

## **Chapter - IV**

### **The Identity**

The conflict within the mind of the protagonist due to some social impetus was discussed in the second chapter and the psychological implications that arise due to this internal conflict was discussed in the third chapter. This chapter endeavors to bring out the moments of realization in each of the protagonists that allows them to recognize their predicament. Once they realize their predicament they have the power to choose their path and thereby embrace their identity. Each novel is a voyage that the protagonist takes, not just metaphorically in search of their identity but from one place to another, with a mission to accomplish or in fear of something.

In HBEW the Calcutec is forced to travel through a secret path, which resembles the sewers of a big city in order to escape the System. In KS, Kafka Tamura leaves home in fear of an Oedipal prophesy and travels to a new place in order to avoid it. Similarly Satoru Nakata makes the same journey in search of the corner stone to open an entrance. In WSC the protagonist is forced to go looking for a Sheep that has a star on its back and in DDD the narrator, who is the same narrator of WSC makes the same journey again in search of a woman who calls out for him in his dreams. Metaphorically this search or voyage taken by the protagonists could reflect the journey of each individual in search of their desires or the flight from their fears. The search ends only when they discover their real predicament, which is the problem that lies in their perception of who they are and only then are they able to make the choices that need to be made. Their desires and fears lie within themselves. It is not something that is present in their external environment but in their perception of it. This is a search for their individual identities.

The moments of realization are powerful and allow the protagonists to see

themselves for who they are. Realization is being aware of their predicament and identity. It is through realization that man can be aware of himself and thereby attain emotional balance and maturity. Religions of the world promote realization through action for contentment. In the foreword to J.W.T. Mason's *The Meaning of Shinto*, Ann Llewellyn Evans, a Shinto priestess explains the ideas of Shinto asserting that it does not follow any set doctrine but allows the individual to create ones own life. Shinto dictates that life is a creation of each individual and it is up to each one to find the truth about themselves through their actions:

Our path is not pre-destined; it evolves... The written word can become formalized and inflexible to the changing needs of society. In Shinto, great responsibility is instead placed on the individual to search his/her heart for truth and correctness... (Mason)

The idea that many characters in the novel are a part of a single protagonist of the novel is very thick in the selected novels. In HBEW there are images present in both HB and in EW that show that it is the same protagonist in both the narratives. The Calcutec and the Dreamreader are parts of a single protagonist. The Calcutec is the narrator of the external world and the Dreamreader is the narrator of the internal world or the mind of the protagonist.

There are many indications and clues that Murakami leaves for the readers to draw conclusions. The name of the inserted program 'End of the World' that leads to the alternating chapters that take place in the 'End of the World' indicates the strong connection between the protagonists as it has been mentioned. Apart from this, Unicorn skulls and paper clips help to connect HB and EW to the protagonist. The process of shuffling in HB is similar to dream reading in EW. Shuffling is explained by the Scientist to the Calcutec in HB:

In other words, we scrape off the surface just like the dentist scrapes off plaque, leaving the core consciousness. No more margin of error. We just strip the cognitive system of its outer layers, freeze it, and plunk it in a secret compartment. That's the original scheme of shuffling. This much I'd worked out in theory for myself before I joined the System. (HBEW 258)

Similarly in EW the Colonel speaks of the gatekeeper:

For the next few weeks, that will be the main work of the Gatekeeper. First he cuts off their heads, scrapes out their brains and eyes, then boils them until the skulls are clean. The remains are doused with oil and set on fire. (HBEW 202)

The role of the Dreamreader is the same as long as he holds on to his shadow, Once his shadow is completely dead he will cease to be a Dreamreader. Anyone who enters within the walls but still has traces of shadow left will be given the job of the Dreamreader. "These skulls are scraped and buried for a full year in the ground to leech away their energy, then taken to the Library stacks, where they sit until the Dreamreader's hands release the last glimmers of mind into the air." (HBEW 336).

Unicorns appear in both worlds. EW has a lot of beasts that graze and they resemble the unicorn. Unicorn skulls are what the Dreamreader reads. These unicorn skulls are commonplace in EW and can be accepted as part of the magical realism. But the unicorn skull sticks out as a sore thumb in HB where it is not needed except to show the connection between the narratives. The Scientist gifts the Calcutec a skull of the unicorn in memory of all the skulls in his lab where he tests for sound removal. These connections bring about the idea of two identities in the protagonist.

Paperclips can be seen as another link between the two worlds of the

protagonist. In HB the Scientist often has paperclips all around him and he is often seen to clean his cuticle with the paperclips. Paperclips are also seen in EW, which the Dreamreader takes notice of and mentions it to the readers. “The counter is scattered with paperclips. I pick up a handful, then take a seat at the table” (HBEW 41). Similar expressions are seen in EW, “On the desk were a lamp, three ballpoint pens, and an appointment book, beside which lay scattered a handful of paperclips” (HBEW 19). The protagonist voices the question that arises in the minds of the readers. “By the way, though, why all the paperclips?” I asked. “*Pa-per-clips?*” she sang back. “To keep papers together, of course. Everybody uses them. Don't you?” (HBEW 76). Paperclips serve a purpose in HB as they lead the way to the professor and its presence in EW guides the readers to find the link in the narratives and the identities of the protagonist.

Similarly in KS there are images that connect the narratives of the novel. The bridge, the flute player and the timing of events suggest that Nakata and Kafka are two identities of a single protagonist, where Kafka narrates from the real world and Nakata from an imaginary world of the mind. Both the narrators remember the bridge that they cross to get to Takamatsu from Nagano ward. Kafka mentions the bridge “I'm asleep when our bus drives across the huge new bridge over the Inland Sea. I'd seen the bridge only on maps and had been looking forward to seeing it for real. Somebody gently taps me on the shoulder and I wake up.” (KS 34). Nakata mentions the bridge many times in his narrative as well. The bridge is his connection to Takamatsu since he cannot tell the direction he is headed towards:

"So where are you headed?"

"Nakata doesn't know yet. But after we got here I knew I had to go across a bridge. A big bridge near here."

"Ah, so you're going to Shikoku."

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Hoshino, but I don't know geography very well. If you go over the bridge are you in Shikoku?"

"Yeah. If you're talking about a big bridge around here, that's the one to Shikoku..."

"That's right. Nakata's going to cross a big bridge."

"Things'll be clearer once you're on the other side?"

"I think so. I won't know anything until I cross the bridge."

"Hmm," Hoshino said. "So crossing that bridge is very important."

(KS 219-21)

Both the characters make note of the bridge. It is an object of interest to both narrators.

The flute player is an important character in Nakata's narrative. He is called Johnnie Walker in Nakata's story and he kills cats, eats their hearts and makes a flute from their souls. It is because of the flute player that Nakata leaves Nakano Ward and travels to Takamatsu. The flute player makes a short appearance in the narrative of Kafka when he enters the parallel world.

The blood on Kafka's shirt when he wakes up along with the leeches and eels raining from the sky is a deliberate and obvious indicator that the narratives are somehow connected. Yet Murakami does not come outright and reveal that the narratives are connected. He keeps them at a safe distance from each other for the magic to be prominent and allows for dialectics of the themes.

In WSC and DDD since there is just one narrative, the idea that certain characters are identities of the protagonist becomes important. It is a very subtle idea that persists through both the novels. In WSC the Rat, the Sheep Man and the narrator

have a way of staring at their hands, which serves as a giveaway. It is an unconscious habit the narrator has, “I gazed at my hands on the table.” (WSC 36), similarly in DDD, “You're probably right. As you say, I've lost and I'm lost and I'm confused. I'm not anchored to anything. Here's the only place I feel like I belong to.” I broke off and stared at my hands in the candlelight.” (DDD 85). Later he notices that the Sheep Man does the same. “The Sheep Man stared at the back of his hand, then turned it over to look at the palm. Exactly the way the Rat used to do, that gesture.” (WSC 255). These mannerisms are suggestive of the connection between the characters. Incidents like the absence of the reflection of the Sheep Man and the Rat speaking from beyond the grave also indicate that the characters are part of the narrator's mind and can be considered identities of the narrator.

In DDD, Kiki and the Sheep Man mention that the people in the room are all connected. The Sheep Man calls the Dolphin Hotel the knot, which connects the narrator to the other characters. “Weconnectthings. That'swhatwedo. Likeaswitchboard, wecon- nectthings. Here'stheknot.” (DDD 84). The narrator realizes this connection when he watched the movie *Unrequited Love* for the first time and he sees his high school classmate with his ex-girlfriend on the screen and it hits him, “That's when I knew: We were all connected.” (DDD 101) but the narrator does not know the depth of this connection. It is the bizarre room of his dreams that make the connections more concrete. These connections seen in each of the novels contributes to the realization of the characters.

The moments of realization often take on a metaphysical nature. Identity is a complex idea and it is subject to change. To understand the significance and nature of identity and existence, Murakami has used magical realism. It enables the author to reveal the metaphysical nature of life and to realize the predicament and the identity

of a person. Murakami uses techniques to make this realization come alive to impact the readers. The use of magical realism and dreams as techniques to discover the metaphysical nature of the protagonists' world is seen. Murakami is often seen to wave his wand of magical realism to show the magic in the real and the real in the magical. The cliché that fact is stranger than fiction is often seen in life and is reflected vividly throughout his novels.

