

I. Author Golden and his works: An Introduction

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Arthur Golden was educated at Harvard College, where he received a degree in art history, specializing in Japanese art. In 1980 he earned an M.A. in Japanese history from Columbia University, where he learned Mandarin Chinese. Following a summer at Beijing University, he worked in Tokyo, and after returning to the United States, earned an M.A. in English from Boston University. His *Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1998, was listed in the New York Bestseller and made him rise in literary world.

In his literary debut, Arthur Golden parlays his academic training in Japanese history and culture into a Dickensian first-person narrative of a geisha girl's rise to prominence in pre-World War II Japan. As a product of meticulous research, *Memoirs of a Geisha* provides a detailed portrait of a little-known but much mythologized profession.

The novel shows Golden's grasp of the 1930s Japanese milieu, which helps the reader immerse him -or herself in a landscape interestingly apposite to the familiar American culture, a secretive world where geisha are obliged to keep quiet about what they learn from powerful man. Geisha resemble culture call girls who train for years in the fine arts of dance, music, makeup, fashion and socializing. Compared to other Japanese women, geisha are exotic cultural creations. Their Kimonos, the colourfully decorated robes, are often worth as much as a fine art objects. Their white makeup accentuates their skin so as to make their necks and other exposed areas more erotic. Their hairdos are elaborate enough to require geisha to use little wooden cradles for their necks when they sleep, so that these coiffures are not disturbed. In many respects, geisha are the fantastical creations of male desire, and there is an odd dissonance between their artistic ability and their more debased utilitarian function as

hostesses and flirts. Ever the master at maintaining appearances, the geisha knows how to act, disguise her true emotions, and use her social wiles to further her. The geisha possesses the writer's ability to play a role in much the same way that a man may inhabit a female persona in drag, which perfectly suits Golden's technique. On the job, Geisha mostly attend tea house parties, serve sake, play drinking games, and entertain boorish businessmen with self-conscious glimpses of their wrists or a lewd joke. Compared to the many apprentice years of learning dance and singing, their actual work can resemble drunken fraternity parties.

Nitta Sayuri begins her story as Chiyo, a peasant girl in the small fishing village of Yoroido. A local fish merchant sells her and her sister into slavery in Kyoto. While her uglier sister is forced into prostitution, Chiyo is suddenly orphaned out to an Okiya, or geisha house, where she must work to pay off the price of her purchase and any other expenses she incurs in her apprenticeship toward becoming a geisha. If she fails, she will work in drudgery as maid life. The premier geisha of the Okiya is Hatsumomo, a beautiful but viciously competitive woman who supports everyone else in the household by attending teahouse parties into the night. Hatsumomo has limitations as a character, as nothing is shown of her but her wicked side, but her instinctual loathing for Chiyo's threatening young beauty enlivens the novel. Hatsumomo incites Chiyo into trying to escape the Okiya. Not knowing the consequences of their action, Chiyo tries to escape and join her sister by climbing the rooftops of the adjoining Okiya, but she ends up trapped and further in debt than ever. In despair of ever breaking free from her bound servitude, she runs into the chairman of an electrical appliance company, and his unexpected act of kindness persuades her to seek her freedom through becoming a geisha instead of by escaping.

Chiyo decides to rough it out and, with the help of another nicer "older sister"

geisha named Mameha, starts to succeed as an apprentice. Hatsumomo does everything she can to stop her. In the meantime, readers learn the concept of a "*danna*", a man who pays extravagantly for a geisha's closer attention. It further says that the geisha are deeply superstitious, relying on their astrological charts to make decisions and having their servants spark flames off a piece of flint on their backs before undertaking a journey. Everyone walks on tatami mats and sleeps on futons.

Crab buys Sayuri's virginity; he claims a sample of her hymen blood and places it in a kind of trophy case of vials labeled with the names of his different *mizuages*. Repeatedly, Golden showcases the extreme sexism of the culture. For all her arts, Sayuri and her geisha mentors are at the mercy of men's favour. Because the men do not share their serious concerns with them, the geisha do not have much opportunity to grow intellectually. As a result, Sayuri, as a character, seems peculiarly stunted.

By the last third of the novel, the narrow role of the geisha limits the possibilities of Golden's narrative. In a profession in which sex appeal is all important, the geishas show a touching simplistic awareness of the topic of sex. Mameha instructs Sayuri in the facts of life, using the metaphor of a male "homeless ell" that looks for a woman's "cave." The possibility of a woman enjoying sex rarely comes up. Sayuri does admit to having one affair with a younger man, just as Hatsumomo does earlier, but generally their profession encourages a kind of chaste ritualized flirtation. The geisha are too involved in their roles as performers to get much pleasure out of it. Besides, economic necessity often obliges them to cater to distasteful older men.

However, Golden's melodramatic story structure, by the end of the novel, overwhelms the carefully researched historical detail. Readers used to romance clichés will enjoy the latter third of the novel, but the more literary-minded wonder

what happened to all the evocative descriptions. Sayuri's endgame move to the United States collapses her foreign perspective into the familiar just as the novel finds haven in romantic conventions. She makes one jab at judging her profession by noting how many American wives are just as much delectable by men as she is, but she also seems to enjoy her newfound lifestyle in America, Geishas are now an endangered species in Japan, probably because of gains in Japanese women's rights and the gradual usurpation of more Western methods for amusement such as television and movies. Golden conjures up a world in the process of disappearing until all that remains are the works of art themselves---the Kimonos as paintings in dress, the traditions in dance and music, the exotic landscape that enriches Sayuri's memoirs.

However, many critics have observed many techniques in this text. Margaret Topping in "Writing the Self, Writing the Other in Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysantheme* and Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*" explains that it explores the use of fictionalized autobiography and autobiographical fiction to show how generic and structural differences enable varying modalities of representation of self and other. There are "ambiguities of such representations". On the other hand, Claudia Puig claims "'Geisha' is more art than realism." People think of the Geisha as a prostitute, because prostitutes started wearing "white-makeup" and "silk kimonos" and calling themselves Geishas. But the actual word means 'artist'. "Yes, they entertain men. But more important, they are great dancers and musicians and great conversationalists... They are like supermodels" adds Puig.

Furthermore, Joseph L. Galloway cites Mineko Iwasaki in *U.S. News & World Report* and through her words expresses excuses for Golden: He has made a mockery of Japanese culture; Geishas, she says, are more artisans than courtesans...more focused on the arts of music and dance and conversation, which

they study for years, than those of the futon. She adds that she was promised anonymity but was named in the book's acknowledgements, and now people think she is the model for Golden's main character, Sayuri, a young rural girl sold into a geisha house. Quite contrarily, David Ansen interprets that the novel bears more than a small resemblance to 'Cinderella,' though it happens to be set in Kyoto in the 1930s and '40s. The Cinderella echoes, present in Arthur Golden's best-selling novel, come through clearly in Rob Marshall's ornately appointed movie of "Memoirs of a Geisha," starring Ziyi Zhang as the exotically pale-eyed Sayuri.

Unlike Ansen, David Punter reads the novel from the postmodern ways of figuring Japan: "There are endless examples in the postmodern ways of figuring Japan: as the e-commercial master, as the producer of electronic equipment [...] and suicidal rule of the 'salary men', as cold violence, as repression, as an inexplicable tongue"(75). Commenting on *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Alfred A. Knopf presents different view: "It is a book of nuances and vivid metaphor, of memorable characters rendered with humor and pathos."

And the writer of this novel explains about geisha: "The so-called 'got springs geisha', who often entertain at resorts, are certainly prostitutes. But you have to look at how well they play the shamisen, and how much they know about tea ceremony, before you determine whether they ought properly to call themselves geisha. However, even in the geisha districts of Kyoto and Tokyo and other large cities, a certain amount of prostitution does exist. For example, all apprentice geisha go through something they call mizuage, which we might call, "deflowering." It amounts to the sale of their virginity to the highest bidder. Back in the '30s and '40s, girls went through it as young as thirteen or fourteen—certainly no later than eighteen. It's misleading not to call this prostitution, even child prostitution.

In this context, it is quite obvious that the present text has been studied from different perspectives. The present study attempts to fill up the Orientalist images prevalent in the text. It will also explore how Golden, through the Orientalist perspective, represents Japanese culture as the 'Other' to the Western culture.

