

The Elusive World of Geisha: The Orient in the Western Gaze



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “The Elusive World of Geisha: The Orient in the Western Gaze” is a record of first hand research work done by me during the period of my study in the year 2016-2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship, or other similar title.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled “The Elusive World of Geisha: The Orient in the Western Gaze” by PremChandar P for the award of Master of Philosophy is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of his study(2016-2017) and that the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship or other similar title and that this dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate.

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This dissertation stands as a result of my long research work. It reveals my major academic interest such as Orientalism, Japanese studies, Inter cultural studies, gender and Post-colonial discourse. I always had a passion for the image of geisha represented in the contemporary literature as the most mysterious creatures. Meanwhile they are identified as one of the iconic image of Japan. In my journey to pursuit the elusive world of geisha, I would like to express my gratitude to many people:

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to examine the biased representation of the Japanese geisha figure in the contemporary literature, reader's reception and criticism. The literary works based upon geisha community such as *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Autobiography of a Geisha*, and *Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing World* were received with great popularity in Western countries than in Japan. The Western audience found the works as very pleasing were the Japanese were not as enthralled. The study specifically talks about the fictional device used by the Westerns to represent the culture and lifestyle of Orient. The dissertation endeavours to figure out the how the West views the Oriental culture which different from the Westerners. It uncovers the unawareness and prejudice behind the stereotypical description of geisha community. The study also aims to explore the hidden perspective and ideas behind the Japanese cultural studies. In this dissertation I principally apply Edward Said's idea of Orientalism to analyse the fictional device used by the dominant frame work (Western) in representing the culture of Orient. In this dissertation I also use the Postcolonial ideas of Homi.kBhaba and Spivak's idea of subaltern to show how the discourse of Post colonialism operates in the selected works.

Keywords: Japanese studies, Orientalism, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Post colonialism, Subaltern, serotype.

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INTRODUCTION

The confrontation of east and West has been an integral feature in the modern literature and history. It has brought in its wake many interpretations in the contemporary times. The Western intellectuals who ventured to study the culture of Orient ended up constructing the East as an exotic 'other' which led to discriminate and oppose them as an alien to the world. The East was an unfamiliar place to the West which the west thought was a place to be explored and colonized. Since the period of colonial expansion the west developed an "ambivalent" attitude towards the east which they labelled as oriental "exotic beings, antiquity, romantic world, uncivilized with lingering memories, experiences and landscape. Asia is known for its antiquity, the vibrant culture and life style. Since the publication of Said's theory of Orientalism and Postcolonial theory it has fascinated western scholars to undertake research upon the orient. The Occident within them is of the opinion that they are sophisticated and culturally advanced than the east. The west felt the orient as its cultural contradictor.

Japan especially as an Orient has experienced excessive military and political pressure from Britain and The United States since the early period of modernization. Being unique the cultural studies of Japan contributed more towards authenticity. The Occident played a major role in prejudicing, misrepresenting and misinterpreting its authenticity. In Asian countries there exist certain stereotypical icons in communities and groups which the westerns take it as an object to be romanticized, eroticized and sexualized. This particular groups of the orient such as the *bacha posh* and *bacha bazi* of Afghanistan, the *devdasis* of southern India, the *Kalbelias* (cobra gypsies), monkey charmers, street circuses, street musicians were the *commodified* objects for the westerners who described them in a bizarre manner by hiding its scholarly and aesthetic idioms. The bias of the West towards the Orient is obvious. The target

audience of the Occident were the western audience. The historians and anthropologist have been drawn to east and held rapt in fascination of the rich history of the orient, by knowing the history of the orient they prejudiced and represented the culture in such a manner that appeared more realistic to the readers. The Western anthropologist and historians had commercial interest which was an effective play in the misinterpretation of the orient.

Japan is in the Far East has the characteristics of orient which was completely unknown to the outer world in the past. The west certainly felt the authenticity of Japan and was attracted by its "otherness". Japan after facing four hundred years of civil war during the period of Tokugawa began to develop its culture, arts, and life style. The country remained shut from the outside world ensuring that no rebellious ideas entered to disturb its elusive stability. The people of Japan hardly crossed their boundaries. They would view their world like a frog at the bottom of the well. Foreigners especially Catholics were not permitted and the Japanese were not allowed to set out from their country.

The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal." But the way of enlivening the relationship was everywhere to stress the fact that the Oriental lived in a different but thoroughly organized world of his own, a world with its own national, cultural, and epistemological boundaries and principles of internal coherence. (Said, Edward *Orientalism* 40 and 41)

Within the nation of Japan there exists certain subculture with distinctive practice and behavioural pattern which projects the Japanese folks to be more stereotypical to the west. Such distinctive icons of Japan were highly regarded, developed and encouraged by the nation in order to preserve the nation's authenticity, cultural practice, customs, values, and tradition. The Geisha community of Japan is considered as one of the most remarkable iconic image all over the world that provokes an idea of being Japanese to an every single mind.

Other than geisha there were other several entertainers such as *Taikomachies* (male geisha), sumo wrestlers, tea brewing women, courtesans, and the *kabuki actors* whose portraits often occupied the colourful *ukiyo-e* engraved in wood block prints which literally meant ‘pictures of the floating world’. Similar to the geisha world in Japan, the other Asian countries such as Afghanistan is known for the custom of *Bacha Bazi* (The cross dressed male dancers) and the religiously practiced system called *Devadasi* (God’s servant) which is common in southern India, like *geisha* the *Devadsis* are known as classical dancers, who are married to the deity of temple at a very young age, like geisha they are forbidden to enter marital life and eventually end up as prostitutes to the rich. Such customs prevailing in Asia are considered as pivotal characteristics of orient which distinguish themselves as a subculture within their nation as well as the “other” among the orient. There are lot of cultural distinctions between the Orient and Occident and Orientalist are always fascinated about the “subculture” within the countries which is in a way doubly distinctive, stereotypical, and a perfect object to be romanticized, sexualized, and eroticized.

Owing on account of its geographical location Japan abundantly carries the characteristics of orient, with the depiction samurai warriors, *hara-kiri* suicide tradition, and the *Kamikaze* attack which have been depicted as an evidence of barbarism by the westerners. The westerners represented the orient as “third world”, the geisha being the women of orient are considered by the western as the women of third world contribute huge sum of sacrifice in order to survive in the third world. They are considered as women in order to fulfil men and let themselves to be commodified to create a supreme image of third world woman. As a third-world being the orient are also the subjects of religious oppression. The influence of Buddhism played a pivotal task in oppressing the women of Japanese society. Buddhism preaches that the “*nature of woman is inherently evil*” this very notation was emphasized by Lebra from the *Tale of Genji* written by Lady Murasaki. The notion “women as a bad luck” is

a kind of tyranny practiced by the orient. This problem occurs when the people fail to distinguish oppression and culture. The Japanese wives and geisha are viewed as two sides of coin with a different perspective of being women in the third world.

The geisha community has been one of the incredible groups of orient who appeared simultaneously in the arts and literature works of the West and in academic works like *Madame Crysantheme* (1887) *Madame Butterfly* (1904) composed by Gimacomo Puccine (1858- 1924) purely based on geisha. The Western in their literary works utilized the image of geisha in a unilateral manner by ignoring their artistic skills and labelled them as an epitome of sensuality. Such discourse upon the geisha as sexual image was accepted by the Japanese representing the female sexuality. The European encounter of geisha in public bath house got them interested in the bathing custom of 1850s. The westerners were astonished to see the men and women in the same bathing area who even walked back to their home naked after bathing. This perception persuaded the readers to believe that the women of east wearing exotic robes and kimonos were weak, submissive, promiscuous and sexually available. The sexual practice of *mizauge* ritual in the geisha community is very apparent to the context of commodification and patriarchal domination since it financially benefits the third party by selling the virgin girl to a Stanger. There exists a popular myth in the West that, when someone thinks of Geisha the think as hyped prostitute. The image is due to the limited understanding of the West. The nature of geisha profession is “ambivalent” to some extent, due the counterparts such as courtesans who have mimicked their manner to attract more customers. This state of ambivalence resulted in bringing ignominy the community to a certain extent, which resulted in emergence of new groups as “hybrids” who were a mixture of geisha and prostitutes. The Japanese government first sent the geisha to represent their country which made many men fantasize and the fashions of kimonos were spread throughout Europe.

Like many nations Japan always had some mode of entertainment with in every sect of offering various kind of pleasure through the magnificent Geisha. The aristocrats of Japan after cutting off all contact with the outside world during the Edo, era they pioneered themselves to the development of the arts and culture of Japan in major and urban areas. The culture of geisha developed in Japan when the aristocrats and merchants looked for other modes of entertainment such as music, dance and poetry which provided a service to refresh and charm, working alongside the very desirable, and for most people unobtainable, courtesan. Earlier in the eighteenth century in Japan the geishas on the screen and stage used to be men. As this kind of entertainment progressed the women of Japan with some artistic quality adopted the form of geisha, and the geishas as we know today follows strict rules and norms to not upstage the courtesan or steal the clients. Afterwards the geisha culture has banned after the mid- eighteenth century. They took their social position peaked around in Tokyo in the 1900s. Kyoto a place in Japan is said to be the cultural capital of geisha. Hundreds of them remain in the city, and work in the traditional teahouse as the always have done. People who wish to experience geisha culture visits, Kyoto. Geishas are inevitably declining in number these days due to excessive norms and traditions they have to follow has which has made their profession very elite and enigmatic.

Like *saburuko* of seventh century and the *Shirabyoshi*, who emerged in the beginning of thirteenth century Geisha have their rhizome as a female entertainers. They would entertain and perform for honour and fame while some of them become concubines to rich men and emperors. The first walled in pleasure quarters were built in Japan in late sixteenth century. Like other aspects of Japanese culture, they were modelled after the Ming dynasty china. They became known as *shimabra* after they were relocated in the mid 1600s. A boggy patch of land name *Yoshi- wara* in Edo has acknowledged as a region for brothel district under the auspices of *Tokugawa shougunate*. Brothels in Japan were prohibited to operate

anywhere outside the district and had certain strict rules laid on them, the customers who would visit the brothel were not allowed to stay more than twenty-four hours. The courtesans had to wear simple dyed kimonos and any suspicious or unknown visitors were to be reported to the office of the city Governor. Since Japan enjoyed a prolonged period of tranquillity, peace and calm in the following centuries of civil war, many samurai decided that the places like *yoshi-wara* no longer need such kind of brothel services. It can be surmised that many women of these formerly noble background became courtesans; as a result the districts like Yoshwara and Shimbara were reformed as places of refinement, honour and culture. The stability in peace brought an increase in prosperity and the rise of the merchant class, or *chonin*. Due to the artistic atmosphere and being free from the strictures of outside world, it seemed something like an adult amusement park, with a good measure of culture being thrown. The courtesans were split into different classes within the *hanamaichi* based on their standard and hierarchy which also changed over times. The situation degraded in the middle of 18th century to some extent and there was rise of new kind of entertainers in Osaka and Kyoto.

The earlier *geiko* who appeared on stage were actually men. Like men who cross dressed in Shakespearean plays, the first female group that emerged shortly after, were the *Odrikos* who danced and played the musical instrument called *samisen*. The female geisha soon gained popularity and were capable enough to attract steel clients from the courtesans. In order to keep them under control in *Yoshiwara* they started a registration system or *kenban* to force them pay taxes. The strict dress code became so successful that it quickly became a norm at *hanamici* across Japan. These strict conditions in fact led geishas to flourish as entertainers and artist. In comparison with the courtesans they were simply dressed and were regarded as fashion leaders. But many aspects of life style itself were less glamorous. The parents of young girls during the mid of twentieth century sold their daughters to the geisha

schools and the girls were often subject to the ritual practice known as '*mizu-age*,' which mean that a virgin girl was sold to the man who offers the highest bid. Somehow after the World War two such practice like '*mizu-age* was eradicated and the profession of geisha went into a steady decline.

The term Geisha (pronounced as /'geɪʃə/) is a proper Japanese noun. Like other Japanese nouns geisha is neutral for both singular and plural. The word geisha makes two senses (gei) which means "art" and (sha) "Person" or doer". So, the word geisha literally gives the meaning "artist". *Geiko* is another common term used in *Kyoto* dialect for geisha. A full matured geisha is called *Geiko*. This term is basically used to differentiate between geisha who are trained in the geisha schools in traditional form and the prostitutes who have aped the attire and styles of geisha in order to attract their customers. A prominent difference between geisha and prostitute can be made from the way they wear their bow of their *sash* or *obi*. Geisha wear their *obi* at the back whereas the prostitutes wear it in the front. The dressing of geisha is considered to be a difficult task. Some geisha even take professional aide for their dressing. Geisha's clothing contains several different layers of Kimonos and undergarments. Even with professional help the dressing is time consuming. The *obi* which is considered a part of their attire is a simple band of cloth; Geisha and prostitute wear it in different style for a very important reason. The prostitutes often had to take off their *obi* many times in a day, so they tie the *obi* in front for ease of removal and replacement.

Maiko is a term used for the apprentice geisha. The word is made of the *kanji* (*mai*), meaning "dancing" and (*ko*) meaning "child" *Maiko* geisha wear white makeup and grand kimonos and "split peach" hair style. This has become a kind of stereotype for geisha to the western instead of a true geisha. Geisha in *Kyoto* are considered more orthodox and maintain strong traditions whereas *Tokyo* geisha are a bit westernised and do not follow the strict rituals of *Maiko*. The *Tokyo* geisha go under the training process from six months to a year

which is considered to be notably short than a Kyoto apprentice geisha. The trainee is entitled as *Hangyoku* which means “half-jewel,” or with the more gentle term *O-shaku*, literally means “one who pours alcohol.” Tokyo geisha are tending to be older than their Kyoto counterparts; many hold formal degrees from universities. Geisha begin their life and skills in their respective *Okiya* a kind of geisha house at the age of fifteen these days but the traditionally *Geiko* learn their skills at a very young age. After spending her life in learning skills in traditional Japanese arts and in hospitality in *Geiko* stage, she will pass on to *Maiko* stage to become an apprentice geisha. As an apprentice each young *Maiko* are adopted by an “elder sister” whom they consider their mentor, the young *Maiko* change their names and follow and obey their elder sisters. Being a professional artist and entertainer the geisha other than playing music and dance is supposed to make her client feel comfortable and easy by her witty conversations and participating in drinking games as the night progresses. Being new to such occasions the apprentice geisha is not considered as appealing and jocular. So in order to grab attention of the client she relies on rich kimono and heavy jewellery. Geisha have many engagements and appointments every night starting from dawn to midnight. They hustle from bar to bar wearing their high heeled wooden *geta* sandals. The elder sister takes her apprentice every where she goes in order to make her familiar. These days geisha are rather modish oriented. They typically take a weekly off, wearing jeans leaving their hair untied and going for shopping like ordinary women. If we are walking around the streets of Kyoto and Tokyo we may pass by any geisha without even realising it.

The iconic geisha image has been increasing popularly in the west since the publication of Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The community of geisha has been misinterpreted and misrepresented so far by the west in many literary works, which acknowledges the stereotypical image in projecting the geisha community. The culture of east has left a barbaric impact in the minds of west due to their prejudiced view. The dissertation

entitled “The elusive word of Geisha: The orient in the western Gaze” is a serious attempt to explore the oriental ideology employed in selected works which is upon the Geisha community. The Westerners project them as increasingly stereotyped and eroticized.

The life of a geisha is quite expensive: the make-up, luxurious kimonos, lavish accessories and financially providing for the *Okiya*. The only income a geisha could earn at that time was payment from entertaining at tea-parties (geisha’s entertaining men) or occasionally prostituting, but this small income would not be enough to cover all expenses, which is why an income from a *danna* would make it easier to maintain their luxurious lifestyle. A geisha could have more than one *danna* if she or her Mother wishes in order to bring in more money to the *Okiya* house. At some occasions, she could have sleepovers at teahouses and occasionally they would have intercourse with the men at the party, even though she was mistress to another man (Gallagher 114-115).

This dissertation set to analyze the views of occident about the elusive geisha world (orient). The major goal of this dissertation is to discuss about the position of these highly skilled women.

Arthur Golden, the author of *Memoirs of a Geisha* was born in 1956 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He belongs to the Ochs- Sulzberger family, the founders of the New York Times. His grandfather was the chief publisher during 1935 to 1961 which is regarded as the paper’s most productive time. Arthur Golden was much passionate in Japanese arts; he has a master in Japanese History from Colombia University, and graduated from Harvard University with the degree in Art History and specialisation in Japanese arts. He also learned speaking Mandarin and Chinese. Arthur has spent many years in Japan and China. He spent an entire summer in Beijing at Peking University and then worked for a while in Tokyo. After he returned to the United States, he achieved Master of Arts in English from Boston University.

At present Arthur Golden lives in Brookline, Massachusetts with his wife and two children. Arthur Golden is famous for his work *Memoirs of a Geisha*, which remained a best seller for two years in New York Times and was adapted into a film in 2005. His other works include *Walt Whitman: A Collection of Criticism* and *Level 6 Pack Updated* which was published together by Alan Paton, Bill Gates and Arthur Golden.

Arthur Golden while he worked in Tokyo met a young man born to a famous businessman and a Geisha. His parentage was known as an open secret which fascinated him and made him work on the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* after he returned to U.S.A. He initially was interested work on the young man's childhood as a son of geisha but later he found himself interested in writing about the young man's mother. He finally made up his mind to write a story about a geisha based on the life of the young man's mother. In order compose the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* Golden read everything which was available in Japanese and English about the geisha community. He wrote about eight hundred pages at first as a draft aiming to describe span of years of life a Kyoto geisha soon after World War II. Then he started revising the manuscript. He was introduced to Mineko Iwasaki by a long time Japanese friend of his grandmother. Mineko Iwasaki was a former geisha of Kyoto who seemingly wished to talk to him. Golden travelled to Japan to meet her and wasn't at all certain of what to expect. Mineko patiently answered all his questions and took him for a local tour to the geisha district of *Gion*, in Kyoto. She arranged everything readily available for Golden, including a photographer. In order to photograph the regular activities, daily rituals of a geisha, and their professional drapers who helped them wearing makeup and kimono Mineko Iwasaki helped him review his entire opinion about geisha life. He burnt the previously written eight hundred pages and sat down to task of writing all over again

Iwasaki had many reasons to open up her experience to Arthur Golden. Most of the geisha do not share their experience with anyone. Iwasaki was kind and generous when she

came to know that Arthur Golden has approached her as a fiction writer not a journalist. His sole interest was to know only about geisha life, the rituals and routine in it. Iwasaki in her early life being a popular Geisha had the privilege and opportunity to meet many great Japanese writers and artist. Being apprised of his interest and respect towards geisha culture and traditions, she showed great concern to the writer and gave him an insider's view.