Magical realism is a technique that has become very popular in the twentieth century. The term was first used by Franz Roh, a German art critic in 1925 (Hart 1). Later it gained popularity with the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison and J K Rowling. In the Merriam Webster the term magical realism is defined as “a literary genre or style associated especially with Latin America that incorporates fantastic or mythical elements into otherwise realistic fiction” (“magical realism,” def). The literary term ‘magical realism’ is described as:

Postmodern writers mingle and juxtapose realistic events with fantastic ones, or they experiment with shifts in time and setting, “labyrinthine narratives and plots” and “arcane erudition” . . . and often they combine myths and fairy stories with gritty Hemingway-esque detail. This mixture creates truly dreamlike and bizarre effects in their prose. (“Magical realism”)

Postmodern writing is said to employ this technique to a great extent to give a dream like quality to the novel. “[It] abolishes the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural on the level of textual representation and the reader, who recognizes the two conflicting logical codes on the semantic level, suspends his judgment of what is rational and what is irrational in the fictitious world” (Faris 8). The use of Magical realism allows the author to take the readers beyond realism and the events that are of

everyday occurrences to a whole different realm of imagination. “Magic realism is a literary device or a way of seeing in which there is space for the invisible forces that move the world: dreams, legends, myth, emotion, passion, history.” (Hegerfeldt 35). The most common definition of the term is that of Flores who defines magical realism as “Amalgamation of realism and fantasy” (Hegerfeldt 37). Murakami is seen to use magical realism in most of his novels.

In virtually all of his fiction, with the one notable exception of *Noruei no mori* [*Norwegian Wood*], a realistic narrative setting is created, then disrupted, sometimes mildly, sometimes violently, by the bizarre or the magical. As Yokoo Kazuhiro puts it, Murakami explores “how the world, our insignificant daily lives, might or might not change after introducing one tiny vibration.” It is for this reason that Murakami's work seems to fall into the general category of “magical realism”. (Strecher “Magical Realism” 267)

Cats that can talk, men who cannot read but can communicate with cats, fish and leeches raining from the sky, existence of parallel worlds, doppelgangers, men in sheep's clothing, a sheep that rules the world, walking through walls, post nuclear cities, sound reduction and control and the ability to be in two places at the same time are some of the elements of magical realism that Murakami uses in his novels.

Although magical realism was at first associated with Latin American writers such as Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel and Jorge Borges, it also includes works by authors like Toni Morrison, Salman Rushdie, Alice Hoffman and Sarah Addison Allen. (Strecher “Magical Realism” 267-8)

The concept of magical realism bears certain political and cultural specificities that should at least be addressed before applying the term



to Murakami's work. For instance, there are those who claim that magical realism is a specifically Latin American idea, one that expresses the natural wonder felt by the people of Latin America toward their land as a “marvelous” yet real place. Others argue for a more politicized, but equally region-specific definition of magical realism as a post- colonial discourse that rejects traditional Euro- American emphasis on realism and positivism in favor of a world view that permits the “magical” to coexist with the "real. (Strecher “Magical Realism” 268)

Murakami’s style of magical realism is different from that of many others like Garcia Marquez since Murakami’s characters constantly point out the absurdity of the situation. His fantasy or the magical element used is pointed out to the readers by the characters. In KS, Hoshino points out the appearance of Colonel Sanders as weird and absurd. He asks the man why he is dressed like Colonel Sanders, the founder of KFC. But the man replies that he is *the* Colonel Sanders himself. Hoshino’s doubts about why Colonel Sanders works as a pimp in the back alleys of Tokyo reflect the thoughts of the readers and point out the magical realism that is employed.

Similarly in HBEW the Calcutec questions the existence of EW and each of the fantastical elements used are given a symbolic meaning. The Gatekeeper points out the existence of the wall, the librarian points out the absurd nature of having a wall that seems to be alive, around the town, the narrator of WSC mentions about the absurd sheep suit and in DDD the elevators and the sixteenth floor are pointed out by Yumiyoshi. The absurd nature of the situation is noticed and then accepted by the characters, which in turn are accepted by the readers. This is different from the magical realism of Latin America, where the magical element is not pointed out but

simply accepted as a part of the fiction and its reality. Murakami gives reason as to why he constantly points out the absurdities of his magical worlds:

[It is] my honest observation of how strange the world is. My protagonists are experiencing what I experience as I write, which is also what the readers experience as they read. Kafka or García Márquez, what they are writing is more literature, in the classical sense. My stories are more actual, more contemporary, more the postmodern experience. Think of it like a movie set, where everything—all the props, the books on the wall, the shelves—is fake. The walls are made of paper. In the classical kind of magic realism, the walls and the books are real. If something is fake in my fiction, I like to say it's fake. I don't want to act as if it's real. (Murakami TPR)

In each of the novels, the way the protagonist perceives himself is very different from how his society perceives him. This in itself is the springboard for the problem of identity. The protagonist then realizes that he is perceived differently by his society and he understands the difference between his individual identity and his social identity. He then has a choice: to be the person that he wants to be or to be the person that he is expected to be. In most cases he is unable to balance both the identities, so he has to make a choice. Each protagonist makes his own choice depending on his predicament and mettle. The realization of identity and the metaphysical nature of life are brought about by the techniques of magical realism and dreams.

In HBEW, the Calcutec may be considered the individual identity and the Dream reader is seen as the social identity of the same protagonist. The Calcutec's predicament, as depicted is due to the interference of technology. He is unable to assert his true individuality since he is controlled by the program inserted into his

brain. The intrusion of technology is due to the intrusion of the System or the social background. In HBEW the 'System' has a specific meaning. In general Murakami uses the word 'System' to refer to anything that warrants conforming to. In this case it can be seen as the society. In HBEW the company that the Calcutec works for is 'The System' and the Semiotecs who indulge in piracy and stealing information belong to the 'Factory'. The Calcutec thinks that he is paid well because he is a Calcutec and he dreams of retiring to a quiet life. The Calcutec's perception of himself is quite different from how his society perceives him. He thinks of himself as an ordinary person and he is completely unaware of the exploitation of the System. He leads a quiet life, but he is well noted by the society. "For starters, I knew nothing about these INKlings, yet they knew about me" (HBEW 27). He was unaware of the fate that awaited him. In working as a Calcutec, he has lost control of his life. He does not know that all the other Calcutecs are dead and that the Semiotecs decapitated five of the Calcutecs. Although he is aware of the risk in his work he is not aware that he has no future. He has no superior attitude as a Calcutec. When the grand daughter wonders what it is like to be a Calcutec, he is indifferent to it:

"We're normal ordinary people, just like everyone else."

"Everyone may be ordinary, but they're not normal."

"Yes, there is that school of thought," I said. "But there's normal and then there's *normal*. I mean the kind of normal that can sit down next to you on the train and you wouldn't even notice. Normal. (HBEW 54)

He believes that he is an unassuming person, who will not be noticed by people, but that is quite different from what others think of him. The society appears to view him as a hero. The people who set him up for death and those who experimented on him

believe the same thing. The Scientist reveals this to the Calcutec when he tells him that he was the one to insert the program into the Calcutec's mind.

“I asked them't'send 'round their crackest Calcutec, and seems you've got that reputation. Everyone speaks mighty highly of you. You got the knack, got the gumption, you do a crack job. Other than a certain lack of team spirit, you got no strikes against you.” (HBEW 27)

The granddaughter is full of questions for the Calcutec. She knows that the Calcutec's job is very demanding and many Calcutecs lead single lives because they do not have time for a family. “Did you get divorced because you became a Calcutec? I always hear how Calcutecs don't have families.” (HBEW 55). Calcutecs were considered very reputed and valuable, and they were on the verge of extinction. “Nobody's gonna doubt you. ... Calcutec like yourself with a Record of Excellence? Hell, they got no choice but to trust you.” (HBEW 155). It can be seen that it was not the Calcutecs themselves who were considered valuable but it was the resources that was invested into creating the Calcutec, irrespective of their future or freedom of choice. The Calcutec was not completely aware of his end. The user manual was not specific about it. “So in this sense, this is an extremely sensitive experiment.” “Experiment?” I recoiled. “Yes, experiment,” echoed the chorus. “We cannot tell you any more than this.” (HBEW 114).

These contradictory perceptions of who the Calcutec thinks he is and who the Calcutec is expected to be, heightens the conflict. He has planned for retirement but soon realizes that he will have no time to retire and his life will end soon. This realization is brought to him through the use of magical realism. The password for shuffling is ‘End of the World’, which is the place that the protagonist goes to when his mind breaks down. He is unaware of its relevance:

My shuffling password was “End of the World ... The word is only a label, for convenience sake. All the same, I was in the dark about its contents. The sole thing I knew was its title, End of the World.... They refused to reveal any more than this.

“There is no need for you to know more. The unconscious goes about its business better than you'll ever be able to. ” (HBEW 112-13)

The End of the World is the unconscious of the protagonist to which even he has no access. The System has devised a way to map the consciousness of an individual and send and receive data through this, thereby encrypting it so that it cannot be accessed.

I had undergone a full year of Calcutec training. After I passed the final exam, they put me on ice for two weeks to conduct comprehensive tests on my brainwaves, from which was extracted the epicenter of encephalographic activity, the "core" of my consciousness. The patterns were transcoded into my shuffling password, then re-input into my brain—this time in reverse. I was informed that End of the World was the title, which was to be my shuffling password. Thus was my conscious mind completely restructured. First there was the overall chaos of my conscious mind, then inside that, a distinct plum pit of condensed chaos as the center. (HBEW 113)

When the Calcutec realizes that he has been manipulated by the System. He is helpless against the System and he has very little choice. He learns from the Scientist that he can choose to die and end his life as he knows it or he can simply let the programs shift his mind to the ‘End of the World’, which has put his mind on a loop. This would be like living in a single moment through eternity.

“But if you act now, you can choose, if choice is what you want.

There's one last hand you can play... "You can die right now," said the Professor, very business-like. "Before Junction A links up, just check out. That leaves nothing." (HBEW 285-86)

Although the choice seems to be between living in the real world or the End of the world, the actual struggle is the choice of identity. The Calcutec can choose to die with his individual identity or he can continue to live with his social identity. This choice is realized by the Calcutec through the use of magical realism.