Moreover, Edward Said's Orientalism and Michel Foucault's discourse on power and truth will form the theoretical tools for the analysis of the text. Moreover, the present study will seek to prove that Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* consists of the stereotypical images about the Japanese people and their culture.

II. Orientalism: Othering the East

The term 'Orientalism', in general, derives its meaning from the word 'Orient', which simply denotes the geographical division of the world. To put it simply, it just implies the opposite direction or pole of the West. In this respect, people, who have been living in the East, are known as the Oriental (Eastern) people, and what he or she does is known as Orientalism. Therefore, it is suitable to bring the name Edward Said, a postcolonial and cultural critic, who has used it to refer to the historical and ideological process whereby false images of constructed in various Western discourses.

In the introduction to his seminal book, *Orientalism* (1991), Edward Said says, "Anyone who teaches, writes about or researches the orient...is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism"(2). This assures us that the Orientalism is an "academic project", which deals with Orient and Oriental people.

Furthermore, Said says, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident' "(2). Thus, according to this definition, a very large mass of writers (poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators) have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political account concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny, and so on. Said says "this Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx"(3).

Giving his third meaning of Orientalism, Edward Said in the same book says:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate

institution for dealing with the Orient---dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over it. (3)

In it, Said employs Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as he describes in his books *The Archaeology of knowledge* and *Discipline and punish* to identify Orientalism. Without examining Orientalism as a discourse, says Said, one can not possibly understand the systematic discipline and this helps European culture to manage (even produce) "the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively..."(3). As a result, no one writes, thinks, or acts on the Orient without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. Therefore, it tries to show that European culture gained strength and identity by setting itself of against the Orient as a sort of 'underground self'.

On the other hand, Orientalism can be described as a Western discourse to govern the Orient. But it is important to know what the discourse is. In our general sense, the word discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience. So, in this context, it is better to bring Foucault's view of power, knowledge, discourse, and truth. According to him, for the application of power, there should be the knowledge about the nature of power which is only possible by the interplay of discourse. And as the knowledge disseminated by the discourse it change into truth and truth establishes the power. Here, in the context of Orientalism, we can find the same type of power relation between the Orient and the Occident. But their power functions not in vertical order and so no Westerners directly come to dominate

the East. Instead, they have constructed many images of the Orient through which they establish knowledge about the Orient. And, through the means of written or spoken discourse, they propagate them and establish them as truth which makes them powerful. This ideology of the West, then, changes into universal truth through the means of discourse constructed in the Western texts or broadcasted by Western media. That is why, we would not be wrong if we say that the Orientalism is a discourse which makes the West superior to the Orient. However, all the time all knowledge can not be objective: can not demonstrate the particular spirit of time because no knowledge can be understood in isolation from the web of discourse. In his book *The Archaeology of knowledge* (1972), Foucault says, "A discourse is a series of sentences or propositions and it can be defined as a large group of statements that belong to a single system of formation"(107).

Similarly, Said's final description delivers an understanding of Orientalism as a discourse (Foucault's sense of the term). Sociolinguistic theory tells us that discourse, or discursive formations, are always linked to the exercise of power. They are modes of utterance or systems of meaning which are both constituted by, and committed to, the continuation of dominant social systems. In every society, as Foucault writes, "the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by certain numbers of procedures whose role is to ward off its dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality".

Discourses are cognitive systems which control and delimit both the mode and the means of representation in a given society. Accordingly, Orientalist discourses are typical of discursive activity whenever they claim the right to speak for "the mute and uncomprehending orient".

And while doing it so, they represent it as the negative, underground image or

impoverished or impoverished 'Other' of Western rationality. In other words, Orientalism becomes a discourse at the point where it starts systematically to produce stereotypes about Orientals and the Orient, such as “the heat and dust, the teeming market-place, the terrorist, the courtesan, the Asian despot, the child-like native, the mystical East.” These stereotypes, Said tells us, confirm the necessity and desirability of colonial government by endlessly confirming the postcolonial superiority of the West over the positional inferiority of the East.

Besides, the Orient is said to have been formed by the West or it is said to have been born out of the Western imagination. So, on this ground, it can be said that Orientalism never represents the Orient and Oriental people's reality. Instead, it limits and overlaps Oriental reality through the imposition of imagination, myths, false opinions, hearsays and prejudices generated by influential scholars. Therefore, we must not feel any embrace to say that the Orientalism is the Western estimation and the imagination of the East (Orient), which never lies beyond Eastern reality.

Therefore, Orientalism refers to “discourse about the East which remains rooted in the Western imagination, packaged and disseminated by the publishing industry and perpetuated in academic institutions dominated by western civilization”(88). So, it is said that Orientalism is not fare attempt of the West to approach the Orient. The West never perceives the Oriental reality. And, it seldom represents the Oriental values, norms, and the entire ideologies. Instead, Orientalism is the exhaustive attempt of the West to prove the Orient inferior to the West with the help of imagination, myths, stereotyped images and talk-stories.

Furthermore, Orientalism as a discourse produces a form of knowledge that is great utility in aiding this process serving to define the West, its origin and serving to relegate alien cultures. Said, in 'Crisis in Orientalism', argues that “the political and

cultural circumstances in which Western Orientalism has flourished, draw attention to the debased position of the East or Orient as object of study" (298). He quotes Anwar Abdel Malek, characterizing the notion of the Orient as Orientalized Orientalists: "The Orient and Oriental as an 'object' of study stamped with an Otherness that is different, whether be it 'subject' or 'object' but of constitutive otherness of an essentialist character..."(298).

The Orient is governed and dominated by discourse produced by Orientalists rather than material, military or political power because discourse makes possible Orient as 'subject class.' And the discourses of the West, presenting everything non-Western, are inferior, manifests desire to govern; to dominate and to control the other and that this attitude is colonial at heart. Said's Orientalism serves this purpose in an effective manner. It produces a kind of stereotype of the orient describing it as an object of study stamped with an 'otherness' to make it easier to have power and authority over the orient.

In this way, West has presented the orient in the primitive and barbaric space. The stereotyping images embody the Western perspective of the Orient that the Orient is static, fixed, and unchangeable. This biased concept of the West always underlies the Western desire of dominating or ruling the Orient: "Orientalism assumed on unchanging Orient, absolutely different from the West" (96). So, it is obvious that the West always underestimates Oriental reality and wants to show them superior.

Moreover, the West always supposes that the Orient is dark, mysterious, romantic, exotic, and inferior and so on. Like the West, the Orient also changes and develops, but it is possible that the West is changing more rapidly than the Orient. In addition, Edward Said in Orientalism argues that the division of the world into East and West has been constructed over centuries, and this division expresses the

fundamental binary division---for example, the West is civilized, forward, and modern and the East is barbarian, backward, traditional---which enable the Western superiority over the Orient. Often the Orientalists use these binaries to increase the hierarchy between the West and the East, between "self and other".

Said has also challenged the Western discourse, following the logic of Foucault's theories that no discourse is fixed for all time. It is not only handled power but also stimulates opposition. The opposition of power is just like another side of the coin. Michel Foucault writes that, "this discursive practices have no universal validity but are historically dominant ways of controlling and presenting social relation of exploitation" (164). Therefore, discourse is produced and that discourse is manipulated the power in order to maintain the sense of superiority and authority over the 'other'. Discourse, in this sense, becomes an instrument of power and means of governing the 'other'.

When one traces out the demarcation between East and West through religious, classical period, the Orientalism, its story begins with the Iliad. Two of the most profoundly influential qualities associated with the East appear in Aeschylus's *The Persian* and in *The Bacchae of Euripides*. As Said says:

Two aspect of the Orient that set off from the West of European pairs of plays will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate: Asia is defeated and distant...of alien powers and expertly coming to terms with them. Hereafter, oriental mysterious will be taken seriously, not least becomes, and may challenge the rational Western mind so now exercises of its enduring and ambition. (57)

Here, Said sees the motives of European imaginative geography located upon the presentation as Europe is powerful and orient is defeated. Moreover, Orient becomes a stage to act by the Occident: "The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined"(63). Thus, orient has been taken as an object, as an object, as well as a stage where Orientalism used to play on it throughout the classical period to now a day.