Being an American man of 1990s writing a novel from the point of view of 1930's Japanese women, Arthur Golden initially had some reluctance, to pass over certain contradictions and cultural divides such as West versus East, man versus woman, present versus past and a fourth divide as well, the geisha which dwells into subculture. Having such complexities it would be more challenging even for a native writer to write about such a peculiar world. Even though Arthur Golden interviewed Iwasaki he had no urge and ability to explore a protagonist to his story. He instead wrote another draft of a manuscript of seven fifty pages, a draft in the third person. The editors and some big name agents of New York started approaching him while he was revising the text for submission but unfortunately the manuscript wasn't that much appealing to them. Arthur Golden being a proficient prose stylist wrote the manuscript in form that seemed like a prose. The subject matter of the text always fascinated him he soon realised the error he had committed in the manuscript, He had gone onto use an uninvolved narrator. This was owing to his concern regarding the crossing of four cultural divides; he ended up writing a tedious and dull book. Having no temptation to give up Arthur Golden successfully crossed the contradictions and cultural divides.

The first chapter of this dissertation focuses on *Memoirs of a Geisha* which is based on Golden's favourite subject Japanese culture and geisha world which he released on 1997 after he spent six years working on it. The book played a crucial task in spreading a more brutalized and mysterious picture of geisha in twentieth century. It was thrice written by Golden with a shifting of view, and was also translated in Japanese versions such as *Me*

Sayuri, Kanag- Kenangana Seorang Geisha. Arthur used Mineko Iwasaki a former Geisha as a spokesperson for the book and out of inspiration made a fictional character Sayuri. Golden employs theme such as classes within the society, slavery, oppression and exploitation of female gender. The book begins with translator's notes, Harahuis who records the life of a retired Geisha. *Memoirs of a Geisha* tells the story of nine year old girl Sakamoto Chio (Sayuri) who went on to be one the most popular geisha of her time in Kyoto. *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a booker prize romantic novel about the fictional character Sayuri, who passes through many lovers in her life, and eventually ends up marrying Iwamura who was a Chairman of an established factory, with whom she developed a sense of dwelling. The chairman, whom Sayuri fantasize as a prince, incorporates the image of friendly, reserved and elite business man representation constructed by American media in late 1990s. The male characters project the relationship between Japan and America it reflects the feelings of the dominant westerners over Japan. It is a fairy tale like unrealistic story of an orient with handful of conspicuous flaws. *Memoirs of a Geisha* projects an image of geisha who is imprisoned in an innocent mindset. Captivating her adolescent mindset it portrays a feeble, ignorant, but empowered state of geisha. The novel is based on ancient Japanese habits in the geisha community that is rarely seen today. *Memoirs of a Geisha* has a great deal to do with the gender lens. Initially women as a human being were exploited by the capitalist. They are considered as a sexual object; the idea is that women have to make use of their bodily resources in order to survive in the society. The geisha sacrifice a great amount in order to create the ideal figure of a Japanese woman. The novel is a result of Golden's tremendous amount of research which he has done upon the socio-economic milieu. The novel has got four curial aspects which make it interesting; first the story of Sayuri has a Cinderella syndrome. Her story parallels with Cinderella's tale Sayuri's role as a beautiful maid and Hatsumomo's role as an evil step sister. The second aspect is Golden's illustrations of

exploitation and subordination of women in the Japanese society, Arthur reveals many evidences throughout the novel which are related to the geisha life, position, role and their delusion to lead their life in the Japanese society. He projects many form of subordination and exploitation. Thirdly in the novel Arthur states, being a woman the geisha should be smart and talented to survive in their community. Golden's characters in this novel are fictional but in fact there were such real characters and facts that existed in the society. It is a fact that supports the plot and story line of the novel. The novel is an accurate example of the Western's invasion towards Japan and the citizen who suffered the hazards of war. In spirit the war redesigned the geisha world and twisted it into another past secrecy of the orient. Golden's story involves the 'almost pathological ugliness of almost all men in the book' (Allison, 1999). Iwasaki's novel which she released in 2002 makes obvious how Golden has cannibalized and distorted her biography in the *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The novel has also inspired other writers to publish books about geisha such as *Geisha: A Life* (2002) by Miniko Iwasaki *Geisha The Unique World* (2003) by John Andrew, *The secret History Of Vanishing World* (2001) by Lesley Downer, and the *Autobiography of A Geisha* by Sayo Masuda (2003).

The second chapter of this dissertation focuses on Masuda's autobiography *The Autobiography of a Geisha* (2004). Sayo Masuda a former geisha wrote her autobiography, in which she decides to share the truth about life as a geisha in which she explores the mystery of the geisha world. The alluring geisha world is known popular to many people, but very few writers prefer to write about their painful experiences and difficulties they have been through in their life as a geisha. Masuda at the age of six was sent to work as a nursemaid. She was given very little to eat, bared ill treatment and punishments frequently. She spent most of her time looking at the owner's children, and then later was sold to an *Okiya* (geisha house) at the age of twelve. Masuda being an illiterate was given a nickname in the *Okiya* she

was called “Low” by other geishas for lacking in intelligence. Masuda was badly criticised and discriminated for having dark sunburned skin. Masuda befriended with Karuta the second oldest geisha in the *Okiya* who was the only girl to show kindness and help Masuda during her training both shared a lifelong friendship. She started to work as a maid in the *Okiya* and then became a geisha in 1940.

Masuda as a participant wrote her autobiography between 1956- 1957 for nonfiction women’s writing competition which she came to know from an article. She submitted the manuscript of her autobiography in hope of winning monetary reward. Her book was published under the Japanese title *Geisha: Kuto no hanshogai*. Masuda could barely read and write, she never reads more than *hiragana* and she wrote her entire book in *hiragana*. Her autobiography was translated and published in English by G.G. Rowley in 2003. The translation was passionately done by her editors preserving the original feelings of her writing. Through this autobiography, Masuda conveys an important message to the Japanese parents who abandon their children and sell girls to Geisha house. She declares the children are the sole responsibilities of parents and therefore they should give them comfort and should not abandon them in any circumstance. She also fights against the prohibition of prostitution in Japan. She declares that even though no one enjoys becoming prostitute it is a fine way to make living when there is no other option left to live. Masuda declares that she could not have possibly survived if she hadn’t prostituted herself.

After Masuda released her text *Autobiography of a Geisha* she was harshly criticized by the geisha community and ultimately she had to remain confined. Masuda tries to convey message to the readers that her goal was only to tell her story for which she is paid off. She never had any intention to become prominent. She refuses to meet with people who wish to discuss with her about her book. The translated version of Masuda’s text receives positive comments from Arthur Golden, Liza Dalby and several other reviews.

Golden's *Memoirs of Geisha* is a fictionalised account of Geisha life whereas Masuda's book tells about a real geisha life. The book is a raw and unvarnished account, about the cruelties and occasional hardships of geisha's *Okiya* life which the protagonist has been through as a first-hand experience. Masuda's autobiography dedicates only a least part to the elegant custom and life of geisha. The majority of the episodes depict a graphic account of torments such as rape, agony, sexual servitude, and domestic violence which provokes a sense of empathy to the readers. Predictably Masuda's story is a harsh and pungent account, with sorrowful reflections on the destiny of the abandoned children conceived out of marriage. Although Masuda depicts her life as a geisha, in truth most of her dedication goes to depicts about her retired geisha life which are the times of sever deprivation and poverty. The publication of her autobiography eventually relieves her from hardship and disgrace. The story also tells about certain geisha houses during Masuda's time, which functioned against the code and laws of geisha community, which functioned as brothel as well as *Okiya*. It chronicles the tough life of *Okiya* where the geisha were expected to continuously engage in sexual activities for payment. The story can be viewed as a pitiable situation of 'Third World' women strives to exist in a backward society. Masuda is an embodiment of an orient a stereotypical Japanese entity confined to the geisha community. Therefore Masuda's autobiography is discovered as an oriental subject, a story of a former geisha in which the features of orient is predominant.

The third chapter of this dissertation turns its focus to Lesley Downer's nonfictional work *Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing World*. Lesley Downer is an author, journalist and a novelist born to a Chinese mother and Canadian father, who was a professor. Downer was fascinated by Japanese culture and people, where she ended up accidentally. Downer lived in Japan for fifteen years and has written many non-fiction and fictions based on Japanese culture. *The Shogun's Queen* (2016) her fourth novel, which was recently

published completes her quarter of novel which is set in a charming and dramatic era of Japanese history. Downers second novel in the quarter, *The Last Concubine*, tells the story of Sachi, a young girl caught up in the last days of women's place and forced to flee as civil war rages. She travels through Japan, to discover who she is and to discover the meaning of the term 'Love' for which there is no word in her language. The Third novel, *The Courtesan and the Samurai*, is the tale of Hana, forced to work as a courtesan in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, the heart of floating world. Her fourth novel, *The Samurai's Daughter*, is a kind of Romeo Juliet story in Taka, the daughter of legendary 'last Samurai' and Nobu, whose family is on the wrong side in the civil war.

Downers non-fiction includes *The Secret History of a Vanishing World*, which she wrote after she lived among geisha for several months and started identifying herself with them. She also wrote *Madame Sadavakko: The Geisha who seduced the west*, the story of the model for Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*. Her book *The Brothers* was chosen as a New York Times 'Book of the Year'. Downer currently lives in London; she is a visiting lecturer for MA programme in the city university.

Downer lived among the geisha many years and got to know many of them personally. *The Secret History of A Vanishing World* is a book packed with exciting details about her study of Japanese culture and geisha world, the book carries a detailed study about Japanese history which is crucial and linked with the history of geisha world. Downer's *Secret History* is a beautiful master piece that consists of different cultural and historical context embodied with several ideas such as imperial, cultural, oriental, historicism and postcolonial discourse. The book talks about the western encounter and strong political and militaristic pressure prevailed in Japan. Downer in the later parts of the book explores the real secret history, the modernization and the counterpart of geisha world after the arrival of westerners which intrigued the Japanese womanhood and the geisha community, Downer

also states about the contemporary reality of geisha which is getting vanished gradually. The Secret History also contains Downer's personal anecdotes with different *han-machi* and some random facts and stories about different geisha. The book has certain complexities toward the due to lack of thematic structure. The book tells random stories of different geisha and about their domestic life. The book contains some strange and fascinating truth about the origin of geisha profession which decanted from the *taikomachi*, who became out fashioned when the women began to appear on the stage as geisha. Downer eventually tries to answer an important question: are the tradition geisha vanishing, becoming extinct, because they cannot survive in the modern world? Is there any way to preserve their ancient custom?

Puteri Roslina Abdul Wahid and Anish Shahira Abdul Sukur in their article "Translation of *Memoirs of a Geisha*: Analysis and insights on Cultural Perspective" opts to analyse the translation of cultural Japanese words into Malay language. The article makes a cultural study of *Memoirs of a Geisha* and its translated Malay version *Kenang-kenangan Seorang Geisha* and further states how the changing do occur due to the cultural differences between two languages. The translation of social culture is associated with work in this part the researchers intend to show how the universal meaning used describe particular work is equivalent while it is used in particular community.

Siti Masitha Bint Md.Zin in her article "A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN THE NOVEL, *Memoirs of a Geisha* uses Marxist theory of feminism and Portrays the various form of patriarchal oppression faced by geisha in their society. She uses the ideology of Takie Sagiyuma Lebra about women's freedom "She tells him she cannot return with him to heaven, and instruct him not to look for her...she threatens to strangle one thousand of his people each day if he divorces her". The article concludes that *Memoirs of a Geisha* has a strong element of Patriarchal domination.

Era Kartika Sari in her article "SAYURI'S DEFENCE MECHANISM IN ARTHUR GOLDEN'S *Memoirs of a Geisha*" answers the following research questions: what kind of defence mechanisms used by main character? And why does Sayuri use defence mechanism? Era Kartika Sari uses the idea of defence mechanism in her article as tool for her analysis. The article has got supporting data and main data. The Main data are collected from the text *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The supporting data are gathered from the opinion of critics regarding the novel. The researchers study declares that Arthur Golden has used repression, suppression, rationalization and acting out through the character of Sayuri by depicting her as a victim of anxiety.

Prusha Majid in her article Prostitute or Artist? Stereotype and Authenticity in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of Geisha* talks about the attitude of Arthur Golden towards the geisha in his novel, he also attempts to answer the question in this article whether the novel challenges or reinforces the received stereotypes about and their unique way of living. The article also talks about Mineko Iwaski's criticism about the novel. The article concludes *Memoirs of a Geisha* according to feminism and patriarchal law has both negative and positive view of geisha's exotic way of living.

Jin Jin in his article "The Discourse of Geisha: In the Case of *Memoirs of a Geisha*" considers the text *Memoirs of a Geisha* as an event that consist of different cultural text, social and historical ideas which is embedded with discourse of geisha. The study for discourse analysis uses the authenticity. According to Jin Jin *Memoirs of Geisha* uses orthodox oriental cliché and some romantic elements. The text connects geisha narratives form with some oriental traditions and western narrative.

Anne Allison in her article “Memoirs of the Orient” concludes *Memoirs of a Geisha* is an accurate understanding of the Orient. Allison further asserts the novel is “widely perceived to be historically and ethnographically correct.”

Liza Dalby has commented that *Autobiography of a Geisha* is ‘An Unvarnished look into the world of a woman who unflinchingly relates the bitter struggle of her geisha existence in pre- World War II Japan. This is a fascinating and heart- rending tale’

Book list review says *The Profession of Geisha* is romanticized in literature, but Sayo Masuda’s autobiography portrays the secrecy and the unseen side of their living. The review further states Masuda’s position was reduced to a commodity and talks about her pathetic condition in the okiya. The review further says Masuda’s memoirs must read for those interested in the lives of geisha.-Kristine Huntley

Publisher’s Weekly Review comments Masuda’s account of being a geisha in rural Japan at a hot spring it’s at once intriguing and heartbreaking. There is nothing idyllic in her description of geisha training or life between the world wars. Her picaresque adventure as geisha, the mistress, factory worker, gang moll and caretaker for her younger brother offer an impassioned plea for valuing children “Never give birth to children thoughtlessly!” She writes. “That is why, stroke by faltering stroke, I’ve written all this down.” (May) FYI. While Arthur Golden’s fictional *Memoirs of a Geisha* continues to be yardstick against which all other books on the geisha world are measured, Masuda’s account is a worthy complement. Readers interested in this culture will probably have already seen Atria’s *Geisha, a life* (Forecasts, Sep. 9, 2002) and Gotham’s *Madame Sadayakko: The Geisha who bewitched the western* (Forecasts, Jan. 20).

Partner, Simon in his article “*Monumenta Nipponica*” Compares Masuda’s *Autobiography of a Geisha* with other books on geisha life, he says none of the book provides

a raw and unvarnished account as Sayo Masuda's *Autobiography of a Geisha*. He identifies a very slightest contribution offered to elegant arts, subtle human actions and alluring customs. Instead he finds cruelty, rape, tournament, and sexual servitude as a graphic account offered by Masuda. The article analyses Masuda's story as a picaresque novel and discusses about her different stages and profession she has been through such as labourer, black marketer, prostitute, waitress, and a children caretaker before penning her memoir. Simon concludes that Masuda provides many interesting details about provincial and urban life during the hazards of World War.

Known world comments "Lesley Downer has taken the essential truth of geisha culture- its mystery- and peeled it away layer after like an onion. I highly recommended her engaging and enlightening examination of this little."

Simon Winchester has commented "Exquisite.. Lesley Downer has crafted, with wonderful precision, the best ever portrait of those mysterious creatures who still play their vulnerable craft in the silent backwaters of Japan. Geisha deserves to become a classic".

The New York Times Book Review states "Downer penetrates, with understated sensitive, a perennially misunderstood world, exploring both its storied past and ambiguous present". Downer describes her increasing intimacy with the Kyoto geisha with candour and grace. She is intelligent and curious and modest, and the result of her very personal researcher are deeply satisfying".

Jonathan Mirsky, The Spectator. Comments "Lesley Downer has created a masterpiece in subject and mood." 'Lesley Downer has succeeded in penetrating this intensely secret and rapidly vanishing world and describing it brilliantly.'

Bookseller states ‘This is the best account among several of the real life of geisha. Fascinating, Culture and still capable of surprising and shocking a western audience.’

This dissertation will examine about the western ideology of geisha world in 21st century, how their life and characteristics are portrayed in the western literature by the anthropologist and historians, as an oriental approach this study will applies Said’s theory of Orientalism which ventures how the occident sustained to subordinate the east which is a long lasting crisis since 18th century. The thesis also uses other postcolonial key terms such as stereotypical discourse, ambivalence, imperialism, and the other which are applicable in the text. The thesis discusses how the genuine image of geisha affects the western ideology. The discussion will be on selected books which is solely based on the elusive world of geisha, the chosen books are *Memoirs of a Geisha* (1997) a fiction by an American author Arthur Golden, *Autobiography of a Geisha* (2003) an auto biography of Sayo Masuda who was a former geisha and Lesley Downers nonfiction *The Secret History of Vanishing World* (2000). Edward Said first urbanized the theory of Orientalism in his pioneering work *Orientalism* (1979). Focusing on the political and military pressure between the European and Middle Eastern countries he condemned the cultural imbalance, Said particularly focuses on racial binary image constructed by the westerners which has a dispute such as “us” versus the “other” this notation has helped the westerners to hegemonies the “east”. Said states how the discourse constructed by the west helped to generate an racial inferiority complex in the mind of orient, he remarks the difference and superiority that the westerners defined such as the east as savage, feminine, exotic, outranged, orthodox, and pre- modern. Said argues “Orientalism is a western technique for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the orient”. According to this discourse the inferiority complex is biologically, historically, ingrained in the mind of orient, the west has repeatedly oppressed and undermined in various filed. Said’s orientalism has become a wonderful platform to comprehend the unequal binary

opposition between the orient and occident. Said's orientalism to some extent has its drawback in the case of American orientalism since Americans did not involve in colonial expansion during the pre- WWII period. John Kuo Wei Tchen in his book *New York before China Town: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture* (1776- 1882) opposes Said's view regarding American orientalism. The book similar to Said's orientalism describes the westerner's alliance with the Far East. Tchen shows how the "dominant Americans built their own selves in relation to various others."