Murakami's use of magical realism, while closely linked with the quest for identity, is not the least bit involved with the assertion of an identity. Put another way, magical realism in Murakami is used as a tool to seek a highly individualized, personal sense of identity in each person, rather than as a rejection of the thinking of one-time colonial powers or the assertion of a national (cultural) identity based on indigenous beliefs and ideologies. (Strecher “Magical Realism” 269)

The Calcutec knows that “As long as an individual's alive, he will undergo experience in some form or other, and those experiences are stored up instant by instant. To stop experiencin' is to die.” (HBEW 257). He also realizes that if he chooses to go to the ‘End of the World’ it will be the death of his individuality. The ‘End of the World’ is described explicitly throughout the novel, with the author devoting half of the novel to it. The EW is the mind of the protagonist. It is the black box of the mind “That's your black box. In other words, we all carry around this great unexplored 'elephant graveyard' inside us. Outer space aside, this is truly humanity's last terra incognita... So the black box is the subconscious.”(HBEW 256). The Calcutec is vexed that he has been manipulated:

They had shoved memories out of my conscious awareness. They had stolen my memories from me! ... Nobody had that right. Nobody! My memories *belonged* to me. Stealing memories was stealing time. I got so mad, I lost all fear. I didn't care what happened. *I want to live!* I told myself. *I will live.* I will get out of this insane netherworld and get back my stolen memories back and live. Forget the end of the world, I was ready to reclaim my whole self. (HBEW 239)

Magical realism is used to bring out the metaphysical nature of the Calcutec's life and thereby his realization of his problem. The problems of choosing to live in EW will be to lose his individual identity, which means to lose his choices. Simple choices like "Say I get up in the morning and decide whether I want to drink milk or coffee or tea with my toast." (HBEW 256) will be lost. The memories of the individual along with desires will be completely lost. When time is stopped, memories cease to be formed. Any residual emotions that are formed will be scraped out by the system.

Your body dies, your consciousness passes away, but your thought is caught in the one tautological point an instant before, sub-dividin' for an eternity. Think about the koan: *An arrow is stopped in flight.* Well, the death of the body is the flight of the arrow. It's makin' a straight line for the brain. No dodgin' it, not for anyone. People have't die, the body has't fall. Time is hurlin' that arrow forward. And yet, like I was sayin', thought goes on subdividin' that time for ever and ever. The paradox becomes real. The arrow never hits."

"In other words," I said, "immortality."

"There you are. Humans are immortal in their thought. Though strictly speakin', not immortal, but endlessly, asymptotically close to immortal. That's eternal life." ... That expandin' human time doesn't make you immortal; it's subdividin' time that does the trick." (HBEW 285)

The idea of losing ones individual identity is brought out by magical realism and the existence of a parallel world. This is compared to two clocks in one's pocket. One is a ticking clock and the other one is a stopped clock. The Dreamreader in the EW lives where time does not move. Murakami states that:

Each individual behaves on the basis of his individual mnemonic makeup. No two human beings are alike; it's a question of identity. And what is identity? The cognitive system arisin' from the aggregate memories of that individual's past experiences. (HBEW 255)

So if the memories are erased and time is stopped, the individuality of the person is soon lost. He realises the nature of identity. It is not so strange that when one's memories change, the world of that person changes. "... "No, the time paradox here's in your mind," said the Professor. "As you create memories, you're creatin' a parallel world." (HBEW 283), and in the process of creating new memories, one creates new identities.

The Dreamreader too realizes that he has a choice just like the Calcutec. The Dreamreader's shadow tries to persuade him to leave the EW.

I shake my head. "I thought you would explain to me what's what in this Town. After all, you ended up with almost all our memories."  
 "Big deal," says my shadow. "I got most of our memories, but what am I supposed to do with them? In order to make sense, we'd have to be put back together, which is not going to happen. If we try anything,



they'd keep us apart forever. We'd never pull it off. That's why I thought things out for myself. About the way things work in this Town." (HBEW 247)

The shadow is weak, it represents the mind, a shade of individual identity, in the Dreamreader and it wants to survive. Just as the Calutec is facing an option in the real world, the Dreamreader is faced with a similar choice in the parallel world. The shadow has found a way to leave the world by jumping into the pool, just like the Calutec can leave by choosing to end his life. The shadow tries to coax him to take his chances with an unknown world rather than get stuck without choice, memories and emotions. A structured and predictable life, which is charted out by the society, is an artificial structure that the shadow struggles against. The Dreamreader is still stuck in a dilemma and is unable to choose. He begins by drawing out a map, so as to learn the geography of the place but soon begins to like the idea of living in EW; a world of his own making. At first the Dreamreader believes that he has no choice when his shadow is cut off from him "I drew near the shadow. "Sorry, I must leave you for now," I said. "It was not my idea. I had no choice. Can you accept being alone for a while?" (HBEW 63), Later at the persuasion of the shadow, as he draws the map, he is afraid to forge on into the woods. "I am left with the choice either to forge past these obstacles or to return by the route I had come." (HBEW 118). Recognising the Dreamreader's hesitation to leave, the shadow puts forth his argument:

You tell me there is no fighting or hatred or desire in the Town. That is a beautiful dream, and I do want your happiness. But the absence of fighting or hatred or desire also means the opposites do not exist either. No joy, no communion, no love. Only where there is disillusionment

and depression and sorrow does happiness arise; without the despair of loss, there is no hope." (HBEW 334)

The reason that the Dreamreader has for staying back in the EW is that he is in love with the librarian. But the shadow tries to assert that the librarian has no mind. All the residents of the EW are without the mind and that only means that they exist and not live. He calls them "Phantoms" which could only mean that life in the EW is an illusion. The Dreamreader's choices are laid out in front of him very clearly. The shadow tries to help him see the EW for what it is, just like the Scientist helps the Calcutec to see that his end is near. The Dream reader decides to leave when he tries to make the map, yet he decides to stay later on. The realization that he would stay in his own world rather than try out another new world is brought about by magical realism, through the shadow that is cut off from him and speaks to him.

Both the Dreamreader and the Calcutec are able to realize their situation and the need to choose. They are at the crossroad that decides their future. It is a choice between the individual identity and the social identity. This awareness forces them to make the choice. The Dreamreader chooses to stay in his world and the Calcutec decides to leave his world. The struggle between the real and the imaginary or the struggle between the individual and the social come to an end. The Dreamreader represents the social identity since he is an entity formed by the intrusion of technology of the System. The death of the Calcutec is the death of his individual identity and he chooses to conform and assume a social identity.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, the use of magical realism brings out the realization of the predicament in Kafka Tamura and his identities. Kafka can be considered the individual identity while Nakata can be considered the social identity of the same protagonist. Kafka Tamura is a boy, who is on his own. He runs away from home and

finds refuge in a library. He thinks he is fleeing from an Oedipal prophesy that his father has revealed to him. Although he runs away from home, he realizes that he cannot run from his fate. This realization then leads him to choose between allowing fate to take over his life or to try to fight it and make his own destiny.

All kinds of things are happening to me," I begin. "Some I chose, some I didn't. I don't know how to tell one from the other anymore. What I mean is, it feels like everything's been decided in advance that I'm following a path somebody else has already mapped out for me. It doesn't matter how much I think things over, how much effort I put into it. In fact, the harder I try, the more I lose my sense of who I am. It's like my identity's an orbit that I've strayed far away from, and that really hurts. But more than that, it scares me. Just thinking about it makes me flinch." (KS 209)

In a conversation with Oshima, Kafka reveals his feelings about the force of this unseen power that he calls fate and the direction in which it propels him. The discussion on fate brings about the understanding of Kafka's conflict and leads to his realization of the conflict. "Man doesn't choose fate. Fate chooses man." (KS 209). The novel begins with this discussion of fate. The character of Kafka and Crow are both present in this scene and the idea is presented through magical realism. Crow compares fate to a sandstorm and tells Kafka to imagine the sandstorm. Later on when Kafka finds himself in an alternate world where he can choose to stay or return to the real world, Kafka imagines the real world to be the sandstorm, which he chooses to return to.

I don't even know what I want anymore. I'm standing alone in the middle of a horrific sandstorm. I can't move, and can't even see my

fingertips anymore. Sand as white as pulverized bones wraps me in its grip. But I hear her--Miss Saeki-- speaking to me. "No matter what, you have to go back," she says decisively. "It's what I want. For you to be there."

The spell is broken, and I'm in one piece again...Now I just focus on making it through the forest without getting lost. (KS 464)

Kafka is pulled into an alternate world where he can remain if he chooses to and he can avoid the real world. But he chooses to come back to reality. He remembers Ms. Seiki's words when he is at the entrance of the world. Kafka has gone through trying times where he feels like he has no choice but to follow the path that fate pulls him in. The events in his life line up in a such a way that he is forced to fulfil the Oedipal prophecy. He is unable to shake off his predicament and he ploughs through it like he would brave a sandstorm. The alternate world helps him to see his predicament with objectivity. His does not know if he should go with the flow and allow fate to take over or to fight it as much as he can. Fighting fate seems impossible as he is unable to fight his sexual urges when he is with Sakura and he is not in control when he loses consciousness near the Shinto shrine and wakes up to find himself covered in blood. He began the fight against fate by running away from home, but he realises that even through dreams the prophecy will be fulfilled.

Incest is the social taboo that he flees from. He has never met his mother and does not know what she looks like and in running away from his father in order to avoid killing him, he has increased the chances of meeting his mother without knowing who she is and eventually he fulfils the prophesy. He realises that the choice is not his at all and that he seems to be walking a path that has been charted out for him. He then chooses to accept his destiny. He decides to fulfil it, if that is his role.