In this respect, it is better to use the concept of hegemony as Edward Said uses in Orientalism. The term hegemony is most commonly associated with the Italian Marxist critic Antonio Gramsci, who has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society: the first is made up of voluntary affiliations like schools, families, and unions, and the latter has direct domination in the polity. As Said says, "culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influences of ideas, of institutions by what Gramsci calls consent" (7). Furthermore, said claims that hegemony gives Orientalism the strength and the durability: "It is hegemony or rather the result of culture hegemony at work that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength [...] there is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over oriental backwardness".

Moreover, the division of the West and East as 'self' and 'other' has been more helpful to the Western colonialists and imperialists. The destiny of colonizer and imperialist is formulation of 'other' image through the identification of otherness. That is way, the division of the world into self and other embodies the Western's attempt to define their self-assumed higher and superior position in the world. And, the West has created the other to define itself. Its derivation of its own identity through the division of world into self and other underlies the Western passion for governing the orient.

Whatever Edward Said tries to depict can be categorized under three claims:

(a) Orientalism disinterested, and rather esoteric field, in fact functioned to serve political ends; (b) it helped define Europe's self-image. "It has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world", and (c) it has produced a false description of Arabs and Islamic culture. The Orient was defined as a place isolated from the mainstream of human progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce.

According to Said, the faults of Orientalism, moreover, have not been confined to analyses of the Orient. There have been counterparts in "similar knowledge" constructed about Native Americans and Africans where there is a chronic tendency to deny, suppress, or distort their systems of thought in order to maintain the fiction of scholarly disinterest. In other words, Said presents his work not only as an examination of European attitudes to Islam and the Arabs but also as a model for analysis of all Western "discourses on the other."

This strategy has worked remarkably well. Today, twenty years after his work was first published, Said is widely regarded by students of literature and cultural studies as not only one of the founders of the postcolonial movement in criticism and of multiculturalism in politics, but still one of their chief gurus. This is despite the fact that his work was not original as Said himself acknowledges. It is a synthesis and elaboration of two separate theses. One was an analysis that emerged among a number of Muslim academics working in Europe in the 1960s. Said cites the Coptic socialist author Anwar Abdel Malek, who wrote in France using the then latest Parisian versions of Freudian and Marxist theory.

The Other source of Said's inspiration also derived from Paris in the Sixties. This is the writing of Michel Foucault, especially his notion that academic disciplines do not simply produce knowledge but also generate power. Said uses Foucault to

argue that Orientalism helps produce European imperialism. “No more glaring parallel exists,” Said says, “between power and knowledge in the modern history of philology than in the case of Orientalism.” Within a discourse, all representations are tainted by the language, culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representatives. Hence there can be no “truths” Said argues, only formations or deformations. No scholar or writer can rise above these limitations, and even a towering figure like Louis Massignon, who dominated French Orientalism until the 1960s, was no more than “a kind of system for producing certain kinds of statements, disseminated into the large mass of discursive formations that together make up the archive, or cultural material of his time.”

Edward Said quickly assures us that putting it this way does not dehumanize poor Louis. But what it does mean is that "every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric." Said is not merely talking about what Europeans actually did say, but rather what they possibly could say. In short, the prevailing discourse renders Europeans, of necessity, racists.

Before pointing out some of the problems with these arguments, it should be acknowledged that Said does score a few hits. He shows that there were plenty of nineteenth-century European travel writers and journalists who visited the Orient and quickly developed an ill-informed opinion of the Arabs and their religion. It is a surprise to find the historians Leopold Von Ranke and Jacob Burckhardt expressing some agreement with such views. It is not so surprising to find genuine racists of the period---like Joseph Arthur Gobineau, whose essay on the Inequality of the Human Races later provided the Nazis with a rationale -- espousing such views.

Although Said makes excuses for him, one of the worst offenders in this

regard, was plainly Karl Marx. Said cites the following passage.

We must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath the traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. ... England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating... the annihilation of the Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.

But none of these examples, or indeed all of them combined, is sufficient to sustain Said's thesis. It is not difficult to show that each of his three main claims about Orientalism is seriously flawed.

For a start, he should have realized that Abdel Malek's analysis of the essentialist fallings of Oriental scholarship and Foucault's thesis that knowledge always generates power are quite incompatible. If, as Malek and Said claim, Orientalism's picture of the Arabs is false, then it is difficult to see how it could have been source of the knowledge that led to the European imperial domination of the region. According to Said, Orientalism essentialism is not knowledge, but a series of beliefs that are both distorted and out of date. Surely, though, if these beliefs are wrong, they would have contributed to poor judgment, bad estimated and mistaken policies. Hence the political power of Western imperialism must have been gained despite them, not because of them.

In fact, Said's whole attempt to identify Oriental Studies as a cause of imperialism does not deserve to be taken seriously. The only plausible connection he

establishes between Oriental scholarship and imperialism is the example of the Comte de Volney, who wrote two travel books on Syria and Egypt in the 1798, though Volney himself was an opponent of French involvement there. But nowhere else does Said provide an analysis of the thoughts and reasons of the imperial decision-makers at the time they actually entered upon Europe's Oriental adventures. At most, Said established that Orientalism provided the West with a command of Oriental languages and culture, plus a background mindset that convinced it of its cultural and technological advance over Islam. But these are far from sufficient causes of imperial conquest since they explain neither motives (opportunities), nor objectives.

Said gives the impression of offering more when he cites speeches and essays by Lord Cromer, Arthur Balfour, and Lord Cromer that paid some recognition to the work of Orientalist scholarship in helping to manage the Empire. But all of these quotations come from works written between 1908 and 1912 that is more than twenty-five years after the peak of Britain's imperial expansion. Rather than expressing the aims and objectives of potential imperial conquests, these speeches are *ex post facto* justifications, sanctioned by hindsight. In Cromer's case, the speech, from which the extracts above are quoted, was given in the House of Lords in 1909, four years after he returned from India. It was made to support the funding of a new London school of Oriental Studies. He had been recruited to the school's founding committee and, not surprisingly, was painting its prospects in the best light he could.

Apart from Foucault's grandiose hypothesis that knowledge always generates power, Said provides no support at all for his contention that "colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism" because he fails to cite evidence about the actual causal sequence that led to the annexation of any of the territories occupied by England or France in the nineteenth century. Where real historians have attempted

this, they have come to quite different conclusions, with trade, investment, and military causes predominating. The decisions of the British to move into North Africa and the Middle East in the 1880s, for instance, were based on rivalry with the French, the need to guarantee the sea routes to India and China, and to protect British financial interests from nationalist challenges after Egypt became bankrupt. Philology did not come into it. Even Lenin has a more convincing explanation of imperialism than Said.

Said's inept handling of historical material is evident throughout the book. He claims that, by the end of the seventeenth century, Britain and France dominated the Eastern Mediterranean, whereas in reality the Levant was still controlled for the next hundred years by the Ottomans, and British and French merchants could only land with the permission of the Sultan. Said described Egypt as a "colony" of Britain, whereas the legal status of British occupation of Egypt was never more than that of a protectorate. This is not merely a semantic difference because a real colony, like Australia or Algeria, was a place where large numbers of Europeans settled which never happened in Egypt. Even on Islamic history, Said is unreliable. He claims that Muslim armies conquered Turkey before they took over North Africa. The facts are that the Arabs invaded North Africa in the seventh century, but what now Turkey is remained part of the Eastern Roman Empire and was a Christian country until conquered by the Seljuk Turks late in the eleventh century. The fact that these howlers have been preserved in the 1995 edition of the book suggests that Said lacks friends, admirers, or advisers with expertise in history who might give sent him a list of corrections.

