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The Demonic Women of Premodern Japanese Theatre

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THE DEMONIC WOMEN OF PREMODERN JAPANESE THEATRE

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The representation of women in Japanese theatre has been shaped by the perpetuation of artistic tradition as much as it has by the creativity and innovation that distinguished actors have brought to their roles. "Artistic tradition" goes back perhaps thousands of years – a number of plays in the premodern theatre of Japan derive their inspirations from older myths, legends, and folktales, and can be traced throughout history, throughout these separate but complementary theatrical institutions (Brazell 4, 10). This propagation of antiquity so fundamental to the arts of Japan serve as a testament to the symbolic power of famous characters that have appeared throughout the ages; in the face of political subjugation and the evolution of religion within Japan, major character archetypes in the theatre have continued to thrive, but do so while also incorporating change. This thesis aims to explain the portrayal of two female characters across four plays, and how their characterization contributes to the larger narrative of the subjugation of women in premodern Japanese history.

The two theatre traditions to which these plays belong are the noh, developed in the Muromachi Period (1336-1573), and the kabuki, developed in the Edo period (1600-1867) (R. Dolan and Worden 1). Noh and kabuki, along with bunraku (puppet theatre, also of the Edo period), comprise the preeminent forms of premodern Japanese dramatic arts. Paul Varley explains in the "Cultural Life in Medieval Japan" of *The Cambridge History of Japan* anthology that the playwright Kan'ami is credited

for synthesizing disparate forms of song, dance, and *monomane,* or imitation (in this case, of historical and literary figures), into a coherent form from which our current conception of noh derives. His son, Zeami, "accepted immersion in the elite social world of Kyoto and who, under the tutelage and influence of people like Yoshimitsu and Yoshimoto, elevated noh to the supremely refined and courtly art we know today" (Varley 464-465). The theatre was first exposed to governmental influence when shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu attended a performance of sarugaku, the predecessor to noh, in 1374; since then, noh has been regarded as a form of "high culture" with incessant reference to the stories of ancient Japan, and its fundamental shaping by Buddhist ideology.

In the next volume of *The Cambridge History of Japan,* Donald Shively discusses in the section "Popular Culture" that kabuki flourished under wildly different circumstances. Said to have been developed by a female dancer named Okuni in 1603, kabuki was closely linked to prostitution and sexual promiscuity between military men and young actors (male and female) until women were banned from the stage in 1629 (Shively 751). Strict government reforms enacted by the Tokugawa shogunate onto the kabuki theatre were, Shively argues, "beneficial" to the art because it was forced to formalize (Shively 752). Since its "legitimization," kabuki has incorporated the themes and plotlines of popular noh plays and developed several celebrated methods of acting, all while continuing to maintain popularity among Edo and Meiji audiences.

One such vestige carried throughout these two theatrical traditions is the demonic female character. This woman, who is revealed within the play to be a

demon disguised in human form, is an archetype that serves as a cautionary tale against succumbing to the dark side of femininity. She is superficially defined by her tendency to act based on emotional impulsiveness and fits of jealous rage, but more profoundly she contributes to larger narratives demonstrating the necessity of religious and familial devotion, the strength of karmic retribution, and the ways in which both men and women must rely on institutional discipline to prevent these tragedies caused by her irrationality. Her representation, therefore, reflects the interplay and tension between certain systems of power – those of gendered customs, religion, the arts, and the feudalistic society encapsulating these institutions – which should be understood as the parts that make up the whole of her character. Examining the major theatre traditions of Japan (whose actors and creators comprise of only men) begs an analysis of the place of women in this sphere of one-sided representation, and scholarly works up until this point have offered no shortage of dialogue concerning the implications of her emotional, fiery, and often destructive representation in the performing arts. Here I will outline scholarship that has contributed to the discussion of wayward women on the stage; these scholars have placed the characters of their focus within their respective political and religious paradigms, parsing the forces in society that have contributed to their specific characterizations.

Steven Brown, in *Theatricalities of Power: The Cultural Politics of Noh*, aims to unearth the ways in which the noh theatre has been molded to conform to specific institutional norms, or in other words, how the noh theatre is representative of power relations in medieval Japan. Using the play "Aoi no Ue" as textual evidence, Brown

investigates the ways in which the women in the play reflect larger political and religious struggles, and the ways in which they often fall victim to the severity of their social subjugation. In the play, *Genji Monogatari* characters Aoi and Rokujō battle over their claim to Genji as a lover; after finding out about Aoi's pregnancy, Rokujō possesses her in a fit of jealousy, and must be extracted by a shamaness. Brown first alerts readers to the fact that Aoi's pregnancy (and therefore her status as female) predisposes her to spiritual possession; the origin of this idea comes from the Heian belief that pregnancy made one susceptible to spiritual attack (Brown 38). Brown's interest, however, lies in the actions of the Rokujō Lady; spirits were thought to possess others because of some dispossession they underwent, and the case of Rokujō is no exception. The implications of her actions are both political and religious. Rokujō must overcome the karmic cycle of rebirth in order to reach enlightenment by breaking her attachments to her mortal jealousy. But Rokujō was also the woman whose first marriage was supposed to make her empress; because she was further shamed and humiliated by Genji's public acknowledgement of his marital union with Aoi, her jealousy culminates in her spiritual invasion of the evidence that she is not favored in the court.

Though Rokujō's experience of dispossession from the court was not necessarily relevant to noh audiences in the stratocratic Muromachi period, Brown states that her attacking the pregnant Aoi tells much about the sociopolitical context of medieval Japan: "in attacking Aoi, Rokujō's jealous spirit effectively attacks the progeny of Genji, who will ensure Aoi's continued social and economic well-being" (Brown 69). This is especially true when one considers how Yūgiri, Aoi's son, is

primed for political success because of his bloodline. This additional dimension to Rokujō's anguish reflects the shift in inheritance rights that happened between the Heian and Muromachi periods; Brown explains that between these two time periods, women's rights to property and inheritance were severely diminished due to the institution of military government. This was executed under the guise that the male-protected "continuance of the family line" would bolster national security, especially considering the fear of Mongol invasion at this time.

Brown also highlights the differences between the original *Genji Monogatari* and "Aoi no Ue" as evidence for the intentional manipulation of power representation. While the issue of inheritance rights provides a context for Rokujō's desperate attempts to prevent Aoi from carrying to full term, her jealousy is given disproportionate attention in the play because Genji is absent from the noh stage. In *Genji Monogatari*, Rokujō's spirit is finally appeased when Genji agrees to care for Rokujō's daughter, but in "Aoi no Ue," the dynamic is very different: Brown argues that Genji's absence from the play "along with the omission of his guilt, effectively mitigates the responsibility of a husband to both his principal and secondary wives, and thereby shifts the blame for Rokujō's possession of Aoi from the man's neglect to the woman's jealousy" (Brown 77). Brown calls this an "active reconfiguration of power relations between men and women staged before the same Muromachi audience that had witnessed the utter disinheritance of women" (Brown 78). Though fictional, this revisionist account implies that the "authorized" voice of the government-sponsored noh theatre approved of a feminine existence that was responsible for its own discord.

Galia Todorova Gabrovska, in the article "Gender and Body Construction in Edo Period Kabuki," posits that the "mirror" of the Kabuki stage is actually an instrument for both affirmative and subversive political response. She claims gendered performance within kabuki is essential to our conception of gender in pre-modern Japan on the whole, and takes a Foucauldian approach to understanding the "power" of gender dynamics. She sees the body "not as a purely biological form but as a pre-eminently socio-cultural construct and of power relations in society not as a visibly repressive process but as subtle pervasive mechanisms of both discipline and resistance" (Gabrovska 72). She also uses Jill Dolan – whose work I will introduce in its own right in chapter 2 – to define the theatrical stage as a male-centered and male-created 'site of representation" where women are merely imagined figures and not necessarily participants, a reality continued on from the noh. Gabrovska usefully outlines three different feminist performance theories one may use to approach women's exclusion from the theatre: the liberal, where women should enjoy equal representation in the theatre; the radical (cultural), where the theatre should be used to assert female supremacy; and the materialist, where one looks at both men and women as "classes" of people and examines the mechanisms that shape their representation. Gabrovska, using materialist theory, claims that theater can be used as a mechanism to create cultural ideology: 'societies generate and enforce standards for gendered behaviour that must be followed by their members' while also serving as entertainment (Gabrovska 73-74).

Gabrovska uses the gendered images in Kabuki to illustrate her point. She argues that *onnagata* (men who cross-dressed to portray women's roles) must

maintain their feminine disposition even off-stage, and that he must be "virtuous" like

a noblewoman as opposed to the prostitutes with which kabuki was associated.

Further, their gendered identities are clearly articulated in their movement: female

bodies "[shrink] in order to take less space while the male body is always represented

on the stage of kabuki as expanding in the space" (Gabrovska 79). In short,

Gabrovska's article argues that the policing of the body both reflects its use as an

instrument of power and reinforces gendered ideals to its audiences. The

representation of the *onnagata* had ramifications both within and outside of the

theatre: this characterization elevated the status of female-role performers and also

contributed to the construction and reinforcement of female moral code

(Gabrovska74).