He realises that he lacks choice in the matter since fate seems to catch up with him. He decides to walk through the sandstorm (KS 6) and to take the bull by the horns. He realises that he has a role to play just as others have their roles to play. Ms. Seiki, Sakura and Koichi Tamura have all played their part and he too has to play his part whether he likes to or not. Magical realism is evident through the words of the flute player:

"I made this flute out of the souls of cats I've collected. Cut out the souls of cats while they were still alive and made them into this flute. I felt sorry for the cats, of course, cutting them up like that, but I couldn't help it. This flute is beyond any world's standards of good and evil, love or hatred. Making these flutes has been my longtime calling, and I've always done a decent job of fulfilling my role and doing my bit. Nothing to be ashamed of...I'm not the one who decides whether that flute turns out to be good or evil, and neither are you. It all depends on when and where I am. In that sense I'm a man totally without prejudices, like history or the weather--completely unbiased. And since I am, I can transform into a kind of system." (KS 452)

The Flute player accepts his calling and has made peace with his role in life. Kafka discovers that he can either willingly do his role and be the person he was meant to be or strive from it, hide it and be ashamed of it. If it is fate that is driving him to do it, then he is a helpless pawn but if it is his choice, then he is the person who *he* has decided to be and he decides to come to terms with it. When he meets the "flute player" who may be his father, in the alternate world, which is similar to Limbo, he is provoked by the flute player and tries to kill him. He takes the opportunity just like he was waiting for it. This tells the readers that he has made his choice and decided to

live according to his own terms. He chooses to accept his fate and stops fighting against it.

Kafka's perception of himself is different from how the society sees him. Kafka thinks of himself as "the toughest fifteen-year-old in the world". This phrase is drilled into him by the Boy named Crow, which is an identity within Kafka Tamura. The same phrase is used eight times through the novel. This is who Kafka thinks he is but in the eyes of the society and people around him, he is a young runaway teenager who is inexperienced and maybe having a difficult time. The girl at the hotel decides to give him a concession on the price of the room because she thinks that he could use some help; "I talked with the manager," she says, "and he said they've never done this before, but seeing as how you're young and there are special circumstances, he'll make an exception and let you stay at the rate the YMCA arranged for you. We're not so busy right now, he said, so we can bend the rules a bit." (KS 60-61). Kafka does not appear as tough as he thinks he is in the eyes of many others. The social outlook on fifteen year old boys is that they still need to be looked after. The difference in perception occurs time and again.

The librarian, Oshima at the Komura library tries to help Kafka. "A boy your age in a place you've never been before--I can't imagine it's easy going." (KS 62). He offers to give Kafka a place to stay at the library and even tries to protect him from the police when they arrive in search of him. Sakura too feels that he must be having a difficult time being on his own at his age. "Pretty rough being young, huh?" (KS 289). But Kafka still does not believe that to be true. He believes that he can manage his circumstances since he is the toughest teenager. "They're after me because I'm a runaway. They want to catch me and ship me back to Tokyo" (KS 289). The person he thinks he is and the person he wants to be are different from the person the society

perceives him to be. He thinks that he is strong but the society thinks that fifteen year old teenagers still need to be under the care of an adult. Kafka's belief about himself as the toughest teenager is the one that stays the longest. Although he manages to keep his identity and his perception of himself alive through the novel, there are moments in the novel where this is brought to the test through certain events. These events are brought to the readers through magical realism.

"I didn't kill him, you know."

"I know that," Oshima says. "On the day of the murder you were here at the library, reading until evening. You wouldn't have had enough time to go back to Tokyo, murder your father, and then get back to Takamatsu. It's impossible."

But I wasn't so sure. I did the math and figured out he was murdered the same night I woke up with my shirt covered in blood. (KS 208)

Kafka does not kill his father in reality since he is in Takamatsu and his father is in Nakano Ward. Given the distance and the time, it is not possible for Kafka to travel the distance and back. It is physically impossible for Kafka to have committed the crime. The crime is committed by Nakata, who could very well be an identity of Kafka Tamura:

The dead man was a famous sculptor, and his body was discovered by the cleaning woman who came every other day. The body was naked, lying in a pool of blood. Estimated time of death was in the evening two days previous, the murder weapon a steak knife from the kitchen. To his dismay, the young policeman finally believed what the old man had told him. My God, he thought, what a complete mess I've gotten myself into! I should have called up the precinct and taken the old man

in. He confessed to murder, so I should've handed him over to the higher-ups and let them decide if he's crazy or not. But I shirked my duty. Now that it's come to this, the young policeman decided, the best thing to do is to just clam up and pretend it never happened. But by this time, Nakata was no longer in town. (KS 179-80)

His father, the famous sculptor has been murdered in the real world and Kafka loses consciousness for a while and when he comes to, he realises that he is covered in blood. When he regains consciousness, he finds that he is near a Shinto shrine where Hoshino later finds the entrance stone. These events suggest that Kafka has murdered his father through his mind. Although Nakata can be considered a part of Kafka's identity, he speaks to a police officer about the crime that he has committed. Kafka cannot believe that it is possible for him to kill his father through his mind.

I'd lost consciousness in a small woods behind the main shrine building...I notice something dark on the front of my white T-shirt, shaped sort of like a huge butterfly with wings spread. I try brushing it away, but it won't come off. I touch it and my hands come away all sticky. I need to calm down, so consciously taking my time I slowly take off both my shirts. Under the flickering fluorescent light I realize what this is--darkish blood that's seeped into the fabric. The blood's still fresh, wet, and there's lots of it. I bring it close for a sniff, but there's no smell. Some blood's been spattered on the dungaree shirt as well, but only a little, and it doesn't stand out on the dark blue material. The blood on the T-shirt is another story--against the white background there's no mistaking that...I feel like crying, but even if I do, nobody's going to come to my rescue. Nobody... **Man alive, how'd**



**you get all that blood all over you? What the hell were you doing?  
But you don't remember a thing, do you. No wounds on you,  
though, that's a relief. No real pain, either--except for that  
throbbing in your left shoulder. So the blood's gotta be from  
somebody else, not you. Somebody else's blood.**

(KS 75-76)

It is through magical realism that the murder of his father is depicted, which causes him to realise that no matter how far he runs he cannot escape his fate. His perception of himself as the strongest fifteen year old is shaken in this situations. Murakami further uses magical realism to show the timing of the murder. Nakata predicts that fish and leeches will rain from the sky but no one believes something like that. True to his word, fish begin to rain from the sky immediately after the murder, which causes a traffic jam near the mall and the event makes headlines in the same paper that reports his father's death. "FISH RAIN FROM THE SKY! 2,000 Sardines and Mackerel in Nakano Ward Shopping District At around 6 p.m." (KS 211). This is a reference for Kafka to remember the death of his father and the time he lost consciousness.

Murakami uses the idea of parallel worlds to show the metaphysical nature of Kafka's world. The struggle to retain his individuality and his beliefs about himself is the greatest struggle against believing what the society thinks about him. Oshino's support helps Kafka to cling onto his own individuality rather than bow under the pressure to conform.

"I've experienced all kinds of discrimination," Oshima says. "Only people who've been discriminated against can really know how much it hurts. Each person feels the pain in his own way, each has his own

scars. So I think I'm as concerned about fairness and justice as anybody. But what disgusts me even more are people who have no imagination. The kind T. S. Eliot calls hollow men. People who fill up that lack of imagination with heartless bits of straw, not even aware of what they're doing. Callous people who throw a lot of empty words at you, trying to force you to do what you don't want to...Gays, lesbians, straights, feminists, fascist pigs, communists, Hare Krishnas--none of them bother me. I don't care what banner they raise. But what I can't stand are hollow people. When I'm with them I just can't bear it...

(KS 191-92)

Murakami also breaks the stereotype of identity of certain popular commercial icons like Johnny Walker and Colonel Sanders. Johnny Walker is depicted as a man who kills cats and Colonel Sanders is a pimp on the streets of Japan. Just by breaking these images, Murakami sets the expectations of the readers as far as identity is concerned. Murakami lays stress on the individual capacity to imagine and strongly ties it to the development of individual identity. He implies that when an individual has no imagination he will succumb to anything that is forced on him. It is only those who have imagination that strive to look beyond the obvious that the social identity has to offer:

Narrow minds devoid of imagination. Intolerance, theories cut off from reality, empty terminology, usurped ideals, inflexible systems. Those are the things that really frighten me. What I absolutely fear and loathe. Of course it's important to know what's right and what's wrong. Individual errors in judgment can usually be corrected. As long as you have the courage to admit mistakes, things can be turned around. But

intolerant, narrow minds with no imagination are like parasites that transform the host, change form, and continue to thrive. They're a lost cause... (KS 192)

The struggle against the social pressure to conform and gravitate towards one common social identity is what the young Kafka Tamura fights against. He realises that he is a unique individual with unique strength that no other teenager has seen and faces an uncommon predicament which he tries to overcome and fails in his attempts. His choice then, is to go along with his fate and emerge strong. He fears criticism from the society and is scared of being different, but his past cannot be changed. He is given a choice to hide away from his life in a parallel world; to lose his individuality and identity and to merge into the world of denial and pretense instead of facing the future with his own past. He chooses to live in his own world with his own identity where he still remains the toughest teenager in the world. In order to recognise and realise his strength and identity he has come through his conflict with the help of defense mechanisms and finally reached a place of acceptance. He decides to leave the Limbo of social identity, depicted by the parallel world, which he entered and return to the real world with his own individual identity.

The character of Hagita, who makes a short appearance in the novel sums up the idea of individual and social identity. He helps Nakata and gives him a ride on his way to Takamatsu. In that short exchange of words, Murakami gives his readers, the essence of social identity. He speaks about the importance of an opinion and one's "own way of thinking" along with the problem of a single social identity. "People who look normal and live a normal life--they're the ones you have to watch out for." Nakata does not understand the meaning of opinion and Hagita lays it out for him clearly. "If you try to use your head to think about things, people don't want to have

anything to do with you.” (KS 199-200). Murakami uses this opportunity to show the influence of the society or in his terms the “System” to be so strong that its pressure is forgotten. The individual is accustomed to it that he forgets about his individuality and his conformity. When Hagita explains this to Nakata who is an experiment of the system, it puts the whole issue on simple terms and in new light, which is his way to reiterating the theme. He defamiliarises the situation with magical realism to bring about realisation.

