

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Politics of Representation of Japanese Culture in Arthur Golden's**

*Memoirs of A Geisha*



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She carried out her research from November 2011 to December 2012. I hereby recommended her thesis to be submitted in the research committee for viva voce.

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## **Abstract**

Derogatory representation of Japan and its traditional culture along with its native people especially is the most dominant and repeated issue in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha*. Arthur Golden as the westerner has made the Japan and its traditional culture as the critical site of interpretation, analysis, demonstration and intervention. Politically he has fictionalized the Japanese culture with colonial binaries and stereotypes. The images of western power have been utilized by the writer in the mission of canonization of westerns and marginalization of Asians. The novel depicts the geisha women as uneducated, violent, irrational, superstitious, aggressive, devil where the positive attributes like rational, kind, educated, independent etc are assigned to westerns. In the text, there is the powerful opposition between civilization and savagery. The construction of non-western culture by assigning violence, prostitution, vulgarity, irrationality and abnormality is the justifying the superiority over Asians. He has produced so many myths about geisha women to create western hegemonic state or cultural imperialism over Japanese culture. The stereotypes and derogatory images have become the determining factors for representing the native place from the Western perspective. So, this research analyses the discursive formations and practices of representations on the orient and tries to dig out the politics behind the derogatory portrayals of native people and their culture by the young generation of Western colonizers.

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## I. Representation and *Memoirs of A Geisha*

The project deals with the exploration of the authorial politics of cultural reconciliation and Japanese people's cultural resistance to reduce the domination of western culture. It exposes how Arthur Golden's superior attitude in his book *Memoirs of A Geisha* undervalues the importance of the heterogeneities, multiplicities, pluralities and ambiguities. It questions Golden's mission of undermining the non-western culture in general and Japanese culture in particular as a western writer who gives priorities to homogeneity. It brings out the author's attempt to establish and sustain the western culture as a mainstream culture. He regards Japanese culture as the culture of passion, irrationality and vulgarity. So, the research aims to show that Golden's subjectivity is naturalized with the myth of white supremacy over non-western culture and is manipulated by the western holistic mentality. The author in *Memoirs of A Geisha* creates hierarchy between western and Japanese culture as the critical site of interpretation, analysis, demonstration and intervention. This research deals with the culture of traditional Japanese society that stands in opposition to western culture. In the text, the author Golden is prioritizing the western culture undermining the value of culture of Japanese people. This research also studies the author's perspective on ethnic value and originality of native culture by using genealogical and cultural approach.

Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha* is a Memoirs about social, political and cultural scenario of Japan. It explores the agenda of Arthur Golden as a white European behind the fictionalization of Third World and his attempt of showing culture as the site of interpretation, analysis, and illustration. So the project aims to

show that the cultural difference between Japanese and western culture is not the difference between way of living but in underlying level it is the difference between values and importance of two cultures or two civilizations. The so called superior western culture tries to dominate the Japanese culture but Japanese culture attempts to resist at last. The book *Memoirs of A Geisha* raises the issue of culture and locates the fact that culture is a way of living and a medium of existing in the materialistic world. The cultural practices in traditional Japan under unique way of living is the main concern of the project and it analyses getting acquainted with the gap in ways of life between western and Japanese. Not only that, it observes the cultural optimism of the authorial approach and his devaluation of traditionalistic way of living and uniqueness of Japanese culture.

The problem is that Japanese culture is being disqualified as the non culture and Japanese culture is contaminated by European gaze of superiority complex. As a westerner, the author's latent derogative mentality is manifested in the creation of fiction on Japanese culture. The argument is that, so called civilized and enlightened western are not ready to acknowledge the rise of orient's culture and their cultural and ethical consciousness. It shows that westerners do not acknowledge the diversities, heterogeneities, multiplicities, or pluralities. Due to the cultural biasness, he does not like to acknowledge the multicultural existence in the mission of establishing universal civilization.

This project regards *Memoirs of A Geisha* as the political enterprise that comes as assistance to colonialism. The book itself is a orientalist writing that becomes the means of knowing the orient culture in general and the Japan and its people in particular. In his mindset, there is legacy of colonialism that is seen in his nostalgic



portrayals of western culture vis-a-vis Japanese culture. The famous phrases 'White Man's Burden' and 'Big Brother attitude' can be linked in the project of critiquing Arthur Golden's invocation of spirit of European mission. Edward Said who argues "European travel writing claims to be pure knowledge or harmful entertainment must be seen as part of the apparatus of empire" (2). Golden is defining the orient as the matter of interpretation for them.

The research analyzes the biased perspective of western world to the culture of Japanese people. So it studies the author's attempt of excluding the Japanese cultures as the non- culture, disvaluing the heterogeneity of cultural existence, author's ignorance on the double marginalization of women's culture in Japanese community and his mission of establishing cultural dominance on Japanese culture.

The thesis reads the primary text with the help of cultural studies that is related to exposing the politics of culture. The study of culture involves exposing the relations of power that exist within the society. The text seeks to study the culture or ways of life of Japanese people very derogatively. It finds out that Arthur Golden, as the westerner, generates representations and attributes, values and meanings in the line with Eurocentric perspective or classificatory schemas which are historically specific.