CHAPTER 1

Memoirs of a Geisha: The Geisha in the West

The idea of Orientalism is purely a western fabrication. The existing concept of orientalism can be traced from 1870 during the time of World War II when the non Western countries started expanding their colonies into the East. Even though some eastern countries gained independent the praxis of colonialism long lasted as its impact. The nuisance such as oppression, racism, discrimination, colonization, and exploitation continued. The Americans and Europeans coined the East as an orient the lay which could be described as strangers and outsiders.

The status of colonized people has been fixed in zones of dependency and peripherality, stigmatized in the designation of underdeveloped, less-developed, developing states, ruled by a superior, developed, or metropolitan colonizer who was theoretically posited as a categorically antithetical overlord” (Said, Edward. *Orientalism* ,207).

The Westerners had the authority to hide and control their overriding reality, since the era of colonialism reached World War II. The colonizers interpreted the world through their western eyes. The dominant made the colonized to accommodate and assimilate in the way they instructed. The West has constructed an ambivalent and idealistic opinion since the age of colonization.

The book *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a standpoint of an occident male writer. His protagonist Sayuri is what critics view as an oppressed, feeble orient entity. Golden has distorted the Japanese culture and reduced the *Memoirs* to an oriental subject. Rather giving an encouraging image golden book gives a corrupted ideology about the geisha world.

Golden explores some facts about the mysterious and glamorous geisha world but to some extent he freely engages himself in orientalising the culture. So when a reader without background knowledge reads Golden's narrative it would further lead to accrue inappropriate principles about the geisha figures. *Memoirs of a Geisha* incorporates many obscene joke and sexual scenes which pleasures and please the western appetite, the target audience of Golden were the Westerners. Like most other Western anthropologist, writers and historians who ventured into orientalism, Golden also seems to be commercially engineered in bringing out his novel which also lead him to distort Iwasaki's story.

Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1997, sold 4 million copies in America in four years and stayed on the New York Times bestseller list for 58 weeks (Tegler, 2001).

The above lines make obvious that Golden has made the novel appealing to the readers, specifically to his American audience whereas in Japan the reproductions of *Memoirs of a Geisha* were hardly demanded and remained unsold in the racks. As a subject of cultural phenomenon it is abundant about orients cultural drawbacks. It is merchandised by the west for its appropriate features of orientalism such as the sexualized, exoticised and romanticized ideas about the geisha world. Golden as a Westerner maintains his privilege and interprets the orient through western eyes which is common among the western intellectuals since the early age of colonisation. Since he has interviewed Iwasaki and used her story as a fiction it is an existing evident about geisha world. As a borrowed story it generates a binary between fiction and fact but at the same time this borrowed story serves as a piece of evidence to weigh the *Memoirs* as a great fiction like other fiction requires. Golden has malformed Iwasaki's fact as a fiction which includes some sense of enthusiasm which entertains the readers. Basically fictions are known for its ability to amuse the reader whereas facts are regarded as random information which may or may not charm the readers as better than

fictions. When Iwasaki published her subsequent autobiography *Geisha: A Life* as an oppose to Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*, it remained least admired due to its inability to entertain the readers. Comparing it with Golden's fiction it was viewed as random information.

Mineko Iwasaki's autobiography, *Geisha, A Life*, was published in 22 different countries and sold 500,000 copies ("A Former Geisha," 2006), not nearly as many as the four million copies of *Memoirs of a Geisha* (Hanawald, 2000; Shoji, 2005).

Looking into the field of postcolonial writings most of the westerns who engage in Orientalism use fiction as a tool to launch their ideas, since fiction is free from certain limitations the writers fascinate the audience by applying their creativity and imagination. In most of the oriental and postcolonial fiction the native's culture and the standard of living are often condemned and distorted. The Westerners have handled fiction as a secure platform in distorting the culture of east and orientalising them. The works of Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling are noteworthy for its commands and sweeping generalizations about the "Orient" and "Orientals" for example:

Conrad in his fiction *The Heart of Darkness* (1994) openly criticizes about the civilization of Africa. As an influential text there has been a backbreaking debate whether *The Heart of Darkness* is itself a racial book. The most renowned Nigerian novelist Chenua Achebe accuses Conrad in his essay *An Image of Africa* that "Clearly Conrad has a problem with niggers... his inordinate love of that word itself should be of interest to psychoanalysts." Like Achebe Said also notices some sweeping commands and generalization made by Kipling about the Orients Such as : "Impassive as Orientals always are" (*The Phantom Rickshaw*) "Natural Oriental eccentricities" (*Letters of Travel*) "Being an Oriental it makes no protest" (*Letters of Travel*) "The Oriental as a guide is indiscriminating" (*Letters of Marque*) "Kim lied like an Oriental" (*Kim*) "If there is one thing that the Oriental detests more than

another, it is the damnable Western vice of accuracy" (*Letters of Travel*) "Politely cheated in each one, that the Japanese is an Oriental" (*Letters of Travel*) "Destruction—the one thing the Oriental understands" (*The Naulakha*)

Memoirs of a Geisha is a deformed version of Iwasaki's subsequent biography which has been adopted in Golden's book, but being a fiction it remains least possible to pinpoint the matter. Golden never could have exclusively created such a fine story about a geisha.

Former real-life geisha Mineko Iwasaki's story was cannibalized and distorted in the making of the book and the movie. Golden had interviewed her "extensively" at her Kyoto home for two weeks in 1992 ("Geisha Guy Seeks," 2006) and credited her by name in the book's acknowledgments, for which she sued, claiming she had agreed to assist him as an anonymous party. Golden defended himself by arguing that his book was fiction and not a retelling of Iwasaki's factual life story. (Morrison, 2002).

The Westerners identify the Japanese as an antithesis; Golden has strengthened the uninvited stereotypical ideology of Japanese culture in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, which has guided the audience to misapprehend geisha. The outlooks of Geisha repeatedly has been pigeonholed by the stereotypes, due to ignorance of the Westerners who repeatedly portrayed geisha as a high-end prostitute, it has been difficult for the West to accept geisha as an artist rather than a prostitute. They are known as a hired entity to amuse men through singing, dancing and to have sexual affiliation with their clients. The unsure status of geisha is not only common in the West; it is also prevalent even in Japan, when such question arises whether geisha are artist or prostitute? Such complexities are due to the lack of knowledge and absolute understanding of the glamorous geisha life. Golden in his *Memoirs of a Geisha* projects an authentic outlook and objectifies them as an entity which is to be fantasized, romanticized,

studied, consumed and photographed. Among all the characters in the novel Golden (alias Jacob Haarhuis) is the person who approaches as an American scholar of Japanese History to interview Sayuri, who was a former geisha. This helps to cover up that the novel is constructed with an American ideology and perception. While Sayuri narrates her story, Golden makes his presence invisible. His approach towards Sayuri and her narration exhibits the idea of Orientalism. This particular episode at the beginning of the novel can be observed as his personal anecdote. Sayuri's narrative helps the Westerners to build perspective upon Japanese history, culture and the situation of a geisha in a huge cultural, oriental and historical framework. Golden by using Sayuri's narrative leads the readers to directly glide into the mind of Sayuri in order to comprehend the difficulty of her life as a geisha who is an 'orient'.

Golden as a western male writer prejudices the Japanese culture. Like other Westerners he typically involves himself in orientalising the geisha's standard of living. He has also lessened the subject of geisha to a text of patriarchal tyranny which is a common dilemma among the orient. As an American it is tricky to have an absolute understanding of the geisha. Golden remained unsuccessful in altering the stereotypical western view of geisha, instead he has reinforced the inappropriate 'ambivalent' image. Instead of giving an encouraging status, Golden has made them emerge as prostitutes by sexualizing them. "Geisha are popularly understood as high class prostitutes (concubines or courtesans)" In Random House interview he tells that was always the first question people ask him. The text speaks very little about the scholarly artistic life of geisha and instead focuses on sexualizing them: The translator "Jacob Haarhuis notes:

"Like prostitutes, their lower-class counterparts, geisha are often in the unusual position of knowing whether this or that public figure really does put his pants on

one leg at a time like everyone else. Probably it is to their credit that these butterflies of the night regard their roles as a kind of public trust,” (Memoirs, 36).

Golden misuses the Japanese word ‘*mizu*’ which literally means ‘water’ he uses the word as a literary device to connote with sexuality. For instance:

He uses the word “Mount Fuji” to refer to girl’s bosom. Sayuri’s mother is described as a woman with great quantity of water in her personality, who made a fine match with a man (Sayuri’s father) who had great quantity of wood in his personality. “What a great deal of water you [Sayuri] have!” (*Memoirs* 25); and “She [Sayuri] has a great deal of water” (*Memoirs* 43).

“*mizu*” which literally means water generally cannot be connoted with sexuality it can only be used in certain circumstance such as prostitution. Regarding the *mizauge* Golden conveys many sexualized ideas in connotative way through the characters. For instance: when Mameha tries to convey her idea about *mizauge* to Sayuri she makes her easily understand by using few connotations.

“Men have a kind of... well, an ‘eel’ on them,” she said. “Women don’t have it. But men do. It’s located-” “I think I know what you’re talking about,” I said, “but I didn’t know it was called an eel.” “It isn’t an eel, really,” Mameha said. “But pretending it’s an eel makes things so much easier to understand. So let’s think of it that way. Here’s the thing: this eel spends its entire life trying to find a home, and what do you think women have inside them? Caves, where the eels like to live. This cave is where the blood comes from every month when the ‘clouds pass over the moon,’ as we sometimes say.” I was old enough to understand what Mameha meant by the passage of clouds over the moon, because I’d been experiencing it for a few years already. (*Memoirs* 264)

The *mizuage* (deflowering) ceremony of geisha which Golden portrays in the novel is analogous with a prostitute's sexual favour which is done for money. Unlike prostitutes geisha do not make personal contacts with strangers, but Golden has inaccurately applied the idea in the story. The protagonist Sayuri who goes under *mizuage* could not offer her virginity to the man whom she loved; she is helpless to do so and instead have to offer it to the highest bidder like a prostitute who does it for money. The episode of *mizuage* in Sayuri's life represents it as ceremony done to financially benefit her. In this way Golden's idea about *mizuage* is somehow related with prostitute's sexual favour. According to Iwasaki there exist different classes in the geisha community and the *mizuage* is a very old custom practiced only among the lower class community of *Otsubu* and *Higashi* where the geisha are readily available for sex. In Golden's novel Sayuri pursues the very old tradition of *mizuage* which isn't very common among geisha. He also conveys an inappropriate idea to the readers that *mizuage* is mandatorily practiced in the geisha communities. "A virgin geisha is considered odd as a virgin wife"

Golden makes his readers to live the experience of the orient by providing certain ethnographic details. The reader almost plunges into the text when they get to read certain strange and fascinating things, at the same time he also makes the readers to maintain some detachment from orient by using the characters as fictional. Most of the episodes in the *Memoirs of a Geisha* are sexualized in order to fulfil the sensual gratifications of the Western readers; such sexual scenes fan the flames of the desirers for direct sexual contact with geisha, who as an orient, are not available in reality for the westerners to consume. To provide real lived experience in the text, a writer needs to immerse readers in the story. Mitchell (1989) talks about Orientalism and how "to immerse oneself and yet stand apart" (Mitchell 232).

The Westerners, who dwells into the text to experience the orient, envisage themselves as a consumer of geisha's body. At the same time, since it's just a fiction they also manage to remain detached from the fantasy. The Westerners fantasize the *Memoirs of a Geisha* due to its ethnographic details, which has been employed by Golden. Golden describes the women as how they examine the virginity of young girls in a nasty and harmful manner. When Sayuri was young she and her sister Satsu were taken to a lady who examined their virginity.

“Satsu was completely naked. Fidget had put her hands on Satsu's knees and spread them apart. And without a moment's hesitation reached her hands between Satsu's legs. After this I could no longer bring myself to watch. I think Satsu must have resisted for Mrs. Fidget gave a shout, and at the same moment I heard a loud slap.... Mrs. Fidget was done and told Satsu to put her clothes... Satsu gave a big sniff. She may have been crying.” (*Memoirs* 22)

At the begging of Sayuri's *mizuage* process Mameha warns her by saying: *mizauge* is like a meal served in the table “No man will wish to eat it [Sayuri], if he hears a suggestion that some other man has taken a bite” (*Memoirs* 253).

Despite Mameha's advice about the defending of her virginity until her *mizuage*, Sayuri had to encounter an unfortunate situation at Baron Matsunaga's Summer house. Sayuri faces her next sexual experience which is more serious than the early episode. When she is call into the back room she is sexually assaulted by the Baron. “Sayuri states, “I'd certainly never seen myself so utterly naked before” (*Memoirs* 262).

Since the Baron respected the principles and culture of geisha he spares Sayuri's virginity. Instead he outwardly probes Sayuri's body by loosening her kimono without penetrating her. As she gets frightened and embarrassed she tries to stop him.

“She reflects “I kept trying to stop him with my hands, but he pushed them away”. It also an intent to illustrate the readers that, how geisha as a helpless figures suffers in the hands of men who is with a powerful authority. This particular sexual scene of *Memoirs of a Geisha* demonstrates such characters like Baron and Dr. Crab, aim to amuse the readers by showing how, the way they uphold their aloofness from the exotic eroticism.

The exotic world of geisha is accustomed to be mysterious since it clutches several secrets of *mizuage* and other ceremonies which are seldom discussed publicly but Golden in *Memoirs of a Geisha* has used up five pages to describe it. In order to sexualize the subject Golden ardently discloses about it in detail which starts from ‘drinking sake to traditional unite of Dr. Crab and Sayuri’. To make obvious the practice of *mizauge* to the readers he uses a sexually psychotic medical doctor as a character, who is known to be an expert in deflowering the geisha. Dr. Crab the expert of *mizauge* deflowers Sayri in a night, collects her blood in a cotton swab and deposits into a small glass vial labelling it with her name.

The thoughts and feeling of Sayuri are experienced and sympathised by the readers, when she as an apprentice geisha passes through the *mizauge* ritual for the first time. Mameha excitedly persuades Dr. Crab to deflower Sayuri without even bothering about her consent. By using the character Mameha as Sayuri’s mentor Golden skilfully transforms Sayri to sexualised object, which is a stereotypical idea of the West about the geisha. When Sayuri reaches puberty Mameha begins her *mizauge* customs by asking her to distribute the *ekubo* boxes. The boxes contain delicious sweet rice cake with a dimple on its top and tiny red circle in the middle which is called *ekubo*. The tiny red circle on the dimple of the cake signifies the *Maiko*’s vagina and represents their virginity. The distribution of *ekubo* boxes is mentioned by Golden as, an initial process of *mizauge* in the geisha community. Sayuri as an apprentice, she is ordered by Mameha to distribute such boxes to several men who wished to be her *mizauge* patron for the deflowering ceremony. Sayuri was advised to offer the boxes to Dr.

Crab and her friend Nobu who were regarded a first-rate contenders and as the men who could offer the highest bidding for her *mizuage*. In the novel Sayuri's *mizuage* is considered as a wonder which brings her a great relief from the debts burdened by her *Okiya* house. As she received the money from Dr. Crab she settled the debts of her *Okiya* and to the others permanently. The patron of Sayuri's *mizuage* was Dr. Crab who successfully handled and offered ¥ 11,500 as a reward which was the highest paid *mizuage* amount in those days. The meaning highest paid *mizuage* amount simple exhibits an idea that, 'Sayuri is an expensive sexual product who is available for the rich men of Japan.' In the novel we get to experience the wretched Situation of Sayuri, to experience her dilemma as a geisha, the readers immerse into the text. Sayuri had no other option other than sacrificing her virginity to a man for whom she never cared. Sayuri's transformation to a sexual object makes the readers feel a sense of clumsiness. Her action on the night of her *mizuage* ceremony seems as a prostitute offering sexual service for money.

“There must have been a very great deal of blood, because the air had an unpleasant metallic smell. I kept reminding myself how much the Doctor had paid for this privilege; and I remember hoping at one point that he was enjoying himself more than I was. I felt no more pleasure there than if someone had rubbed a file over and over against the inside of my thigh until I bled.” (*Memoirs* 283)

The extremely melancholic quotation above refers to the painful experience and feelings of Sayuri who is deflowered by Dr. Crab. This sexualized episode of an Orient expresses a strong element of male domination and commodified condition of a woman. The virginity of a geisha is sold for a certain price, the women as geisha had to sacrifice their self value to satisfy men. Sayuri was in love with the Chairman and she was willing to offer her virginity to him, but as she was controlled by the third party she could not go after her wish and eventually had to surrender herself to a stranger. As she was in love with the Chairman, the

night of her *mizuage* wasn't much significant for her to consider it as a special night of her life. I felt sad, in a way, that I wouldn't give them to the Chairman; but on the other hand, the whole thing seemed so distasteful, I wasn't entirely sorry he would be left out of it (*Memoirs* 272).

She rather accepts the *mizauge* as a task or a business deal that has to be done to her. She was ordered by her elder sister to behave gently like a professional geisha. "Mameha instructed me to behave very sternly, as though I had no sense of humor at all" (*Memoirs*, 320). In order to be successful Sayuri behaves submissive by accepting her disreputable status and helplessness. As she is ignorant is was unable to comprehend why her virginity is confined, established and inspected and what the physical abuse was all about. The *mizauge* was the great turning point of her life she gradually understands how the ceremony influenced her life.

The young *Maiko's mizuage* ceremony is linked to marriage and the sum offered by her patron for the ceremony is considered as souvenir from her bride groom but Golden faultily links it with prostitution and presents a stereotypical image of geisha. This offensive idea is what fascinates the West, who may think, like prostitutes geisha engage in sexual relationship with strangers. According to Iwaski all marriage should be linked to *mizauge*, since the ceremony is comparable with *mizuage*. In other words why *Maiko's mizauge* should be compared with prostitution when a marriage is not?

Golden's portrayal of *mizuage* gives a discouraging outlook to the readers about the Orient. It is considered as a subject of an orient prejudiced by a Westerner which has been viewed from a Western gaze, Golden presents the feelings and voice of Sayuri when she undergoes the *mizauge*. Golden describes Sayuri's action, and experiences it in an awkward manner. Golden's account of Sayuri's *mizuage* is considered erroneous and misleading. This

is the reason why Mrs. Iwasaki is disappointed about Golden. In describing about *mizauge* he has faultily interpreted that, it is a common and a mandatory practice in all classes of geisha community. Mrs. Iwasaki says she as a former Geisha had never been through such kind of ritual, therefore this stereotypical idea is absolutely wrong according to her view.