In WSC, the protagonist is the narrator, while the character of the Rat, the Sheep Professor and the Sheepman can be considered as parts of a single individual – the narrator’s identity. The Rat represents the individual identity in the narrator while the Sheep professor is the social identity of the narrator. The Sheep Man holds both identities of the individual and the social. This depicts the struggle between the individual and the social identities of the protagonist. The Rat, who is the rebel, is a strong presence in the novel but the narrator does not speak about him until the fifth part in the novel. He does not actually make an appearance until after he is dead, by the end of chapter thirty eight. Although he appears to have a shorter time with the readers he is undoubtedly the most important element of the theme. It is the Rat who finally stopped the sheep. He was able to stop the sheep from taking over once again like it had done with the Sheep Professor and the Boss, who were finally living carcasses when the sheep left them. The Rat was able to put a stop to this.

The Rat’s perception of himself is not very different from how the society perceives him. His individual identity is dominant and his social identity is not prominent. The Rat perceives himself as someone who is impulsive and imaginative. He is very proud of his sex appeal. He appears to be a very compelling and an honest young man who is sentimental at times and easily admits his errors and quick to

apologise. Not many people in the novel know him apart from the narrator, J, who is character in the novel, and the lady whom the Rat conveys his regards to. Not much is said about the Rat in the novel by the other characters, yet it appears that he is a man of his whims from the little that is said about the Rat. Leaving town without informing a soul and not revealing his whereabouts accounts for his whimsical attitude.

The narrator feels that the Rat was not someone very dependable. “He never struck me as the stick-with-it type.” (WSC 95). Yet there was a very endearing quality about the Rat that attracted people to him. The lady to whom he conveys his regard to, seems to think that it was this unique nature that was refreshing about the Rat:

“He was so... more than unreal. Do you know what I mean?”

“I think so.”

“I guess it took someone as unreal as him to break through my own unreality. It struck me the very first time I met him. That’s why I liked him. Or maybe I only thought so after I got to like him. It amounts to the same thing either way.... “I sometimes think maybe, in the end, I was only using him. And maybe he sensed it all along. What do you think?” (WSC 100)

What the lady calls “unreal” is the uniqueness of the individual. The role of the Rat in the novel is to enunciate the importance of the individual identity, no matter how peculiar it may seem. The Rat speaks about weakness in the individual, as that which is unique to each one. Each one’s weakness should be accepted for what it is and that is what makes individuality distinctive. The Rat was curious about the place in Hokkaido when he had seen the photograph of the sheep. “I guess I felt attached to my weakness. My pain and suffering too. Summer light, the smell of a breeze, the sound

of cicadas—if I like these things, why should I apologize. The same with having a beer with you ...” (WSC 284).

He says that it was his weakness that drew the sheep to him. By weakness he means “Moral weakness, weakness of consciousness, then there’s the weakness of existence itself.” To the Rat this weakness is “a very individual thing”, and the Sheep seeks people with a weakness that can be exploited. Finally the sheep with the star gradually extorts from its host “My body, my memory, my weakness, my contradictions ... That’s the sort of stuff the sheep really goes for.” (WSC 282-83). The pressure to conform by shedding these unique oddities is the goal of the sheep. The sheep with the star is drawn to people with these qualities. The Rat goes in search of solitude and finds it in the mountains until the sheep with the star finds him. He writes in his letter to the narrator, “Here, there is nothing my size. There’s nobody around here to make himself the measure of everything, to praise or condemn others for their size” (WSC 81). The Rat wants to shrug aside the burden of expectations of the people around him and he has succeeded in that. His friends have no more expectations than that which the Rat had set for them. He simply disappeared without having to give reasons and he never gives the reason until the end. The Rat is able to make some very crucial decisions for himself. His predicament against conforming is delineated by the use of magical realism, for example, his appearance after his death to tell the narrator about the sheep with the star. The goal of the sheep was to enter into individuals with “weakness” and it finally found the Rat after it had destroyed the Boss, and then to establish “A realm of total conceptual anarchy. A scheme in which all opposites would be resolved into unity. With me and the sheep at the center.” (WSC 284). The sheep, or the social identity that creeps into any individual forces them, from within their minds, to conform to one moral, ethical, aesthetic and legal

code among other generalities. This causes one to lose track of his individual identity to an extent that he does not realize that it was there in the first place. It continues to grow until everything about the person is only what is the System. The individual is lost as the social identity usurps the individual identity until there are no traces of memory of it. All that is left is only the social memory. The author points out that elements common to each unique identity does exist, but adds that this not the problem of the individual identity. The problem is the kind of weakness that allows one's individuality to be taken away. Its nemesis is a different kind of "weakness".

"As a general rule," said the Rat, snapping his fingers a couple of times. "But line up all the generalities you like and you still won't get anywhere. What I'm talking about now is a very individual thing. Weakness is something that rots in the body. Like gangrene. I've felt that ever since I was a teenager. That's why I was always on edge. There's this something inside you that's rotting away and you feel it all along. Can you understand what that's like?" (WSC 282)

The Rat describes the pain of knowing that his own individuality was rotting away inside of him ever since the sheep entered him. The Rat is aware of the influence of the society to an extent where it begins to alter his individual identity. This is shown to the readers with the help of the sheep with the star, which no one has seen and it enters the Rat. It is interesting to know that the Rat is not described to the readers and the reason why he is called a Rat is not mentioned in the novel. The use of magical realism serves to bring out these complex ideas of identity crises and the search for individual identity. It allows the Rat to realize his predicament and make a choice.

The Rat is left with a choice just as all the other protagonists, to choose to conform, enter into limbo and be accepted with the rest of the herd of sheep, or decide

to be different and face the consequences. The Rat is not one to end it just for him, but he sets out to finish the sheep as well and end it for many like him:

“What happened was this,” said the Rat. “I died with the sheep in me. I waited until the sheep was fast asleep, then I tied a rope over the beam in the kitchen and hanged myself. There wasn’t enough time for the sucker to escape.”... I had to go that far. If I waited, the sheep would have controlled me absolutely. It was my last chance.” (WSC 281)

The Rat is the depiction of the occasional radical that any society sees, who has the mettle and sinew to follow through with what he believes in and can leave repercussions in his wake. These are the individuals who are able to blur the social boundaries and bring change to rigid mandates. A trace of the Rat hides in every individual. So do traces of the Sheep Man. The Rat’s predicament can be compared to that of the Calcutec in HBEW. While the Rat is successful in thwarting the impinging social identity by hanging himself, the Calcutec fails to do so and allows himself to be consumed by the social identity since he is unable to end his life, but allows the EW to take over.

The Sheep Professor was a person on his way to excellence, who was recruited by the system, used to the hilt and finally spit out from the entrails of the system, never to get back on his feet. Everyone around him was proud of him in his younger days. He was the quintessence of success. His son explains that the professor was:

... a child wonder known to everyone in Sendai. And not just schooling. He surpassed everyone at the violin and in middle school even performed a Beethoven sonata for the royal family when they came to the area, for which he was given a gold watch. (WSC 179)

He could have chosen anything he wanted to, like law or music for which his father



was happy, yet he chose to study agriculture. He graduated with honors and his research was adopted by the government. It was when he was researching on sheep that the sheep entered the professor. In the words of his son, the Sheep Professor was “considerate and earnest, the sort of youth who once he said something would stick by his word. His own father couldn’t get a word in edgewise.” (WSC 180). It was a man of determination and a man of his word that the sheep had entered. In the course of his research he became too involved with the sheep and called it a spiritual involvement. The government was concerned about his involvement and they subjected him to interrogation:

Q: You would tell me you had spiritual communion with sheep?

A: That is correct.

Q: Are you telling me that during the week of your disappearance you had spiritual communion with sheep?

A: That is correct.

Q: Do you not think that is sufficient reason for dismissal from your offices?

A: It is my office to study sheep, sir.

Q: Spiritual communion is not a recognized course of study.

Henceforth, I would ask that you amend your ways...

A: It is impossible for me to forget.

Q: You will have to explain the circumstances.

A: The reason, sir, is that there is a sheep inside me. (WSC 181-82)

His determination and earnest study has finally brought him to the Ministry reference collection where “he catalogues reference materials and organizes bookshelves. In other words, he has been purged from the core elite of the East Asian agricultural

administration.” (WSC 182). The Sheep Professor is a man stuck in time. He has entered the limbo that society creates, just as the librarian and the residents of EW from HBEW and the soldiers and other residents of the parallel universe in KS, and the skeletons of the bizarre room in DDD, are all stuck in the illusionary time capsule that resembles eternal stagnation.

The society placed great expectations on the professor and he did live up to them for a while, but he reached his tipping point when the individual identity was soon crushed under the weight of the social identity. He was an easy victim. He relates “The sheep didn’t tell me anything. But the beast did have one major purpose. That much I do know. A monumental plan to transform humanity and the human world.” (WSC 189). The sheep escaped the Professor and took its powers along with it, leaving only a shell behind. The Professor regrets letting the sheep go. He thinks he could have used it to his benefit. “No,” said the Professor, “it is my fault. I should have caught on a long time ago. I would have had a hand to play. But it took me a long time to catch on. And by the time I did, the sheep had already run off.” (WSC 189).

The author uses magical realism to bring out the influence of society through the idea of sheep entering men and then leaving them “Sheepless” and in “sheer hell” (WSC 189). The Boss, who never speaks to the readers but is only spoken about by the Strange Man, has been “entered” by the sheep just like the Sheep Professor. The Boss is on his deathbed with a blood cyst since the sheep left him. The sheep has used the Boss to do his bidding and finally discarded him. The sheep is the *idea* of social identity. When the person realizes that he has lost his innate identity it is too late, since the social identity has scraped out every last trace of it and when the social identity is brought into question, the person is lost and finds himself stuck

“Sheepless” and in “sheer hell”. The individual has no direction and longs to belong somewhere, with some sense of identity. The Sheep Professor does not realize that he has lost his individual identity at all. It is the sheep that he continues to search for, for forty-two years. He does however, realize that he has lost faith in the social identity after he was let down by the government after all his sincere work. He has lost faith in the system and he has no identity.

“As I said before, I can’t express that in words with any precision.