Among the discourses on occidental countries, *Memoirs of A Geisha* is the collection of his interpretation and exploration of traditional way of living of Japanese people. His text *Memoirs of A Geisha* is the product of his western mentality and the writer has represented Japanese culture inferior to western culture. In the surface level, this non-fiction is a rich tale of complex and moving relationship between the three central characters as a route through Japanese history. In the story, civilization is

represented by whites and people with gray hair and traditionality is represented by Japanese people especially geisha women.

The underlying argument of the writer is to hegemonize the Japanese culture by the practices of exhibition through this text. The author is exploring the Japanese culture as well as socio-political scenario with the help of stereotypes and negative images. He has shown the historical reality of Japan in a negative way, western mentality. He regards the aboriginals' practices to conserve the aura of traditional culture as the barbarism as well as backwardness. The main protagonist, Sayuri's attempt to follow Geisha culture is presented as the backward going tendency. He is failed to have objective representation but has valorized the ethical representation of culture by assigning evils and vices to Japanese and by hiding importance and originality of the culture. Elleke Boehmer, in his text, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, says "from the early days of colonization . . . not only text in general, but also literature, broadly defined, underpinned efforts to interpret other lands, offering home audience a way of thinking about exploration" (03). It exposes the parochial mentality in the western writer. Bickford-Smith analyses *Memoirs of A Geisha* in his writing "Japanese and White in Colour" through the new historical perspective depicting the undervaluation of Japanese culture. He says ". . . there is merely a unifying myth for a complicated scramble of mixed impulses and social theories and night terrors and cruelty and personal interests."(13). From the argument of Bick-Smith, it is clear that there is the process of creating false regime of Japanese culture here the west has presented Japanese culture as the objects rather than subjects. Henrietta Lidchi in her text *The Politics and the Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures* says Golden, in the production of popular about aboriginal culture, continues "the pre-

existing discursive parameters of the linguistic networks created by western world” (21). The western discourse has carried the mission of asserting negative stereotypes of non western culture that have been exploited to justify western economic and political as well as cultural domination of the orient. Likewise Lawrence Rungren in his text *The Japanese World and the Western Desire* exposes the indifference of author towards the customs and cultural values vis a vis European culture to make the text comprehensible to the reader of western world. Golden has favoured western life styles and mocked the Japanese traditional culture. He criticizes a Japanese girl’s eating habit and her unfashionable character. The statement carries the concept that *Memoirs of A Geisha* is a discourse in which the author as the western councilor gives a certain kind of knowledge about non western culture creating a particular historical movement. The research notices that the author is trying to dominate the cultural status of Japanese people and he is approaching Japanese culture with European gaze. His attempt of marginalizing the native culture is the main issue for the research.

This project tries to foreground the author’s negation of other culture and his process of homogenizing the multiple cultures in one. Multiculturalism is the post 1960s theory that talks about recognition of marginalized groups’ identity and existence. Multiculturalism is closely associated with ‘identity politics,’ ‘the politics of difference,’ and ‘the politics of recognition,’ all of which share a commitment to revaluing disrespected identities and changing dominant patterns of representation and communication that marginalize certain groups. On the other hand, it is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an

inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society. It refers to the cultural and ideological diversity and designs the national unity in ethnic diversity. Heterogeneity and plurality are the souls of multiculturalism and it celebrates the melting of various cultures and languages. In this regards, Mary Louise Pratt in her text *Imperial Eyes* says “Obe would seriously misinterpret Creole relations to the European metropolis (even their neocolonial dimensions) if one thought of creole esthetics as simply imitating or mechanically reproducing European discourse.”(27)

### Critical Analysis

The research has applied Stuart Hall’s approach of cultural studies in the process of studying Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of A Geisha*. Stuart Hall is one of the founding figures of cultural studies and one of the leading public intellectuals of the post 1960. He has helped to transform the understanding of culture as a theoretical category and political practice. Hall’s main contribution to postwar thinking has been to demonstrate the politics in culture. He regards culture as a critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are established, and because of cultural inequalities, he also views culture as a site of on-going struggle that can never be guaranteed for one side or the other. James Procter, in his book *Stuart Hall*, views “If we follow the logic of Hall’s argument then we must come to the conclusion that politics are inseparable from popular culture and that popular culture is central (rather than secondary) to political debate.’ (18) Hall applies cultural approach to study the causes and reasons behind the formations of discourses, politics and motives behind the representational practices through the images, linguistic phrases, figures to study,

politics of identity and identity politics, and to study the denotative or underlying message of the primary texts.