Said justifies his decision to omit German Orientalists from his analysis by claiming that German scholars came to the field later than the British and French, and merely elaborated on the work originally done by their European rivals. This claim

has generated considerable scorn among contemporary Oriental scholars. Bernard Lewis argues that "at no time before or after the imperial age did their [British and French] contribution, in range, depth, or standard, match the achievement of the great centers of Oriental studies in Germany and neighboring countries". To omit German scholarship in this way is like trying to do a survey of the discipline of sociology without mentioning Weber, Simmel, or Tonnies. It is quite clear, however, where Said derived the incentive for their strategy. The Germans were prominent Orientalists, yet Germany never wanted to become an imperial power in any of the Oriental countries of North Africa or the Middle East. For the Germans, knowledge did not generate power in the way that Foucault's theory said it should. So, rather than admit this or try to explain it away, Said conveniently omits Germany from his survey.

The second part of Said's thesis has just as little to recommend it. The notion that Western culture has needed an "Other" to define its own identity derived from the structuralism version of Freudian theory that became prominent in France in the 1960s. An individual's self-concept, this thesis maintains, emerges only when he recognizes himself as separate from and different from others. Cultures need to go through an analogous process. It is claimed, and so must identify themselves through an alter ego. In other words, the need for an "other" is built into human nature at both the individual and collective levels. This is a central concept of a Said's thesis but, unfortunately, it leads him into a direct contradiction with one of his core methodological dicta: his rejection of essentialism. In the afterword to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, he complains that the book has been misread by hostile critics as an essentialist polemic against Eastern civilization. He says he would condemn any "attempt to force cultures and peoples into separate and distinct breeds or essences. ... This false position hides historical change." His own approach is "explicitly anti-

essentialist." It is difficult, though, to reconcile this assertion with the way he characterizes Western identity. He argues that, from its origins, the West's self-concept was defined by its opposition to Asia.

Consider first the demarcation between Orient and the West. It already seems bold by the time of the Iliad. Two of the most profoundly influential qualities associated with the East appear in Aeschylus's *The Persians*, the earliest Athenian play extant, and in *The Bacchae* of Euripides, the very last one extant ... The two aspects of the Orient that set it off from the West in this pair of plays will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant.

These same motifs persist in Western culture, he claims, right down to the modern period. This is a tradition that accommodates perspectives as divergent as those of Aeschylus, Dante, Victor Hugo, and Karl Marx. However, in describing "the essential motifs" of the European geographic imagination that have persisted since ancient Greece, he is ascribing to the West a coherent self-identity that has produced a specific set of value judgments --- "Europe is powerful and articulate: Asia is defeated and distant" ---that have remained constant for the past 25000 years. This is, of course, nothing less than the use of the very notion of "essentialism" that he elsewhere condemns so vigorously. In short, it is his own work that is essentialist and a historical. He himself commits the very faults he says are so objectionable in the work of Orientalists.

The proposition that produces this contradiction is the claim that every culture needs to be defined by an Other. This is not an historical statement at all, but an epistemological assumption derived from structuralism theory. It is now such standard refrain within cultural studies that it usually goes unquestioned. There is, however,

very little to recommend it. Although they have long distinguished themselves as joint heirs of classical Greece and Christianity, each tempered by the fluxes of medieval scholasticism, the Renaissance, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, and modernism. In other word, Western identity is overwhelmingly defined by historical references to its earlier selves, rather than by geographical comparisons with others. To claim otherwise is to deny the central thrust of Western education for the past one thousand years.

The final component of Said's thesis, the allegedly false essentialism of Orientalism, not only contradicts his own methodological assumptions but is a curious argument in itself. Going back to the origins of a culture to examine its founding principles is hardly something to be condemned. This is especially so in the case of Islam where the founding book, the Koran, is taken much more literally by its adherents than the overt text of the *Bible* is taken by Christians today. In several countries, the *Koran* is both a religious and legal text. In others, like Egypt and Algeria, there are political movements prepared to resort to terrorism to have it made the basis of national law and authority. Moreover, one could not understand the most bitter division in the modern Islamic world, that between Shi'ites and Sunnis, without knowing its origins in the conflicts over succession after the death of Mohammed in 632, any more than one could properly understand events in contemporary Northern Ireland without some knowledge of the breach in the Christian world that occurred during the Reformation. One Muslim critic, Sadik Jalal al-'Azm, has argued that the kind of religious essentialism of which Said indicts Orientalism is actually necessary to understand the Muslim mind: "It is true that in general the unseen is more immediate and real to the common citizens of Cairo and Damascus than it is to the present inhabitants of New York and Paris; it is true that religion "means everything"

to the life of the Moroccan peasants in a way that must remain incomprehensible to present day American farmers."

Of course, Said would be right to complain where Western ideas about Islamic peoples confined solely to stereotypes derived from their founding texts and early history. But it is simply untrue that the whole body of Oriental scholarship has made this kind of mistake. Take Said's claims about economic studies of Islamic countries. He condemns the work of Western observers, whose economic ideas never extended beyond asserting the Oriental's fundamental incapacity for trade, commerce, and economic rationality. In the Islamic field those clichés held good for literally hundreds of years ---until Maxime Rodinson's important study *Islam and Capitalism* appeared in 1966.

Anyone, however, who takes the trouble to read the one book he favors, *Islam and Capitalism*, will find it actually tells a different story. Rodinson is a Marxist sociologist and his work, like most in its mold, is based on secondary sources. A large section of the book is a debate with, and critique of, those Western economists and their Muslim allies who do not, in fact, see the Arabs as having an inherent "incapacity for trade," but instead regard these societies as capable of adopting capitalist commerce and industry. He discusses in some detail the work of six economic commentators who expressed views of this kind between the 1910s and the 1950s. Though Rodinson agrees there are many observers who share the assumptions identified by Said, and though his main aim is to see Islam adopt socialism, the evidence of his book is a clear refutation of Said's sweeping generalization about Orientalist economics. In a later work, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (1987), Rodinson dismisses the kind of homogeneity that Said wants to impose on Oriental Studies, insisting that the field has always included "a multiplicity of issues coming

under the jurisdiction of many general disciplines."

Outside economic studies, Said's claims about the essentialism of Oriental Studies are just as misleading. Bernard Lewis has produced his own survey of European attitudes towards Islam since the Middle Ages, *Islam and the West* (1994). He argues that Europe's initial theological and ethnic prejudices had been largely overcome within serious scholarship by the end of the eighteenth century when the study of Islam was established as an academic subject worthy of attention and respect.

The Muslims were no longer seen purely in ethnic terms as hostile tribes, but as the carriers of a distinctive religion and civilization; their prophet was no longer a grotesque impostor or a Christian heretic but the founder of an independent and historically significant religious community.

In other words, rather than being necessarily ethnocentric and racist, Oriental Studies was one of the first fields within European scholarship to overcome such prejudices and to open the Western mind to the whole of humanity.

Although each of the three components of Said's thesis is, therefore, untenable, this is unlikely in the short term to affect his status as an academic celebrity among students of literature and cultural studies in the East. He is not only one of those writers who helped create the current hegemony of identity-group politics and multiculturalism within the university system, but is also one of its chief beneficiaries. In accomplishing this, he has both endorsed the prevailing cult of the victim, upon which identity-group politics are based, and milked it himself to an indecent degree. "My own experiences of these matters," he says in *Orientalism*, "are in part what made me write this book."

Moreover, the definition of the term 'other' as used in current post colonial theory is rooted in the Freudian and post Freudian analysis of the formation of

subjectivity most notably in the work of the psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan, his use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other' (the capital one) and the 'other' (the small one). According to Lacan, the 'other' (with the capital 'O') has been called the "grande-audre". It is the great 'other', where subject gains identity. The symbolic other is not a real interlocutor but can be embodied in other subjects such as the mother or father that may represent it. This other here can be compared to the Western discourse of the west itself in two ways. Firstly, it is the term in which the Oriental subject gains a sense of his or her identity as somehow 'other' dependent, and secondly, it becomes the absolute pole to address the ideological framework in which the Oriental may come to understand the world. In Western discourse, the subjectivity of the Oriental is continually located in the gaze of Western or Occidental other, the grand-audre. Subjects may be interpolated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing function of the Western power concurring with descriptions such as 'we' Western.