What the sheep seeks is the embodiment of sheep thought.”

“Is that good?”

“To the sheep’s thinking, of course it’s good.”

“And to yours?”

“I don’t know,” said the old man. “I really don’t know. Ever since the sheep departed, I can’t tell how much is really me and how much the shadow of the sheep.” (WSC 190)

He has no opinions anymore just like Nakata in KS. The interference of the System has left him without opinions and he does not know who he is anymore. The Professor has been devastated by his brush with the bad side of the System and he warns the narrator:

“If you really want to know the truth, I think the fewer people that get involved with that sheep the better. I’m a prime example. There’s not a soul the happier for having tangled with it. The values of one lone individual cannot bear up before the presence of that sheep.”

(WSC 192)

The Professor has no choice either and the novel does not tell the readers about the plight of the Professor anymore in the sequel than it does in WSC. While the Rat

made his choice, it was too late for choices as far as the Professor is concerned.

The Sheep Man can be considered as yet another identity of the narrator. The Sheep Man is a magical element, who is dressed in sheep's clothing, but the sheep has not entered him, neither is he a part of sheepfold like the other sheep. Some of his mannerisms resemble those of the sheep. "The Sheep Man was just like an animal. Approach him and he'd retreat, move away and he'd come closer" (WSC 254). He is a loner who lives by himself in the woods.

The Sheep Man wore a full sheepskin pulled over his head. The arms and legs were fake and patched on, but his stocky body fit the costume perfectly. The hood was also fake, but the two horns that curled from his crown were absolutely real. Two flat ears, probably wire-reinforced, stuck out level from either side of the hood. The leather mask that covered the upper half of his face, his matching gloves, and socks, all were black. There was a zipper from neck to crotch.

(WSC 251)

The novel also has an illustration of the Sheep Man to be sure that the readers get the exact image of him.

The woods symbolize the mind and the Sheep Man is the identity that does not reveal its true individual nature for fear of being wiped out. Instead of revealing his true nature and locking horns with the system, he chooses to appear to be a sheep and be insignificant without drawing attention to himself, but he still remains the man that he is. The individual identity is not altogether thwarted, but there is no room for expression of this individuality. The Sheep Man lives with an individual identity disguised as the social. He still is not part of the social identity, and lives on the fringes of society hiding away from civilization.

“Why’d you take to hiding out up here?”

“You’d laugh if I told you,” said the Sheep Man. “No, I wouldn’t laugh, I swear,” I said. I couldn’t imagine what there’d be to laugh about.

“You won’t tell anyone?”

“I won’t tell anyone.”

“I didn’t want to go off to war.”

For the next few minutes, we walked on without a word between us.

“War with whom?” I asked.

“Dunno,” coughed out the Sheep Man. “But I didn’t want to go.

Anyway that’s why I’m a sheep. A sheep who stays where he belongs up here.”

“You from Junitaki-cho?”

“Uhhuh but don’t tell anyone.”

“I won’t,” I said. “You don’t like the town?”

“The town down there?”

“Yeah.”

“Don’t like it at all (WSC 263-64)

The war that the Sheep Man speaks about could be the war within himself; the war between the expression of his individual identity and the social identity. He does not want to fight for his right to express himself, nor does he agree with the System and its mandates, so he pretends to agree, all the while saving his own private opinions for himself.

The Sheep Man is annoyed with the attitude of the narrator since he is not involved with the girlfriend the way she is with him. He accuses the narrator of thinking only of himself. The Sheep Man criticizes the narrator for his lack of

emotions. The Sheep Man is not to be seen as a hypocrite, but as someone who does not publicize his opinions and wants to avoid conflict but still has his own opinions and lives by them.

He appreciates the simple things “Gottaopenwindowsonnicedaysthis” (WSC 253), yet he is very economical with his words. He fears that he will let out something that will cause trouble for him. He repeatedly tells the narrator not to tell anyone about his whereabouts. He seems quite interested in the war, though he does not know or does not let on that he knows about the war. He also seems tight lipped about many things that the narrator wants to know. “Ican’tellyou I’mreallysorryIcan’tellyouIcan’t.I’mnot supposedto.” (WSC 262). This is an indication of staying low, without attracting the attention of the System. The Sheep Man is seen to maintain the balance between the social in the form of sheep and the individual in the form of man with some effort.

“Sorryforshouting,” said the Sheep Man in a low voice.

sometimesit’slikethesheepinmeandthehumaninmeareatoddsso Igetlikethat. Didn’tmeananythingbyit. Andbesidesyoucomeonsayingthingstothreatenus.” (WSC 253-54)

The Sheep Man speaks in the plural when he refers to himself. This could be to refer to both the sheep and the man inside him. He does not identify entirely with the individual identity (Like the Rat) or entirely with the social identity (Like the Sheep Professor). This keeps both the identities in coexistence.

“Youdon’tknowathingaboutourwaysheredoyou?” ...Ifwewerechasedoutofherewe’dhaveno placetogo.” ...youwouldn’t beabletoseethesmoke fromourfire.

Wegotaspecialwayofbuildingfires.” (WSC 262-63). Since he is referred to as the Sheep Man it is safe to assume that there is just one of him and he represents the part

of a person that is able to strike the delicate balance between the social and individual identities. The character of the Sheep Man continues to survive and makes his entrance in the sequel.

In WSC these three characters, The Rat, the Sheep Professor and the Sheep Man are brought out by magical realism, where the Rat speaks from beyond death, the Sheep Professor has been “entered” by the sheep with the star on its back, which wants to rule the world and the Sheep Man is a person dressed in a sheep suit. The three characters on deeper analysis may be seen as the different facets or approaches to the narrator’s individuality. They may all be a part of the narrator’s identity. The realization of the narrator is seen very clearly in Chapter forty-one of the novel. The short chapter is laid out with pastiche and defamiliarization where all the events relate and come rushing into him. It is as if Murakami cut out the narrator’s memory like snippets of the novel and spewed them out at random. It shows how the mind throws up information to bring out the relevant details. It is a moment of epiphany. The pieces of the puzzle seem to fit. The narrator decides his identity after the Rat’s visit. He does as the Rat bid him to do. He fixes the cords:

The cords came out of four holes drilled in the back. One pair above, one pair below. The cords were secured with twists of the same wire I’d seen in the jeep. I pushed the grandfather clock back in place, then went to the mirror and bid farewell to myself.

(WSC 290)

Influenced by the Rat even after his death, the narrator finally chooses to be his own individual self. He decides to take down the representative of the System. When he says, “It’s not easy to walk in a straight line.” (WSC 291). He could be talking about the difficulties of the untrodden path. The ground is fresh with snow and he cannot

see a single foot print. It shows the new beginning that the narrator has chosen. The narrator chooses to ignore the proposition of the Boss's secretary "I almost wish you would consider working for me." (WSC 292). The secretary is keen on catching the sheep and the Rat "Well then," the man continued, "our wild sheep chase is drawing to a close. Thanks to my calculations and your innocence. I've got him right where I want him. True?" (WSC 292). The final words of the narrator bring out the realization of the narrator very aptly "One way or another, I'd made it back to the land of the living. No matter how boring or mediocre it might be, this was it" (WSC 293). The narrator takes a stand and makes his choice to preserve his individual identity.

In DDD, the struggle between the individual identity and the social identity is unveiled through Gotanda, Mei and the Sheep Man. Gotanda is an actor by profession and on reading between the lines, his profession synchronizes with his identity. The character pretends to be someone who he is not. He wears a mask and adorns a lifestyle to keep his true nature subdued and undercover.

The narrator idolizes Gotanda. He admired everything about him. "He set his knife and fork down on his plate, then pressed at his temple again. Seemed to be a mannerism of his. And a charming one too." (DDD 142). There are many instances in the novel where the narrator expresses his admiration for Gotanda. It is one of the very few instances where the narrator shows his opinions in the novel. The narrator is often seen as a detached person who observes the world around him in a nonchalant manner except when he describes about Gotanda, where he has a sense of awe. Gotanda has many devoted fans that he speaks of, who like his squeaky clean image. The roles he plays on screen are that of doctors, dentists and teachers. When he tried his hand at the villain's role, his fans were not happy. "But no way. The letters came pouring in. It was too mean a role for the noble likes of me. Somebody even



threatened to boycott the sponsor!” (DDD 144). Gotanda enjoyed a wonderful public image. Everybody liked him and they celebrated him.

Gotanda had this remarkable awareness of the effect he had on others, and he held it in reserve. He controlled it. He never lorded it over people, never scared them off. And even when his presence had inflated to star proportions, he could smile and joke about it. It was his nature. That way everyone around him could smile along and think, *Now there's one nice guy*. And Gotanda really was a nice guy.

(DDD 209)

Gotanda’s perception of himself was quite different from what the others thought about him. He did not consider himself as reliable as the roles he played. He was modest when he spoke of himself and although the people loved his persona as an actor, he did not have too many friends that he spoke of and he seemed to have a connection only with the narrator.

“Don't know” said Gotanda, finger in the middle of his forehead this time. “It's this trust business I'm such a pro at. I don't know whether I trust myself. Everybody else trusts me, sure, but, really, I'm nothing but this image. A push of the button and—brrp! —I'm gone. Right?”

(DDD 144)

He feels confused between his roles and his true self. He is not sure about himself.

“Sometimes I just get tired,” said Gotanda. “I get headaches, and I just lose track. I mean, it's like which is me and which the role? Where's the line between me and my shadow?” (DDD 144). His confusion extends to his existence. The roles he plays and the people’s perception of him is an illusion. The Gotanda that they all see on the television is not the person that Gotanda thinks he is and no one knows the real

Gotanda. He also knows that if his fans knew the real person that he was, he would not be celebrated like he is. This brings him to think about who he truly is. He realizes that even he does not know who he truly is. He wants to forget the dark side that he has and he wants to believe that he can be like the dentist and the teacher that he portrays in the movies. He wants to live his role, but his true nature has an intense grip on him and he cannot but be himself. This true identity cannot be accepted by the society so he struggles with wanting to be himself and wanting to be his roles.