Works in Japanese literary theory, meanwhile, have also studied gender

relations through the status of women as a marginalized group of people. Terry

Kawashima examines the idea of marginality in her book *Writing Margins: The*

Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan, and aims to

"reconsider the definition of the margin and marginality, as well as the underlying

assumptions about the center/margin power structure, through the examination of a

selected group of texts" while also exploring "the ways in which certain aspects

attributed to the state of being a woman came to be constructed as marginal" in the

late medieval period (Kawashima 2). These ideas reflect sentiments echoed earlier,

that exploring the margin shows one "the result of textual effects generated by

authors and compilers who display desires to promote certain ideas and practices at

the expense of the targets of marginalization" (Kawashima 3). Kawashima notes that

there are problems with many theories of marginality: they present an "essential marginality" that confidently proclaim what kind of person is subject to that categorization, and that theorists forget that these subjects cannot, in the case of Japan, speak back to the authorities that create their stereotypes (Kawashima 12). Kawashima defines marginalization as a specific and singular act, and its repeated occurrence makes up the system under which the phenomenon operates.

Kawashima uses the story "Uji no Hashihime" to illustrate the marginalization of the female in medieval Japan by the process of the Uji maiden becoming a demon after losing her lover to another woman. By saying "their demonization represents recognition of and sympathy for the many resentments they harbored" because of declining social status, Kawashima effectively argues that the marital arrangement of one husband who has multiple wives lowers the status of each respective woman involved, and becomes a source of oppression onto those women (Kawashima 221). This positions her argument similarly to that of Brown's with regard to female rank within the noh. The end result was that a woman's ability or inability to cope with this societal structure was depicted in popular culture by her characterization as either a demon or a pining lover. Uji no Hashihime is depicted as both of these in the various works in which she appears.

The pining wife trope is an example of a woman "aestheticized and deified into an elegant poetic trope that conveniently erases the disruptive forces of polygyny such as jealousy and domesticates her suffering" (Kawashima 221-222). Because jealousy and resentment of the current social order was unfavorable and problematic for men in power, women's dissent due to their dissatisfaction was marginalized and

portrayed as unbecoming. The female demon was borne from this; exhibited as the antithesis to this ideal model of femininity, this archetype is "an expression of male fear of the feminine and feminine power, which is both uncontrollable to men and incomprehensible by them" (Kawashima 255). Kawashima argues, however, that the construction of "demon" is not borne out of fear but for the desire of the creators to signify which feminine traits are undesirable, and to marginalize those traits. The demon is an apt vehicle through which storytellers can achieve their ends: demons are categorized chiefly by their isolation from humans, they occupy marginalized spaces, they are known for violent outbursts, and they oblivious to or unconcerned with propriety. Kawashima argues that women are given this representation because "jealousy and resentment were crucial emotions that upset the peace of a polygynous relationship," and those emotions were known to be characteristically female (Kawashima 286).

Kawashima, like Brown, points to the blamelessness of men in these situations. Pining women must pine for their men because they must share their lovers; because "in order for the logic of polygyny – that is, one man visiting multiple women – to function successfully, those exact positionalities must be presented and received as the norm," Kawashima concludes that "texts that present the pining-wife trope are therefore at once complicit with and responsible for the maintenance and amplification of the vision of polygyny in smooth operation" (Kawashima 287). Meanwhile, in demon narratives, "jealousy and a man's ordeals in dealing with this problem also come to be naturalized as being part of the polygynous system" because

the emotions of the woman are depicted to be strong enough that they may not have been preventable (Kawashima 287).

Like Kawashima, Noriko Reider notes the poignancy of the representation of "Uji no Hashihime" in her book *Japanese Demon Lore: Oni from Ancient Times to the Present*. Reider aims to examine *oni* as a vestige of marginalization, to position *oni* as a group who exists outside of prescribed social norms. Reider notes that the conception of female *oni* has largely to do with their desire to be seen as favorable by men, but ultimately failing to do so, and this shame serves as the impetus for their transformation. Additionally, *yamauba* are another kind of oni, forced to live in the mountains; Reider interprets their existence as a reaction to the marginalization women experienced that lends to them a mystical element, closely connected to nature. The term *oni* is, in this way, used as a descriptor for people who are outside the control of the emperor or any bureaucratic (and therefore "civilizing" force) – while *yamauba* represent physical isolation, Uji no Hashihime then represents a kind of emotional isolation caused by the intensity of her feelings, which alienate her from those who more easily prescribe to the social norm.

Using the same "Uji no Hashihime" story, Reider notes the persistence of the decidedly emotional portrayal of this woman in the noh play Kanawa. In her comparison to male *oni* who represent political marginalization in the face of authority, Reider posits that Uji no hashihime, as a female character, is one who inhabits private and domestic space. Reider takes her domesticity to be a caution against allowing overly emotional and jealous women to enter politics, noting that this is something that cannot be overcome: while the protagonist 'successfully

becomes an *oni* and plots to kill her husband for abandoning her, she still cannot extinguish her feelings for him" (Reider 59). Ironically, it is only through her irrational acts that Uji no Hashihime has any agency, having been denied any other aspiration than to be a favorable lover.

Meanwhile, the *yamauba* (Mountain Ogress) archetype personifies a kind of evil that exists outside of personal and/or emotional affairs. In addition to the *yamauba's* physical marginalization discussed earlier, Reider adopts a gender studies approach to posit that *yamauba* may be seen as the subversive antithesis to the obedient and loyal "country village girl;" as she "nullifies traditional gender roles" because she exists "outside of the sato's [village's] system of normativity" (Reider 66). Even if this were to be the case, her marginalization achieves no further ends than her intimidation – which is not completely due to her status as female – and her representation remains an example that women could not, in any capacity, find fulfillment in realms that were not domestic or "inherently feminine."

In each of the secondary texts outlined, women have been proven to be vehicles for the theatre to address larger ideas, and often represent religiously motivated, male-centered ideas of the pitfalls of femininity that plague both genders. The use of women on stage as tropes representative of undesirable traits – such as jealousy and resentment – as well as their exclusion from the creation of theatrical works ensured that, on the pre-modern stage, their representation was limited to characterizations that would be most convenient for their male authorities to exploit, and replicated so that the structures of power between the genders would remain so. Though this scholarship sufficiently outlines the political and religious implications

placed on the representation of demonic women in literature and drama, I have not seen a scholarly approach that traces plays which feature this character over time, through historical eras, and through theatrical traditions. From the focus on Buddhist ideology in the medieval period, to the resurgence of Confucian ideals into Japanese social politics during the early modern period, it is inconceivable that works within the theater would continue without absorbing any of the changes that come with evolving social contexts.

Recognizing this, I would like to conduct a comparative analysis of the gendered power relations within two plays that have evolved from the noh to the kabuki that feature female characters who, as antagonists, reveal themselves to be demons. My leading research question will be: How do the plays "Momijigari" and "Dōjōji," in their representations in both the noh and kabuki theatre traditions, reflect and perpetuate the power regimes that served to subjugate women in their respective time periods? In an attempt to answer this, I will first define in chapter 2 the framework of "power" to which I will refer throughout this thesis, pulling from the works of three scholars: Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Jill Dolan. Chapter 2 will also include an overview of the two institutional sources of power I believe are imperative to understanding social relations in the medieval and early modern periods of Japanese history. First is Buddhist ideology, with special attention paid to the *Lotus Sutra*, influential in the Japanese Mahayana tradition. The early modern period, meanwhile, saw a resurgence of Neo-Confucian thinking in the establishment of the warrior class ideal, which heavily influenced the "moral" teachings of popular literature targeted towards and consumed by women.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss "Momijigari" and "Dōjōji," respectively, in both their noh and kabuki renditions. Using the framework established in chapter 2, I examine the usage of religious and moralistic ideology in the treatment of the principal female antagonists of each play, aiming to answer how these works illuminate the gendered power struggles of premodern Japan, and what the changes in representation from the noh to the kabuki insinuate about those institutions as they incorporated contemporary ideologies.

Chapter 2: Power and the Institution

This chapter aims to make sense of power relations that manifest themselves within Japanese theatre with regard to gender, exploring the question: *How does institutional pedagogy (namely Buddhist ideology in the medieval period and the moral code of the stratocratic shogunate in the early modern period) sanction the lowering of female status in premodern Japan?* To answer this, I will explain my theoretical approach with regard to the notion of power, and then outline the historical processes that have contributed to the subjugation of women in Japan that have, in turn, colored the way they are portrayed artistically. To articulate a complete and working theory that encompasses the intersection at which the theatrical portrayal of femininity exists, I will outline power as it is prescribed in three major works of postmodern theory: power most generally, as described by Michel Foucault; power over gender, as discussed in the works of Judith Butler; and, finally, the relationship between power and gendered dramatic representation, as explored in the work of Jill Dolan.

I will then look at two representative works of the Buddhist and shogunal institutions that have had considerable influence over the mode of thought which those institutions perpetuated: the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in the medieval period, and *jokun,* or "moral guidebooks," written by Kaibara Ekiken and Namura Jōhaku, in the early modern period. These texts illustrate officially-sanctioned attitudes and beliefs that originated in higher social classes and were

proliferated into lower ones. While such ideology may not be representative of what the entire Japanese archipelago was thinking (or doing) at the time, these works are given weight because theatre did, to some extent, have to bend to the will of authority as a form of art that required patronage by the elite.