As an American writer Golden frequently keeps depicting a sexualized version of the Orient by including many sexual scenes, coitus language, and innuendos. The novel is considered significant for such sexual episodes which Golden includes in the very beginning itself. Such sexualized depictions in the *Memoirs of a Geisha* shows how golden allow the audience, especially the Westerners to consume the sexualized body of the Orient. Golden's process of transforming Sayuri, into a sexual entity begins very early in the novel, from her pre-geisha days. As an evident we see Sayuri remembers her meeting with Tanaka in her childhood:

I lay there on that slimy table while Mr. Tanaka examined my lip, pulling it down with fingers and tipping my head this way and that. All at once he caught sight of my gray eyes, which were fixed on his face with such fascination, . . .” ...

“Sayuri,” naked, meets Tanaka again: “I sat before him naked, . . .” (*Memoirs*, 14 and 20).

We get to learn at the beginning of the novel that, Sayuri developed a sort of affection towards Mr. Tanaka, the person who showed her great kindness and later sold her into the geisha life. At the age of 12 when she meets the Chairman first, she relocates the same affection to the Chairman. As she grew up she later learned the real motive behind Mr. Tanaka's kindness. Tanaka and the Chairman are middle aged married men who were at least 30 year older than her. Golden has the 12-year-old “Sayuri” reveal: “I managed to say my

name, and then he moistened a fingertip with his tongue and touched me on the cheek—to take off an eyelash, as it turned out.” (*Memoirs* 68)

The novel includes debate about both, the transformation of girl into ‘geisha and prostitute’. Apart from Sayuri’s journey who becomes a geisha, the novel also briefly discusses the journey of the character Satsu who becomes a prostitute. In the early part of the novel in certain episodes we note that, story of Satsu parallels with Sayuri. Golden victimises both the girls Sayuri and Satsu whom he has sexualized in two different ways, one as geisha and the other as a prostitute. The character Satsu can be viewed as one of the most sexually manipulated figure used by Golden in the novel. Golden has depicted her in a way, which erroneously demonstrates the very nature of Japanese girls who is considered by the West as, lustful, immoral, and licentious in nature. Satsu is described as a character that who is reasonable to be transformed into a prostitute. Golden right from the beginning of the novel keeps his audience aware about Satsu’s promiscuous nature. In fact Satsu is the basic source for Golden, which helped him introduce sexual eroticism in the novel. Golden makes her appear in seductive attire in certain scenes in which she is involved in gang bang and hanky panky activities.

Satsu had left much earlier with the Sugi boy, who was the son of Mr. Tanaka’s assistant. She acted like a dog around him. When he went somewhere, he looked back over his shoulder to signal that she should follow, and she always did. I didn’t expect to see her again until dinnertime I caught a sight of her on the path ahead of me, leaning against a tree. If you’d see what was happening, you might have understood it right away but I was only a little girl. Satsu had her scratchy bathing dress up around her shoulders and the Sugi boy was playing around with her ‘Mount Fujis,’ as the boys call them. (*Memoirs* 14)

This is the first the evident, in text which talks about Golden's sexualised illustrations of oriental figures used by him to satisfy the appetite of Western audience. The scene is awfully offensive; since it is witnessed by Sayuri. Golden shows how Satsu's adulterous behaviour affects Sayuri and awakes her sexuality and body consciousness. It also leads the young Sayuri to build up a manner of attraction for Tanaka but eventually she transfers it to the Chairman. When the girls are taken to Mrs. Fidget for their virginity check Sayuri witnesses another offensive incident, where Satsu and she are disturbed by a strange woman who examines their genitals. Knowing about the adulterous and promiscuous nature of Satsu, Tanaka sells her to a brothel. Later we learn in the novel that Satsu elopes with the Sugi boy with whom she kept committing adultery. Golden has used the character Satsu as a symbol of adultery depicting her sexualized personality he tries to impose his own stereotypical Western ideology to representing the characteristics of Japanese women which assures the audience that the Japanese women are immoral, and licentious in nature. The characters of Sayuri's *okiya* the Grandmother, Hutsumomo, Pumpkin, and the Mother are also sexualized characters of Golden. As the story proceeds to end we come across a scene conspired by Sayuri in which she directs the Minister to get herself raped by him to grab the attention of the Chairman.

Other than sexual anxieties described by Golden's his narrative is also noteworthy for its detail about American invasion in to the Japanese territory in 1853. The geisha at the mid of 1983 were westernized; they began to learn English and behaved like modern American women. As a colonized the Japanese had to accommodate and assimilate themselves according to the American's choice and order. The geisha districts of Kyoto were closed due to the hitches of warfare. As a colonizer the Americans used the opportunity to sexualize and consume the body of the geisha, but Golden in order maintain a good image of his realm he has avoided to provide some factual details that which would be an essential evident to prove

the fact about the 'Americans consuming the body of orientals'. As an American Golden, shows a very positive image of the American military. He had Sayuri reflect. "All the stories about invading American soldiers raping and killing us had turned out to be wrong; and in fact, we gradually came to realize that the Americans on the whole were remarkably kind" (*Memoirs* 349). Golden's attitude towards Japan is completely Western, a fiction of the West by the West which is narrated to the audience as the reality of the orientals. As a Westerner he had the privilege to interpret about the orient in his own Western view.

According to Japanese history there are many evidences which prove that during the World War II the American invaders engaged in sexual activities with the Japanese prostitutes and Geisha. In the *Memoirs of a Geisha* Golden has not included any Western or American character in any sexual scene as a coloniser who consumes the body of the natives. The characters involved in sexualizing the women are all orientals themselves not the colonizers. In this context Golden he himself can be considered as a colonizer who sexualizes the orient; he as an American writer orientalises the East by illustrating their sexualized image and stereotypical ideas to the audience who take it as a fact. Golden's assumption about the Japanese culture and the geisha leads the audience to consider that, he as an American author functions as a colonial authority. This very status: Golden as a colonial authority, is actually an irony to himself.

As an oriental text *Memoirs of a Geisha* also incorporates certain other postcolonial discourses, it connects with historicism and culturalism, Western narrative and Third wave Feminism. The novel is noteworthy for its cultural and social and historical events. It pictures the impenetrable world of geisha as Japan's subculture. The mysterious world of geisha in the orient has exposed to an extensive range of audience with the help of an English-speaking author. The Westerners consider the orient as their cultural opponents; it is believed that if the occident is culturally advanced, sophisticated and hygienic then the orient must be

uncivilized, dirty, orthodox and backward. Thus “European discourses ... constitute ‘the Orient’ as a unified racial, geographical, political and cultural zone of the world” (Said *Orientalism* 71).

The Westerners have an imaginary geographical understating of the West as “our land and the Orient (East) as Barbarian land” but they do not bother whether the orient as barbarians acknowledge this discrimination. The very discrimination is sufficient enough for them to construct the idea in their mind: the “other” become “other” therefore the land and state of mind of the “other” are different from “ours”.

When a learned Orientalist traveled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the "civilization" he had studied; rarely were Orientalists interested in anything except prov-ing the validity of these musty "truths" by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives. Finally, the very power and scope of Orientalism produced not only a fair amount of exact positive knowledge about the Orient but also a kind of second-order knowledge— lurking in such places as the "Oriental" tale, the mythology of the mysterious East, notions of Asian inscrutability—with a life of its own (Said, *Orientalism* 53)

The very word ‘orient’ has its origin in Latin which literally means “East”. Golden’s option of a Japanese fishing village as the setting of Sayuri’s childhood supports and strengthens the oriental perception of this novel. The description of Sayuri’s tipsy house, her poor family situation and the sister’s hideous appearance with their unruly hair illustrates an exact oriental environment to the audience. As the background of orient is described in a Westerners standpoint it leaves a substandard impression to the audience.

The children of Sayuri's fishing village are described as very unhygienic who experimented eating anything which moved. Sayuri herself admits that she was once tricked by the children to eat a cricket. The character Pumpkin behaves in an uncouth manner, despite Sayuri's warning she eats a piece of contaminated sweet-rice cake from a pavement stone. Furthermore in text we find Sayuri and Satsu are frequently admonished for having fishy smell on their body.

Fish what a stench! both of you'...'But if you touch them," she said, "they'll start to smell like you. And then the men will say to me, 'Hatsumomo-san, why do you stink like an ignorant girl from a fishing village?' I'm sure you understand that, don't you? (*Memoirs* 34 and 48)

The thought of "fish" and "fishy stench" provokes a stereotypical idea about Japanese, it is a way of constructing an idea in the mind of the audience to think all Japanese people are unhygienic and smell fishy.

The Westerners recognize the men of orient as brutes, gullible, crafty, and unkind and oppressive to their woman. The Japanese society is recognised as a patriarchal oppressed society since from the influence of Buddhism. Buddhism preached that "woman's nature was inherently evil" they were identified as devilish who diverted the men from following the teachings of Buddha. This very idea is identified from Lady Murasaki's book the *Tale of Genji*. The idea exposes the backward condition of the women in a non-western country. The postcolonial critiques identify the non western countries as a 'Third world'. The Japanese women were oppressed by religious and socio- cultural forces which overvalued the men than the women.

The Orientalist has distinguished the categories of woman whose environment differ among them as first and third world with a monolithic stereotype. The women of first world

are defended by the global power forces; therefore they are not included among the women who victimise ethnocentric and orientalist dilemma. On the other hand Third World woman are the individuals who victimizes the otherness and are identified as sexualized objects.

The concept of Third World women can also be argued as postcolonial woman oppression in which postcolonial feminist oppression is determined through the class in particular society (Mishra, 131)

Golden in the *Memoirs of a Geisha* portrays various form of patriarchal oppression experienced by the Japanese women. He shows how the Japanese women as a Third World entity is oppressed both socially and economically. Golden begin his novel in a deprived and backward female dominated society. In order to have a control the society practices various form of superstitions linked with the female sex. In this way Golden's female figures in the *Memoirs of a Geisha* fit into the category of third world female entities, whose values are weakened and subjugated by men. For instance Golden discusses about the superstitious men of Sayuri's fishing village who are blindly influenced the teaching of Buddhism. The village men believe "the nature of women is inherently evil". They value their sons more than their daughters; they punish their daughters ridiculously for simple reasons.

Fishermen are terribly superstitious, you see. They especially don't like women to have anything to do with fishing. One man in our village, Mr. Yamamura, found his daughter playing in his boat one morning. He beat her with a stick and then washed out the boat with sake and lye so strong it bleached streaks of coloring from the wood. Even this wasn't enough; Mr. Yamamura had the Shinto priest come and bless it. All this because his daughter had done nothing more than play where the fish are caught." (*Memoirs* 15)

The quotation above reflects the status of women who as a third world entity strives in male dominated society. The quotation above reinforces the Westerners oversimplified idea about the orient. It reveals that Third World women are the subjects of superstitions and their status are not esteemed by their men. Since it has been practiced for decades this type of dominative practice are accepted as culture which helps the men to have a control over women.

The traditional ideal women of Japan is one who unquestioningly and dutifully follows the old Japanese rule of 'obedience to a father when yet married, and to a son when widowed.' Japanese women have been taught that they exist to serve men faithfully and well as they have been carefully indoctrinated with the idea that women are subordinate to men. (Welty, 1984)

The traits of the Japanese women seems permanent they are lethargic to transform their status; they maintain their stillness due to the societal teachings and roll modelling. The religion has strongly influence the Japanese men to domesticate and modify their women for their personal convenience. The Japanese women are customized in a way that they are least bothered about their own self they mutely tolerate their domination without offending the regulations of the society. They seldom stand by their own self rather they act on group assessments.

In the case of geisha they come into view as a double marginalized as well as commodified entities. The sub culture of geisha in Japan is controlled by its ancient ethics which originated from the male. The early Geisha were the male *Taikomachies* which got outraged when the females started appearing in the stage. The principles and code are set according to the males which makes the geisha vary from the ordinary woman of Japan. In order to excite men they tolerate huge domination in the Third World. Most of the

women who become geisha belong to a deprived background they become geisha out of family pressure and society especially males. Since the geisha originated from male the community is dominated by various patriarchal laws which maintain a strong male hegemonic control. They come into view as individuals who specially exist to satisfy the male sexual desires.

In *Memoirs of a Geisha* Golden's narrative about geisha indicates the Western hegemony which establishes the consequence of the women of Orient. Golden shows how the geisha status is reduced to a sexual object, and valued as females of male sexual desire. The status of female in the third world is always assessed by male. In order to be an ideal role model among the men the Japanese women objectify themselves by transforming themselves to geisha. The major reason for such objectification is to make themselves different from the ordinary Japanese females. The geisha are identified as more traditional and artistic than the ordinary Japanese women. From this context it is clear that, despite the fact geisha's oppressions originates from male the geisha in other way are also themselves responsible for their oppression. They go under the training of geisha by their own decision so that they can enhance their status which helps them to stimulate the men sexually.

Golden in the novel uses characters such as Sauyri and Pumpkin to illustrate them as Oriental females who oppress and sexually objectify themselves. Their life journey as geisha is an excellent example which shows how the geisha as self objectified entities are respected as an object of male sexual desire. Their external sexual objectification leads them to have direct and indirect role in sexual orientations. The protagonist Sayuri originates from a chauvinistic unjust social society which is a typical feature in the case of every oriental female. The process of oppression in Sayuri's life embarks from the male characters of the novel. As the process of oppression proceeds, Sayuri gradually accepts and reinforce the process by objectifying herself. Born in deprived background her father Mr. Sakmoto is the

first male who is responsible for her oppression. Being poor and old Sayuri's father fails to prevent his daughter from being sold to a geisha house. In this situation Sayuri is oppressed by her own father who sells her because he is need of money. Secondly Mr. Tanaka is another male figure who oppresses Sayuri. As a neighbour he suggests Sayuri's father to sell his daughters. At this point we notice the values of girls are reduced to a commodity. The character Tanaka is an embodiment of Oriental male who subordinates the status of women to an object. Since he sold Sayuri's sister Satsu to a brothel house, he can be considered as the chauvinistic ideal of male who access and degrades the character of a women. He represents the wealthy fat cats of Japan who spend their time and money lavishly on teahouses and geisha entertainments. Tanaka he himself had a passion for geisha he frequently visits teahouses to have the pleasure of geisha entertainment. It was Tanaka's passion and desire for geisha which made him decides to sell Sayuri and transform her into a famous geisha. At this point it clear that Sayuri's oppression originates from a male's sexual desire. Throughout her life the protagonist Sayuri holds resentment against Tanaka for his action, at the end of her story she reflects: "As a young girl I believed my life would never have been a struggle if Mr. Tanaka hadn't torn me away from my tipsy house" (*Memoirs*, 493).

Sayuri seems as an extremely oppressed figure when she is separated from Satsu. Her oppression reaches its peak as she lives a horrible life in the *Okiya* by bearing ill-treatments from Hutsumomo. Despite the fact Sayuri is negligent to acknowledge the oppressed life of geisha; she eventually acknowledges the oppressed life when she encounters the Chairman. She is encouraged and inspired by the kindness of the Chairman, in order to impress the Chairman she objectifies herself by transforming into a geisha. At this point it is appropriate to state that Sayuri's objectification of herself is due to the male sexual desire. Her objectification of herself to a geisha is a kind of oppression which comes through male sexual desire. In order to amuse the men she struggles to enhance her status as geisha. The very

status of geisha represents a traditional Japanese model. In Pumpkin's case she is sold by her own uncle to the *Okiya*. Like Tanaka he stands as a male oppressor of Pumpkin who dumped into the geisha world to live a harsh life. Therefore both Sayuri and Pumpkin's tyranny originates from a male.

Most of the girls become geisha due to economic hardships and family pressure. They come from a very humble background and let themselves to be commodified in order to benefit their family. When they are sold to the *Okiya* house they are controlled by the mother of the *Okiya* who claims to have an authority over the lives of geisha. Golden in the novel describes to the audience about the geisha's incapability of being self independent. In Pumpkin's case she is advised by her uncle to be a dependent. For instance when Sayuri tries to persuade Pumpkin to escape, she refuses to join and therefore reveals her condition.

“My uncle was a very nice man,” she said. “Here’s the last thing I heard him say before he sent me away. ‘Some girls are smart and some girls are stupid,’ he told me. ‘You’re a nice girl, but you’re one of the stupid ones. You won’t make it on your own in the world. I’m sending you to a place where people will tell you what to do. Do what they say, and you’ll always be taken care of.’ So if you want to go out on your own, Chiyo-chan, you go. But me, I’ve found a place to spend my life. (*Memoirs* ,54)

The geisha do not have self independence every important decision is made by their mothers and elder sisters. Like other Japanese parent who finds bridegroom for their daughters, the mothers of the *Okiya* take the responsibility of finding a *danna* (Patron) for the geisha girls. The geisha cannot act according to their wish, they behave like unemotional creatures. As the *Okiya* is depended on geisha's earning the mothers generally prefer wealthy men as *danna* for the girls, so that it would be beneficial for the *Okiya* house. The geisha are burdened with debts by their *Okiya* house and therefore they consider themselves responsible to financially

benefit their house. Their rank and position in the *Okiya* depends according to their earning. If a geisha earns more money she will enjoy more privilege in her *Okiya*.

Since Sayuri and Hatsumomo contributed more to the *Okiya* they were considered as an empress whereas the other two characters the Aunty and Pumpkin were regarded worthless and unsuccessful. In the early days when Sayuri arrived to *Okiya* the Mother did not realize her worth, she decline her geisha schooling and kept her as a maid in the *Okiya*. When Mameha discovered and transformed her to a most famous and classy geisha, she realized her value and turned her entire attention towards Sayuri.

You're a very expensive commodity, little girl. I underestimated you. I'm lucky nothing has happened. But you may be very sure I'm going to watch you more closely in the future. What a man wants from you, a man will pay dearly to get. [...] If you give a man freely what he ought to pay for, you'll be cheating this *okiya*. You'll owe money, and I'll take it from you. And I'm not just talking about this! [...] 'Men will pay for that,' she went on. 'But they'll pay just to chat with you too. If I find you sneaking off to meet a man, even if it's just for a little talk. (*Memoirs* ,313)

Sayuri's status as a geisha is lowered to a commodity, she is also conscious about her commodified status. The Mother candidly reveals to her about Sayuri's commodified status. As she realizes that her *mizauge* would cost a huge sum, she warns Sayuri that if she would offer her virginity to a man whom she loves. If Sayuri acts according to her wish she would have ended back as a maid in her *Okiya*. As she obeyed her mother she was adopted as the daughter of her *Okiya* and had the privilege to inherit. When Sayuri was sold to the *okiya* she lost the right of her own self, her belongings she owned and including herself became the properties of the *Okiya*. For example:

After Sayuri made an attempt to escape from her *Okiya*, the mother and aunt constantly made her realize about her proletariat and commodified status in the *Okiya*. The mother questions Sayuri “Do you know how much I paid for you?” The question circuitously intends to make her realize that ‘her status is no more than a property in the *Okiya*’. Furthermore in the novel we notice, the mother sells Sayuri’s kimono which she received as a gift from Yasuda -San. The mother sells without taking Sayuri’s consent.