In this respect, Gayatri Spivak thinks that 'othering' describes the various ways in which the Western discourse produces its subject: "Othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing is established at the same as its colonized others are produced as subjects" (Hans Bertens 171). In other words, Spivak coins 'othering' for the process by which Western discourse creates 'other that corresponds to the focus of desire or power in relation to which the subject is produced, and the other is excluded or mastered subject created by the discourse of power. That is why, Orientalism is the process of creating and image of other to identify or designate the Orient and this helps the West to define its place as self. In this connection, Deepak Shrestha regards that Orientalism is the discourse of the West about the East, and it identifies the "long term images, stereotypes, and general ideology about the Orient as other" (51).

Now we can say that the Orientalism imposes limits upon the Oriental beliefs and ideas. Therefore, it is supposed that the Orientalism includes the entire Western activities over the Orient. And, the Orientalists are regarded as the special agents of Western power. Thus, Edward Said states that "only an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White man who could designate and name the coloureds, or nonwhites. Every statement made by Orientalists or White Man conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from coloured, or Occidental from Oriental..." (228).

Now it is believed that there is relationship between the Orientalism and literature. It is because literature has become helpful to create the false and imaginary image of the Orient on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has become successful to make many Eastern people accept Western ideology as their reality. Because of this, the Orientalism is regarded as an academic discipline.

Obviously, the writers who succumb to the Western culture create stereotypical images about the East and the Eastern people. And these stereotyped images enable these writers to portray the East as exotic, irrational, bloody, barbaric, feminine and what not. However, it can not be said that all Western writers play the role of vehicle to convey Western ideology and stereotype images over the Orient; there are many writers, who are Orientals by birth but they have been playing the role of Western agents by associating themselves with western ideology. Some of them are Samrat Upadhaya, Salman Rusdie, V.S. Naipaul, R. K. Narayan, Nirad C. Chaudhary.

III. Orientalizing Japanese Culture as the 'Other' in *Memoirs of a Geisha*

As a literary genre, a memoir is different from biography; a memoirist can never achieve the perspective that a biographer possesses: "A memoir provides a record not so much of the memoirist as of the memoirist's world. It must differ from biography in that a memoirist can never achieve the perspective that a biographer possesses as a matter of course" (1). Similarly, we often confuse between memoir and autobiography. A memoir chiefly differs in the degree of emphasis placed on external events.

On the other hand, an autobiography is a record composed from personal observation and their main purpose is to describe or interpret the events:

History or record composed from personal observation and experience closely related to, and often confused with, autobiography, a memoir usually differs chiefly the degree of emphasis placed on external events; whereas writers of autobiography are concerned primarily with themselves as subject matter, writers of memoir are usually persons who have played roles in, or have been close observers, historical events and whose main purpose is to describe or interpret the events.

(Encyclopedia Britannica, Micropaedia Ready Reference, 2003. USA.)

As the definition presented before (in previous paragraph), it is true that Arthur Golden quite understands the role of memoirist: he closely researches for years and brings them into the form of the novel. However, Golden applies some of the Western construction toward the East; he can not avoid the images for the East by the West because he is inborn and lived in the West and these all. For the West, the Orient has always been an enchanted space for the West, strange and exotic, seductive and threatening. But this vision of the East is more than simple myth making. The

presence in whose text of a Western/American, ideological subtext –in characterization and, above all, the climax of Sayuri’s story – calls into question its apparent cultural neutrality. Golden’s presentation of the Chairman of the Iwamura Electric company and its President, Nobu, for instance, betrays a marked, if implicit valorization of the West. Encountering, by chance, the child Chiyo (Sayuri’s previous name) crying in the street, the Chairman speaks gently to her and gives her his handkerchief. She comments:

Ordinarily a man on the streets of Gion wouldn’t notice a girl like me, particularly while I was making a fool of myself by crying. If he didn’t notice me, he certainly wouldn’t speak to me, unless it was to order me out of his way, or some such thing. Yet not only had this man bothered to speak to me, he’d actually spoken kindly. He’d addressed me in a way that suggested I might be a young woman of standing -- the daughter of good friend, perhaps. For a flicker of a moment, I imagined a world completely different from the one I’d always known, a world in which I was treated with fairness, even kindness -- a world in which fathers didn’t sell their daughters. (127)

The Chairman, who will become Sayuri’s hidden patron, is presented as an exception amongst Japanese men. Certainly elsewhere in the text, girls are granted little status and superstitions concerning women abound, providing a vision of authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal Japan. From this moment, the Chairman’s handkerchief becomes a talisman for Chiyo and she associates him with opportunity. Significantly, though the Chairman, and by extension his attributes (kindness, opportunity) are metonymically linked to the West through his attire: we are repeatedly told that he wears a Western-style business suit rather than kimono.

Moreover, his is the quintessentially (American) rags-to-riches story of a self-made man.

Nobu, who also wears Western-style clothing, is ideologically linked to the West. He reacts scornfully to Sayuri's dependence on fortune-tellers and astrological almanacs: "If life is a stream, you're still free to be in this part of it or that part, aren't you? [...] If you bump, and tussle, and fight [...]" (314). Nobu's position echoes traditionally Western philosophies of action in opposition to Eastern doctrines, such as Taoism, which advocate the acceptance of fate. Sayuri's ultimate decision to take control of her destiny – significantly in an American plane, a privileged position from which she enjoys a broader perspective not only on the land and sea below, but also on her own fate (394-5) – only elevates further Nobu's philosophy of action.

American soldiers are amongst the very few Westerners to appear in Sayuri's account. She explains how: "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" (349). These kind soldiers are also presented as the innocent victims of Mother's commercialism: she sells them worthless, Eastern trinkets (353). Thus, Golden includes stereotype correction in favour of the West.

These undercurrents paved the way for the climax of the text, the final chapter in which Sayuri relates the events of the last forty years of her life: the realization of her dream of being loved by the Chairman and her decision to establish a tea house in New Your. Questioned about the frame of the translator's preface and Sayuri's move to New Your, Golden explains these features in practical terms:

It would never occur to Sayuri to explain things [such as customs, attire etc] – that is, it wouldn't occur to her unless her audience was not

Japanese. This is the role of the translator's preface, to establish that she has come to live in New York and will be telling her story for the benefit of an American audience. That's also the principal reason why the story has to end with her coming to New York. (From an interview with the author on July 5th, 2004)

However, in concluding the text in this way, Golden has implied – whether consciously or otherwise – that the journey to the United States is also the culmination of Sayuri's personal journey to an enlightened maturity. It is here that she has found freedom, opportunity and independence: “Mother had power over me as long as I remained in Gion,” she writes, “but I broke my ties with her by leaving” (496) – in contrast to the slave-like world from which she came. Indeed, introducing the image of a baby, she highlights her rebirth (493). Sayuri's life in the US is described as “even richer in some ways than it was in Japan” (496) and her rupture with the past seems to carry with it a sense of wholeness in the American present. In characteristically metaphorical style, we find: “I drank from a [bowl] of the most extraordinary soup I'd ever tasted; every briny sip was a kind of [ecstasy]. I began to feel that all of the people I'd ever known who had died or left me had not in fact gone away, but continued to live on [inside me]” (498).

She may confess to experiencing moments of otherness in New York, but acknowledges this would be no less true for Japan: “It's true,” she says, “that sometimes when I cross Park Avenue; I'm struck with the peculiar sense of how exotic my surroundings are. [...] but really, would Yoroido seem any less exotic if I went back there again?” (498). In the American contest, she has achieved a supracultural awareness and only here has she found the freedom and the perspective necessary to tell her story. Indeed, the compression of forty years into one chapter

would seem to support the idea of a global perspective which transcends the minutiae of everyday life.

I would argue, therefore, that, whilst Golden appears to have produced an entirely convincing autobiographical narrative, the voice of the Western author of the fiction can, in fact, be heard, and the climax of Sayuri's story, above all, betrays a Western or American ideology. It is unlikely that this was Golden's intention, but reader reception may point to the transmission of a different message. The sensationalist tone of many popular reviews of the book abundant as they are in Orientalist stereotypes, may be tapping into a contemporary Western desire for a re-Orientalized Orient (3). In combining a focus on one of the pillars of the Western exotic imagination, a quasi-academic discourse on the world of the geisha, and an implicit valorization of West over East, Golden may unwittingly have responded to that desire.