Theoretical Approach

    1. *Michel Foucault*

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* includes a section titled "Docile Bodies" that outlines the ways in which institutions maintain control over individuals. Central to this chapter is the notion that "the body is an object and target of power," which, when submitting to the control of institutional force, establishes rhythms, prescribes movements, and imposes exercises upon its subjects that make up "disciplinary practice" (Foucault 136, 167). Foucault describes power as something that is constantly exerted over individuals by its insinuation into not only the actions of an individual, but also their mode of operation. It is this total control that creates in bodies an obedience that makes them reliable and effective tools to be politicized (Foucault 137-138). This position ensures that an individual is not only docile, but that their utility as contributors to society is maximized. In short, institutions create and perpetuate modes of being among their constituents that simultaneously impose order and encourage productivity relative to the operation of that institution.

Foucault maintains that this enforcement of order is regulated by what he calls the "art of distributions," which is the idea that individuals are minutely controlled by their place relative to their institution in space and time in a way that serves that

institution (Foucault 143). He paints a picture of the exact articulation of bodies that allow the institution to operate; he does this with reference to places like monasteries, where solitude and sleeping arrangements are used to further an ascetic's holy aspirations, or the divisions of space in a hospital that quarantines disease and encourages healing (Foucault 143-144). This "coding" of spaces, as Foucault calls it, is an enforcement of discipline that one is naturalized into as they become part of any given group. Time is employed in a similar manner, with Foucault explaining that in this "temporal elaboration," institutions "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations," and "regulate the cycles of repetition" to make members accustomed to operations within the institution (Foucault 149-151).

2. *Judith Butler*

Foucault's ideas can also be taken in the abstract, and need not apply only to enclosed spaces like hospitals, prisons, and monasteries. Judith Butler's work *Gender Trouble: Identity, Sex, and the Metaphysics of Substance* uses Foucauldian theory to argue that the concept of gender is itself based upon a sort of discipline imposed on groups of people according to their biological sex. Butler defines sex to be "produced precisely through the regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms," and that gender and sexuality are put into binaries, dependent on the creation of "discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine," where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female."" (Butler 23). Gender is, then, a construct that both maintains control and maximizes productivity by clearly articulating what *type* of person

belongs to various spaces within their governing institution and/or society. From this,

Butler posits that "intelligible" genders are those which in some sense institute and

maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice,

and desire;" that in order to be recognized as "viably" bodied by their institution

(one's surrounding society, in this case), they must conform to that society's

conception of gender (Butler 23). This conformity to the expression of gender is

executed through "performance acts" that are repetitively "produced and compelled

by the regulatory practices of gender coherence" (Butler 33).

Butler lays the foundation for this notion of "performance" of gender in her

earlier work "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in

Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in which she states that "gendered identity is

a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo" (Butler 520).

Central to this argument is the notion that the perpetuation of gender identity –

expressed through a 'stylized repetition of acts" that arguably references the docility-

utility organization of bodies purported by Foucault – relies heavily on the

naturalization of the gender binary (Butler 519). The occurrence of certain actions

being attributed to either the masculine or the feminine "codes" both the action and

the gender, and it is through this process that gender builds up a repertoire of

associative acts. There is, perhaps, no intrinsic motivation to change or challenge the

notion of gender if its existence – whose form, behavior, and style – has been handed

down to them without the possibility for an alternative mode of being, and if this

arbitrary construction of gender is taken to be *objective truth* by those who consume

and perpetuate it. Without the acknowledgement that gender is socially motivated

and is not necessarily intrinsic, the "possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" of gender into another form is not entertained, and Butler's work specifically challenges such conditioning of thought (Butler 519).

  If it is true that "the authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions whereby the construction compels one's belief in its necessity and naturalness," then there is much room for institutional enforcement of gender in the name of upholding what is naturally and fundamentally "right" or "good," especially with regard to men prescribing onto women their notion of "femininity" when men constitute the group in power (Butler 522). Indeed, Butler points out that "performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect, and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all;" so that in any situation, one's aptitude in performing their social role through gender is kept in check either positively or negatively (Butler 529). It is important to note that Butler does distinguish herself from an exclusively Foucauldian theory in that she recognizes the paradoxical agency-passivity dichotomy the body must navigate – while "the body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations," it is not as if "embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies," so it becomes impossible to tell the point at which institutional force does not or cannot penetrate (Butler 526).

3. *Jill Dolan*

This question of where institutional influence and intentional personal agency meet is tackled by Jill Dolan in her analysis of the perpetuation of gender within the theatre, which, as she argues, lends itself fundamentally to a more deliberate and thoughtful expression of gender. In the article "Gender Impersonation Onstage: Destroying or Maintaining the Mirror of Gender Roles?" Dolan challenges the idea of the theatre as a mere "mirror" of the production's contemporary social conditions, arguing instead that "the images reflected in [the theatre] have been consciously constructed according to political necessity, with a particular, perceiving subject in mind who looks into the mirror for his identity" (J. Dolan 4-5). This "identity" Dolan speaks of is specifically "male" in the gender binary, involved in a cycle of consuming and producing work that caters to the ideology of male gender performance often at the expense of women. With reference to theatre in the West, Dolan states that the clear distinction of a gender binary in Western society has been a result of "male economic and political necessity" which "manifests a particular ideology that in turn reflects a particular hegemonic structure" (J. Dolan 4). The theatre, then, has the potential to be used as an active tool for bolstering gendered differences among its audiences. While such use of theatrical production implicates both genders and subjects them to particular models on which they may base their "masculinity" or "femininity," Dolan acknowledges the reality of theatrical traditions around the world that position men at the center of thematic production, with women occupying, at most, an "outsider's critical position" (J. Dolan 5).

In the task of deconstructing these existing structures, women have most to lose because men alone are "invited to identify with the image in the mirror" in a way that empowers and affirms traits associated with their gender while also erasing, ignoring, or actively belittling traits associated with femininity (J. Dolan 7). In the case of theater traditions where men take on women's roles (Dolan names ancient Greek, Shakespearian, and English and American popular stage traditions to illustrate her point), "we find men in control of the mirror, with women looking into it for appropriate reflections. Shining back at them from the male mirror, however, was a socially constructed concept of Woman that served the guiding male's ideology" (J. Dolan 5). Premodern Japanese theatre also fits into this paradigm, with women being barred from the noh stage for religious reasons, and from Kabuki for moral ones. Such a construction is problematic because in silencing women's voices and taking away their say in their gendered representation, the forms of male-created femininity that are perpetuated become sanctified as "tradition" and naturalized in much the same way as Butler describes. Especially if it is true that, as Dolan posits, the stage is more than a mere "mirror," then theatre becomes yet another avenue for propagating the beliefs of influential and authoritative groups.

To put these frameworks in the context of Japanese history, one may look at the theatre of premodern Japan as an entity that perpetuates a particular gendered ideology which ensures the continued prestige of men within Japanese social hierarchy. By regulating the body in space and time according to the whims of the institution, the Japanese conception of gender is created and employed within the

theatre as a political tool for social control and the establishing of the boundary within which the feminine operates.

If theatre traditions in Japan have indeed carried on with the intention of perpetuating a particular agenda, one must look into the contexts surrounding these productions to understand what messages theatrical productions aimed to convey. The lowered status of women throughout various institutions in Japanese society has been internalized in the ways they are portrayed on stage, and the fact that women did not have a say in their dramatic representation designates premodern Japanese theatre as an institution of male ideology onto the female body. Such ideologies have been built up over the course of medieval and premodern history, and this inclusion of religious, legal, and mythical association in the notion of "femininity" has created a rich symbolic inventory that bears the markings of consistent institutional domination.

Manifestations of Institutional Power

1. *Buddhism*

The two major institutional sources of power I see dominating the premodern Japanese social sphere are the Buddhist church and the shogunate-sanctioned Confucianist pedagogy from the Kamakura period onwards. Both regimes create for its followers prescribed moral codes and distinct social roles based on gender, class, and lineage, and the perpetuation of societal structure according to such ideology creates an imposing framework within which groups such as women were forced to operate. To begin, I will look at a source of fundamental religious literature from which many Japanese preconceptions concerning women originate: *The Sutra of the*

Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma, known simply as the *Lotus Sutra*.

Introduced here, through the story of the dragon girl, is the idea that women are

inherently inferior to men in the chapter dedicated to Devadatta:

> Then Shariputra said to the dragon girl: "You think that in no time at
> all you will attain the unexcelled way. This is hard to believe. Why?
> Because the body of a woman is filthy and impure, not a vessel for the
> Dharma. How could you attain unexcelled awakening? The Buddha
> way is long and extensive. Only after innumerable eons of enduring
> hardship, accumulating good works, and thoroughly carrying out all
> the practices can it be reached. Moreover, a woman's body has five
> hindrances: first, she cannot become a king of a Brahma heaven;
> second she cannot become king Indra; third, she cannot become a devil
> king; fourth she cannot become a wheel-turning saintly king; and fifth
> she cannot have the body of a buddha. How then could you, in a
> woman's body, so quickly become a buddha? (252-253)

It is important to note here that the *Lotus Sutra* is most well-known for the

progressive effects it has had on Buddhism; the *Lotus Sutra* is, notably, the first text

within the Buddhist canon to claim that women are not barred from attaining

enlightenment, despite the fact that this path is arguably more difficult to navigate.