“When I found out what she’d done, I said to her boldly as I dared that the robe had been given to me as a gift, not to the okiya, and that it wasn’t right for her to have sold it. ‘Certainly it was your robe’, she said. ‘But you are the daughter of the okiya. What belongs to the okiya belongs to you, and the other way around as well’” (*Memoirs* 351)

This is an appropriate evident which shows, how the mother claims her authority on Sayuri’s belongings. In this context Golden deals with the stereotypical idea. Sayuri’s commodified status seems obvious; since she came from a deprived background she is conscious about her proletariat status in the *Okiya*. Therefore for the sake of her successive future she has to tolerate the situation and remain obedient to the mother. Sayuri’s selfless and commodified status reflects the plight of many geisha, who as a third world being suffer the same fate like Sayuri. Golden demonstrates the systematic lifestyle of geisha which as a subculture varies within the orient (Japanese). The Japanese women and geisha are the two sides of a same coin, but when it comes to the view of Westerners the subculture of geisha appears odd within the orient, the geisha are the ‘others’ among the others. This particular oddness of the orient is what makes the occident to fetishize the orient.

The systematic *Okiya* life of geisha is often confused with Prostitute’s brothel life, since the functioning of both has certain resemblance. The geisha use the *okiya* house only

for their lodging in which they live like a family. Unlike brothels the *okiya* do not permit the clients inside, instead the engagements with clients are usually organised in teahouses.

Despite the fact the geisha live like families, the treatment which they obtain in their *Okiya* are similar to brothels. Like prostitutes geisha do not claim for their self independence. Like brothels many *Okiya* houses relay on the system of *debt bondage*, in which the geisha like proletariat work for the third party who provide them fundamental needs such as food, clothes, shelter and other necessary expenses. The *Okiya* houses are connected with the teahouses, theatres and various geisha agency which prepare schedules for the geisha to work. The income earned by the geisha profits the teahouse and the *Okiya*. Like prostitutes most of the geishas in the *Okiya* house becomes the victim of oppression and ill-treatments. Most of the Mistress of *Okiya* houses beat the geisha girls for disobeying the demand of third-party.

In the novel Sayuri's carrier as geisha begins from the day when she is sold to the *Okiya*. In the early days of her career she is often beaten by the unpleasant senior geisha Hatsumomo who identify Sayuri as her counterpart. She is frequently been punished by the Mother and Granny of the *Okiya*. They are always cold towards Sayuri, the first day when she arrives to the *Okiya*, we see the Mother rudely warning Sayuri. 'Well, little girl,' Mother told me, 'You'r in Kyoto now. You'll learn to behave or get a beating. And it's Granny gives the beating around here, so you'll be sorry. My advice is work hard, and never leave the *okiya* without permission. (*Memoirs*, 44)

Sayuri is kept as a house maid and has to do her regular domestic duties such as washing the clothes, cleaning the house, and polishing Hutsumomo's shoes. Later in the novel we notice the *Okiya* burdens Sayuri with debts from which she cannot escape without paying back.

Sayuri's condition as a debt to the *Okiya* is due to her social status. As geisha Sayuri, Hutsumomo, and Pumpkin are enslaved to the System of *debt bondage*. The Mother as the

Okiya Mistress who enslaves the geisha girls can be considered as a third party or a pimp who controls the lives of prostitutes. After Sayuri's *mizaage* the money which she receives from her patron doesn't benefit her more, than the third party. The *mizaage* just relieves Sayuri from her debts, as the ritual benefits more the third party the *mizaage* appear like a prostitute's sexual favour than geisha's ritual. Since the systematic lives of Geisha and prostitute appear similar Golden suggests certain link between *Okiya* and brothels. The *Okiya* life of geisha and Sayuri's life in Golden's novel exhibits an example of deprived and oppressed life of Oriental female in the third world. Golden's novel does not break the Westerners stereotypical dogma of geisha. Instead the text reinforces the stereotype by suggesting links and similarities between *okiya* life and a brothel life which makes the geisha appear to audience more like prostitutes than artist. Apart from the debate about Sayuri and other geisha's life, the early few chapters of the text debates about the character Satsu whom Golden transforms to a prostitute. In the novel Golden discusses a little about Satsu's brothel life which is worse than Sayuri. At this point we notice how Golden portrays different forms of oppression the third world women face, one as a prostitute and the other as geisha.

The Westerners identify geisha as meek, dispassionate and unemotional beings but in Golden's novel there are several instances which prove that geisha also possess emotions and other human qualities like ordinary human beings. For example: Sayuri's love for the Chairman, She kept fascinating about the chairman for long time. At times when she felt grief she always had the Chairman's handkerchief with her to console herself. At the end of the novel she managed to bring back herself to an ordinary womanhood after she retires from her profession as geisha. Even though she was a geisha Sayuri always kept her emotions alive. This 'emotion' which she kept alive is what helped Sayuri to bring herself back to the human self. Furthermore the character of Hutsumomo has been portrayed as cold and emotionless but the readers experience her emotions and feelings while they come across the scene, in which

she falls in love with a man and express her grief with cry, when he breaks up. This shows the emotional and kind nature of Hutsumomo which she kept repressed since she considered, it is necessary for the geisha profession being emotionless. From this framework it is clear that Golden's ideology about geisha is ambivalent to some extent. His stereotypical attitude towards geisha has both negative and positive outlook. Golden can be viewed as a colonizer who regards the Orient as exotic as well as inferior. As a Westerner it is impossible for Golden to accurately interpret the culture of Orient. As Homi K Bhaba states in *The Other Question* that "you can never fully "know" another person, let alone a whole people; there is always something that exceeds what you think the other is or how you construe the 'other'."

Memoirs of a Geisha can be viewed as a cultural text of Orient which is developed by a Westerners perception. It is an existing evident about an authentic world of Orient. According to Vnnini and Williams Authenticity is consider as a highly valued principle in individuals and groups. It is not a state of being an objective process of representation, instead, it refers to "a set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an ideal or exemplar (Vannini and Williams ,2009: 3)

The debates about the elusive world of geisha in Golden's novel are noteworthy for its authenticity. Other than a fictional love story, Golden's work is significant for cultural, historical and ethnographic information about the geisha world. Since Golden depicts about the local manners of Orient, the audience view the work as documentary rather than a fiction. Golden employs the authenticity of the novel by using first person narrative. Sayuri's narration of her life as a geisha lures the audience to enter and analyse the life and mind of geisha. It also ensures the audience about the presence of geisha voice in the novel. The voice Sayuri in the narration represent's her as an ideal prototype of geisha culture. With the inclusion of the Jacob Harrhuis's "translator's note" Golden tries to cover up his utilization of Western ideology, perspective and imagination in his framework. Nevertheless like other

Westerners Golden in *Memoirs of a Geisha* constructs and vindicates the stereotypical “otherness” upon the image of geisha. The fame of geisha’s otherness is projected by Golden in a genuine and reasonable way that strongly influences the particular image in the mind of Westerners. The translator’s note and the involvement of Japanese historian who obtains permission to record Sayuri’s story represents the involvement and presence of Western authority. The narrative which has used by Golden breaks the geisha code of ‘silence’. Geisha are not allowed to share their story but Golden made Sayuri directly to speak to the audience. The novel has its significant for both Western narration of Orient as well as the present narration of history.

Memoirs of a Geisha not only provides details about the sub-world of geisha, it is also known for its vast and extensive facts about Japan’s history, society and culture. The extensive documentary frame work of this novel helps to exemplify the world of Orient. Golden’s reproducing of the historical facts formulates the audience to experience on living back in the past history of geisha and also makes the audience to attain an emotional realism. The exotic detail of Orient in the novel makes foreigners to immerse into the text. It helps the audience epically the Westerners to widen their familiarity with the Japanese culture. The Westerners regard the *Memoirs of a Geisha* as a dominant resource to comprehend the Japanese culture and geisha community. Due to the unusual subject matter about Orient, the illustrations of Golden legitimize the authenticity of the fiction. The authenticity of Orient in *Memoirs of a Geisha* supports the concept of Orientalism. The Orientalist critiques of *Memoirs of a Geisha* often discovered the Westerner’s distorting outlook of the Orient’s authenticity.

Dura states: Authenticity primarily refers to an order or regime which invokes various representations of authoritative inviolability” or “a regime of power that repeatedly constitutes itself as the locus of authority (*Dura*, 294)

The authenticity of *Memoirs of a Geisha* accentuates the Orientalistic elements and the Westerner's domination in describing about the eminence of Orient and their women. Golden shields the entire story with many layers of authenticity.

His acknowledgment to Mineko Iwasaki "To Mineko thank you for everything" is the first significant evidence of authenticity. The acknowledgement evokes the dispute in the readers mind about the operation of Iwasaki's subsequent biography in the fabricated story of Golden. The ending of the novel is salient for its authenticity. The fictional character Jacob Harhuis at the ending of the novel, in "Translator's note" tells the audience that how he is associated with Japanese culture as a historian and how Sayuri came to record her story. Her Sayuri harmonizes by narrating her own story. She represents as historically enriched figure, by letting her narrate Golden shows her as an embodiment of an academic figure. Therefore her narration vindicates the authenticity of the novel.

The culture of geisha as an oriental subject matter appears authentic to Westerners due to its exoticism and uniqueness. The Westerners attention and the oriental recounting of geisha in their works has been a familiar issue.

They had been the fashion leader in the past in virtue of the exquisite Kimono and make up they wore. Since they gather in the pleasure quarters apart and preserve Japanese traditions cautiously, they are regarded as "the essence of Japanese beauty" and "more Japanese" than almost any other definable group (*Geisha*,55)

In the *Memoirs of a Geisha* the authenticity of the geisha community is identified as one of the major concern. The Westerner's biased representation of the geisha's authenticity is often criticised by the feminist and Orientalist critique. The authenticity of geisha in Golden's novel obviously contributes to Orientalism. The novel describes many interesting facts about

the geisha's daily routine customs and standard of living. They are strictly habituated to take their regular courses.

As I say, my early-morning lesson was in the little drum we call tsutsumi, [...] I studied them all at one time or other. A drum may seem like an instrument even a child can play, but actually there are various ways of striking each of them, such as-for the big taiko-bringin the arm across the body and then swinging the drumstick backhand, you might say, which we call uchik omi; or striking with one arm while bringing the other up at the same moment, which we call Sarashi. There are other methods as well, and each produces a different sound, but only after a great deal of practice. (*Memoirs* ,108)

The paragraph above describes the life of geisha who utterly dedicate their lives in learning the artistic skills of Japan. In order to amuse the audience Golden empowers the text by including the ethnography of Japan. To show the interpretative quality of the novel golden explicitly describes about the geisha's musical devices and their school activities as an example.

Said's theory of orientalism mentions the orientalism of "cultural archives" which includes details about custom, tradition, and historical narratives which would create a museum or archive out of it. In the case of *Memoirs of a Geisha* golden invents an oriental museum by contributing enormous details about the Japanese culture. Golden's legitimization of authenticity in the subject matter leads the readers to enhance the consciousness of Orientalism. Therefore the authenticity of the novel prognosticates the existence of real orients. As an oriental text it frequently generates the conflict of East and West, Golden demonstrates the typical features of Japanese by imposing the "otherness" to the characters. Golden uses a camouflage technique he himself imposes the "otherness" to his own self. He

as an American author does not emphasize his higher eminence; instead he appears to the audience as a former geisha who narrates her own story. This very authenticity of Golden's storytelling is considered as an oratorical method. He generates the disproportion of the West and Orient through his narration. For instance we see Sayuri talking about an unfinished make up of a geisha.

“I must tell you something about necks in Japan, if you don't know it; namely, that Japan men as a rule, feel about a woman's neck and throat the same way that men in the West might feel about a woman's legs. This is why geisha wear the collars of their kimono so low in the back that the first few bumps of the spine are visible; I suppose it's like a woman in Paris wearing a short skirt.” (*Memoirs*, 46)

The above quotation generates the notion of East West conflict to the readers it represents the demonstrative value of a pure oriental based text. The narrative of a former geisha's story to Japanese historian makes assure that the story is developed from a Westerners standpoint, ideology and imagination.

CHAPTER 2

Autobiography of a Geisha: Narrating the Life and Times

Sayo Masuda, a former geisha of hot-spring resort of Suwa wrote her autobiography in 1956-57. Rowley translated and published it in 2003 by capturing Masuda's real feeling and voice. It is perhaps an excellent job done by Rowley. Masuda's autobiography is a rare story which is of totally anaesthetized picture of realities. She demonstrates her personal experience and the hideous truths about the geisha community. Masuda in her autobiography directly talks to the audience about her life as geisha. Like Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Masuda's text breaks the geisha code of silence by sharing her experience to the audience. Geisha are not allowed to share their story but the book is a confession of a former geisha. *Autobiography of a Geisha* violets the custom of keeping the secret happens within the geisha community. It is a raw and unvarnished account, about the cruelties and occasional hardships of geisha's *Okiya* life which the protagonist has been through as a first-hand experience.

In contrast with Arthur Golden's fictionalised character Sayuri, Masuda is a real character. To some extent Masuda's story is considered to be similar with Sayuri's but the ending of Masuda's autobiography is not convincing as Sayuri's story. It illustrates harsher and cruel life than that depicted in Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. When comparing Sayuri with Masuda's account of geisha life, Sayuri represents one of the elite geisha who move around the higher class society of Japan. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* is considered as a work which is pessimistically familiar. Her account of life is an instance of rural backward society of Japan, which suffered from severe stress and economic hardships. The abandonment, lovelessness and the deficiency of parental care in her life questions the pointless living manner of Japanese society. Predictably Masuda's story is a harsh and pungent account, with sorrowful reflections on the destiny of the abandoned children conceived out of marriage. It

is story about the provincial and urban life at the time of war recovery. She talks about the geisha houses of her days which functioned allegedly like brothels. She shows how far the difference between a prostitute and geisha has gone faded. According to Kimberly Shearer Palmer Masuda's autobiography "resolves the ambiguity over whether or not geisha are prostitutes... [Masuda] leaves little doubt in the reader's mind that even the most talented geisha are forced to sleep with men for money, a fact glossed over in many accounts of the profession." (Kimberly Shearer Palmer, 14)

Autobiography of a Geisha reinforces the idea of Orientalism. The audience view Masuda as a woman of Orient with Orientalistic characters. It can be considered as a "story of an Orient narrated by the Orient". Since it mortifies the geisha image throughout the world, the popularity of Masuda's autobiography became problematic for the geisha society. Even though Masuda won second prize for her autobiography, she was callously criticized by the geisha community and she happen to move to another town. The audience regard her narrative as more realistic, original and child-like, which is unvarnished free from prejudice and imagination. Being an autobiography Masuda's story exaggerates and alters the event of her life for certain artistic intention, she does not employ any persistence of exact truth.

Like most geisha stories by the West, Masuda's autobiography does not provide a pleasing idea to the audience about the geisha. It represents the existence of particular underprivileged groups within the sub-world of geisha communities. According to Mineko Iwasaki, in Japan there exist different group and classes of geisha. In the geisha district of Gion the geisha neighbourhoods are divided into various parts such as Gion Kobu (High Gion), Otsubu, and Highasi. The lower class geisha sometimes engage in sexual favours for money, they reside the pleasure quarters of Otsubu and highasi.

The novel also exposes some hideous truths about a particular rank of geisha of hot-spring resort who are shoved into prostitution. It chronicles the tough life of *Okiya* where the geisha were expected to continuously engage in sexual activities for payment. The story can be viewed as a pitiable situation of 'Third World' women strives to exist in a backward society. Masuda is an embodiment of an orient a stereotypical Japanese entity who was confined to the sexual slavery. Her autobiography has a very least contribution to the elegant arts and elusive customs of geisha. Most of the episodes include offensive scenes and anguish such as domestic violence, rape, and sexual servitude. Owing to on account of her story Masuda doesn't give the impression of an academic geisha figure, majority of the episodes are about her life after she leaves the geisha house. Her fight against the prostitution ban is an evident that Masuda's profession was more likely into prostitution than an artist or entertainer.

Throughout her life Masuda takes on various lines of work and way of living such as: nurse maid, Geisha, concubine, waitress, labourer, black-marketer, prostitute, and childminder. Her story is enlighteningly dissimilar with the scholarly and glamorous life of a geisha. Masuda is a widely significant model of the Oriental woman. Her autobiography may appear as a paradigm of a typical Asiatic life with some usual drawbacks. She hardly stands for her liberty her narration demonstrates to the readers that in what way she is a "typical Orient". Masuda herself ignores her professional skills and artistry that she has gained, instead she overstress narrating about sexual anguish and eternal domination of her life. Her fictional description of her own self distorts the authenticity of the geisha community.

Masuda's account of life generates a kind of suspicion in the readers mind that, like Masuda all geisha are prostitutes at the same time. They may assume that the lives of all classes of geisha are same as Masuda's life. This very assumption narrows the thoughts of readers who fail to figure out the distinctions between geisha and prostitute. It fuses all classes of geisha together under the term of "prostitute". The novel *Autobiography of a*

Geisha reinforces the culturally twisted assumptions ideas and generalizations about geisha. To analyse further Masuda's autobiography integrates abundant features of an orient. It is a doomed story of an Oriental female with the narrative pattern that the Orient portrays her own self. It is not only a solo pop oriental product it is digressive for it's cultural, feministic and Marxist features.

The autobiography of Masuda begins with her earliest memories at the age of six as a *komori* (nursemaid) where she was sold to work in the rural land lord's house. Her situation reflects the fate of the children conceived out of marriage. This very subject of her autobiography questions the Orient's backward and futile way of life. Being a fatherless child Masuda is a social embarrassment to her family and society. As a female born with an interrupted lineage Masuda comes into view as double marginalized individual. As a girl her worth is abridged to a commodity. Masuda has been commoditized by her own family, at a very young age her family sells her as a nurse maid to work in the landlord's house. At the age of twelve she is again sold to the geisha *Okiya* house where she is ultimately forced into sex for money.