Now let's change the discussion to our main topic. In fact, the geisha are "art-persons", skilled as singers, dancers, storytellers, and conversationalists. They are employed at parties and other affairs primarily to entertain men. There is a clear distinction between geisha and courtesans; geisha are believed not to be involved in the business of sexuality. However, some of them became the mistresses of men, who purchased their contracts from the masters who held them in bondage.

Although most (geisha) worked in the pleasure quarters of "floating worlds", they were also considered to occupy, in a sense, their own realm, called the "flower and the willow world". Geisha were entertainers, skilled as singers, dancers, storytellers, and conversationalists who were employed at parties and other social affairs primarily to entertain men. There was supposed to be a clear

distinction between geisha on the one hand and courtesans and the other, lesser prostitutes on the other. Geisha were expected to be strictly entertainers and not engage in the business of sexually gratifying men. But the distinction between entertainment and sex was not always precisely maintained and some geisha even became the concubines or mistresses of men who purchased their contracts from the masters who held them in bondage.

Golden, in his novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha* tries to explore/construct all the geisha involve more in the business of sex than being “art-persons”. It is true that all the Western people think, by Golden’s presentation, that Geisha are courtesans though he tries to explain they are not: “A true Geisha will never soil her reputation by making herself available to men on a nightly basis” (171). However, Sayuri comments: “A few years after the war, I heard she (Hatsumomo, a popular geisha in Kyoto like herself) was making a living as a prostitute in the Miyagawa-cho district” (386). Similarly, another geisha Pumpkin is also presented in the end of the novel as a prostitute: “Pumpkin spent more than two years in Osaka as a prostitute” (427). In fact, anybody has their own way of thinking and making a decision, but Golden states that Geisha is always revolving around man, she may become the rescuer of her. “I looked at the despair on the faces of the other geisha around me and knew in an instant that we were all thinking the same thing: which of the men we knew would save us from life in the factories?” (393). Can they themselves not come out of the factories? Are they weak enough to fight for themselves? Of course, some of them can but the writer, being the Westerner, makes the Eastern Woman (geisha) inferior. In the further example, we will get lots of the proofs that geisha are high level prostitutes (courtesans) and this goes like this:

A geisha of the [first or second] tier in Gion can't be bought for a single night [...] but if the right sort of man is interested in [something else] – not a night together, but a much longer time – and if he's willing to offer suitable terms, well, in that case a geisha will be happy to accept such an arrangement. [...] But the real [money] in Gion comes from having a *danna*, and a geisha without one [...] is like a stray cat on the street without a master to [feed] it. (171)

Now, it is clear that geisha, according to Golden, are courtesans along with being entertainers at the party. Then there is no difference between geisha (art-persons) and first class prostitutes. Their clients are highly reputed men like ministers, military generals, top class businessmen and the like, and they call them *danna*, the term a wife uses for husband (170). Sayuri further states:

Since moving to [New York] I've learned what the word "geisha" really means to most Westerners. From time to time at elegant parties, I've been introduced to some young women or other in a [splendid] dress and jewelry. When she learns I was once a geisha in Kyoto, she forms her mouth into a sort of smile, although the corners don't turn up quite as they should. She has no idea what to say! And then the burden of conversation falls to the [man] or woman who has introduced us – because I've never really learned much English, even after all these years. Of course, by this time there's little point even in trying, because this woman is thinking, "My goodness [...] I'm talking with a prostitute..." (339).

Indeed, the woman, who says she is talking with a prostitute, is herself rescued by a wealthy man later: "a moment later she's [rescued by her escort, [a wealthy man] a

good thirty or forty years older than she is. Well, I often find myself wondering why she can't sense how much we really have in [common]. She is a kept woman, you see, and in my day, so was [I]" (339). What a prejudice feeling a Western woman has. She is not ready to accept herself as a prostitute though she is, she says other women (Japanese Geisha) prostitute. And this proves that Westerners carry their prejudices over the Easterners and are not ready to accept the reality similar to them.

Furthermore, Golden explains through Sayuri that without a *danna* (for easy to understand a wealthy client) many of geisha are struggling to establish themselves: "I often have the feeling that without their wealthy husbands or boyfriends many for them would be struggling to get by and might not have the same proud opinions of themselves. And, of course, the same thing is true for a first class geisha" (340). Indeed, they (geisha) can live without having wealthy clients and some of them were/are doing the same thing. But it is the writer (Arthur Golden) who constructs the image of the Geisha like Sayuri, and he is quite successful.

Arthur Golden in his novel tries to construct the image of the geisha in an awful way which is made to be the fact of any girl, who is going to be geisha. It is Sayuri who further represents the character from whom the author is able to broaden the false image of the geisha throughout Japan. It is stated in the way that without the *danna* no geisha can compete with the present harsh world around them and it is their *danna* who helps to rescue from it. Moreover, they need wealthy clients in order to advance their career:

But a very top geisha, of whom there were probably thirty or forty in Gion, would expect much more. To begin with she wouldn't even consider tarnishing her reputation with a string of *danna*, but might instead have only one or two in her entire life. Not only will her *danna*

cover all of her living expenses, such as her registration fee, her lesson fees, and her meals [...] He won't pay her usual [hourly] fee; he'll probably pay more, as a gesture of good will. [...] But a geisha who wishes to become a [star] is completely [dependent] on having a *danna*. Even Mameha, who became famous on her own because of advertising campaign, would soon have lost her standing and been just another geisha if the Baron hadn't covered the expenses to advance her career. (172-340)

Furthermore, as many Westerners believe that 'financial exploitation' becomes the 'domain of the East', Golden extends that construction to some length. We find many examples in the novel which extends the belief that Orientalists fall to do anything for money and materialistic pleasure. As the protagonist of the novel says, "I couldn't stop thinking about Mr. Tanaka. He had [taken] me from my sister into something even worse. I had taken him for a kind man..." (94). What we understand from the protagonist's mouth is that Japanese parents (whom Sayuri thought a kind man fall into any level for fulfilling their financial need and personal benefits. But as we know Oriental people and their values, Easterners respect 'spiritual transformation' not materialistic pleasure, and therefore they don't make themselves doom by selling their own children; they believe life after death, and so they are never tempted in doing sinful act like selling their own child.

Similarly, Golden tries to represent the fact of 1960s Japanese milieu in his novel, but he does not know that he extends the length of stereotyped construction of the East -- 'financial exploitation'. Sayuri is first bought by Mrs. Nitta ('Mother') and brought up in the Okiya to make Geisha. Now, she became well-known geisha in the Okiya with huge amount of money and Mother decided to adopt Sayuri as her

daughter: “You and I will perform a ceremony next week. After that you’ll be my daughter just as if you’d been born to me. I’ve come to the decision to adopt you” (320).

In fact, Mother had already decided to adopt Pumpkin as her daughter. But she later changed her mind and adopted Sayuri. Why has she changed the mind? It is easy for everyone to understand that she did for financial benefit, not for promise:

I [promised] her I’d speak with you. She told me something very strange. She said, ‘Oh, Hatsumomo! Mother has changed her mind! [...] But I’m sure she’d feel better, Mother, if you told yourself [...] that you haven’t changed your mind about adopting her.’ [...]

Pumpkin had rushed down the stairs looking so upset. (320-321)

Mrs. Nitta exploits children-turn geisha (Sayuri and Pumpkin) in terms of their earning which is valued in the West. In other words, the West always looks the East as the domain of financial exploitation. But isn’t there in the West any exploitation? Why does the writer not feel and write along with this? What does he want to show by presenting Nitta as the representation of the East? Therefore, Golden fails to prove himself as a neutral writer. He must understand the Eastern norms and values, and accordingly should write.

As we know the Western writers present (rather try to construct) the Eastern people with so many adjectives in their novels, and being the Western writer Arthur Golden also in his novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* repeats the same – one of them is ‘superstitions’. Westerners think that Easterners are superstitious; they can’t change themselves into the modern thought, always be trapped in their traditional norms and values even though they are harmful for them. Sayuri states: “But, you see, geisha are more superstitious even than fishermen. A geisha will never go out for the evening

until someone has sparked a flint on her back for good luck” (42). This is one example where Golden presents Japanese women as superstitious and so are Easterners. There are several discussions where we find the writer’s biasness that the Westerners are scientific whereas the Easterners are superstitious. Let’s begin from this: “geisha are a very superstitious lot, as I’ve said. Auntie and Mother, and even the cook and the maids, scarcely made a decision as simple as buying a new pair of shoes without consulting an almanac” (146). But does anyone need to consult an almanac to buy something like a pair of shoes? This he presents knowingly to construct the image of the Japanese women as superstitious after all.