Especially, Hall's theoretical concepts are based on an articulation, a bringing together of Derridian idea of representation in particular and deconstruction in general, Gramscian hegemony, Foucault notion of discourse, the works of Laclau and Mouffe, and Edward Said's orientalism. Hall is mainly influenced by Foucault because of his notion of discourse. Foucault writes:

Discourse are produced in which concept of madness, criminality, sexual abnormality, and so on are defined in relation to sanity, justice and sexual normality. Such discursive formations massively determine and constrain the forms of knowledge, type of normality and nature of subjectivity, which prevail in a particular period. (623)

Due to the influence of Foucault's concept of discourse, Hall as postcolonial thinker analyses the discursive formations and practices of representations on the orient and tries to dig out the politics behind the derogatory portrayals of orient people and their cultures by the western media, discourse and paintings. As a cultural critic, he says that " culture is the site of struggle of different groups, nations and colonies in the process of marginalizing and dominating each other"(Hall,02). He believes that popular culture is the site at which everyday struggles between dominant and subordinate groups are fought, won and lost. Hall argues:

Where the struggle in the first moment involved a reversal of oppositional differences, putting in the place of the bad old essential white subject, the new essentially good non white subject, the second moment emphasized the internal differences that cross and complicate

the supposedly unified category 'non-white' and recognizes as fictional the idea that all non-whites are 'good' or all the 'same'. Here, the oppositional logic of the first moment unwittingly repeats the binary them-and-us logic of racism, showing complicity with the racist stereotype that 'they all look the same'. (127)

Hall mainly observes the discursive formations with stereotypical representations by the westerners to secure their dominance on or to hegemonize the orient. Borrowing the concept from Foucault, he defines discourse as the ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice, which provides ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with it. James Procter in *Stuart Hall* argues:

Like Foucault, Hall is interested in how discourse works to govern and empower certain understanding of subject, while ruling out or delegitimizing others. For Hall it is important to note that Foucault is not saying there is no actual world outside discourse but, rather, that the real world only acquires meanings through discourse. He defined discourse as politicized conception of representations and as the production of knowledge and power (60).

Discourse is a system of representation that constructs certain type of truth. In general discourse produces knowledge through different practices of representations, a form of racialized knowledge of the others, deeply implicated in the operations of power. Power intervenes in discourse; power always operates in conditions of unequal relations. With the help of different stereotypes and negative images, dominant culture generates the essence or meaning of marginalized culture.

Systems of representation produce meaning through the display of culture, geography, language and way of living. How the dominant culture or west classifies categories and represents other cultures is the issue of representation. Representation is colored by power politics, so the west applies discursive formatives as the constitution of 'body knowledge' which works to construct the universal truth about the orient. The dominant group generates ways of representations and attributes value and meaning in line with certain perspectives or classificatory schemas which are historically specific. The active process of representation is involved in constructing one culture for another. What is being produced therefore is not a reflection of the truth of other cultures but representation of them stereotypically.

Representational practices are based on the articulation of the binary oppositions or polarized extremes. Stereotypical representations display a strategy of 'splitting.' It divides the normal and the acceptable from abnormal and the unacceptable. The dominant culture or west associates normal and acceptable images or qualities to itself and assigns the negative features like violent, savage, irrational and ignorant to the marginalized culture. Through the biased representations, power reduces culture to object or human subjects are transformed into the objects. The power of images and stereotypes has been utilized by westerners to dominate or hegemonize the non-westerners. The main concern of the non western writer is western writer's use of images inherited from their past generation to function conceptual power on eastern subjects. There is the process of essentializing of 'difference' or 'otherness' through stereotypes in western discourses like Christina Lamb's *House of Stone and Shakespeare's Tempest*. The west encountered non-white

people, giving rise to an avalanche of popular representations based on the marking of difference.

Particularly, Stuart Hall contextualizes the practices of discursive formations and representation in the struggle for power between what has been called ‘the West and the Rest.’ West represents the non-west very negatively, while they frequently constitute themselves as enlightened and civilized. Stuart Hall in *New Ethnicities* views:

What allowed a human subject to be transformed into an ethnographic object was a particular relationship of knowledge to power in association with wider social changes whereby, in the exhibition context, the colonizer/seer/knower was made separate and distinct from the colonized/seen/known. In this manner the ability to display ethnographic objects or subjects required certain types of knowledge allied with a particular relationship of power. (199)

The western writer assumed himself/herself as the intelligent, educated, civilized them in contrast to non-western people. He defines them as objects without dignified identity and subjectivity. Such representations serve to legitimize and substantiate a discourse of European empirical superiority. Culturally, he argues, the construction of hegemonic or unified black identity is formulated itself in terms of a critique of the way non-whites are positioned as the unspoken and invisible ‘other’ of predominantly white aesthetic and cultural discourses. Hall here in his text *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* makes a link between the marginal states of non-whites to the dominant modes of representation and the construction of a representative non-white’s experience. And also he says racialized regime of



representation applies the culture/nature distinctions and it associates non-western with primitivism and western with enlightenment.

Stuart Hall also explores the politics of stereotypical representation of non-whites by western scholars. According to him, the politics of false portrayal of orientals by westerners is to make native culture visible, in other words, they allow them to be subjected to the scrutiny of power. This derives from a historically unequal relationship between western powers and other peoples. With the vision of maintaining the supremacy over the non-westerners, west tries to hegemonize the non-west through the stereotypes and recognition that 'second man' is a discursively produced category constructed through representations.