Her childhood illustrates an unfortunate upbringing which is considered as common for many geisha. Like other geisha girls Masuda is neglected as a child. She represents a submissive beauty in a cage. Masuda's fallacious identity as geisha reinforces the Orientalist portrayal of the whole community. By positioning herself and the other geisha's into an unfortunate class she further leads the audience to underestimate the very nature of geisha profession. She frankly talks about the negative aspects of her geisha community comparing with the other Japanese women. Being an essential sub-culture of Japanese society, the community of geisha endures double marginalization when compared with the Ordinary Japanese female. Her version of geisha reinforces the powerlessness of Japanese woman. According to Masuda like other Japanese female geisha cannot possess liberty, they cannot

enter into romantic relationship and have financial independence. The geisha characters of Masuda's autobiography are confined to live the *Okiya* lifestyle. Her portrayal of geisha and herself aids the thought of geisha's submissiveness and self-enslavement to the males. By depicting a fallacious identity of her Masuda aids the eroticized, eroticized, and fantasized image of geisha.

The text holds no object behind its narration, the elaborated version was of Masuda's autobiography was published by her just with a commercial motive. As an author with commercial motive, Masuda provides a realistic and unvarnished account. Even though it is her real story, Masuda had manipulated her autobiography in a manner that would stimulate the pity of the audience. She let the audience to view the world of geisha according to her own view. She reduces the subject of geisha to an Oriental and patriarchal subject. The geisha according to Masuda's autobiography lacks the endorsing Western values such as liberty, individualism, equality and self independence to geisha life.

Autobiography of a Geisha portrays a neglected picture of geisha; Masuda makes the geisha appear in an unfortunate socio-milieu. In order to portray a clumsy image she places the geisha in a deprived background. By confining herself under the dominating laws and ethics of geisha community she maintains and portrays the subjugated image of geisha to the audience. Rather than focusing on the geisha's artistic traditions and professional virtue the autobiography emphasizes the negative aspects and non-conventional pictures and ideas about the geisha world. Masuda's sexuality is exploited, when people abuse her body. She loses her virginity in a very young age, her body is mistreated at various occasions. Masuda portrays a sexualized and eroticized picture of her own self. The detailed descriptions and the thoroughness of sexual scenes emphasize the significance of her sexuality and the importance of her sexual experience to her profession. She extensively describes what is done to her how she feels at the time. Masuda's narrative provides a captivating account of sexual violence

and molestations. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* like Western stereotypes describes about the commodification of geishas body. By describing about the violation of her naive body and her powerlessness to prevent the abuse, it stresses the exotic, erotic and unprivileged ideas about the geisha.

As Siti Masitha explains commodification is a term which refers to the devaluing a human to objects or merchandise that is profitable. In this study, women are seen as merchandise with a specific price tag on their back. A woman's self value has been downgraded when they are seen as nothing but objects that can please men's sexual need. (Siti Masitha , 927)

To illustrate the commodification and exploitation of geisha as sexual object in the novel *Autobiography of a Geisha*, Sayo Masuda is the main protagonist who is commoditised as sexual object. As an illegitimate child she is neglected by her own mother who considers Masuda as a social embarrassment. Therefore she sells her to an *Okiya* house to make money. At this point we notice the commodification, and exploitation of a Japanese female comes from another female. Masuda's first oppression begins since from her birth. Since she is an illegitimate by birth her value as a daughter, is reduced to a commodity. As a father less child Masuda is underestimated by her own mother, she is reduced to commodity that would benefit her family. Therefore Masuda is sold to the *Okiya* of spring resort to work as a geisha.

On the fourth day, my mother said, "If I don't get back to work, everyone at home'll starve. I can't stay with you any longer. There's an invalid at home and four children waiting for me. I've asked the nurse to look after you, so do as they say and make them like you" She went home. We parted before I'd been up to calling her "Ma" even once. (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 37)

The excerpt above manifests the plight of a young girl who is born without legitimacy. Masuda is deserted by her own mother in the hospital. She's no more her daughter than a commodity who sold to a geisha house. The plight of Masuda reflects the condition of many Japanese girls and children who is conceived out of wedlock. It also exemplifies how the oppression of Japanese women in their society begins within their homes. Their oppression and exploitation originates from their own families. In Masuda's case we notice it is her own biological mother who exploits her. Her mother is seen as a woman who utilizes her daughter as merchandise, to feed her family. As she spares Masuda's brothers, it is understood that, she values her sons more than her daughter. By emphasizing her grief she questions the myth of an emotionless Japanese mother who deserts her young daughter. "We parted before I'd been up to calling her "Ma" even once." (*Autobiography of a Geisha*) Masuda becomes a property of the *Okiya* when she is sold by her family. This sort of dealing can be considered as an essential and usual dilemma in every geisha life.

The most well known geisha figures such as Mineko Iwasaki and Liza Dalby are said to have experienced the *Okiya* life during their career as geisha. A girl or a woman who builds her career as geisha should surrender herself as a property of the *Okiya*. She even has to sacrifice self liberty and therefore cannot even claim the right of her own self. She is confined to live under the systematic life of *Okiya*. The *Okiya* house is functioned by the geisha's financial contributions. In Masuda's case she becomes a commodity of the *Okiya*. She equivalently calculates her worth with valuable commodities.

When you were sold, your approximate worth was calculated in *tama*, meaning "Jewels." The euphemism used to describe the units in which geisha's wages were calculated. At most it would be 100 yen, although plain creatures like me would have fetched only 30 yen. At that time, I *sho* [1.8 Liters] of polished rice cost somewhere

between 20 and 22 sen... so in today's money that means I was sold for 20,000yen.

(*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 43)

The *Okiya* houses of geisha and a prostitute's brothel have many things in common. The geisha sold to the *Okiya* house are merely confused with prostitution. Both geisha and prostitutes are sold there for one reason, to financially benefit their family. Both represent selling their body. The girls sold to brothels holds no pride, prostitutes do not possess any artistic skills and qualities. But a girl who enters into the geisha world makes huge achievements. As a geisha she develops enormous talents and qualities. But regrettably the geisha like prostitutes are burdened with debts. The geisha are not let independent from the *Okiya* house and the third party until they settle their debts.

A brothel is a house usually owned by such a third-party and is used for prostitution.

The customers may visit these houses to pick and choose a prostitute of their liking.

One of the methods that brothels use to control these girls is so-called debt bondage:

giving loans to confirm their lifelong loyalty to the brothel and when they cannot

repay their debt, their children may inherit it from their parents and as such are forced

to work as prostitutes to pay it off .(O'Connell Davidson 29 and 30)

The *Okiya* house in which Masuda resides it purely functions on money motive. The geisha as the tenants are accustomed to the system of debt bondage. They are controlled and subjugated by the third party. Their treatment in the *Okiya* depends according to the wages they earn. "Mother was warm those who were popular and cold to those who weren't".

(*Autobiography of a Geisha* 49) The geisha of Masuda's *Okiya* are dehumanized and valued as commodities. The mother of the *Okiya* exploits the geisha by forcing them to frequently engage in sexual deeds.

Then without any warning, Tsukiko killed herself. Elder sister Sennari read me her farewell note. ... I was so shocked I felt as if my heart had been smashed to smithereens. Mother screeched and yelled, looking as if she were about to beat up the girl's dead body. "That shameless ingrate! Who the hell does she think she's being living on all these years? I've spent more than 300 yen on that bitch!" This was more than I could bear. "Mother! She's dead now! Please, leave her in peace. Couldn't you at least say, 'Poor thing'?" She turned on all of us. "Poor thing! I'm the, one who's the poor thing! She's run out on her debts! And it's going to cost money to clear up this mess besides!" (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 76)

The excerpt above displays the shocking reality behind implementations of geisha's *Okiya* house. The lives of human are lowered to a commodity. The *Okiya* mother is ruthless she acts like a demon of greed. Despite the fact she is a surrogate mother for the geisha girls, her acts are more like a third party. She values money more than a human life. She is more worried about the girl's debts and her cremating expenses than her suicide.

The mother of the *Okiya* sells Masuda's virginity to an ugly old man who is twice her age, old enough to be her grandfather. During her carrier as a fully-fledged geisha she is circulated as a sexual object to various men. Her *mizuage* (virginity) is sold four more times by the mother to various patrons as her first time. According to the code of geisha, the *Maiko* who peruses her carrier as geisha undergoes the *mizuge* ceremony just once in her life.

The former geisha Mineko Iwasaki states "the *mizuge* is a very old geisha ceremony practiced in the community. Mrs. Iwasaki's response was that as a former geisha, she has never performed this ritual and never heard of it ritual among her friends, and she suggests that this could had occurred in the lower part of quarters (where the lower-

class lives) and no one in Gion Kobu would lower themselves and perform such an act. (Jin Jin, 10)

The *mizuage* ceremony practiced in the geisha community is a kind of oppression. The act is viewed as a sexual initiation, selling the bodies of geisha to the men for money. In Masuda's case she is constantly forced by her mother to have sexual intercourse with various men for which she is offered a handsome amount. In this context the audience views Masuda as merchandise who is being utilized by the *Okiya* mother. The *mizuage* ceremony specifically the one which Masuda describes in *Autobiography of a Geisha* comes into view as inappropriate and utterly fallacious. Therefore it also reduces Masuda's distinction to a prostitute. Due to her constant engagement in sexual activities in her early days as geisha, Masuda ultimately enters into prostitution without any hesitation.

Masuda in her autobiography also truthfully and poignantly illustrates the dehumanisation of subalterns by the dominant hegemonic ideology. The autobiography generates two folds of subalternity: one is gender subalternity (represents geisha as a female mainly) and the other is social subalternity (represents the sub-culture of geisha within the orient). Masuda wonderfully exposes the social reality of Japan. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* depicts how the geisha as subalterns are marginalised and constricted life of humiliation and agony.

The geisha of Masuda's *Okiya* are treated like commodities. They live and work like proletariats whose lives are controlled and dominated by the *Okiya* mother. In most of the *Okiya* the mothers and mistresses are cruel the geisha are often beaten and tormented by the *Okiya* mother. The geisha as do not have voice of their own most of the judgment in their lives are made by the *Okiya* mother. In this context Masuda and the other geisha as a proletariat appear as "subalterns" who are voiceless. The *Okiya* mother and the third party

such as the teahouse mistress, and *danna* (Patrons) come into view as dominants who controls the lives of geisha.

Subaltern” began as a description of certain rank in the military. The word was used under censorship by Gramsci: he called Marxism „monism,“ and was obliged to call the proletariat, subaltern. “That word, used under duress, has been transformed into the description of everything that does not fall under strict class analysis. This is so, because it has no theoretical rigor (Spivak, 1991)

When Masuda arrives to the *Okiya* she is named Low by her elder sisters, she is kept as a maid, she frequently ordered by the Mother and Sisters to do one core after another. However, in the *Okiya* house Masuda meets with an elder sister Karuta who shows her care and affection. She is also aware about the bad-tempered Mother and elder sister Takechiyo. She soon becomes a victim of ill treatments. The elder sister Karuta and Masuda are often beaten by the Mother. When a geisha of Masuda’s *Okiya* dies the elder sister Karuta regrets by raising her voice. “How can anyone live honestly in a world like this?” (Autobiography of *a Geisha*, 32) The regret of Karuta signifies the voice of subaltern which offend and challenges the overruling hegemony of the “dominants”. As a subaltern Masuda and Karuta are beaten and snubbed by the Mother. The mother is an embodiment of a dominant figure who mutes the voice subalterns.

One night I was asleep when Shizuka woke me up. “Low! Get up! Your favourite sister’s having a dreadful time!” Mother was holding Karuta’s feet down and pressing a hot iron against them. Karuta was gritting her teeth and glaring furiously at Mother. Without stopping to think, I blindly flew at Mother, screaming at the top of my lungs. In that same instant she shouted, “Shut up!” and knocked me flat on my back. Involuntarily I shrieked, “Help me! Please!” Mother’s eyes seemed glazed with rage

as suddenly she flung me down the stairs. Oh no! That was my first thought, and then from within my leg the sound of bones cracking ripped through my brain.

(Autobiography of a Geisha, 33)

We notice as we read the incident reflects the treatment of geisha they endure in their *Okiya* houses. The condition of Masuda and Karuta divulge the dilemma and proletariat status many geisha. The incident is significantly portrays the overwhelming and devastative authority of dominant over the subaltern. Karuta as a subaltern do not have a voice of her own, she mutely tolerates the harassments and tortures of the *Okiya* Mother. Masuda can be considered as a voice for her elder sister Karuta who rebukes against the nuisance of dominant. But ultimately Masuda as a subaltern is crushed by the dominant. The mother flings Masuda down the stairs which leves a deep fracture in her leg.

Spivak's controversial statement „the subaltern cannot speak“ implies a lot of inner meanings. The subalterns have the capacity to articulate things well and they can go to any extent so as to make their stand clear before the authorities. The real problem lies in the receiver as s/he is not ready to listen to the sender of the message. The receiver is neither interested in listening to the message nor in a position to decode the message of the sender. The element of noise distorts the proper reception of the message and when a subaltern tries to speak. (Rosalind, 58)

The term subaltern refers to any person or group of inferior rank and station, may be for race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion. As an illegitimate child Masuda loses her identity in a very young age, she is expelled by her own family. She doesn't hold a particular identity. Masuda identifies herself with different names people have given her different nick names. Such as Crane, Nursie, Monkey Baby, Low.

When I first arrived, Father had asked me what my name was and I'd reply, without a moment's of hesitation, "Nursie." "There's no such name as Nursie," he laughed. "It's Crane," I quickly corrected myself. "Crane? That's better". So it was "Crane" I was called, but then they all decided they'd call me "Low," as in "Low intelligence."

(Autobiography of a Geisha 20 and 21)

Masuda is named as "Low" by her sisters. Her name "Low" signifies her illiteracy, lack of intelligence, inferior rank, status and her racial dissimilarity. She is frequently ridiculed by her elder sisters for her dark complexion and sun-burned skin. Masuda during her early days in the geisha house describes herself as sunburn novice. "When you compare Little Hamako with little Crane, they're as different as princes and a foot soldier's daughter," they'd laugh. In my heart, child though I was, I was ashamed of myself and longed to be beautiful".

(Autobiography of a Geisha, 22) The liens indicate the racial subalternity, her consciousness and her inferiority complex. Racial discrimination is another common dilemma between the dominant and subalterns. They generate various binary oppositions between the dominant and subaltern which are discriminative in nature. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* demonstrates a kind of racial discrimination and subalternity which occurs within the Orient. Masuda as a subaltern is discriminated as an 'other' in her own land by the native elites. Her position is described without an identity. The dominants hear who subjugate the subalterns are the native elites, the Orient themselves not the Westerners. The native elites come into view as the leading race who are first and foremost, the subalterns are considered as others who are unlike the original inhabitants. Masuda depicts the native elites as the governing race who dominates the poor. As a neglected child conceived out of marriage in a poor family, she becomes a proletariat at very young age. She a nurse maid in her childhood is pressurized and tormented by the landowner's children. After her debut as geisha in her early days Masuda is bullied and humiliated her senior geishas in all sort of ways. Masuda is more bothered about

an ugly scar of her leg. Due to the deficiency of beauty and her bodily flaws Masuda remains frightened and self-conscious. As her body is being publicly exposed she expresses her agony, she reflects: "I had that ugly scar on my leg and felt much more self-conscious than the others, but I was determined never to cry. My breast was a maelstrom of shame and humiliation; I felt I could shed tears of blood". (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 45) Here the relationship of the subaltern and dominant is identified as relationship between the race and colour, rich and the poor, the. Masuda does not form an identity of her own, the identity which she holds as a subaltern is an ignominy which is externally imposed by the dominants.

In my estimation the word subaltern and the idea of the popular do not inhabit a continuous space at all. I see subalternity as a position without identity it is somewhat like a strict understanding of class. Strictly speaking subalternity to an extent it is that kind of thing no one can say I am a subaltern in whatever language. Or so to that extent... I think the relationship between the subaltern and the popular may will be somewhat like relationship between class and poverty, or race and colour or gender and sex. (Spivak 2004)

The *Autobiography of a Geisha* reflects the background of women's struggle in the Third World. As a Third World female and subaltern they are consumed and exploited by the dominants. The geisha can be considered as the individuals who can't make their life by their own. Therefore they fully depend on the elite to make their living.

The world of geisha deliberately exists to amuse the dominants. Masuda establishes the consequences of subaltern women the geisha are valued as an object of the elite's sexual desire. By selling their daughters into geisha houses the poor parents victimize the girls into sexual slavery. The girls are exploited and utilized by dominant elites as a source of sexual pleasure and entertainments. As a subaltern the geisha's hands are tied and they do not have

voice of their own. Since they are burdened with huge debts by the system and third-party they compensate it by offering sexual service. The geisha endure huge amount tolerance in their career. Therefore in order to become a successful ideal it is important for a geisha to tolerate such exasperations in her life.

As O'Connell Davidson discussed, this is a typical trap quite a few girls fall into: they are in need of money and have no choice but to borrow from a third-party with a huge interest and afterwards when they are forced to pay off their debt it is impossible for them and they are obliged to use their body as a source of income. (O'Connell Davidson 29 and 30)

As a former geisha Masuda in her text talks about the sexual experiences of her profession and some miserable truths of her life. At various juncture Masuda faces sexual harassments and exploitation. Her crisis emphasizes the idea of capitalist oppression and the plight of Third World women. As a geisha Masuda is sold as a sexual object to her *danna*, therefore she has to satisfy her *danna's* sexual appetite. At various juncture as an object Masuda experiences sexual abuse and harassments from her *danna*. She explicitly shares the sexual experiences of her profession. Masuda in her text mournfully describes about the episode of her painful miscarriage, as she is impregnated by her *danna*. She is determined to undergo the pain of miscarriage.

“You know, there's nothing so pitiful as the sight of a geisha who's pregnant. You can't dance with that big belly. What you do is go to the Inari Shrine...Vow that you'll donate a lantern if you miscarry. And every day, whenever you have a chance, try jumping off the edge of the veranda.” From the very next day, I did as I was told. Miracle or not, I couldn't say, but one morning of the twentieth day ...I felt a sudden pain in my abdomen....The creature that should have been born as my child had

turned into a mess of blood and miscarried. Everyone seemed to know about it but no one did anything for me. (*Autobiography of a Geisha* 65, 66)

Throughout the novel Masuda describes herself as a sexualized character the inclusion of detailed sexual scenes immerse the audience to lively experience her story. By narrating the sexual experiences of her life Masuda directly invites the audience to touch and consume her body. The readers immerse into the orient to experience the orient. The narration of her detailed sexual experiences provokes the readers sexual desires for geisha, whom they thing in reality they are not available for consumption. The portrayal of her personality as a sexualized character adds force to emphasize the Western stereotype of geisha. In other words Masuda becomes an example of the Western fascinated sexualised Oriental model. Masuda's self objectification and sexualisation begins early since her childhood. She appears as an erotic girl child in the very beginning of her Autobiography. There are several evident and occurrences in her childhood which establishes her as a sexualized character. During her childhood as nursemaid Masuda has constantly been tricked by her landowner's children to publicly expose her body.