“But when I think back on my life, it's like I didn't make one choice.

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and it scares me.

Where's the first-person 'I'? Where's the beef? My whole life is playing one role after another. Who's been playing the lead in my life?”

(DDD 146)

He does not know who he is anymore and this prospect is unnerving. He knows that he does not deserve the trust that his audience has in him. “Well, obviously, you radiate trust,” I laughed. “Yes, a fatal flaw,” Gotanda laughed back” (DDD 143). He is dissatisfied with his life and wants to change the way he is. He does not think much of the television show and possibly feels like he can do better roles that have more in common to his real self. “It's a stupid program anyway. If I wasn't in it, I wouldn't watch it myself. But it's a popular show. The ratings are pretty high. You know how the public loves this kind of stuff.” (DDD 143). Despite what the public thinks of him, Gotanda does not base his identity on the opinion of his viewers. His opinion of himself is very different from the public opinion.

He has had a destructive nature as a child where he hurt animal and was guilty of arson. The narrator admires Gotanda but he does not know Gotanda's true nature. It appears that Gotanda himself is unaware of his crimes as an adult even though he

remembers his past crimes and has kept them under wraps for a very long time. He can be seen as the actor within the narrator and also as the individual identity of the narrator. He has worked very hard to live up to socially acceptable standards and he has managed to go the distance to be a popular public figure as well. Gotanda faces his moment of truth when the narrator approaches him about the murder of Mei and Kiki. His predicament begins when he has to ask himself if he is the one who murdered Kiki and to accept himself for what he is or live in hiding with the pretentious social identity. He refuses to acknowledge his individual identity and he appears to have forgotten if he had killed Mei or not.

Mei can be interpreted as the social identity of the narrator. Mei is often referred to as the goat girl and she works as a call girl where her job is to please people. The death of Mei could signify the murder of the social identity of the narrator by the individual identity. “But I still feel responsible for Mei's death. I don't know why. I wasn't there, but it's like I killed her with my own hands. I have this feeling that she died on account of me” (DDD 354). The struggle between the individual identity and the social identity is depicted through Gotanda and Mei. Gotanda's struggle to realize and accept his true individual identity is seen throughout the novel and he reaches a decision only at the end of the novel. He realizes that he is unable to let go of his individuality. In order to remove his individual nature, he has to kill himself. The character commits suicide after he confesses to the murder of the clairvoyant ex-girlfriend Kiki. Unlike the Rat in WSC who kills himself to silence the voice of his social identity, Gotanda kills himself to silence the voice of the individual identity.

The narrator realizes that “Gotanda never really got himself in tune with his inner impulses. He pushed himself as far as he could, to the furthest edge of his awareness—and then right across the line into that dark otherworld.” (DDD 361).

Gotanda does not appear after his death like the Rat does. His voice is silenced forever. Gotanda is the individual identity of the narrator who is silenced. Mei the social identity is dead and the Sheep Man, who survives represents the combination of individual and social identity.

The Sheep Man lives in the Dolphin Hotel in DDD. He is the same character that the readers meet in WSC except that he lives on the sixteenth floor of the Dolphin Hotel instead of in the woods. He still hides away from society and is afraid of the war.

“But sooner or later it will,” he voiced, uninflected, folding his mittened hands. “You better watch out. War’s gonna come, no three way- sabo- it. Mark our words. Can’t trust people. Won’t do any good. They’ll kill you every time. They’ll kill each other. They’ll kill everyone.”  
(DDD 81)

Although he seemed to have both the individual and the social identity in WSC, the passage of time between the novels has changed him. The Sheep Man now calls himself the connector. He becomes a person who connects the narrator to the society and to his individuality. The Sheep Man makes a single appearance in the novel yet his presence and memories are peppered throughout. The Sheep Man tells the narrator about his reason for being there in the Dolphin Hotel; “Like we said, we’ll do what we can. Try to reconnect you to what you want,” said the Sheep Man. “But we can’t do it alone. You gotta work too. Sitting’s not gonna do it, thinking’s not gonna do it.” (DDD 85-86). The narrator is still looking for Kiki who seems to be calling out to him from the Dolphin hotel. Although it is seen as all the characters in the bizarre room are parts of the narrator’s personality due to dissociation, these three characters can be considered in representing the struggle between the social and

individual identity. Just as Kiki tells the narrator when he asks about the bizarre room:

“What's it mean? Those six skeletons?”

“They're you,” says Kiki. “This is your room. Everything here is you. Yourself. Everything.”

“My room,” I repeat after her. “Well, then, what about the Dolphin Hotel? What's there?”

“That's your place too. Of course. The Sheep Man's there. And I'm here.” (DDD 371)

The author allows the narrator to gradually realize the different identities through magical realism. He speaks to the Sheep Man:

There in the dim light, staring at the shadow on the wall, I poured out the story of my life. It had been so long, but slowly, like melting ice, I released each circumstance. How I managed to support myself. Yet never managed to go anywhere. Never went anywhere, but aged all the same. How nothing touched me. And I touched nothing. How I'd lost track of what mattered. How I worked like a fool for things that didn't. How it didn't make a difference either way. How I was losing form. The tissues hardening, stiffening from within. Terrifying me.

(DDD 82-83)

The narrator's description of himself is a reflection of being disconnected. The solitude and the detached nature of his life are seen as he converses with the Sheep Man. The Sheep Man in turn asserts the idea that they are all one and the same and the return of the narrator to the Dolphin Hotel was inevitable. This further establishes the idea that the Sheep Man is an identity within the narrator. “Likeabird, comingbacktothenest. . . . But- let'sussayitdifferent. Ifyouweren'tcomingbackhere,

this place would not exist.” (DDD 82). The Sheep Man would cease to exist if the narrator forgot about the Hotel. The Sheep Man resides in the mind of the narrator. The words of Kiki and the Sheep Man about all the characters being the same, brings the realization of his identity to the narrator:

“Don't worry. You really are part of here, really. Always have been, always will be. It all starts here, it all ends here. This is your place.

It's the knot. It's tied to everything.”

“Everything?”

“Everything. Things you lost. Things you're gonna lose. Everything.

Here's where it all ties together.” (DDD 83)

The narrator is cut off from his social identity since he is unable to connect with his girlfriend. The death of Mei signifies it. Now after Gotanda's death, a balance is struck again since it was his individual identity kept him from functioning well as a social being. He not only speaks about his divorce with detachment, but he also lacks emotion when he discusses his wife's infidelity or when he speaks about losing Kiki. The end of the novel sees a change in the narrator as he feels the fear of losing Yumiyoshi. He is able to connect with Yumiyoshi, which he was not able to do throughout WSC and DDD. The Sheep Man's accusation that he was selfish in WSC is finally proven wrong when he actually wants to find Yumiyoshi when she passes through the wall. The image of Yumiyoshi passing through the wall and the narrator trying the same even though he is afraid to, signifies that he has decided to enter the wall. The wall is a symbol of the system in Murakami's world. He is afraid that he will not make it to the other side but will be swallowed by the wall.

I was casually observing my own shadow, wondering where the Sheep Man was, when I was suddenly struck by a horrifying realization: I'd

let go of Yumiyoshi's hand! ... "Yumiyoshi!" I yelled. No one answered. Silence and cold reigned, the darkness deepened.

"Yumiyoshi!" I yelled again.

"Hey, it's simple," came Yumiyoshi's voice from beyond the wall.

"Really simple. You can pass right through the wall."

"No!" I screamed. "Don't be tricked. You think it's simple, but you'll never get back. It's different over there. That's the otherworld. It's not like here." ... I was overwhelmed by my helplessness, despairing.

Yumiyoshi was gone. After all this, I would never be able to reach her again. She was gone. There was no time to think. What was there to do? I loved her, I couldn't lose her. I followed her into the wall. I found myself passing through a transparent pocket of air. (DDD 390-91)

This change signifies the narrator's stand eventually. He was able to accommodate the social identity and step out of his individual identity without completely doing away with it. Eventually he is able to pass through the wall without being swallowed by it. In the case of the narrator, his individual identity was not of much help to him and it appeared to hinder his relationships and his ability to find love. Characters like Ame and Dick North along with Gotanda represent the individual nature of the narrator. Ame and Dick North appear as two pieces of the same puzzle. If Ame was the garden, Dick was the gardener who attended to Ame. They complemented each other. Their creativity had dimensions that they completed each other with. The sixth skeleton of the antechamber of death is left unknown to the readers, therefore it is safe to assume that the only surviving identity of the narrator that did not die remains to be the Sheep Man, who is the narrator's masked identity.

Dreams have been an important part of the magical world that Murakami has

woven. It is a specific technique that the author uses to show the subconscious events of the narrator. The term 'dream' is a blanket term for many words. The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives five different meanings for the same word. Dream is defined as "a series of thoughts, images, or emotions occurring during sleep", or "a visionary creation of the imagination" as a daydream. It also brings in other meanings like "a state of mind marked by abstraction or release from reality" as in a reverie, "an object seen in a dreamlike state" as in a vision and "something that fully satisfies a wish" like the ideal ("dream," def.).

Dreams have been a literary technique from time immemorial. There are many instances in the Bible where dreams are used. In the medieval period dreams and dream vision were a common phenomenon. As in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, dreams were used as a technique for didactic literature. Elizabethan drama is seen to make use of this technique very often as in *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *Cymbeline*.

Dreams are very convincing as a technique to show situations that require "a willing suspension of disbelief" of the readers. According to Sigmund Freud, a dream may be considered as "a wish as fulfilled... another may turn out to be a realized apprehension; a third may have a reflection as to its content; a fourth may simply reproduce a reminiscence" (94). "From real life experience, the poet-author knows that dreaming and the relating of a dream to another is an essential part of human intimacy. Therefore the selection of a dream report to relate allegorical or fanciful matter becomes more than a technique to present the fantastic" (Rupprecht 246). It is the intimacy and universality of dreams that allow for the easy infusion of the fantastic. Murakami uses the dream technique to show the 'bizarre' that is attributed to his writing. The technique of dreams allows Murakami to discover the enigma of identities with ease.