## II. *Memoirs of A Geisha: A Critical Discourse Analysis*

This research focuses on Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha* (1997), an American novel that claims to write about traditional culture and contemporary political cum social scenario of Japan. A story about a country girl who is sold into a geisha house and raised to become one of Japan's most celebrated geisha in captivated Japan before the Second World War. As a cultural text, the story of *Memoirs of A Geisha* integrates oriental traditional cliché and the romantic story of a woman within the narrative pattern that the West portrays the Orient. Arthur's *Memoirs of A Geisha* is not only a solo pop cultural product; it also links oriental traditions, geisha narrative patterns and western narrator, which is of significance in discourse of Geisha.

This paper critiques and notes the book's narrative practices, with particular attention paid to the racial and gendered discourses produced in it. In examination, the representational codes carry the politics in the construction of Asian women bodies. It is argued here that a critical engagement with western discourse is necessary in order to reveal the complex ways in which people are represented as dangerous, pre-modern and uncivilized in American popular culture. This analysis exposes how representations of Japanese women not only are essentialized, but act simultaneously to discipline these bodies, which is grounded in the trope of the western lust of power and knowledge, intimately linking it to the project of empire. A commitment to misrepresenting bodies in western discourse will illustrate the embeddedness of racialized and subsidiary imaginings of 'Others'.

Western fiction creating tendency of imagination of the 'Orient' as the culturally-different Other has long been debated amongst postcolonial scholars and cultural theorists examining imaginary representations. The Asian country Japan is essentially misinterpreted, as the western literary writings are reinvigorating Orientalist conceptions and colonial gaze disseminated through the negative images of Geisha bodies in Arthur's discourse. Drawing from literature in postcolonial studies and its engagement with representations in popular culture, this research analyzes the book as a fictional misconception taking place in the traditional Japan. The book is analyzed with contextualized methodology within the contemporary socio-political landscape, where heightened anxieties toward the Third World nations is prevalent.

Accordingly, this analysis demonstrates how Asian figures that come to symbolize the uncivilized and unclear as prostitute, emotional and irrational human beings in relation to the civilized European. The regime of imaginary representations found in the book is not only symbolically violent, but a historical of Western conquests that have acted to discipline bodies and communities deemed different. The history of Western encounters with Others has a narration that can be found in various cultural artifacts- including paintings, advertisements, television shows, films and literary works, to name but a few. Mapping these interactions and, especially, the representations that the West has constructed of racialized Others has been an important task that many scholars have undertaken. These representations have evolved over time, thus retaining a fluid existence, but they are greatly influenced by different regimes of power or empires. The persistence with which the West continues to depict encounters with Others rests heavily on colonial discourses.

The text *Memoirs of A Geisha* has vilified the non western community by representing them as materialistic, dangerous men or eroticized women or maidens. Golden has represented Japan with dangerous stereotypes in limited roles that are purposeful and politically motivated given Western foreign policy with the Asia. The critics like John Robertson in his writing “Debate on Orientalism” asserts that “Orientalist ideology structures the western discourses about non western problematically, effectually perpetuating discriminatory relations and understandings of these communities.”(03) They are careful to assert that texts are a “site of struggle” (Hall, 1980), and their deployment of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the book, which includes news discourse and viewer interpretations, is useful to understanding the intricate ways in which Japanese culture and people perceived in clichéd roles. Stereotypical roles are intimately tied to larger political policies and structures, which are pervasive and can be found in cultural artifacts. They locate the anxieties toward culturally rich communities and mobilize the concept of hegemony in their analysis. Western confession and manipulation reflects a social anxiety toward Asian traditional cultures, and they suggest that it relies heavily on a sense of otherness. Their critique situates the unspoken hidden explicit derogatory assumptions underlying Japanese rich cultures, traditions and social harmony.

Accordingly, there exists a literary heritage of representing Others in problematic ways. To expose this symbolic heritage would be essential in understanding how the contemporary western arts, as a hegemonic mediums, play a role in diffusing regimes of knowledge that are intimately tied to relations of power. As Stuart Hall noted that “Racism, of course, operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary

system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness”(445). The body and its investment in power relations are “directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold on it; they invest it, train it, torture it, force it to carry tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (Foucault,25). The relationship between human beings is the relation of power because everyone creates relationship with other for his personal interest and to function his or her power on those who are assumed to be inferior. It is in and through the body and especially in its relation to other bodies that we are marked as different or Other. A configuration of the Japanese traditional ritual performers’ body requires a construction of otherness that is not only marked by psychological imaginings, but also in embodied practices.

The western literature and art works reveals that Western encounters with the ‘Orient’ were highly problematic. Images of savagery and barbaric by western writers invoked racial and cultural hierarchies whiteness being the most valorized establishing a knowledge of Others and informing the way in which the West came to know itself as superior and civil in relation to the East. Said denounces a number of inaccuracies in a wide variety of suppositions about the Orient that have set the stage for Western imperialist conquests. As Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient’s difference with its weakness. In keeping with this logic of thinking, Stuart Hall (1997) mentions how Europeans constructed their encounters with Third World. Natives were caught in a binary of primitive/civilized, whereby civilized was appropriated by the enlightened Europeans who had etiquette and manners, while primitive was used to identify the Africans on an evolutionary scale.