I suppose it was then that the children would ask, "Hey, nursie, are you a boy or a girl?" And I would pull up my skirts and show them my bottom. In the end they found it so funny that whenever they saw me they would jeer, "Pull it up! Pull it up!" When I turned eight or nine, although no one thought me, I came to understand, by instance I suppose, what it was to feel shame. And then if I tried to escape them, they would bar the way and tell me that if I didn't pull up my skirts, they wouldn't let me through. "Nursie, crane, monkey baby! They would jeer, "Is your bum bright red? "when I burst into tears they would let me go. (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 13)

Her constant involuntary in sexual activates in various stages of her life proves that Masuda's life has been increasingly sexual. After Masuda wanders as a castaway without money she utilizes her bodily recourses for her living. A man buys Masuda for getting her nakedly dance. Masuda's account of life is an instant which emphasize the consequence of Third World women. By offering her the otherness Masuda is victimized and therefore she is symbolized as a sexual object. Masuda describes her sexual encounters as unfortunate situations of her life. After experiencing various sexual anxieties as a geisha and kept woman Masuda enters into prostitution.

Since Masuda has used real character the audience intertwine themselves into the text as a character who consumes the body of Orient. The autobiographical with first person narrative lures the audience to immerse themselves into the text. It do not let the audience to stand apart from the characters. The use of real characters also serves an evident to prove the existence of Oriental stereotypes.

Apart from Masuda in the story, we also learn about the other charters like Karuta and Tsukiko who are also sexualized, commodified, like Masuda. Karuta and Masuda eventually manage to liberate themselves from the oppressive life of geisha but Tsukiko remains the most sympathised character who fails to strive against her oppression. As a geisha her life is exploited in all sorts of ways, she is disgusted by the sexual slavery which she has to undergo throughout her life. To satisfy her *danna's* sexual appetite seemed to her the most painful task. Like Masuda her *danna* exploits Tsukiko by impregnating her. But unlike Masuda she fails to handle the consequence. She instead turns out to be a meek female who ends up her life by committing suicide. This is an excellent example which highlights the dilemma of the Third World women who are exploited by the men as a sexual object.

The geisha are considered as an object of male sexual desire, therefore their oppression is patriarchal. In the case of Tsukiko she is victimized by her own father who sells her to the geisha house, here we see Tsukiko's oppression originates from a male. Tsukiko as geisha gets transformed into an object of male sexual desire. By describing Tsukiko's situation Masuda illustrates the plight of patriarchal oppression in a backward Japanese society where fathers sell their daughters to brothels, circuses and geisha houses to make profit.

Masuda criticizes the unequal treatment of women, which has been a usual practice in the form of culture in Japan. The men make use of women's femininity to bring profit. Tsukiko does not become a geisha by her will her father discards her into the geisha world due to his financial burden. He also sells her elder daughter to a circus. At this point it is clear that, the oppression of Third World women is male centric. Masuda describes the status of Oriental female, their worth as a daughter is lowered to an article of trade. There is no pride for Japanese girls in their family. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* describes how human trafficking was a common practice those days in Japan and other far eastern countries. The parents of poor families in China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia victimized their daughters into sexual slavery.

The traditional values and ethics of geisha *danna* relationship are complicated and not well understood even by many Japanese. The very nature of such relationship between geisha and patron gives an impression in such a way that prostitute and geisha are not so far.

In those days a *danna* was almost like a husband except, of course, that he already had a wife. The geisha would be his concubine, his number two wife, or if he was a wealthy man, his number three or even number four wives. (*The Secret History*, 234)

The patronage or *danna* system was the essence of the flower and willow lifestyle.

The first requirement was a man who had a sizeable amount of money to spare (extra,

that is after he had paid all his living expenses, his mortgage, provide for the needs of his family and dependent relatives, paid for school fees, holidays abroad pension plans and regular investment commitments). Such a man was likely to be at the pinnacle of his career and rather elderly. (*The Secret History*, 235)

The description of geisha *danna* relationship in Masuda's autobiography corroborates a strong patriarchal idea. It denotes the powerlessness of Oriental females who are completely dependent on men for their basic needs and financial support. Masuda and the other geisha's relationship with their *danna* demonstrate the centrality of men in every geisha's life. Despite the fact the geisha are highly accomplished and vigorously trained, their scholarly virtues and artistic qualities remain concealed when they rely on men for their financial stability.

For in those days, a geisha who was considered "first class" wouldn't sleep with just anyone. As soon as they made their debut, most geisha were fixed up with a *danna*, or patron. If he was good to you, you'd have only one; but if he was stingy and you found difficult to cover expenses, you'd have two or three *danna*, and you wouldn't sleep with anyone else. All of this would be arranged secretly between the mother of the house and the people at the geisha registry office. (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 53)

The geisha cannot claim for freedom until they settle their debts of their *Okiya* house. Since it is a huge burden they have no other option than granting themselves to the *danna* for financial support. The *danna* system is was a long lasting custom in the flower and willow world. Looking into the history most of the geisha *danna* relationships were purely on money basis. Due to the fact that geisha let the *danna* to dominate and control their lives they do not give the impression of an independent female. In terms of relationship with men geisha do not differ much from the ordinary Japanese women, wives and concubines. Like the traditional Japanese husbands who control their women the lives of geisha are controlled by

their *danna*. Therefore both geisha's perspective of being women and the wives perspective of being women does not have much difference.

Since the subculture cultural of geisha originated from the male geisha the cultural ethics are partial in terms of gender and therefore they are set according to the men's convenience. The geisha *danna* relationship maintains and a strong patriarchal decree. In the novel relationship of Masuda and her *danna* expresses and swots up the idea of male female relationship and gender inequality. It is significant for the debate about a women's secondary status. Masuda describes in way that articulates the gender difference. Being a male Masuda's *danna* is allowed to have more than one female in his life, but Masuda as female has to be pure, loyal and act upon her *danna*'s order. In one section in *Autobiography of a Geisha* Masuda describes her experience about being a second mistress to Cockeye. She describes herself as Cockeye's "number three. The Japanese men take pride in their masculinity by having relationship with number of concubines but when it comes to female the case is not the same. Masuda is abused and beaten by Cockeye when she is caught for secretly rendezvousing with a man whom she loved. The particular situation apparently denotes the gender inequality. Being a male the Japanese men enjoy the privilege of gender freedom which permits them to have extra marital relationships. For a man in Japan to own geisha and concubines signifies his enormous wealth. Therefore the geisha and concubine becomes the men's object of luxury their status is viewed as not more than a man's luxuries commodity. As a female born in a male dominating society the Japanese women especially concubines and geisha are the victims of gender norms. The gender norm which prevails is highly subjective and it often favours the male sex. The novel gives a strong Orientalist image regarding the men women relationship. The Japanese men by holding extra marital affairs with geisha and concubine they think it is an appropriate way of executing their manhood.

The *Autobiography of a Geisha* demonstrates the centrality of men and women in each other's lives, how the two opposite sex make use of each other for social reputation. Like men to some extent the women are also able to take advantages of men for their social empowerment. Masuda describes about her relationship with Cockeye and with her other male clients. Masuda in her early days as geisha is able to utilize her proficiency to manipulate men for her social status and self empowerment. For example the details about her relationship with her *danna*, even though Masuda dose not love him she's determined and manages to give him intimate attention. She satisfies him and tolerates his sexual urges just because of his high social standing. The relationship does not possess any sort of devotion, love, feeling or emotion it wholly functions on money motive. In order to make a space of their own in the society it is essential for a geisha or a concubine to stand with a wealthy patron. They make use of the advantage of their wealthy patrons by making extravagant demands and frequent savings for their future. In the novel we learn how the first mistress advices Masuda to utilize her opportunity to extract as much wealth she could, from her *danna*.

“You mustn't think like that!” she said. “That man's a monstrous weirdo. If you don't coax something substantial for yourself out of him, you'll be in trouble when you end up in my position. The house and the land are in my name, so I can support myself without too much difficulty. But if you don't have anything, and then he changes his mind about you, you'll be destitute. Men are greedy. If you get him to spend money on you now, he won't want what he's spent to go waste, and he'll spend more; then you'll never have to worry about being abandoned.” (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 83)

The excerpt above shows how a female is influenced by another female to handle various tactics to manipulate a male. The mistress and geisha who are engaged to their patron consider him as a source of income than a human being. In order to obtain power the geisha

have to sell their bodies, Masuda as a geisha learns how to carry on relationship with men without any romantic involvement. Her autobiography provides a deep analysis and clear picture of a geisha's mentality. It shows the capability of women who are able to have control on their male clients for achieving their needs. For a geisha the relationship with her *danna* is just a business contract which is arranged by the *Okiya*. Masuda only depends on her income which is important for her and the *Okiya*. Masuda's account of life does not break the stereotype of geisha. Therefore when we analyse such relationship we notice there is an apparent prejudice between both the genders. *Autobiography of a Geisha* shows the kind firmness the male female maintain in their relationship, which do not go beyond the facade of geisha *danna* relationship. To one side of her narration Masuda tends to follow the stereotype of a geisha, concubine and mistress. In terms of geisha's relationship with men, the novel insists more on geisha's professional trait than basic human trait which they seem to lack.

In the novel we also see how Masuda upholds the image of "other" she shows how she as a geisha differs from the other Japanese female. Like ordinary Japanese wives the geisha do not enjoy the privilege of family relationship. Even though they remain subjugated the Japanese wives are held in high esteem in the society. In contrast the geisha as women are confined to strict living rules. Like ordinary woman the geisha are not allowed to enter into love relationship. Their otherness is scrutinised when they come into view as professional women than a common being. They geisha identify themselves distinct from the common women they are either consider as more independent at the same time they also appear as a double marginalized female. Their distinction depends according to their rank and status within the subculture. They take pride of their profession as well as at the same time some also reduce themselves to a certain level of disgrace about their social standing.

In most case geisha are viewed as others by both the Japanese and Westerner's. When it comes to relationship with men the geisha do not share a complete relationship like the ordinary Japanese wives. When a *danna* takes a geisha as his mistress he does not divorce or quite his relationship with his wife. The geisha just remain a half wife she never attains the status of her *danna* real wife. In most case the geisha *danna* relationship lack in commitments and devotion. Since the *danna* is committed to another female he rather takes the relationship as a responsibility than a commitment. In Masuda's case we notice her *danna* maintains multiple affairs with various women.

Therefore it is not possible in the geisha *danna* relationship to accomplish a wholesome relationship with each other. The relation between them is carried out as an obligation than a true love, neither Masuda is devoted nor her *danna*. Throughout her narrative we get learn about the level of intensity and commitment she contributes to her relationship with *danna*. For instance we learn from Masuda's inner voice and regard about her *danna* which Cockeye's first mistress and Masuda share with each other.

“You mean you don't like him either? Me too!” At this she lowered her head laughed, and the reserve of our fist meeting evaporated.. I told her I'd work out that his nickname, “ Lon-Pari,” meant “ One eye looking at London and the other eye looking at Paris.” Number Two squeezed my arm and laughed. Perhaps it was the shared misery of being kept women that made us feel this way. (*Autobiography of a Geisha*, 83)

In this context we see how geisha and concubine differ as other from ordinary women and wives. The *danna* and geisha fail to accomplish a wholesome relationship like an ordinary couple does. The autobiography of Masuda generates the idea of an orient narrating her own story. Therefore by analysing Masuda's character we see how Masuda projects herself as a

stereotype of the geisha world. Her story typifies the fallacious identity of a geisha who for the Westerners are just expensive prostitutes their artistic skills and qualities are ignored when they are forced to engage into sex for money. The story of Masuda is an excellent example which talks about the vanishing qualities of a geisha. Masuda's Autobiography eventually states a girl should become a geisha by her will not by force.

CHAPTER 3

Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing world: A Historical Insight

Lesley Downer, a London based English journalist, author was fascinated by the Japanese culture and people. After researching six months about geisha, she published her non-fictional work *Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing World* in 2000. By studying the history of Japan and earning the trust of the present day residents Downer gains the privilege to enter into the mysterious world of geisha. After spending more than ten years of working and living in Japan she acquired fluency in Japanese language and the characteristics of Japanese cultural social elegance. Downer's history about geisha includes enormous details and fascinating ideas and truths about the flower and willow world.

The *Secret History* as a historical and cultural frame work generates the traditional oriental cliché, with the description of the romantic and undisclosed life of geisha Downer employs the narrative pattern of the Western portrayal of Orient. Her fascination about the mysterious theatricality of geisha's mask tends her curiosity to reveal the hidden human face behind it. The Oriental tradition is employed by including a documentary depiction of the Orient's life and local manners. As a cultural frame work *The Secret History* is enriched with numerous photographs. The photographs provide an authentic and humanized picture of the Orient. As a cultural expert Downer was given a free hand to document the traditionally secluded life of the flower and willow world. Other than geisha *The Secret History* also introduces the counterparts of geisha such as Japanese courtesans, prostitutes, tea brewing women and the male *taikomachie* who are also the part of the flower and willow world. *The Secret History* relives some enchanting truths about the evolution and origination of geisha from the male *taikomachie*. Downer extricates the description of geisha's history from the history of Japan which has a crucial link with the origination of geisha. Perhaps the secret

history is a beautiful master piece that includes various conceptions such as imperialism, historicism, cultural, oriental and other postcolonial discourses.

The Secret History holds the East- West encounter as its background theme which accentuates the concept of Orientalism. Downer certainly expresses the authenticity of Japan as Westerner she is excited by the otherness of Japan. As she ventures to study the culture of Japan it signifies that she authenticates the Orient as an object which she photographs, studies and consumes. Her study about the Orient divulges a sort of romantic and ambivalent idea. She describes the world of geisha with romantic and exotic expressions. In her introductory part Downers describes her experience as an adventurer who tries to unveil the elusiveness of the geisha world.

The Secret History extensively focuses on the political and imperialistic pressures which prevailed after the Edo era in Japan. The American invasion into the Japanese territories denotes the idea of Western dominance over the Orient. It appears as unwanted influence which intends to exploit the richness and idiosyncrasy of the nation.

Long before Harris had packed his bag to leave Shimoda, representative of other western nations were already appearing on Japan's coast, demanding equal or greater concessions. The Russians came, the Dutch appeared, the French, Swiss and Portuguese sent representative. Meanwhile Queen Victoria's special envoy, Lord Elgin, fresh from Victoria in China, steamed imperiously straight past Shimod and right into Edo Bay where he dropped anchor, to make sure the Japanese were well aware of his superior status. (*The Secret History*, 109)

The American vessels are identified as "The Black ships" the particular catch word articulates the nation's fright towards foreign league. Since Japan was closed from foreign contacts for centuries the flower and willow word bloomed as a source of entertainment for

the nation. Among other measures, they sealed off the country from the outside world to ensure that no subversive ideas entered to disturb the delicate balance. Foreigners and in particular Catholics were not allowed in and Japanese were not allowed to leave. Any one breaking the rules was liable to execution. (*The Secret History*, 53) Therefore here we perceive Japan as a thoroughly organised nation of the Orient a land with its own ethnicity, epistemology, standard and culture.

Downer describes about the establishment of various pleasure quarters in Japan such as Yoshiwara and Simabara where the women were trafficked to work as courtesans and geisha. To the Westerners the men and the people of Japan appear as pre-modern, backward and feminine. The Orientalism lies in the fact that *The Secret History* largely exposes the culture of Orient. It is viewed as a topic of discussion that gains wide range of audience with the help of the Westerners. Apart from the documentary depiction of local manners Downer also extensively provides historical details which indicate the perspective the present narrates the history. By reproducing the historical details Downer aims the audience to make them “live back in the history” the reproduction of historical scenes achieves the emotional realism.

Downer’s commentary about the Westerner’s invasion exemplifies the Orientalist based concept of binary opposition between the East and West. When The United States arrived to Japan with their eight well armed vessels lead by its commander, the Japanese were completely hopeless since they did not have a navy of their own. The very circumstance epitomize the idea how the Orient in contrast to westerners remained backward. The circumstance which Downer exposes insists to highlight the ignorance and lack of western technology which kept the Orient pre-modern backward. At this point we notice the author highly estimate the modern warfare and western technology. Downer highlights the high social standing of Westerners. *The Secret History* also tries to show how the Westerners gain

strength and identity by setting themselves against the Orient. At the same time Downer's portrayal of Western encounter and the Japanese society in *The Secret History* reflects the aggravation and anxiety of Westerners whom thought the Japanese were culturally and economically challenging them. Downer shows how the image of Japan was more appealing to the West who always fantasized such traditionally bounded society. Downer's view about the women of pleasure quarter extensively builds up the sexualized concepts and illustration of the Orient. For instance Downer describes about the Lady Izumo no Okuni as and sexual epitome of Japan during the *shougunate's* period who appeared more seductive and erotic to the men. She describes how the Japanese men were obsessed into sensual pleasure. And how the eroticism reached its peak and became a threat to the *shougunate's* policy and public order. Furthermore in *The Secret History* there are meticulous facts and sceneries about the ancient sex workers and female dancers which convey generalized and exotic idea about the Orient.

The text constantly debates about exotic life and the manners of Japanese people. Apart from prostitutes and courtesans Downer also mentions about the homosexual reality which were customary those days with kabuki actors in Japan. Like the early Shakespearean theatre the young male Kabuki actors played female role on stage, the beautiful young males eventually ended up as male prostitute. The author remarks that unlike the Westerners the Japanese considered homosexuality as the purest form of love. By scrutinizing this particular opinion the author tries to accentuate the contrast of Oriental and Occidental folklore. In terms of sex unlike the societal censors in the West the Orient are free from the Christianity's guilt inducing concepts of sin.

The Westerners infatuation for the Japanese women intensifies the idea, the supremacy of colonizer over the natives. The prominence of the Japanese is abridged to a substandard grade as colonized. Downer talks about Okichi and Ofuku whom she refer as

foreigner's concubine, the two young geisha offered by the Japanese government to the Americans under diplomatic pressure. As the Japanese considered the Americans as nauseating barbarians the geisha must have had an utter traumatic experience. The natives felt that their women are almost being ruined. This shows how the Westerners as colonizing empire were able to consume and exploit the Orients.