Definitely, any person has their own personal choice of doing, eating, moving and the like, and so is of Mameha and Sayuri. But the writer stereotypes Easterners, who have not their own, rather follow what the almanac says to do:

Mameha told her maid to bring an almanac for that year and then after asking my sign [...] checking and cross-checking various charts, as well as a page that gave my general outlook for the month. Finally she read [...] “A most inauspicious time. Needles, unusual foods, and travel must be avoided at all costs. [...] Mameha asked my sister’s sign and looked up the same information about her. [...] And when she brought out a map and found Yoroid, it lay to the north northeast of Kyoto, which was indeed the direction corresponding to the Zodiac sign of the Sheep. [...] And she’d certainly been right to do it; she had escaped, while I hadn’t. This was the moment when I began to understand how unaware I’d been – not only in planning to run away, but in everything. (146-47)

In the novel, Mameha herself is the victim of superstitions, and at the same time she has been shown to visit other developed countries like America. From them she may definitely learn some of ideas that really harm people, and their way of living which may bring changes in geisha life. However, Golden himself forgets to be neutral and forcefully imposes that Geisha are superstitious and, to prove this, he presents Mameha, Sayuri, and Satsu, Sayuri's sister, even though she is not a geisha. Mameha reads the almanac and instructs Sayuri to do this and not to do that because almanac says that she said. Sayuri, at the end of the above extract, quite believes herself on the fortune-telling and regrets not to follow the almanac before. This is further extended by the statement of the protagonist herself:

As for my name of Sayuri, Mameha had worked with her [fortune-teller] a long while to choose it. The sound of a name isn't all that matters, you see; the meaning of the characters is very important as well, and so is the number of [strokes] used to write them – for there are lucky and unlucky stroke counts. My new name came from “sa,” meaning “together”, from the Zodaic sign for the Hen – in order to balance other elements in my personality – and “ri”, meaning “understanding”. All the combinations involving an element from Mameha's name, unfortunately, had been pronounced inauspicious by the fortune-teller. (195)

In fact, the name itself doesn't affect anything in person's life; it is the deed that affects much in the life circle of us to the end. But the author forgets the fact and goes to construct the image of the geisha that they are superstitious by the characters like Sayuri. She comments: “The next morning I looked carefully at my almanac in the hopes of finding some sign that my life wouldn't be lived without purpose [...] Only

the next morning did I notice that my almanac had warned against travel in the direction of the Rat, precisely the direction in which the dry goods store lay” (406).

So, Golden’s motive is to show Japanese women (Geisha) are superstitious and so are Orientalists whereas Americans (Westerners) are scientific. But he forgets the fact that all Westerners are coming through the same stage. Now they call themselves scientific and the other the superstitious.

Just as Arthur Golden, in his novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*, stereotypes Geisha as superstitious, Japanese men are also depicted in derogatory terms. Now let’s take some characters from the novel. Dr. Crab is one character whom the author has described in this way: “Of course, his name wasn’t really Dr. Crab, but if you’d seen him I’m sure the same name would have occurred to you, because he had his shoulder hunched up and his elbows sticking out so much, he couldn’t have done a better imitation of a crab.... He even led with one shoulder when he walked, just like a crab moving along sideways” (251). To give doctor the name Crab is itself even though his bodily structure is similar to a crab; he must have name but to offend the Easterners he knowingly or otherwise uses that name. He (Dr. Crab) represents all doctors in the East (Japan) and must be depicted with his name because anybody has their own name.

Similarly, Nobu is recognized with ‘shorter’, ‘one hand in a fist’, ‘sleepy’: “Nobu stood beside him, half a head shorter and at full attention, with his one hand in a fist at his side [...] and his eyes looked sleepy” (245). Quite interestingly, Uchida Kosaburo, the famous painter in Japan, was described as a peculiar-looking man and the same as the other Japanese men.

He was a quiet peculiar looking man. In one corner of his mouth was a giant mole like a piece of food, and his eyebrows were so bushy they

looked like caterpillars that had crawled down out of his hair and gone to sleep there. Everything about him was in disarray, not only his gray hair, but his kimono, which looked as if he'd slept in it the night before. (256)

But why the writer uses the adjectives that are quite offensive. This is the indication of his being prejudiced Western writer, who always sees the Eastern artists as lazy and peculiar. Moreover, he is shown to fall into “another drinking spell” because his cat had been bitten by a badger and within a few days was dead from infection (264).

Quiet similarly, Arthur Golden depicts the character called General Tottori through Sayuri which really offend the people of Japan who sacrifice for the nation. He uses so many adjectives that are really humiliating and disgusting.

He was a bit on the small side --- shorter than I was, in fact. But he wasn't the sort of person you could overlook, any more than you could overlook a machine gun he moved very briskly and was always puffing on one cigarette after another so that wisps of smoke drifted in the air around him like the clouds around a train idling on the tracks [...]

General Tottori's own rank was *sho-jo*, which meant 'little general'. (134)

Indeed, Japanese men and women are shorter and this is not necessary to describe. Rather it can be preferable to give a picture of his great deed he has done while he was in a military as a general. Quite contrarily, the author prefers the offensive way of describing the Orientalists people and fails hereby. In addition, he uses the similar kind of way to depict the other characters like Shojiro, and artist. He is described as 'homosexual', and it will be fine. Today, anybody can choose their own way of living. However, what the writer did for him is that he has interest on

beautiful women like Hatsumomo and Mameha.”Shojiro may have lavished attention on women like Hatsumomo or Mameha, but the fact remained that he was homosexual”. It is also said that “his heart was destined to be broken because Bajiro-san had no interest in men” when he has returned from the trip to England where he had done friendship with the English actor Basil Rathbone (‘Bajiro-san’), but he broke the friendship after knowing he has no interest on men (383).

In fact, it is controversial thing. It is because a homosexual can never be heterosexual mentally even though his partner leaves him. In this context, I think, Golden’s Western spectacle encourages to do anything against the Japanese (Eastern) people. This is further proved by the line: “He grabbed Mameha ... and planted kisses all over her face” (384).

Another man is called ‘Mr. Snow shower’ for his terrible dandruff. Not only Japanese men but the similar behaviour done toward the women as well: “My instructor was a woman of about fifty, known to us as Teacher Rump, because her skin gathered at her throat in such a way as to make a little rear end there beneath her chin” (175). Indeed, the writer is doing his quite opposite motive and purpose. He said in the acknowledgements that it is based on “extensive research” (500). But how can an author, who calls himself historian, write the novel in the name of preserving historical events in a joking and offensive manner?

However, on the other hand, Arthur Golden is seen energetic to describe the characters that are influenced by the West. Now let’s begin form the Chairman. While describing him the writer overshadows the Japanese clothes and the name given to the Japanese males:

With the Chairman in a stylish three-piece suit of heavy wool, holding in his hand the ceramic two-bulb socket that had been the company’s

first product. He looked as if someone had just handed it to him and he hadn't yet decided what he was going to do with it. His mouth was slightly open, showing his teeth, and he stared at the camera with an almost menacing look, as though he were about to throw the fixture. (245)

Sayuri further describes him as a 'song' she had heard once 'in fragments' but had been singing in her mind ever since (230). And while describing the Chairman, she compares him with the Emperor Taisho's nephew, and is seen positive:

Standing so close before him, I could smell the odor of talc the day when the Emperor Taisho's nephew had come to our little fishing village. He'd done nothing more than step out of his car and walk to the inlet and back, nodding to the crowds that knelt before him, wearing a Western-style business suit, the first I'd ever seen. (129)

The creation he has built is attempting to make a false image considering and examining some Japanese is for his Western readers, who love the West and always think to see the East as a wild, barbaric and superstitious. And this is coming for century as well and Arthur Golden tries not to divert his position like other Orientalists are coming to do.