In this sense, looking back at imperial and colonial conquests, it becomes evident that these databanks of images are both epistemically and materially violent, and that “representations about Others that were formed and circulated at that time helped solidify a sense of European self” (Jiwani, 2005: 33). Unveiling the Japanese woman both literally and metaphorically has been a fantasy and mission taken on by both Western men and women. It is the argument that western writers represent non western world in a negative way. The research analyzes the biased perspective of western world to the culture of native people. So it studies the author’s attempt of excluding the native cultures as the non culture, disvaluing the heterogeneity of cultural existence, author’s ignorance on aura of the cultural dominance on native culture.

### III. **Politics of Representation of Japanese Culture in**

#### **Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha***

This project aims to explore Arthur Golden's stereotypical representation of Japan and its native people in his western discourse, *Memoirs of A Geisha* and tries to show the hidden politics of his subjective fictionalization of the orient. While investigating the real intention of Golden as the westerner, the research studies the subjective position of the author and finds out that his subjectivity is naturalized with the myth of white superiority. The research carries the objective of exposing and dismantling the binaries and stereotypically invented images of Japanese people by western. This thesis tries to show the westerner's orientalizing attitude expressed in oriental discourse and questions the author's motto of misrepresentation of native land and its people. In the process of studying Golden's text, the researcher has analyzed the biased representation of Japan and its native people through misrepresenting different images of people, culture, customs and language. It also focuses on elitist representation of Japan in negative connotations like land of traditionality, prostitution and irrationality and people as barbaric, brutal and country as a kingdom with fragmented conditions. So, it studies the Japan's socio-political and cultural scenario, dismantling the politics of orientalizing the Asian nation as 'heart of irrationality' and evaluates the causes behind the stereotypical representations. And it also interrogates Golden's aim of orientalizing the non-west and digs out that Golden as a westerner is penetrating orientalist ideology.

Though the author is fictionalizing the history as well as socio-cultural aspects of Japan in its surface level, there is the politics of culture in the underlying level. By understanding the concept that the politics of culture and culture of politics is a big issue in the mission of dominating and hegemonizing the other, the author as the carrier of superior mentality is targeting to attack native culture and language of Japan. Here the researcher looks *Memoirs of A Geisha* as the cultural discourse the author to take dominance and finds that the author is trying to prove western superiority over eastern. How the orient are represented and how Japan is presented in the text are the research's concern. The research has utilized the cultural criticism by Stuart Hall to dig out the western characterization of Japan as 'heart of prostitution' and native people as 'the traditional' and 'barbarian'. With the help of Hall's cultural studies, the research has exposed the issue that Japan and its native people are derogatorily represented legitimatizing the racist images and stereotypes. The main objective of this thesis is trying to say that the author's latent colonial mentality is manifested in his artistic creation.

In the project of studying the politics of Arthur Golden as a white European behind the fictionalization of Japan and its contemporary political and cultural scenario, the researcher has analyzed the issue of derogatory representation, his construction of community, marginalization of Japanese people and canonization of western, ethical representation of violence, myth making tendency of western world, colonial mentality of European writer, lack of respecting difference in the thought of western people. Studying the primary text, the research taking the help of Stuart Hall's cultural studies, looks into the politics of stereotypical representation of the third world country.



## Issue of Representation in *Memoirs of A Geisha*

Representation of other culture with the known western symbolic system is intentional. It is happening in each case when the author tries to interpret non-western society, culture, values, as well as social customs and symbols. When the author West finds other culture dissimilar to culture, it carries out a subordinate representation of its binary with different propagations. As Bill Achroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *Colonial and Postcolonial Studies Reader* argue:

. . . It is through education and in terms of production and consumption that colonialist representations persist and currently circulate in, for instance, popular television shows, cartoons, novels the derogatory representations they promulgate that they offered a transparent 'window' on an objective reality' that relations between producers and consumers, or writers and readers, did not really exist and thus did not foster and reflect unequal colonialist power relations.  
(15)

The texts, which colonizers have used to show their objective knowledge and the fragility of the colonized, have tried to decipher unfamiliar spaces by the stock descriptions and authoritative symbols from the fantastical tales of the earlier travelers.

Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha* is the western discourse which carries a group of statements that provides a way for talking about the representation. This text is a discourse in which the author as the western councilor gives a certain kind of knowledge about Japan creating a particular historical movement. The history of

Japan is constructed to produce certain type of meaning to attribute the perspective about non-western people to certain classificatory schemes. The geographical and social distinctions are constructed but equally they are located historically in the struggle for power between what has been called the west and the rest. In the project of creating the text by Golden, he seems to be sound as his text that *Memoirs of A Geisha* is an instrumental means of knowing and possessing the culture of the other. The representation carries the politics and it allows the writer to exhibit the culture of the other from her perspective. The active process of representation is involved in constructing one culture for another. What is being produced is not a reflection of the truth of the other culture but representation of it. In the process of studying the representational issue in the primary text, the researcher can observe the approaches and analyze it from marginalized perspective.