This does not, however, reverse the ideology that claims women are inferior to men,

as this chapter points out. The conflict in "Devadatta" is resolved by the dragon girl

overcoming the words of Shariputra because of her adoration of the teachings of

Manjusri. However, she attains enlightenment in her own right not by challenging his

understanding of femininity, but internalizing it. The dragon girl's transformation

into a man and taking up the bodhisattva practice continues to perpetuate the status of

"man" as the ideal, with her transformation being seen as a step up in hierarchy on

her way to achieving Buddhahood. Shariputra's assertion of female worth is not

questioned or given justification because he stands, as a man, as part of the group

who holds the power to attribute meaning over the feminine.

Such thinking inspired by the Buddhist cannon was expanded upon throughout the medieval period. Nagata Mizu's "Transitions in Attitudes toward Women in The Buddhist Canon: The Three Obligations, the Five Obstructions, and the Eight Rules of Reverence" in the anthology *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan* discusses the subjugation of women following the imposition of Buddhist moral codes. Nagata describes this belief in the "three obligations," which is the idea that women were 'subordinate to their fathers in their natal home, to their husbands in marriage, and to their children in old age;" this coincides nicely with the Five Obstructions observed in the passage from the *Lotus Sutra* mentioned earlier as none of these positions women occupy are highest in authority, and serves to show the moral justifications that were used to rationalize the inferior place women took to men in medieval Japanese society (Nagata 279).

This view, however, does not consider the actual participation women enjoyed in religious spheres despite such damning associations in literature. In "Women's Associations and Religious Expression in the Medieval Japanese Village," Mieko Katō argues that women (who still had some measure of control over their assets at this time) could make significant contributions to their local temples. Pulling data from medieval villages in Ōmi Province, Katō examines the nature of female presence in patronage to local temples, and ascertains that "women's donations were for smaller, local, religious purposes" such as "for expenses pertaining to the Sou shrine's Circle of Eight (a consocation for group prayer), for shrine lands set aside for the sutra-copying cult, and for praying to the Amida Buddha" (Katō 126). Despite their status as mere "producers" of heirs, Katō maintains that "their potential as

contributors was significant enough that shrines could not ignore [them]" (Katō 126).

Women's status, however, is implied heavily in the nature of their worship during this

period. Katō notes that in the document collection at Mt. Kōya monastery, women's

donations are supplemented by dedications that differ from those that men wrote

during the medieval period. Women often wished for the "attainment of Buddhahood

by transformation from the feminine state;" such inscriptions show that women had

an internalized understanding of the extra righteousness needed on their part to

achieve enlightenment, and were at least given the hope that "through prayer women

could transform themselves into men and gain salvation" (Katō 128). This change in

Buddhist ideology beginning with the proliferation of the *Lotus Sutra* challenged the

idea that women were unable to reach nirvana because they could not attain the "five

high existences of Mahābrahman, Indra, Māra, world-ruling king, and Buddha"

because of their "heavy karmic burden" (Katō 128). Katō's work serves to remind

readers that while women were indeed active participants in a religious tradition that

did not favor their gender; their inferior status was not questioned, and was instead

internalized.

2. *Neo-Confucianism and Jokun*

With the installation of the shogunate military system in the medieval period

and the expansion of Neo-Confucian thinking propagated by the institution, early

modern Japan was preoccupied with the moral right and wrong-doings of citizens in a

highly stratified and classist social climate. Women's social morality was especially

looked after; with the rise of literacy among the common classes, many Japanese

were brought closer to information relevant to their lives, whether as a farmer,

merchant, or woman. In the introduction to *The Cambridge History of Japan*, editor

John Whitney Hall states that "the addition of Confucian and native historical studies

to the repertory of the samurai led to the most active outpouring of Japanese

scholarship before modern times" and that "by the Edo period Japanese society had

clearly reached a new level of cultural sophistication" (Hall 28). A major

technological advancement of the early modern period was mass printing, a feat

achieved by the *chōnin* (merchant class), which allowed the Japanese public to

consume a wide variety of literature and art. The focus on moral and social order in a

many of the printed works of early modern Japan can be attributed to the strong Neo-

Confucian climate of the time. One such printed resource was the "moral guidebook,"

or *jokun,* aimed towards women, which contained messages about morality and

righteousness similar to that of the *Lotus Sutra*. Liddle and Nakajima explain in

Rising Suns that Kaibara Ekiken's 1672 publication *Women and Wisdom of Japan*

became a key text defining the morality of women in the military class, a group of

women which served as a model for the rest of the nation in a society that idealized

the group of highest social rank, the warrior class. *Women and Wisdom of Japan*

"outlines gentle obedience, chastity, mercy and quietness as the ideal qualities in a

woman," and pins many of the major pitfalls of domestic life on the failure and

ineptitude of women (Liddle and Nakajima 102). For example, the seven reasons for

divorce are given as follows: "disobedience, infertility, lewdness, jealousy, disease,

gossiping and stealing," pertaining only to the wife and not her husband (Liddle and

Nakajima 103). Further, Kaibara outlines the five fundamental failings of the female

gender, which are "disobedience, anger, slander, jealousy, and stupidity" (Liddle and

Nakajima 103).

A deeper look than Liddle and Nakajima's account further demonstrates the

low opinion held of women during the early modern period, and clearly reinforces the

institution of gender hierarchy. "A woman has no particular lord," Kaibara writes.

'she must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and

reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him. The great lifelong duty of a

woman is obedience" (Kaibara 38). The five failings of women, as Liddle and

Nakajima have indicated, further perpetuate the inherent inferiority of wives to their

husbands; Kaibara says that "without any doubt, these five infirmities are found in

seven or eight out of every ten women, and it is from these that arises the inferiority

of women to men" (Kaibara 44). Kaibara finishes out *Women and Wisdom of Japan*

with a very firm reiteration of his opinion concerning the intellect and worth of

women; with his deep-seated position as a male literatus in a male-created and male-

centered social sphere, Kaibara remains staunchly against holding men accountable

for problems in their private lives. Instead, he blames women for the undoing of

society, as he makes clear in this passage below:

> …woman's nature is passive. This passiveness being of the nature of
> night is dark. Hence, as viewed from the standard of man's nature, the
> foolishness of woman fails to understand the duties that lie before her
> very eyes, perceives not the actions that will bring down blame upon
> her own head, and comprehends not even the things that will bring
> down calamities on the head of her husband and children. Neither
> when she blames and accuses and curses innocent persons, nor when,
> in her jealousy of others, she thinks to set up herself alone, does she
> see that she is her own enemy, estranging others and incurring their
> hatred. (Kaibara 45)

Kaibara's logic makes for a seemingly iron-clad argument for the continued

subjugation of the female gender. As Butler believes, if the opinion that the female

gender *inherently* contains inferior and undesirable attributes is naturalized and

accepted as indisputable and natural fact, then it is also natural to consider the male

'standard" Kaibara speaks of to be the preferable guide to living righteously.

Additionally, Kaibara's work, like the *Lotus Sutra*, blames women's inherent

ineptitude for their subordinate position to men. This is a further perpetuation of

male-created ideology; women, in the eyes of men, were not allowed to hold

positions of authority (whether it be as king or buddha in the case of the *Lotus Sutra*,

or as a "lord" in the case of *Women and Wisdom of Japan)* because of their own

failings, despite the fact that these statements were made without the firsthand

knowledge, necessarily, that women could not handle power.

Scholar William Lindsey from the University of Kansas affirms the use of

jokun as a "moral" compass in Edo-period Japan in his various publications on the

subject of female moral and sexual subjugation. In his book *Fertility and Pleasure:*

Ritual and Sexual Values in Tokugawa Japan, Lindsey writes that *jokun* "offered

commoners a window through which they could view the world of elite ritual and

etiquette, and then employ it in varying measures in their own lives" (Lindsey 11).

With the military man installed as a social ideal, these guidebooks served to provide

tangible, written goals for commoners that also effectively perpetuated hierarchy with

regard to both class and sex. The appropriation of warrior culture in these

publications allows ideology to permeate through social classes, regardless of the

applicability of those ideologies to the lives of commoners. Lindsey alerts readers to

another prominent *jokun* of the period in the article "Religion and the Good Life:

Motivation, Myth, and Metaphor in a Tokugawa Female Lifestyle Guide," the work

Onna chōhōki (*A Record of Treasures for Women)* by Namura Jōhaku. *Onna chōhōki*

is of interest because the text incorporates religious elements into its moral

framework to further justify its claims, and to further persuade female readers to

follow its recommendations for living a "good life," as Lindsey calls it. Lindsey

makes the argument that the use of religion in the text is significant, saying "by being

attentive to such uses of religion in popular texts we are able to appreciate the active

construction of religious sensibilities, stories, and symbols in Edo period culture

outside of organized religious groups" especially as it pertains to women (Lindsey 35).

Lindsey explains that Namura's work contains an elaborate – and highly

derivative from the original – account of the formation of Japan chronicled in the

Kojiki, as well as the formation of the Japanese woman, in line with deities like

Izanami and Amaterasu. Such allusions serve to place women within a tradition of

particular gender performance, and further naturalize the feminine state and

experience as the same sort of "objective truth" that Butler theorizes. Lindsey also

notes the political motivations of Namura's elaborations upon Japanese myth, saying:

> Namura is not simply the author of a guide but also the author – the
> producer – of a myth. As producer he chooses particular metaphors
> and narrative to amplify his concern and that, he hopes, of his female
> audience, the consumers of his myth: guiding women toward the good
> life. (Lindsey 45)

It is also compelling to consider why these guidebooks were made in the first place.