As we know, culture plays important role in any community or nation; it has its own boundary and distinguished characteristics. Therefore, no community from outside has right to speak against it which Arthur Golden, I think, does not realize or consciously does that the Oriental (Japanese) culture can be introduced in any way. Because of this hegemonized Western conception in Golden, he somewhere in the novel describes Japanese culture in a very horrible manner:

We call them *ekubo* (a kind of sweet-rice cake) because they have a dimple in the top with a tiny red circle in the center...I've always thought they looked like tiny pillows, softly dented, as if a woman has slept on them, and smudged red in the center from her lipstick, since she was perhaps too tired to take it off before she went to bed. (278)

So far as Japanese dancing is concerned, it is their personal choice of enjoying but the writer explains his attitude as a vague and bad impression: As for the young Japanese women dancing on the stage before me, I remember nothing of them except a vague impression of brightly coloured kimono" (1). Whatever the impression he has while watching them dancing are personal matter; this should not be presented in print media.

Arthur Golden does mistake in comparing Japanese women's neck and Western women's legs. Can a neck be compared with leg? To appreciate and feel excitement by seeing female counterpart's parts of body is a matter of personal, not universal because the taste and view of seeing and observing thing is different from person to person. But the writer does attempt to do like this: "I must tell you something about necks in Japan, if you don't know it [...] a woman's neck and throat the same way that the men in the West might feel about a woman's legs [...] I supposed it's like a woman in Paris wearing a skirt" (72). To describe the Japanese cake and women's necks, he can describe in another way that may not humiliate Japanese culture and people's belief. What he does is to extend the length too much in exaggerate manner which make the Western readers believe his stereotyped construction --*ekubo* is the cake with red 'dimple in the center' and some women have slept in it; women's (Japanese) necks and throats are the same as 'Paris women's legs'.

Similarly, Golden presents how inhuman a Japanese hair dresser is. Dandruff is a great problem among geisha, and very few things are more unattractive and make the hair look more unclean. So what the hair dressers do is to put the protagonist over a large sink in a position that made her wonder if he was going to chop off her head. He poured a bucket of warm water over her hair and began to scrub it with soap. Sayuri said this is not 'scrub' but 'what a workman does to a field using a hoe' (189). In fact, I am confused what the writer wants to show by giving these details of the hairdresser. Is he promoting the hairdresser or criticizing their style of doing the work?

In the novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Arthur Golden describes some place of Japan and Japanese instrument in a disrespectful way: "Gion is like a faint star that comes out in its fullest beauty only after the sun has set" (150). Why can Gion be bright and beautiful in day time, only at night? The answer is Gion has no dare to come out because there is the 'Sun' (the West). In addition, the structure of the Japanese houses is described in a rude and disgusting manner that implies the houses in the West are far more better than the Eastern ones: "The room smelled of mildew, and the tatami were so bloated and sodden that they seemed to make a sighing noise when I stepped on them" (355).

However, Sayuri has shown no boringness while describing the Western style house. The adjectives like fair, elegant and hard are used to describe the Western room, whereas smelly, noisy and the other similar type of illustration are emphasized. And by this, Golden makes the protagonist feel the Western style house is far better than traditional Japanese one. Therefore, there is established a binary opposition between Japan (East) and America (West):

The Yashino was a fairly new teahouse, built in a completely Western style. The rooms were elegant in their own way, with dark wooden beams [...] Instead of tatami mats and tables surrounded by cushions, the room into which I was shown that evening had a floor of hard wood, with a dark Persian rug, a coffee table, and a few overstuffed chairs. (279)

Golden, throughout the novel, has used many negative images to portray Japan and Japanese culture and its subjects as traditional, superstitious, wild, cruel, poor, exotic, biased, unrealistic, and dependent, whereas, to define mainstream America (Western) and its culture, he used adjectives like modern, civilized, realistic, rational, kind, sociable, and above all superior to the Japanese.

However, these images are not grounded into the reality of the present Japan. Rather the West had been constructing them for centuries. Obviously, some images may correspond to some Japanese but not to all. In this sense, the novel holds no reality of the Japanese people (Easterners). But it holds more significance to America and American people. It undermines the Japanese a lot so that Americans could feel proud by defining themselves as superior 'selves' in opposition to the inferior Japanese 'other'. In this respect, the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* is seen any created story than the memoir as claimed by the writer.

These all images help create the discourse about the Japanese culture because they are all parts of languages, and it itself creates a discourse as stated by Michel Foucault. And this discourse is a good means to expand the knowledge all over the world and to establish the knowledge as truth. With the help of these countless binary images, Kingston has created many discourses about the position of Japanese (Eastern) culture as the 'other' to American (Western) one. This sort of discourse, as a

result, expands the knowledge all over the world that Japanese are inferior to Americans. And, as commented by Foucault, after the expansion of the knowledge, it changes into the truth, which makes American superior to Japan. At the same time, it has certainly created the inevitable presence of America in Japan to rule it regarding their so called most essential role to civilize Japan, to teach Japanese and to make them independent, modern, rational, human, and above all civilized. However, in the name of civilizing Japan, America suppresses, dominates, exploits and plays the arbitrary role of despite the consensus of Japanese. In other words, America imposes its hegemony over the Japanese culture.

IV. Conclusion

The dissertation on *Memoirs of a Geisha* attempts to observe Arthur Golden as an Orientalist in terms of his use of popular but stereotypical images of Japan and Japanese culture constructed by Westerners for many years.

The source of the novel, as stated by the writer in acknowledgements, is memoirs of Mineko Iwasaki, one of Gion Kobu's top Geisha during the 1960s and '70s (500). But in an interview done by U.S. News & World Report, she regrets helping him with his research into the delicate and hidden world. She says Golden has made a mockery of Japanese culture and geisha are 'more artisans than courtesans'. Therefore, the writer's claims to be done on extensive research is exaggeration, and there are several sources that provide us ground that the images like extremely superstitious, uncivilized, authoritarian, irrational, exploitive, and son on are not rooted into the reality of Japan. Obviously, they do not correspond to the Japanese culture. This they do not represent Japanese culture in reality. These are historical stereotypes constructed to create binary opposition between the West and the East. Of course, the binary is very important in constructing ideological meaning with the help of discourse. The West baked images about Japan and Japanese culture which perform the role of linguistic artifact or interaction in the form of discourse. And through the interplay of discourse, Golden has extended the knowledge that Japanese culture as inferior and exotic, whereas American culture as rational and civilized. And this knowledge circulated through the discourses that assume the position of truth.

Indeed, Arthur Golden has used the aforementioned images to create a negative portrayal of Japanese geisha culture by accepting the mainstream Western culture as 'self'. Being a Western writer, it is his instinct that forces him to define mainstream American in a positive light as the civilized, rational, advanced and modern.

This study, moreover with the scrupulous illustration of many stereotypical images prevailing in the text, attempts to reveal whether the text holds the evidences enough to support the hypothesis assumed by the present study. The text consists of many evidence which clarify that Arthur Golden is an Orientalist who values Western norms over Eastern one.

For Golden, Geisha are more courtesans than 'art-persons', who focus much on the arts of music and dance and conversation, which they study for years. To do so, he presents Sayuri's 'virginity is auctioned off for a record prize'. He further shows them as superstitious and uncivilized. Geisha never does anything without consulting an almanac. Mother, who buys girls from market and exploits them with their earning, is presented as a representative of financial oppressor. In addition, the protagonist finds rude and selfish Mr. Tanaka whom she thought as a kind and helpful at first meeting. What he does is to gain something financially.

Moreover, the worst image Golden tries to construct is that of Japanese parents, especially from village, who sell their children for financial benefits. Thus, presenting himself the Western devotee he claims his work to be historical though there are several exaggerations about Japan and Japanese culture and customs. The reason for this is none other than pleasing Western readers who always hunt for Easterner's mockery and damnation. Certainly, Golden has not written this novel to depict Japanese reality, but rather to present Japan and Japanese culture as inferior, exotic and 'other' so that they could feel proud to be Americans which provide a good license to impose their hegemony over the Japanese culture. Moreover, Golden, whatever he explains and writes, presents himself to be Westerner who tries to construct Japanese culture as exotic 'other' in contrast to the rational, civilized and modern American culture as 'self'.

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