The research has questioned on his so called objective representation and looks into his representational practices in the guideline of mysticism, symbolism and says that his subjective representation of Japan carries stereotypicality and is loaded with misrepresentation. The representation is colored the western images of power. As the westerner, Arthur Golden has portrayed the native people and their culture in hierarchical structure in relation to the western people. In the derogatory portrayal, Arthur Golden has categorized Japanese people as violent, dark, savage, irrational, ignorant, dirty, and uneducated whereas he presents the western people very positively. The author's saying "His skin was smooth and tight as a drum; his cheekbones were shiny hillocks, like the crisp skin of a grilled fish. I'd always found him fascinating"(32) explores the negative attitude. In his representation positive

sides of binaries are associated with the western world attaching the negative sides of binaries to the non-western world.

Golden, in the production of popular image of Japan and its native people, continues the pre-existing discursive parameters of the linguistic networks created by western world. The power of images has been utilized by him to make the text comprehensible to the reader of western world. In the exhibition of culture, there is exercise of power by the so called civilized people. In the portrayal of Japanese people, he utilizes the adjectives like blank, ghost, dark, runny, itchy etc. to create the subjective identity of Japanese people. So the job of the research is to examine how the other cultures are given meaning by the discourses and practices of exploration of the west.

In Golden's representation, there is the seed of colonial mentality and his subjective characterization carries the teleological intention that is to prove western superiority over eastern. He compares the Japanese people with demeaning and ghostly images and tries to humiliate the Japanese people exploring the false reality of them. Not only he misrepresents the Japanese people culture but also he de-fictionalizes it mystically.

Associating the Japanese people identity and their way of living with mystic life, Golden has aimed to associate western world with modernity and civilization. In his representation, he attaches ghostly figures in the portrayal of Japanese people and he creates the setting of native people's story as the dark and night environment. His use of noun "the mists" has loaded his Big Brother attitude and he also does animalistic characterizations of Japanese people. In the process of so called objective representation of Japan, he categories the non-Western world as mystic land where

moon is supposed to be the electricity. He, in his mystic representation, seeks to prove that western world is covered by modernity and it is highly developed. “An abiding concern with the construction, within western discursive practices, of the colonial and postcolonial “subject,” as well as of the categories by mean of which this subject conceives itself and perceives the world within which it lives and acts”(Abrams 245) helps to show the process of formation of discourse by western writers.

In the mission of creating cultural hegemony on the native people, Golden is trying to justify the culture and civilization of third world countries as the irrational and barbarian civilization of Japan. He has invented mythic images by distorting the real fact with the use of imagination. He has assigned Japanese people’s culture with superstition, brutality, irrationality, and traditionalism to establish cultural imperialism upon the orient.

### **Textual Framework: Critical Analysis of Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of A Geisha***

The western discourse has carried the mission of asserting negative stereotypes of the region and its people that have been exploited to justify western economic and political domination of the orient. In his ideological representation, Golden has represented differences with the help of popular figures and stereotypes. His binary form of representation is based on polarized system and hierarchical order. The text, *Memoirs of A Geisha*, is the example of the repertories of representation and representational practices which have been used to mark racial difference and signify the racialized other in western popular culture. Stuart Hall has given the concept of imagined community in the writing of westerner and he argues that there is

construction of community in western discourse to create the hierarchy between west and rest. James Procter in his book *Stuart Hall* says Hall's notion of community:

The term imagined community is used as a means of signposting the contractedness of the nation and its (imaginary) claim to unify and coherence. The nation is a symbolic community constructed not only out of concrete boundaries. Laws and institution, but out of representations, images and narratives like those mobilized by Thatcher during the Falklands War. (106)

Hall's notion of imagined community is influenced by Benedict Anderson and Hall's notion is a modern formation in western societies. It displaces and works to subsume the older forms of collective identification of tribes, regional groups and native people.

Golden's representation doesn't pay any attention to immanent reality, the real contradiction of the society. The text is about violence but it leaves out the violence because it hides the violence of western upon the Japanese people. His representation is not true representation because it lacks the real form of violence and it is guided by relations but not by morality. In his ethical representation of culture, there is only sympathy towards Japanese people, not the empathy towards Japanese people. It is because he is westerner and thus is trying to justify white's supremacy upon the Japanese people in deeper level.

The strategy of representing the third world countries in general and Japan in particular, is very biased and intentional. The representation of Japanese original culture is not objective but guided by authorial subjective position. His portrait of geisha's culture is intentionally guided due to his mindset. While exhibiting the

culture and the political scenario of Japan, the author accumulates the binary opposition between the western and Japanese people. In the process of characterization, he divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. In the mission of construction of community, he assigns positive and good things for western whereas bad and negative things for Japanese people. He excludes or expels everything which doesn't fit for the western world and keeps western world in the pole of normalcy. In his portrayal, he sets up a symbolic frontier between the normal and the deviant, the acceptable and the unacceptable, what belongs and what doesn't or is other. He has facilitated the bonding together of all of 'Us', who are normal in imagined community and sends into symbolic exile all of 'Them'. The construction of community by the westerner can be seen in the following extract:

He did not wear present clothing like the fishermen, but rather a man's kimono, with kimono trousers that made him look to me like the illustrations you may have seen of samurai. His skin was smooth and tight as a drum; his cheekbones were shiny hillocks, like the crisp skin of a grilled fish. I'd always found him fascinating. When I was in the street throwing a beanbag with the other children and Mr. Tanka happened to stroll out of the seafood company, I always stopped what I was doing to watch him. (14)