Lindsey claims that the reason could be, at least in part, because a *jokun*'s "male

authors were thoroughly convinced that they knew what was best for the moral and

social cultivation of their female audience" (Lindsey 50). While *Onna chōhōki* is not

necessarily as explicitly offensive about the lesser state of the female gender, it

remains a work representative of and influenced by the Neo-Confucian ideology of

the age. Lindsey writes that "it is predictably and patently patriarchal, patronizingly

worrisome about the presumed state of women, and confident in its diagnosis and

prognosis of that state;" and is successful because Namura is able to build upon a

notion of femininity that was tied to cultural heritage and history (Lindsey 50).

One can see through this introduction of institutional ideology in the medieval

and early modern periods that the status of women was always sanctioned by male

authority in some capacity. In the cases of both the *Lotus Sutra* and the various *jokun*

outlined in this chapter, women were placed subordinately to men, taking on various

associations that deemed them to be inferior to men in intellect, physique, and

spiritual purity. This was justification enough for those instituting these beliefs that

women had no place in positions of authority, such as "lord" or "buddha." The

perpetuation of such rationale illustrates quite successfully the binding repetitive

gender constructs that afflicted women during these time periods, and showcases the

extent to which power policed the bodies of Japanese women. This reality, as I will

demonstrate in chapters 3 and 4, translates to the dramatic representation of women

on the noh and kabuki stages. The two plays I will use as case studies, "Momijigari"

and "Dōjōji," highlight the ways in which the theatre not only reflected these

confining gender norms, but orchestrated their plots so that these women, no matter

how fearsome they appeared as demons, always submitted to male authority in the

name of justice.

Chapter 3: Momijigari

Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis examine the vestiges of power struggles introduced in Chapter 2 through a close reading of two popular plays in the noh and kabuki traditions. Attributed to the noh playwright Kanze Nobumitsu and translated by Meredith Weatherby in Earle Ernst's anthology *Three Japanese Plays from the Traditional Theatre,* the first work, "Momijigari" *(Viewing the Autumn Foliage),* centers on an encounter between a famed military general and a mysterious group of beautiful court women in the deep forest of Mount Togakushi, and incorporates both the heroic and spiritual against a backdrop of mystical Japanese wilderness. The play is especially intriguing because of its particular configuration of class and moral standing between the two main characters that features an undercurrent of Buddhist ideology, which proves to be essential to the plot.

"Momijigari" also provides a particularly effective example of the changes in the presentation Buddhism has undergone from the medieval to the early modern periods, evidenced by the kabuki text of the play discussed at the end of this chapter. Through my analysis, I hope to answer the following questions*: How does "Momijigari," as a work which heavily incorporates Buddhist ideology in its noh form, illuminate the power relations outlined by Foucault, Butler, and Dolan? How do these illuminations of power struggle change with time, and with the institution of different power regimes?*

Beng Choo Lim writes in *Another Stage: Kanze Nobumitsu and the Late Muromachi Noh Theater* that noh can generally be divided into four chronological stages. First was the formation of the theatre, then its initial success during the lifetimes of its founders Kan'ami and Zeami, its development as a form of shogunate-sanctioned art and subsequent decline, and finally its revival at the end of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (Lim xiii-xvi). A main distinction made of noh in *Another Stage* is that "during Zeami's time… *sarugaku* noh started to develop toward the status of an officially 'sanctioned" art form with Zeami's assiduous writing of treatises and composition of plays. And two generations later, during Nobumitsu's time, noh finally achieved the position of a form of cultural capital" (Lim xvi). The first play I will examine, "Momijigari" *(Viewing the Autumn Foliage),* was created during this tumultuous time, and is credited to Kanze Nobumitsu. A nephew of Zeami through his father, the dramatist On'ami, Nobumitsu was primed for success in the dramatic arts since birth; despite being the youngest of seven, he assumed leadership of the Kanze theatre troupe after the death of his eldest brother Masamori (Lim 30, 36-37). Kanze Nobumitsu is chiefly linked to the proliferation of the *furyū* style of noh that came into vogue in the generations after Kan'ami and Zeami, and is "marked by the use of more stage and hand props, elaborate costumes, and the number of performers present on stage; often also with more dramatic significance given to role types other than the shite" (Lim 54). Further, the *furyū* style experienced a 'shift of focus from an internal emotional landscape of the characters to external drama" (Lim 54).

Momijigari: The Noh

The plays of noh theatre are generally categorized using the classical *gobandate* or "five type" system: "god" plays, "warrior" plays, "wig" (or female ghost or spirit) plays, "madwoman" (or "miscellaneous") plays, and finally "demon" plays (Brown 21). The *furyū* style was known to complicate this arrangement as the theatre tradition flourished, and plays like Momijigari bear the markings of such experimentation, with both warriors and demons. Of Momijigari in particular, Lim writes that though "many noh plays performed today provide their audience with plenty of information about the setting of the play and the *waki's* intention at the outset," "Momijigari" is not one of those plays; the conflict, much like its atmosphere, is difficult to read because of its "multiple levels of deception" between the main characters, which adds to the excitement of the final battle scene that unveils whose wits are mightier (Lim 55-57). This lack of clarity marks "Momijigari" as distinctive and quite unusual in the noh repertoire, and adds to the mystique of the faraway setting and suspicious interactions between the two main characters.

The play begins with the appearance of women in the absence of any men. Their talk of autumn provides an appropriate seasonal frame for the play, and an appropriate placement of the play within the repertoire of other Japanese aesthetic traditions more generally. With their repeated utterance of "the drizzling rains of autumn… / The scarlet maple leaves," viewers are given mere cues as to the tone and atmosphere of the setting without any implication that this event will be used for wrongdoing (Kanze 19). This opening scene also positions the women concretely within nature, and implies the introduction of the general Koremochi as coming from

outside of this realm, from the capital. Koremochi is, however, also introduced with

his own exploration of the autumnal landscape of Mount Togakushi, and furthers the

spiritual encounter he will have with the "Gentlewoman," as she is called, as an event

whose mystical nature is exacerbated by the fact that nature surrounds them, and that

they are alone. Nature is used as a plot device to unite the two groups in the forest –

through their shared purpose in coming to see the maple leaves, Koremochi is given

reason to accompany the court ladies on their journey.

The beginning of Momijigari also concretely positions the play within the

Buddhist canon with its use of Buddhist allegory, which provides justification as to

why Koremochi should not refuse the womens" offer of companionship on their tour:

> *Gentlewoman*: oh, / heartless one! / Does not the proverb have it thus: /
> "To take shelter from a passing shower…
> *Koremochi*: "…under the same tree;..."
> *Gentlewoman*: "…to stop…"
> *Chorus*: "…and drink from the same stream; / To be husband and wife
> for a day – / All these are meetings fated / Since lives lived long ago."
> / Does not the proverb have it so? / And is it not a similar fate / That
> has brought us to this roadside meeting?" (Kanze 25-26)

The notion of "fate" as an element belonging to the canon of Buddhist thought is

taken to be good enough reason for Koremochi to override his own reservations about

accompanying court ladies through the forest. Despite the fact that they are strangers

whose most "highly ranked" noblewoman will not give her name, the ideology by

which they abide encourages Koremochi to accept their vague introductions. The

womens" eventual use of such ideology for evil also suggests their ill intentions; by

manipulating religious teaching so that Koremochi and his attendants bend to their

whims, the Gentlewoman and her attendants establish themselves in a morally corrupt

position relative to Koremochi, who is submitting to their requests as an act of

acknowledging religious tradition.

This framing of the play – with women as morally depraved demons disguised

as beautiful women in order to enable the impulses of a man of high rank – is

successful in removing blame from Koremochi's own poor choices and placing it

disproportionately onto the women as the play progresses, with Koremochi accepting

their offers of drink and dance. In the play, wine is said to be a drink that may

"corrupt a man's heart;" and Koremochi's acceptance of it certainly shows "how

inconstant a man's will" is (Kanze 27). Blame, however, is configured unequally;

there is the implication that Koremochi is only persuaded to drink the wine in the first

place because of the Gentlewoman's use of Buddhist proverb. The play continues

with the Chorus describing how, along the trajectory of Buddhist ideology, one

transgression leads invariably to the violation of many more commandments, and this

marks the beginning point in Koremochi's downfall:

> Now, / Many are the Buddha's commandments, / But even as you
> break the command against wine / So will you surely break two more -
> / That against falsehood, / That against adultery - / and in an instant /
> Three commandments have been broken…. (Kanze 27)

But still, the Gentlewoman continues to adhere to religious doctrine to justify her

motives in approaching Koremochi, using his drunkenness as further fodder for her

affections:

> …and surely our meeting / Was ordained from some deep love. We
> felt for one another / In lives long past. / Why else, then, / In this most
> unexpected meeting of the roadside, / Would I have shown this great
> emotion, / Entreating you to stop, / Reproaching your coldness / With

words as slight / As the dew upina blade of grass, / And pledged you
my troth forever? (Kanze 28)

In this passage, the Gentlewoman has intensified her argument with an emotional appeal to Koremochi while continuing to affirm her devotion to the Buddhist proverb mentioned earlier in the play. Koremochi, beguiled by her remarks, continues to drink until he is lulled into a drunken stupor. The Gentlewoman's plan to kill him becomes clear by the appearance of Hachiman, who has come to save the general with his omnipresent knowledge of the women's plans to fool Koremochi – the audience finds out in this scene that the Gentlewoman is, in fact, a demon.