In HBEW, the Dreamreader tries to release dreams from the skulls. It is synonymous with memories, the self and identities. The Dreamreader comments, “For while I recognize that the old dreams relate to something in me, I am lost” (HBEW 184). Thus dreams allow the readers to relate to the abstract nature of the identity of the Dreamreader. As the social identity of the protagonist, the Dreamreader’s job is to release and dissipate the dreams from the skulls. This clearly signifies the destruction of individuality, since dreams can be a substitute word for aspirations and memories, which constitute the identity of a person. In HBEW the Dreamreader help to show the identities of the protagonist. Even the Calcutec gets into a dream state when he performs shuffling, which again allows for connection between the identities to emerge.

Kafka in KS appears to have killed his father through a dream “So maybe I murdered him through a dream,” I say. “Maybe I went through some special dream circuit or something and killed him.” (KS 214) and the encounter he has with Ms. Seiki at night where he is intimate with her appears to be a dream.

**But you can't locate the borderline separating dream and reality.  
Or even the boundary between what's real and what's possible. All  
you're sure of is that you're in a delicate position. Delicate and  
dangerous. You're pulled along, a part of it, unable to pin down  
the principles of prophecy, or of logic. (KS 293)**

Dreams go a long way in revealing the identities in the novel. Hoshino sees the Flute man that Nakata tells him about in his dreams, but does not think much about it.

Kafka’s profesy of violating his sister is also depicted through a dream. The dream is so real that he feels it has actually taken place. Sakura’s words address the situation “Listen to me. First of all, I've got a steady boyfriend, okay? And second, you've

come into my dream without permission. That's not right.” (KS 385). The experience that Kafka has in the other world seems to have a dream like quality too. In many instances the protagonist does not know if it was a dream or not. When he returns to the entrance from the parallel universe he says, “The next instant I'm facing forward and following the soldiers. I turn a corner and that little world in the hills vanishes, swallowed up in dreams.” (KS 464). The person that Kafka is fated to be and the identity that he rejects due to the moral taboo is depicted through dreams.

Murakami's idea of dreams is expressed by the narrator in WSC “There are symbolic dreams—dreams that symbolize some reality. Then there are symbolic realities—realities that symbolize a dream” (WSC 67). The idea of dream is sometimes synonymous with visionary ideas and sometimes with fate. The Sheep Professor's story about how the sheep entered him is allowed to happen through a dream. This is fate that takes hold of the Sheep Professor:

“It was the summer of 1935 when the sheep entered me. I had lost my way during a survey of open-pasture grazing near the Manchuria-Mongolia border, when I happened across a cave. I decided to spend the night there. That night I dreamed about a sheep that asked, could it go inside me? Why not? I said. At the time, I didn't think much of it. It was a dream, after all.” (WSC 187)

It was after this dream that the Sheep Professor's life changed. The Sheep Professor can also be seen as a social identity of the protagonist. The dream technique along with magical realism brings out the struggle for identity as a theme in the novels.

In DDD the plot begins with a mysterious feeling that someone is crying for the protagonist in the Dolphin hotel. The narrator repeatedly has this dream that causes him to make his journey back to Sapporo and the Dolphin Hotel.

I often dream about the Dolphin Hotel. In these dreams, I'm there, implicated in some kind of ongoing circumstance. All indications are that I belong to this dream continuity. The Dolphin Hotel is distorted, much too narrow. It seems more like a long, covered bridge. A bridge stretching endlessly through time. And there I am, in the middle of it. Someone else is there too, crying. The hotel envelops me. I can feel its pulse, its heat. In dreams, I am part of the hotel. (DDD 1)

The dream he has of Kiki calling for him seems to be a continuation every time it occurs. "Was this a dream? No, not with such continuity. All the details followed in perfect order. I'm in downtown Honolulu, I chased Kiki here. Something's gone whacky, but it's real." (DDD 269). The narrator is not sure if what happened to him was a dream or not. He speaks to Gotanda, who has a vague recollection of having killed Kiki. "I just feel as if I might have done it. I can't prove it. I give up. The most critical part's a blank" and he feels he might have murdered her in his dream, "the whole thing's in pieces, like a dream" (DDD 353) Gotanda describe the murder with a dreamlike quality:

"It all took place in that dark world. You know what I'm talking about? Not here in this one. And it was Kiki who led me there. Choke me, Kiki told me. Go ahead and kill me, it's okay. She invited me to, allowed me to. I swear, honestly, it happened like that. Without me knowing. Can that happen? It was like a dream. The more I think about it, the more it doesn't feel real. Why would Kiki ask me to kill her?" (DDD 356)

This is not hard for the narrator to believe because he accounts for such similar experiences himself:

I had a dream about Kiki. I guess it was a dream. Either that or some act akin to dreaming. What, you may ask, is an “act akin to dreaming”? I don't know either. But it seems it does exist. Like so many other things we have no name for, existing in that limbo beyond the fringes of consciousness. But let's just call it a dream, plain and simple. The expression is closest to something real for us. (DDD 369)

The narrator in DDD realizes that Gotanda is the murderer only after Yuki points it out to him. She is able to see the truth since she is clairvoyant. She explains that her power is like a dream “They were like vibes that I could see. But not like a dream. Like an empty dream. That’s it, an empty dream. Nobody’s there, so you don’t see any-body.” (DDD 191). Dreams bring out the destruction of identities like Kiki, Mei, the Rat and the sheep with the star. The sheep entering the Professor and the bizarre room are also depicted through dreams, which throw light on the different identities that reside within the protagonist. In this way the dream technique helps in bring out the realization in all four novels just like magical realism allows the readers to access the more abstract and complex ideas that the author uses to show the struggle to assume identities.

In analyzing the four novels, it can be said that Murakami’s use of magical realism and dreams helps him to address the complexities of the identity that allows the readers to resonate with him. The use of characters like the Sheep Man, the Rat, the sheep with the star on its back, and Boy named Crow, Johnnie Walker, Colonel Sanders, the Calcutec, the shadow and the Dreamreader; along with other magical elements like sheep entering men, men entering walls, dead men coming to speak to their friends, travelling back in time, men speaking to cats and soldiers stagnant in time, help with the interpretation of the nuances of meanings of the heavy theme that

his novels deal with.

In HBEW the protagonist retains his social identity and allows his individual identity to die. In KS, the narrator chooses to retain his individual identity and loses his social identity. The narrator of WSC tries to retain the balance between the social and the individual, where the Rat dies subduing the social identity and the Sheep Professor loses his individual identity. It is only the Sheep Man that survives. The struggle is not quite finished as the sequel returns with the same struggle where the Sheep Man struggles to maintain his individual identity cloaked in social identity. The individual identity is destroyed after Gotanda, who is unable to lose his individual identity, commits suicide. The social identity is destroyed when Gotanda kills Mei. As it is often seen, those who can balance the social and individual identities seem to survive longer than those who are unable to do so. Some individual identities are so magnetic that they leave their footprints on the sands of time and even manage to influence the society to change and the enigma of the individual and social identity continues in a new form. More often or not, those with a rigid individual identity seem to break under the weight of the social identity.

Murakami's protagonists are usually nameless narrators. In the selected novels, with the exception of KS, where the narrator uses a pseudonym, all protagonists are nameless. The author addresses them using their profession or their relationship with another character. In HBEW, the protagonist is called the Calcutec in HB and Dreamreader in EW. Other characters are called the Scientist, some times professor or also grandfather, granddaughter, the Librarian, the shadow, the Gatekeeper and the Colonel. Sometimes the characters are called according to their description like Junior and Big boy. This is the same with WSC and DDD, where the narrator has no name at all. Although he is a journalist to begin with, he is not called

by any name. He narrates the story in first person in both novels. Although the Japanese version sees the *Boku* and the *Watashi* in some novels like HBEW, the translations do not see much of a difference. The Sheep Man speaks without spaces between words and uses the plural personal pronoun when he addresses himself. His style of speaking remains the same through both the novels. Other characters are called Sheep Professor, the Rat, the Driver, the Boss, the Secretary or the Strange Man, the man with the missing fingers. The cat in the WSC acquires a name in the middle of the novel. The driver names him Kipper. In DDD, this trend changes and Murakami as decided to give names to some of his characters. Yuki, Ame, Dick North, Yumiyoshi are some of the characters. The girlfriend with exquisite ears is called Kiki in DDD, while she was nameless in WSC. The call girls are called Mami, Mei and June. Murakami also goes to the extent of calling Yuki's father, an author, Hiraku Makimura, an anagram of his own name. His later novels have characters with names as Strecher points out, "...it was not until his 1987 novel, *Noruei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*), that the author gave his characters names that might be considered conventional." ("Magical Realism" 267).

The use of nameless characters allows the narrator to be a flexible individual. He could be the writer, or the readers or just an individual. Named characters assume an identity. It could decide their nationality or their ethnicity and race, which set them apart from others. With a nameless narrator, he defies identity and allows his readers to mingle into the narrator. The first person narrative is an accomplice in this allure and aides in the metaphysical nature of identity. The narrator's detachment also removes prejudice and opinion so that he acts more of a medium to the story rather than the owner of the story. Clearly, the story belongs to the readers than to the writer, in the sense that Murakami does not impose any perceived nature of identity that he

roots for. His stories are about the struggle against the umbrella identity that hides and eventually denies the individual identity. Murakami himself does not suggest a labeled identity. He, like his narrators, is an observer of identities, which he brings to the notice of his readers, even when the subject matter defies tangibility.

Murakami uses magical realism and dreams to address the metaphysical nature of the theme of identity. The dialectics of individual identity and social identity and the realization of their existence in the characters is brought out through magical realism. The acceptance and the obliteration of an identity are represented through the use of dreams.