Throughout the text the ideas of things that are Western in Japan also constantly appear. Like the Americans who formed the Western image of geisha, the Japanese also developed inappropriate views and sweeping ideas about the Westerners. Downer's ideas reflect the East West conflict, the relation of colonizer and the colonized. The texts frequently emphasize difference and exoticness by stereotyping each other's culture and placing them against each other values.

The stereotype, then, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both coloniser and colonised, is the scene of a similar fantasy and defence-the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture. My contention is splendidly caught in Fanon's title *Black Skin White Masks* where the disavowal of difference turns the colonial subject into a misfit-a grotesque mimicry or 'doubling' that threatens to split the soul and whole, undifferentiated skin of the ego. The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. (Bhabha, *The Other Question*, 27)

Apart from the Orientalism *The Secret History* also engenders the "Other" discourse. Like Westerners the colonized natives also hold prejudice against the colonizers. Downer employs several ideas and cases of point which proves the both East West attitude as conflicting. Like the colonizers who identify the East as other and the natives an exotic also represent the Westerners as barbaric. In this framework the other applies to both, the Orient and occident.

Who would ever voluntarily consent to be fondled by hairy barbarian who reeked of meat and butter? (The Japanese ate no meat or dairy products and referred to foreigners as *bataa-kusai*, 'stinking of butter'.) (*The Secret History*, 105)

While recounting the story of ice-hearted geisha Oyuki Morgan, Downer renders various ideas that apparently specify the adversary encounter of East and West. The story of Oyuki also exclusively describes about the chauvinistic attitudes of East towards the West. Oyuki the famous geisha of Kyoto comes into view as stony-hearted female. She holds an enduring prejudice and cruelty against her foreign client. Oyuki frankly reveals her strong disliking for Westerners when she was summoned to entertain George Morgan. She instead expresses her passion for the young Japanese men and enjoyed the company of Shunsuke Kawakami a young gallant among the natives with whom she fell in love.

Oyuki was aghast. 'Sleep with a foreigner? I'd rather die,' she exclaimed in the privacy one of the teahouse's back rooms. (*The Secret History*, 159) Therefore Downer describes how the Westerners appeared to Japanese as the other. As she rejects George he had to pay her an extravagant tip to enjoy her company. George is described as a lovelorn foreigner who patiently tolerates Oyuki's unshakable cruelty. In the case of Oyuki story Downer clearly exhibits the idea of racial antagonism. These particular episodes of Oyuki's story gives emphasise to the thought how the Westerner as other is subjugated by the dominant race. "The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, the others" (Fanon 31). Oyuki views her foreign client as a barbarian, the round-eyed long nosed American seemed to the Japanese as an alien from another planet. When Oyuki was summoned to the teahouse to entertain him, she was shocked and repelled by his pallid skin, coarse compared to silky Asian skin, and colourless hair. (*The Secret History*, 156)

In the further section of Oyuki's story Downer spotlights towards the Western chauvinism. The concept of Western chauvinism which Downer employs in later episodes comes in to view as an utter contrast to its initial episodes. Oyuki the icy-hearted geisha after experiencing the pangs of rejection from her treacherous lover Shunsuke Kawakami decides to marry George Morgan as an act of confession for her spontaneous cruelty. At this prerequisite Oyuki is determined to transform herself and to become an unassuming wife from an icy-hearted geisha. The state is viewed as the compliance of West towards the East, Oyuki as an oriental female makes a clean breast about her status of racially being inferior to the Westerners. The story of Oyuki in *The Secret History* highlights various instances in Oyuki's life to demonstrate the idea of Western chauvinism. While describing about Oyuki's voyage to America Downer explains how Oyuki is conscious about her prerequisite which she has to earn for comporting and assimilating herself with the members of snobbish and powerful American dynasty. In the United States the Westerners view Oyuki and George as a peculiar match, which is barely acceptable in the American society. Despite the fact Oyuki lived an exceedingly privileged life as a first class geisha in Japan she is viewed as an outraged Orient in American society. Her race and ethnicity aggravates the Westerners to form and associate a sense of otherness with Oyuki.

George's immediate family was on the quay to meet them... The family, his stepmother was reported to have said, was far from happy with George's choice. The woman was, after all, Japanese and not even a Christian. In those days westerners were unabashedly chauvinist their when it came to other race. No matter how clever their fans and pretty their kimonos, the Japanese were still non-whites and therefore inferior. (*The Secret History*, 159)

The Secret History thoroughly debates about the vanishing world of orients which occurred due to the growing number of foreign settlements. Downer points out how the colonial

missionary intentionally imposed developed and spread anti-nationalistic principles among the inhabitants. The civilizing mission of westerners ultimately results as a threat to the Japanese culture. The Western influence in Japan disturbs the nation's unique culture life style. The upcoming generation of the citizen sets off to violate the *shogunat's* policy which strictly restricted the Japanese citizens to make foreign voyages.

Determined that the country would never again descend into civil war, Tokugawa and his successors set about fencing in the population with rigid systems of control.

Among other measure, they sealed off the country from the outside world to ensure that no subversive ideas entered to disturb the delicate balance. Foreigners and in particular Catholics were not allowed in and the Japanese were not allowed to leave.

Anyone breaking the rules was liable to execution. (*The Secret History*, 53)

Downer narrates several stories about the upcoming generation of geisha becoming modernised after the country passes through the Western influence. The title "Vanishing World" specifically intends to describe the community of geisha which was gradually getting modernised day by day due to the Western influence. The story of the most celebrated geisha Sadayakko, in *The Secret History* is perhaps the first evidence which Downer narrates to prove the idea of geisha becoming Western. We find various instances in the text which sounds as if due to the influence of the Westerners the lives of Japanese folks get liberated. The influence of the West to some extent also relieves the geisha community who were confined to obey strict set of laws.

The most renowned geisha Sadayakko, after achieving her carrier ultimately becomes a modern woman. Sadyakko is sent to the United States where she ends up as an actress. As she widely exposes herself to the West she becomes an embodiment of a mysterious icon of the Orient. By narrating Sadyakko's story Downer tries to emphasize the idea 'things

Western in Japanese and also the things Orient in the West'. Sadyakko is either identified as a mysterious Orient by the West at the same time in the vision of native Japanese she appears as a reformed Western figure. Sadayakko's story exemplifies the vanishing qualities of a geisha in the modern world. Sadayakko manipulates the mannerisms of a geisha according to the Westerner's taste. By modernising herself she moves beyond the native customs and tradition. Downer shows how Sadayakko as a modern geisha becomes a crucial figure to introduce the West to the Japanese. Her passion for Shakespeare's plays and her stage role as Portia, Ophelia, and Desdemona shows how she as a modern geisha get holds to the Western ideas by denying the traditional Japanese subjects. Sadayakko's story also shows how the traditional aspect of geisha community is outraged due to the modern geisha's passion for the Western fantasies.

The text further describes the modern generation of geisha who completely mimicked and adopted the Western manners. We learn the modern generation of geisha were mad about all things Western. They tried mimicking the Westerners in every possible ways. By mimicking the manners of the Westerners the geisha become a tangible form of colonized object. At the same time the manners of Westerners which make the Orient mimic gains power and superiority over the colonized Orient. The geisha who mimic the manners of West are neither identified nor acknowledged as West by the Westerners. They are instead viewed by the West as mysterious Oriental icons. Their imitation of the West remains partial they are identified as almost same to the Westerners but not quite same.

As Bhabha says, Mimicry is the desire for reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (Bhabha, 126)

Downer describes how the modern generation acted as the advance guards of Western fashion. On account of self civilizing mission the geisha of modern age set aside their traditional Japanese manners. They gave up the ancient practices such as teeth blackening and hair waxing. They adopted Western outfits and even wore their hair in a shampoo coiffure.

Bhabha argues that mimicry has serious and disturbing effect on the authority of colonial discourse because while “normalizing” the colonial state or subject, it “alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms” so the “civilizing mission” is threatened. (Bhabha, 127)

The geisha take westernization as a great symbol of enlightenment and civilisation. Here the geisha’s mimicry of Western manners leads to a serious consequence and produce a disturbing effect. On account of civilizing their own selves and community the geisha attain the status of colonized who deject their own mannerism and embrace the culture and lifestyle of the Westerners. Considering the Westerners way of life as more civilized the geisha embrace it to fight against the repressive and intolerable norms and customs of their community. Since westernization alleviates the women from various code of law the geisha find it appealing.

The story of Kiharu the well known English speaking geisha, described in *The Secret History* is an example of modern Japanese female who elegantly manages to release herself from the clutches of overriding norms and customary practices of the community. Due to her special consideration as an English speaking geisha she is smart enough to escape even from the customary deflowering ceremony of *mizuage*. By viewing Kiharu as westernized female Downer tries to portray a powerful image of a geisha. Unlike other geisha Kiharu with the advantage of being westernized, she is able to have control over her relationship with the male clients. By westernizing herself Kiharu tries to break the Oriental stereotype of geisha

she is able to promote herself into the upper class Japanese and Western society. As an English speaking geisha she gets the privilege to entertain the renowned celebrities such as Babe Ruth, Charlie Chaplin, and Jean Cocteau. Therefore by narrating Kiharu's story Downer tries to show how the Japanese as Orient imitate the manners of the Westerners, and how the Western influence empowers and liberate the lifestyle of geisha. She ultimately tries to state the reason of the vanishing world of geisha in the modern world.

CONCLUSION

The study is an in-depth research into the representation of geisha ranging from history to contemporary literature and subsequent reader reception and criticism. The dissertation entitled “The Elusive World of Geisha: The Orient in the Western Gaze” analyses the selected works which are specially based on the geisha community of Japan. The study debates upon portrayals of geisha in Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Sayo Masuda’s *Autobiography of a Geisha*, and Lesley Downer’s *Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing World*. It demonstrates how the works integrate the idea of Orientalism and also analyses how other postcolonial discourses are applicable in the texts. The idea of Orientalism in the literature and history has attracted much interpretation in the present times. Orientalism typically investigates the cultural milieu, backdrop and the living-standard of the Orient. Orientalism is an idea which discusses the ontological and epistemological variation made between the Orient and Occident.

The idea of East West encounter is the foremost and primary theme that constitutes Orientalism. The Westerner’s attitude and the outlook towards the Orient has remained a controversial idea in the history of Oriental studies. In the field of Oriental and Post-Colonial writings we often find the native’s mannerisms and ethnicity are criticized and misinterpreted by the Westerners. The West identifies the Orient as their cultural contradictor. Orientalism in general tries to demonstrate how the culture of the Westerners gained its power and dominant identity by placing itself against the Orient. The bigotry of Westerners in the Oriental writings appears as an intrinsic attitude which is intent to form a dominant identity. By binding themselves into the established image of the East and the assumptions of the Oriental writers the West accomplishes its dominant status. The dominant ideology of Western imperial image in the Oriental writings reflects the irrelevance and insignificance of

an individual author. The established assumption and the sweeping statements of Oriental writing aim to limit the reader's thoughts and ideas about the Orient.

The dissertation chiefly applies Edward Said's idea of Orientalism to study and investigate the Japanese culture and the sub-community of geisha. The study also employs Homi K. Bhaba's idea of post colonialism, Gayatri Spivak's theory of subalternity, and other postcolonial discourse. The introductory part exclusively discusses the significance of East West encounter in Oriental writings. It also discusses the Orientalistic features of Asia and how it attracts the Westerners to study the culture of Orient. The introductory part also briefly discusses certain archetypal icons of Asia whom the Westerners have constantly described incongruously and how they have been commodified by the West as an object to sexualize, exoticize and romanticize.

The preface also includes a brief study of the authors of selected works and their legendary contributions. It investigates the background knowledge, foundation and creative process of the author's established works. To study about the society of geisha the preface includes a detailed description about the meaning, idea, history and origination of the geisha community. It also takes into the view the counterparts and other Japanese archetypal icons such as courtesans, *taikomachi*, Kabuki actors and the tea brewing women of Japan.

Owing to its geographical location the nation of Japan abundantly carries the characteristic of Orient. The historical description of Samurai warriors, Kamikaze attack and *hara-kiru* suicide tradition have considered by the Westerners as an evident of barbarism. It also shows how Japan was a well organised land of orient with its distinct life style and behavioural pattern. The study also analyse the relationship of Japan with the Western countries, it talks about the military pressure, Western colonization and various foreign settlements that intruded the amity of the nation.

The chapters of this dissertation are categorized according to the genre of the selected works since the genres of the chosen works vary as fiction, autobiography and history the analysis of these works possibly provide different insights according to the genre they belong.

The first chapter of this dissertation focuses on Arthur Golden's fiction *Memoirs of a Geisha* to prove how it clearly accentuates the idea of Orientalism. Being a fiction of an American writer with the Japanese theme and subject matter it clearly accentuates the idea of Orientalism. Since the novel contains biased representations and unfair attitudes and ideas about the Japanese it proves how the *Memoirs of a Geisha* as a fiction has served as an effective platform for the Western writer to condemn the culture of the Orient.

The Orientalistic outlook of *Memoirs of a Geisha* in this study mainly demonstrates the idea of sexualized and commodified status and representation of the Orient. The author provides real and live experience to the readers by including sexual scenes, connotations and ethnographic detail. The realistic effect of the novel shows how the Orientalistic writers are commercially motivated. The commercialism is what always provides the real thing. The author reveals various secrets about the mysterious world of geisha. For instance Golden talks about the deflowering ceremony of *mizuage* as an alleged price paid for the sexual service offered by the geisha. The novel by including a documentary depiction about the Orient's life creates a cultural archive. Golden establishes an Oriental environment by including enormous detail about the Japanese culture.

Memoirs of a Geisha as an Oriental text also covers a wide range of ideas such as Historicism, Culturalism and Western narrative. The novel also emphasizes the postcolonial idea of Homi.K Bhabha and the concept of Third World feminism. By using geisha and other female characters Golden describes the status of Women in the Japanese society. *Memoirs of a Geisha* portrays various forms of patriarchal oppression in the Japanese society. Golden

shows how the lives of Geisha and the other Japanese female are controlled by strong patriarchal laws and socio- cultural forces in their society.

Golden shows how the geisha come to view as a double marginalized, and how their social standing differs from the ordinary Japanese women. The novel also shows how the author fails to break the Oriental stereotype of geisha. Even though the novel ends as a love story it is not free from the typical western outlook of geisha. Throughout the novel Golden tends to follow the stereotype of geisha. The novel suggests several links between the geisha's *Okiya* life and prostitute's brothel life. Instead of giving an image of artist golden has made Sayuri appear like a prostitute in the *Memoirs of Geisha*. In the novel it is hard to understand whether Golden distorts the culture of geisha intentionally or accidentally. The novel ultimately conveys the idea that, it is bit hard for the Western author to accurately understand the culture of the Orient.

The second chapter of this dissertation analyses the autobiography of the former geisha Sayo Masuda. The narrative of Masuda's autobiography is viewed as how the Orient narrates her own story. The author has engraved her life story more than a decade after she retires from her geisha life. Unlike most other fictions and autobiography of geisha, Masuda's is the only full length autobiography. Masuda is viewed as a woman of Orient with Oriental characteristics. Her account of geisha is considered as unvarnished account of which she as a protagonist has experienced in person.

Like Golden's *Memoirs of Geisha* the autobiography also violates the geisha code of silence, the idea of Orientalism is found in the narrative pattern of the novel Masuda uses first person narrative where she directly speaks to the audience. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* does not challenge the Orientalistic portrayal of geisha. The life of the protagonist is described as increasingly sexual, Masuda evidently describes about her constant involvement

in sexual activities. The story of Masuda provides a real and lived experience in her story where the readers get them immersed into the text. The *Autobiography of a Geisha* includes sexual and offensive scenes which satisfy the appetite and stimulates the sexual desires of the readers. Masuda in her story appears as an erotic figure. There are instances which show how her body has been publicly exposed. Her identity of geisha reinforces the Oriental stereotype. For the audience Masuda's story would seem like the story of prostitute than a geisha with artistic skills. Masuda in her autobiography shows how far there is a deadline between a prostitute and geisha, her occupation as geisha is more likely prostitution than profession of entertainment. Due to the constant involvement in sexual activities Masuda eventually becomes a prostitute without any hesitation. Her autobiography refers to prostitution as a way of living when there is no other avenue available for her as a woman towards subsistence. Masuda in her story heatedly laments against the Prohibition Act of Prostitution in Japan.

The autobiography talks about the quandary of human trafficking where the daughters in most of the East Asian countries are sold off to either become prostitute or geisha. Both the professions indicate the idea of just selling the bodies. Like most geisha stories Masuda's autobiography also talks about commodification where the girls are devalued as an object or merchandise. The lives of geisha and prostitute represent their status as women in the East Asian society they are identified as an object of male sexual desire with explicit price tags on their body. The geisha as women lose their sense of self value as they are viewed as nothing but a means to cater to men's sexual need.

The analysis of *Autobiography of a Geisha* in this thesis also traces out subaltern relationships. The study primarily uses Spivak's theory of subalternity. The conflict of dominant subaltern is known as a common aspect in most Oriental studies. The dominant subaltern relationship in *Autobiography of a Geisha* is applicable while analysing the relationship between classes, race, sex and gender. The geisha community generally faces the

two faced subalternity. One is gender based and the other is social where we find the community is identified as peculiar from the ordinary people. The chapter also analyses the relationship of geisha with her *danna* which talks about the centrality of men in Women's life. Masuda in her novel explains the benefits and the drawbacks of being a geisha. It ultimately conveys the message that the women should become a geisha only by choice.

The final section of this dissertation turns its focus to Lesley Downers non-fictional work *Geisha: The Secret History of a Vanishing Word*. The elusive world of geisha described in *The Secret History* provides a historical insight. The text accentuates the idea of East West encounter, Downer talks about the political and Western imperialistic pressure of the nation. Her commentary about the Western invasion in *The Secret History* exemplifies the Orientalistic based idea of binary opposition. Like Golden's fiction *The Secret History* holds the narrative of the Western conception of the Orient. The text also largely exposes the sub-culture of geisha to wide range of audience. Downer in the text tries to discuss reason of the vanishing world of orient. The study also analyse the relationship of the colonised and colonizer. To analyse Downers view of the geisha the study principally applies the idea of Homi K. Bhaba's postcolonial theory.

The analysis of the text clearly indicates the bias of the Westerners. The culture of the Orient is manipulated and represented by the dominating framework (Western). Therefore to view the world of geisha through the Western gaze is an utterly fallacious outlook. This study dedicates itself to the cause of the Orient and tries to shed light on its traditions which are unintelligible cultural codes for the West. The purpose of this study remains a more inclusive society.

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