This divine intervention is an act of Buddhist karma and serves to highlight Koremochi's inherent righteousness, as Hachiman, the Shinto/Buddhist deity of war, was called to aid a deserving soldier in need. Hachiman's appearance in Momijigari may also be read as an act of karma pertaining to the women on Mt. Togakushi, as their inherent evil requires punishment by the forces of good. This brings us to the final scene in the play, whose outcome is determined by this distribution of karmic intervention: once Koremochi awakens with the knowledge that he must slay the women, they return to the stage in their true "fearsome" form, with horned heads, spitting fire at him (Kanze 32). The dialogue of this scene belongs exclusively to Koremochi, with the Chorus describing his 'staunch and undismayed" stance and fearless fight, with the blessing of Hachiman on his side (Kanze 32). The play ends with Koremochi once again proving his valor, with karma dealt and evil vanquished, but the womens" fate remains unresolved.

This ending, however, begs further consideration: why was Koremochi the only character worthy of karmic retribution? Hachiman, despite his knowledge of the women's destitute nature, did not come to offer them salvation, but to rescue Koremochi from his unjust death. This choice does not seem discriminatory or glaringly obvious in the context of the play, as the viewer is aware of and sympathetic to Koremochi's plight, and is aware that the Gentlewoman is the established antagonist. While on the one hand Koremochi does indeed fall into a state of vulnerability through his mistakes from which he requires outside intervention to escape, the mistakes themselves are from no fault of his own, because he was deceived by slanderous use of religious thought.

In any case, Koremochi remains the only character in the play to undergo any sort of cycle of sin and salvation, while the female demons remain static in their immorality, revealing an evil nature at the end of the play that did not develop, but was merely hidden away. Despite the fact that Koremochi did indeed partake in sin, he is pardoned and saved by Hachiman, while the women, manifested as demons in human form, are inherent sinners at their core, and are not even offered any hope of salvation. The Buddhist concept of karma is important here – it is not questioned (or addressed) that Koremochi deserves to be saved by Hachiman (despite getting himself into this situation) conceivably because Koremochi has good karma, while the women, as demons, ostensibly do not. Within the context of this play, the likening of the women to demons marks a regression in their path to Buddhahood; instead of men, their transformation is into that of an animal, into something even lesser than their original presentation as women. The conclusion of Momijigari leaves

the demons as they are, with no hope for salvation, and Koremochi with validation of his superiority over them.

Momijigari: The Kabuki

James R. Brandon, editor and compiler of *Kabuki Plays on Stage: Restoration and Reform, 1872-1905,* remarks that the kabuki version of Momijigari (translated by Richard Emmert and Alan Cummings) is a play in which "the forces of rationality, order, and the progressive modern world (in the person of Koremochi) stand arrayed against the forces of an older, mysterious, and superstitiously reactionary past" (Kanze 307). This explanation aptly describes Koremochi as a dynamic character with the potential for progress, with the court women continuing to exist in an immovable and barbaric state of evil, just as they did in the noh. This rendering, furthermore, gives audiences a slight – but still notable – shift in framing; the kabuki, more than the noh, centers around the fame and courage of Koremochi as a hero, and less about the religious implications of his strange encounter.

The Kabuki version of the play differs markedly from the outset, beginning: "as the setting sun glimmers through the tree boughs, /a brave warrior appears into the vast splendor;" the magnificence of the season is lost here, as there is less talk of the actual "*momijigari"* event in the kabuki version to make room for the constant praise for Koremochi. Further, it is only via Koremochi that the audience is introduced to the women, whose leader is named Sarashina in this version (Kanze 309). The entire introduction of the play is made relative to Koremochi's greatness; the Takemoto ensemble musicians introduce our main character as the "renowned

Koremochi of the Taira clan," whose group of warriors is described as "following

paths deep and rugged" to see the autumn leaves (Kanze 310). Their encounter with

the court ladies, too, is permeated by allusions to Koremochi's greatness, with one of

Sarashina's attendants exclaiming, "we have heard much about the Yogo general"

(Kanze 311). Instead of a reference to the Buddhist proverb that is used as a plot

device for the noh, the kabuki Momijigari uses Koremochi's fame as justification for

their encounter, and his chivalry as justification for his choosing to accompany the

women, suggesting the influence of Neo-Confucian concepts found in the *bushido*

ideology of the Edo period. With no talk of fate, and without any religious

connotations in the meeting between Koremochi and Sarashina, the entire premise of

the play has shifted to accommodate the magnitude of Koremochi's greatness; this

pits the evil of Sarashina more directly – and more fundamentally to this play – as

someone (or something) to be vanquished.

The reframing of Koremochi's choice to surrender to the court ladies"

requests is another significant departure from the original noh version of the play.

Whereas the scene of drink and entertainment in the noh involves Koremochi

tempting sin, with reference to Buddhist commandments, the kabuki involves

Koremochi contradicting his own status as a general; as Koremochi accepts wine

from the women, the Takemoto narrates, "in spite of himself even a valiant warrior,"

he submits to their advances (Kanze 314). This portion of the text, which held heavy

Buddhist implications in the noh version, reads as very firmly secular in the kabuki

version, with most of the dynamic between Koremochi and Sarashina based around

notions of ideal warrior behavior on the part of Koremochi, and how he affirms and

denies that ideal archetype. When "pressed with drink by the serving women," his

feelings, not his (religiously informed) moral resolve, are the reason behind the fact

that Koremochi 'soften[s] within the sake cup" (Kanze 316).

Without heavy Buddhist imagery interspersed throughout the text, the final

battle between the two parties is also significantly changed from the noh original. In

true kabuki style, the battle scene is less symbolic and more extravagant; to further

highlight the strength and courage of Koremochi, the demon Sarashina is given an

active voice in the climax of the play. The Tokiwazu and describes Koremochi's

displays of greatness during this scene with the line: "the virtuous Koremochi/with

his virtuous sword," while the Tokiwazu announce the death of Sarashina, saying "the

demon is at last slain by brilliance" (Kanze 325).

The outcome of the kabuki version of Momijigari and its fundamental

reframing to make Koremochi's presence excessively grandiose demonstrates the

extent to which the *bushidō* ideology proliferated throughout popular theatre. The

play has less to do with Buddhist reflection of the nature of sin, karma, and divine

intervention, and more with the physical conflict presented to Koremochi, which

enables him to prove his superiority as a warrior and leader. The women appear

subordinate to Koremochi's greatness in that their presence serves as a mere target for

his prowess over them. The Gentlewoman in the noh, while defined by her

immorality and inherent evil once she reveals her true demonic nature, is at least

given the opportunity to engage with Koremochi in an exchange of deception that

furthers the development of the notion of karma within the play. Sarashina, in the

kabuki, bears the weight of static representation from the characterization developed

in the noh, coupled with her use as a target of Koremochi's power, without any means to retaliate. The demons in the kabuki Momijigari lure Koremochi in by performing femininity effectively; they are referred to with regard to their emotions, praised for their beauty, and successful in their deception because they orchestrated a situation in which Koremochi could enter the scene purporting his masculinity. They, in turn, responded with a seemingly feminine submittal to this display of masculinity. Through such reconfigurations of plot motivations that move the play along, the battle of karma that Momijigari was in the noh has been transformed and secularized into a battle of morality, with the feminine subversion of the masculine (through lustful deception) serving as the catalyst for action, and the resolution involving Koremochi reclaiming his authority in his valiant assertion of warrior righteousness. The play also effectively warns against the powers of female seduction that corrupt men who lack steadfastness of will, further reinforcing the necessity of Confucian ideals of social order to prevent women form having the opportunity to do so. Sarashina's actions imply a lack of rational thinking and awareness of the negative consequences those actions may bring. In her disregard for institutionally-defined moral (and gendered) behavior, motivated only by evil impulse, Sarashina proves that these constructions are indeed necessary for the continued moral wellbeing of men and women alike.

It is also interesting to note what happens to the idea of blame explored in the noh performance of Momijigari. The absence of religious undertone highlights this intriguing interplay of gender ideal, expectation, and performance. The noh Koremochi acted righteously in his decision to accompany the women based on their

exchange of proverb and considering his ignorance of their true nature. On the contrary, it is striking that in the kabuki version, Koremochi is punished for his lapse in "warrior-like" thinking; because he dines and dances with the women *in spite* of his status as a "valiant warrior," he is deceived. This represents a paradigm within which warrior logic is resolute and infallible – it only fails in Momijigari because of Koremochi's human error. This establishment of Koremochi's warrior mentality as objective truth is the kind of "naturalization" that Butler argues against, because – and Momijigari is a glaring example of this – such naturalization within the context of the male-created noh and kabuki traditions is at the expense of the female character, who is pitted against the rational male as the enemy.

The changes that Momijigari has experienced in its transformation from the noh to the kabuki traditions effectively highlight the extent to which institutional power can affect modes of thought that proliferate throughout popular art, and how this knowledge manifests itself in the portrayal of various characters. In the noh version, the audience is presented with a story heavily influenced by Buddhist ideology that serves to both determine the plot and outcome of the story while also characterizing the works" key players in such a way that they fit within institutionally-sanctioned spaces which are social and gendered. Koremochi and the Gentlewoman interact within a space defined by Buddhist ideology in the noh version, with their encounter taken as fate within the play, but also functioning as an expression of a larger dialogue on karma outside the stage. The kabuki version of Momijigari, meanwhile, relinquishes Buddhist association in favor of expressing samurai might. Most importantly, both power regimes are used in each respective

play to rationalize and affirm the behavior of the Koremochi character while also justifying the punishment of the female demon character; despite the differences in the female character's actions (and intentions behind those actions) between the noh and kabuki plays, her character remains subservient and static, and exists merely as a physical manifestation of evil, needing to be overpowered.

