perspective. Although this approach has its uses when looking at these narratives

of female transformation, it has become one of the major ways stories such as *Dōjōji* and the *Kegon engi Emaki* are viewed. Despite the popularity of this psychoanalytical approach, there are other ways of looking at female transformation. Although seemingly different narratives, the two sided self as depicted in Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* shares a similar portrayal of self in *Dōjōji*. Many of these differences are rooted in the fact that *Dōjōji* was written in order to answer questions of Buddhist salvation whereas Murakami was writing to express something deeper about how we as people perceive identity. Both stories end with a sort of reconciliation of these selves, *Dōjōji* by enlightenment and the various characters of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by recovering their lost sense of self.

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