Golden, while constructing the imagined community, assigns savageness to Japanese people. All the act of backwardness and social ills are associated to Japanese people like dirty, fat, bad smelling, vulgarity, childishness and so on. Western are presented as civilized and enlightened and his elitist representation has been trying to prove that

naturally Asian don't want to be civilized. He classifies non western as good and rational human being whereas easter people as the bad and irrational human beings to justify the white supremacy. Neglecting morality and humanity, his portrayal of human beings hides negative facts of whites upon Japanese people. It means that he has been applying the concept of alison of otherness to non-westerners from western world. He does not pay any attention to the savageness of western people, so the research can claim that his representation is based on transcendental depiction of reality that lacks the 'respecting the differences'.

There is no respect for Japan and culture but assigning of negative images like kingdom of prostitution, barbarism, ignorance and trying to show the nature of Japanese people as people without mannerisms and violent. In this sense, Stuart Hall argues:

Alternatively, one can see it as more complicit, a discipline which, despite its aspiration to general human relevance and enlightenment, was primarily a discourse about the culturally or racially despised, developed by the members of a dominant culture in the imperial context. Stocking, for example, argues that it is a discipline which codified knowledge in such a manner that it could be called upon as 'scientific justification for the often bloody process' of imperial expansion. (186)

By providing a classificatory schema for the races of human kind, it is argued by Hall, it is demonstrated about the collecting and exhibiting the other culture in European discourse. He says discourses work in formations which frame the manner in which one can think and talk about the culture and the subjects that produce them.

The following extract shows how he is legitimizing the western tradition of constructing the Japanese people nation as negative world:

I looked for a moment at Mr. Tanaka's gray hair and at the creases in his brow like ruts in the bark of a tree. He seemed to me the wisest and most knowledgeable man on earth. I believed he knew things I would never know; and that he had an elegance I would never have and that his blue kimono was finer than anything I would ever have occasion to wear. I sat before him naked, on my haunches in the dirt, with my hair tangled and my face dirty, with the smell of pond water on my skin.

(20)

Golden's logic depends on representation working at two different levels at the same time: a conscious or perfect and unconscious or immature level, the former often serves as the displaced 'cover' for the later. The conscious as well as perfect world is belonged to whites. And Japanese people are presented as better endowed than whites. Japanese people are named as aggressive and ugliness where as western as civilized and rational. The problem is that Japanese people are trapped by binary structure of the stereotypes. In the extract the Japanese people are shown as drunkard and quarrelsome and his comment "Around the legs of the pier, pieces of vegetables bobbed like the jellyfish in our little inlet. The boats were scratched up, some of their timbers cracked; they looked to me as if they'd been fighting with one another" (24) gives evidences of assigning bad thing to native people. He even compares Japanese people having talk as the fighting in comparison to dog like fighting. Such kind of representation of violence and barbarism is the tool of the author to establish cultural hegemony on native people. As he further, through the mouth of Sayuri, says:



The wagon came to a stop a few minutes later on a patch of dirt beside the train tracks, just outside the town. A crowd of people stood with sacks and crates piled around them. And there, to one side of them, was Mrs. Fodget, standing beside a peculiarly narrow man wearing a stiff kimono. He had soft Japanese people hair, like a cat's, and held in one of his hands a cloth bag suspended from a string. He struck me as out of place in Senzuru, particularly there beside the farmers and the fishermen with their crates, and an old hunched woman wearing a rucksack of yams. (32)

Even in this extract the author in the voice of Geisha woman tries to establish ethical representation of savagery to take dominance on the orient. To make the text and his claim argumentative, he is approaching the Japanese character's narration as the evidences of Asian inferiority. There is not only that the narration from the Asian character, Sayuri but also the narration about the Japanese world from his perspective.

The research shows that author's attitude on the non western world and orient is the perspective of the author upon the non-westerner because he prioritizes European world. Golden fully supports the western discursive practices and accumulates the western existence in Japan as the civilized and rational people's settlement. Moreover, he even forces Sayuri in his narration to praise the western activities upon the Japanese people and to negate the issue that Japanese doesn't have ideal culture. The argument "I was so starlet by her appearance that I forgot y manners not that I had developed very good manners yet and stared directly at her face. She was smiling at me, though not in a kindly way" (37) is trying to construct the western world as the emperor of civilization and culture.