Chapter 4: Dōjōji

"Dōjōji," like Momijigari, deals with issues of sin and salvation in the life of a

woman turned into vicious monster. As a consistently popular play in both the noh

and kabuki traditions, "Dōjōji" has also seem some very interesting revisions in its

adaptation to the raucous kabuki theatre, which will be discussed in the latter part of

this chapter. My guiding research question remains similar to the one I posed in the

previous chapter – *How does the nature of female salvation in the noh version of*

"Dōjōji" point to a particular configuration of gendered power relations, and how

does this configuration change with the employment of a different institutional

framework in the kabuki? – but the kabuki "Dōjōji's" wildly variant plot makes for an

intriguing discussion.

Dōjōji: The Noh

The play begins with discussions among priests at "Dōjōji" temple in Kii

province about the installation of a new temple bell. These characters reveal that "for

reasons known only to himself, the Abbot has ordered that women are not to be

allowed inside the courtyard where the service will take place;" this proposition,

made by the highest authority of the temple system, is considered curious by the

priests but is not questioned further (Dōjōji 243). Immediately the audience is given

the gendered context within which the rest of the play will take place – such a request

would be honored because of the ways in which women were stigmatized with the

advent of Buddhism. If one were to operate according to the logic that women's

bodies were tainted and needed to be escaped from in order to achieve enlightenment,

as discussed in chapter 2, their rejection from this most important temple service does

not seem out of the ordinary. Further, this setup must simply be acted upon to

continue with the flow of the play; the logic behind the abbot's choice is not

explained, and the treatment of women's exclusion is taken to be a trivial and natural

rule that the abbot is justified in enforcing.

The unnamed female character of the play is also first introduced to the

audience with an account of her religiosity, as she explains that she is traveling to see

the bell "in the hopes of improving my chances of salvation" so that "my sin, my guilt,

will melt away" (Dōjōji 243). Here she gives her inherent acknowledgement of

women's status as inferior and impure by Buddhist standards – even though she does

not give an account of the type of sin she has committed, her need for prayer as a

woman is universally understood. Still, posing as a dancer, she is questioned by the

priests at the temple, and eventually granted access because she has skills outside

those of an "ordinary woman" (Dōjōji 244). While the fact that she is a dancer grants

her special privilege and agency at this point in the play, her profession falls outside

of the strictly defined domestic female role – for the purposes of the play, the

woman's vaguely-defined and mysterious profession brings the priests

unpredictability, which proves to be particularly fearsome.

Once the abbot realizes that the dancer on their temple grounds hides the spirit

of a vengeful woman whose failed courtship with a Dōjōji priest left her unfulfilled,

he says: "all of our austerities and penances have been for strength in this moment.

Pray for all your hearts" (Dōjōji 248). This calls into question the motives behind the

woman who felt wronged by the priest's rejection – why does she feel the need to

punish those who had no hand in her rejection of love? As authors such as Brown,

Kawashima, and Reider have commented in their own works, the powers of jealousy

and emotional impulsiveness have enraptured the woman, marking her as the

antithesis to rational thinking. Lashing out against those who were not responsible

for her pain – just as Brown describes in his analysis of Rokujō in "Aoi no Ue" – first

to the man who rebuffed her, and then to the innocent priests of "Dōjōji" in a

different generation, creates in this woman a repetitive cycle of destructiveness that

comes to define her as a woman whose pursuit of love ended in failure. This type of

associative act further cements this behavior as stereotypically female. As Brown

notes, it is also interesting that women alone are depicted as mediums for discontent

spirits come back to earth – the Dōjōji maiden is marked not only by her actions as

she transforms into a demon, but simply by her creed. This representation of *women*

specifically as the carriers of evil, vengeful spirits has been thoroughly enmeshed

within folk culture, and is therefore also firmly situated within the canon of female

representation in the premodern theatre.

       The abbot's urging his priests to pray for their safety as the demon within the

woman awakens under the bell also indicates an important point along the religious

undercurrent of the noh "Dōjōji" – that religion is instituted as a logical force to battle

woman's inherent irrationality, and that this order imposed by religion is *necessary*

for the woman's salvation. As the priests ask, "can the sacred strength of our holy

order fail?" they seem to be questioning the steadfastness of their prayer, when in fact

the play is orchestrated so that this cannot happen (Dōjōji 248). The fact that the

Dōjōji priests' prayers can even slay a snake is testament to the extraordinary power

of both their belief and the truth of their teachings. "If now you show your mercy,

your benevolence, /What refuge can the serpent find?," they ask; and, indeed, their

prayers are granted: "And as we pray,/Defeated by our prayers, /Behold the serpent

fall!" (Dōjōji 250). The play concludes with the "Dōjōji" priests as heroes, having

saved their temple and the fate of the serpent, giving it salvation. Such a feat proves

that even the most destitute forms of life, like this female serpent overcome by

irrational lovesickness, can achieve salvation.

But it is very important to consider the fact that the maiden of "Dōjōji"

required the prayers of the abbot and servants in order to be saved – she is not

responsible for or in control of her fate at any point throughout the play. She is

plagued by a malicious spirit merely because she is female; transformation into a

monster is involuntary, fueled by primal emotion; and her "rescue" from her

serpentine body and subsequent enlightenment was put into the hands of benevolent

male ascetics who took sympathy on her. Her karmic cycle of worldly pain is only

broken with outside influence. Despite the fact that "Dōjōji" is indeed a work that is

very symbolic of Buddhist belief, one wonders about the implication the Dōjōji

maiden's transformation into a monster has on medieval views of women more

generally. Her transformation certainly adds to the intensity of her irrationality, but

her irrationality is not associated with the fact that she is a monster, but a woman

whose emotions went haywire and the implication that as a woman, she cannot

contain those emotions. This failure to maintain control over this woman's

impulsiveness may be seen as a cautionary tale against women's emotional folly –

there could exist a monster in every woman if she is not given the proper institutional

structure, especially when she finds herself in a state of emotional turmoil.

Dōjōji: The Kabuki

This kabuki version of "Dōjōji," translated by Mark Oshima in Karen

Brazell's *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays,* is defined by its

stylistic series of dances performed by Hanako, the given name of the maiden of

"Dōjōji." Throughout the kabuki version, there is an abundance of humor and poetry

not found in the original noh, but one glaring omission changes the dynamics of this

play drastically: there is hardly any religious association with the actions of the

characters, and the temple setting of the play is merely an empty reference to the

play's origins.

The play, beginning with the priests' banter, openly mocks the magnitude of

the abbot's devotions, which establishes the priests as not very firmly invested in their

studies – Priest 3, who says "just thinking about how long the head priest will drone

on reciting sutras makes my stomach turn," represents just one example of the ways

that this version of "Dōjōji" turns the original on its head (Dōjōji 508). The Maiden,

too, is introduced by her love affair, as she says "I think of my sacred oaths of fidelity

to the one I love," as she approaches the temple (Dōjōji 509). In the kabuki "Dōjōji,"

the sight of the bell serves, to the maiden Hanako, as a reminder of the sounds that

"damned the river of my love and stopped the flow of my passion" as she was parted

from her lover (Dōjōji 510). The chanting ensemble explains that "there are many

things to hate about the sound of a temple bell," because it interrupts passionate

encounters and other forms of mortal sin; this statement is made in stark contrast to

the strictly religious tone of the noh version of the play, and further signifies that the

kabuki version is made for the popular audience who derive more excitement from

unfulfilled love affairs (Dōjōji 514). Oshima then explains in the play's notes that the

forthcoming dance, described by the phrase *iwazu katarazu,* outlines the love shared

between a man and a woman, while also incorporating contemporary themes not

found in the original noh production, such as the implications of living as a woman in

the pleasure quarters:

> My heart does not speak, it does not tell tales,
> but the tangles in my hair and the pain in my heart
> all come from your faithlessness.
> So it is that all men are fickle.
> Even though it is the felicitous season
> when people sing in praise of cherry blossoms,
> what my lover told me contained meanings false,
> double as my waving sleeves.
> Even when I am with a man in the pleasure quarters,
> my mind wanders to the one I love.
> So it is that all women are fickle.
> One raised in the capital is as beautiful and pure as the blossom of the
> lotus.
> (Dōjōji 515)

After this explanation which gives insight to the nature of the maiden's pain,

the ensemble narrates a story about Hanako traveling through the various brothel

districts in Edo, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, and Nagasaki, told through yet another dance;

she asks of her absent lover, "are all the written vows we exchanged false?" (Dōjōji

520). Despite the fact that she denies the kind of emotional outburst we see coming

from jealous impulse in the works of Brown and Kawashima, saying, "having vowed

never to become jealous, I became accustomed to hiding my feelings," Hanako

continues to question the nature of her relationship with her lover, asking, "now, after

all that has happened, I think how cruel you are. Is a woman worthless?" (Dōjōji 520).

While her questions may lead one to think her jealousy and disappointment has gotten

the best of her, Hanako does not let her emotions manifest into physical violence.

Such introspection makes up the rising action to this play, and as Oshima explains in

his footnotes, splits off into one of two endings. In the more common ending, the

maiden simply disappears after lamenting how hateful the bell is because it

symbolizes her failed love, while in the alternate ending, Hanako dances under the

bell as it falls over her, reenacting (at least in movement) the original noh; as the bell

rises again, the maiden is revealed to be the ghost of Kiyohime, the woman also

afflicted by her unfulfilled love in the noh version (Dōjōji 522). Her appearance only

makes vague allusions to the original work within the text. Finally, the abbot (named

Goro here) appears, but does not vanquish her; instead, the play ends with no concrete

conclusion and no assertion of any moral or religious convictions that would serve to

punish Hanako.

The kabuki "Dōjōji's" radical departure from its decidedly religious

foundational noh text prompts one to question about the symbolic takeaway this play

provides. Without heavily religious imagery, the maiden is left without the "stylized

repetitions" that make up gendered performativity on stage; and even as a work of

theatrical art, Hanako's stance as a passive recipient of romantic rejection takes away

many of the traditional associations that make the demonic female character so

volatile. Instead, the kabuki "Dōjōji" focuses on the style and dance of its actors –

the bell is used for its magnificence, despite its lessened purpose without the demon

hiding inside, or its use in the former abbot's murder; the head abbot appears only at

the end of the play because he is not required to slay the monster with the power of

his prayer. "Dōjōji's" status as a "dance-play" within the kabuki allows it to go

without the symbolic backbone so minutely orchestrated within the noh, and one

could go as far to say that without religious connotation, the Dōjōji maiden does not

have any motivation to be portrayed as a demon (Richie 27).

There is weight, however, in Hanako's emotional turmoil as she describes in

her dances being parted from the man with whom she had an affair. Though she

expresses her disdain at being slighted by her lover, she acknowledges that all actors

in her story are fickle lovers, which is an acknowledgement of the cyclical and

unfulfilling nature of life in the pleasure quarters. Hanako's occupation as a supposed

courtesan puts her in a situation that is morally ambiguous at best – her place in a

world with sexual encounters that are fleeting and meaningless prompts her to

question the nature of human relationships, but she finds no fulfillment in this

exploration. I would argue that Kaibara would decry Hanako's lack of moral

foundation for her unhappiness – Hanako's lack of fulfillment in her relationships

with her lovers and customers is due to the immorality of her behavior, and she

arguably deserves the pain her "incompetence" as a woman has brought her. Through

a Neo-Confucian lens, Hanako arguably epitomizes a woman who does not know her

place and "fails to understand the duties that lie before her very eyes," which is why

she remains unfulfilled at the end of the play (Kaibara 45).

"Dōjōji" shows us how important religious ideology proves to be in the depiction of the female demon herself. Without a need for salvation by the "Dōjōji" priests, many aspects of the kabuki rendition become defunct, and are kept in the production for seemingly cosmetic or thrill-inducing purposes. The newfound focus on romantic relations and the "pulls" of obligation the maiden feels towards her lover despite her occupation as a courtesan allow audiences to sympathize with her and provides interesting context for the many dances Hanako performs, but even these aspects are not judged with a religious lens because, perhaps, the play would present itself too austerely for kabuki audiences looking for spectacle. The fact that the moderation of religious allusion in the kabuki version of "Dōjōji" directly translate to the kinder portrayal of the Maiden show the extent to which institutional power can influence a mode of art production – without the theme of the cycle of sin and salvation rampant throughout the noh version of the play, the kabuki "Dōjōji" sees no need for the portrayal of its female lead in such an unfavorable light.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

       The demon woman archetype found in noh and kabuki shows the extent to which institutional control was alive and well in premodern Japan. Between the noh and kabuki versions of the plays "Momijigari" and "Dōjōji," there is considerable evidence of the shifts in social thinking that occurred with the advent of Confucian social politics in the Edo period. Despite these shifts in institutional ideology, however, one thing remained constant: these women were always portrayed negatively, and were robbed of any personal agency to escape their destitute situations. I argue in this thesis that enmeshed within the portrayal of these women is a certain kind of power play, always dictated according to the whims of male-centered institutional authority.

       From Foucault's assertion that the human body is subject to the influence of institutional power by the way that body is allocated in time, space, and action, to Butler's theory that gender is based on a regulated and naturalized series of associative behaviors that mark certain people as belonging to certain constructed "genders," chapter 2 served to provide a working theory to visualize the nature of power with regard to female subjugation. Jill Dolan's work then put this framework within the sphere of performing arts, establishing the stage as a space that simultaneously affirmed and perpetuated a particular female identity.   To answer the fundamental question of this chapter – *How does institutional pedagogy (namely Buddhist ideology in the medieval period and the moral code of the stratocratic*

shogunate in the early modern period) sanction the lowering of female status in

premodern Japan? – I examined the *Lotus Sutra*, the central text to the Japanese

Buddhist tradition, and the Neo-Confucian *jokun* of the early modern period, to

cultivate an understanding of the authority behind the social sanctions between the

Muromachi and the Edo periods. Judith Butler, in the spirit of Foucault, argues that

the construction of gender is imposed onto individuals by ascribing set of

"associations" to the inherent nature of one gender (in this case, women), and that

women as a group are subject to social control when the repetition of associations is

naturalized within a society and seen as objective truth. Buddhism and Neo-

Confucianism did exactly this with their doctrines. Women were regarded as inferior

to men in every aspect of life (and death,, in the case of Buddhism) in the official

knowledge of both institutions, and power was maintained with the rationalization

that men had earned their place above women through merit.

These ideologies presented themselves in each of the four plays this thesis

examines. The noh version of the play "Momijigari" features an especially strong

Buddhist undercurrent, with blame and karmic retribution constituting the central

themes of the work. The juxtaposition between the righteous warrior Koremochi, and

the Gentlewoman who exploits religious text to deceive him, reinforces the fact that

Koremochi alone is steadfast in his morality, while the possibility of salvation for the

female demon is not even entertained. The kabuki version of this play, meanwhile,

incorporates *bushido* ideology and takes Koremochi's superiority as a warrior as

justification for the divine intervention he receives. In both plays, the women (and

their femininity) are posed as threats to the inherent righteousness of the warrior

Koremochi –the resolution of the play, in which Hachiman is summoned by Koremochi's good karma, offers a convenient re-balancing of karmic fate that ensures Koremochi's victory against the demons.

"Dōjōji" provides a similar case. In the noh version, the priests were shown the consequences of allowing a woman into a sacred space, but they were not punished – instead, the priests were called upon to aid in the salvation of the Dōjōji maiden, because she as a demon could not achieve that feat alone. The play as a cautionary tale effectively reinforces Buddhist law, while also highlighting the lack of control the Dōjōji maiden had over her own fate. The kabuki version, meanwhile, stripped the plot of its Buddhist undertones, and instead made the production more entertaining to Edo-period audiences. In the end, however, the plight of the main character Hanako was arguably self-imposed; her status as a courtesan – which was at odds with the expected female role according to Confucian ideology – could be the source of her unhappiness, which would imply that the play serves to warn audiences against the hardships Hanako's emotionally indulgent lifestyle may bring.

In any case, the demon woman archetype raises many vitally important questions with regard to the aims of social control in medieval and early modern Japan. From these analyses of "Momijigari" and "Dōjōji," we can see that institutional control over women was informed by a fundamental fear of the unknown. Both plays introduce elements of the unfamiliar: "Momijigari" is set the mountains, while "Dōjōji" takes place at a faraway temple; the social ranks and identities of the women are largely unknown; and the emotional (and therefore uncontrollable) appeals these women make to the male characters hide ulterior motives. In each of

the four plays, audiences walk away with the message that these supernatural events occur because of some lapse in judgment – Koremochi drinks the wine, while the "Dōjōji" priests are sympathetic to the maiden's requests. Such events serve to further reinforce the necessity of institutional ideology.

These dramatic works also call into question what sort of implications a demonic characterization has with regards to women, and how this characterization allows male characters to take more violent action against these women in their demon form. When a woman transforms into a demon, the male character is suddenly given an immediate physical justification for acting violently towards them; the act of violence against a woman becomes *righteous* when her appearance is changed, despite the fact that the demon characterization is fundamentally female. With these women reduced to a non-human form, any violent action against them is justified. Further, the mistakes of Koremochi and the "Dōjōji" priests are forgotten once the women reveal their demon form, and they emerge out of the events of the play blameless. It instead becomes their duty to right the moral wrongs that these women represent, which reaffirms their righteousness and moral superiority. These men are absolved of any obligation to treat the demonic woman with dignity, because she has become an enemy in need of extermination. Koremochi's "courageous" defeat of the demon in "Momijigari" instead becomes an act of righteousness, while the priests' salvation of the Dōjōji maiden becomes an act of sympathy.

Finally, I could like to discuss what the demonic representation of these women says about female agency in premodern Japan. The demon woman perfectly epitomizes lack of self-control, and it is interesting to think that these characters are

unabashedly blamed and ridiculed for a transformation they had no control over, while the men who either save or vanquish them are lauded with praise for their valiant efforts. The rigidity of this archetype proves the enormous capability of institutional ideology for social control, and the ability of male authority to justify male superiority. While women may not have been equated to demons in real life, we must remember that their theatrical representation is not at all coincidental. Even if they are exaggerated for the sake of entertainment or moral teaching, these associations manifest themselves in this way because of a deliberate distribution of power whose reigning groups aimed to preserve their own authority.

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