While constructing the western community in contrast to Japanese community, there is the marginalization of Japanese people and canonization of western. In the text *Memoirs of A Geisha*, primitivism and backwardness become interchangeable. Such binary is located as the true nature of Japanese people and they couldn't escape it. The Japanese people are represented in terms of their hypothetical characteristics but not of essential characteristics. The essence of Japanese people is created giving the characteristics like laziness, mindless, cooning, trickery, childishness, simple fidelity, etc. So, the researcher can say that Golden's text as the racialized discourse that is structured by sets of binary oppositions. There is the powerful opposition between civilization and savagery. There is the opposition between the biological or bodily characteristic of the Japanese people and white races, polarized into their extreme opposites that are taken as the signifiers for an absolute difference between human types or species. There are the rich distinctions which cluster around the supposed link between the white race and Japanese people race. On the one hand, intellectual development, learning and knowledge, a belief in reason, the presence of developed institutions, formal government and law, and a civilized restraints in their emotional, sexual and civil life, all of which are associated with western culture. And on the other hand, the instinctual, the open expression of emotion and feeling rather than intellect, a lack of civilized refinement in sexual and social life, a reliance on custom and ritual, and the lack of developed civil institutions, all of which are linked to non-western culture. Such marginalization of Japanese people and canonization of white can be observed in following extract:

... At length somebody came out. She turned out to be a girl about my age, carrying a wooden bucket so heavy with water that she sloshed

half of it onto the dirt floor. Her body was narrow; but her face was plump and almost perfectly round, so that she looked to me like a melon on a stick. She was straining to carry the bucket, and her tongue stuck out of her mouth just the way the stem comes out of the top of a pumpkin. As I soon learned, this was a habit of hers. (39)

The superior mentality of western has been explored in this extract. Golden is not only presenting Japanese people in inferior position but also dehumanizing the Japanese people by showing them alluring them to be the slave in front of westerners. Not only the issue that Japanese people are shown inferior, but also there is creation of great hierarchy between the natives and the westerners. Japanese people are shown in the world of scarcity and ignorance.

In the text, Sayuri as the representative of the Japanese people population is supposed to interpret in praise of the white world. He has presented the Japanese people as they are fascinating by looking the world of whites. The modernity is far away from them, the richness and materially satisfactory situation is far away from the Japanese people. It means that Golden is placing the Japanese people in poverty and lack and he is showing them economically weak in holistic approach. In another circumstances, he says:

Halfway down the hall we went into a spacious classroom in the traditional Japanese style. Along one wall hung a large board with pegs holding many tiny wooden plaques; on each plaque was written a name in fat, black strokes. My reading and writing were still poor; I'd attended school in the mornings in Yoroido, and since coming to

Kyoto had spent it and hour every afternoon studying with Auntie, but I could read very few of the names. Pumpkin went to the board and took from a shallow box on the mats, a plaque bearing her own name, which she hung on the first empty hook (55)

In this western discourse, there is also strategy of showing inferiority complex in the psychology of the Japanese people. Not only Japanese people are shown living in scarcity economically but also are characterized as weak and fragile in epistemological power. The Japanese people have been represented with animalistic characterization and they are presented as fat and unhealthy people. The politics of establishing the inferiority complex is that Golden is trying to show western are far better in the area of epistemology and ontology. On the other hand in the area of fashion and mannerism, the Japanese people are shown ignorant and unknown. In the text, Sayuri has been indulged in the circle of confusion of what the westerners are and have.

In spite of respecting the nature and culture of Japanese people, Golden just teases the Japanese people keeping them in the world of savagery and darkness. Scientifically and rationally the Japanese people are portrayed poorer than the western. He pretends as the true believer of luxurious life and tries to show that western only can handle the sophisticated life. He puts the Japanese people away from the world of civilization and mannerism by creating the hierarchical structure. Stuart Hall reviews:

The Asian or Negro, it was argued, found happiness only when under the tutelage of a white master. His/her essential characteristics were fixed forever – ‘eternally’ – in Nature. Evidence from slave

insurrections and the slave revolt in Haiti (1791) had persuaded whites of the instability of the Negro/Asian character. A degree of civilization they thought had rubbed off on the 'domesticated' slave, but underneath slaves remained by nature savage brutes; and long buried passions, once loosed, would result in 'the wild frenzy of revenge, and the savage lust for blood. (243)

The racialized discourse is structured by a set of binary oppositions. There are polarized oppositions between whites and Japanese people. There are the rich distinctions between the white race and Japanese people race in the western discourse. Hall's arguments support the researcher to dig out the author's intention of creating cultural imperialism.

There, Golden's intention is to show Japanese people's inferior state and to dig out the aim of showing the importance of imitating the value of western to be like western for Japanese people. His mission of creating the cultural imperialism is focused in this extract and the research easily find out that Golden is prioritizing the values and manners of western and realizes that his intention of continuing the tendency of taking dominance in his saying the Japanese people to identify themselves with western's culture and to imitate the values of colonizer. The process of representing the native world also touches the criteria of hybrid identity of native people.

### **Golden's Parochial Mentality or 'Big Brother Attitude'**

In *Memoirs of A Geisha*, there is sense of colonizer's 'Big Brother attitude'.

European's attitude towards Asians in general and orient in particular are so much derogative and stereotypical. The author has treated the Japanese people as animals

without having the sense and reason. As the western writer, he thinks that western know better than natives and they have better knowledge about their traditional culture. It is proved from his argument where he views that western have to teach them how to live, how to speak, how to learn, how to understand and how to behave. In the process of creating the universal civilization that belongs to western world, he has presented image of Japanese as a place where you will be corrupted, where your soul will be destroyed, where your mind will be savaged, where your rationality will be in danger and where you will be victim of savagery. So, the researcher claims that Golden as the generation of western colonizers, he verifies the European parochialism and he is presenting Japan people as child in nascent stage.

In his motto of universalizing the Asian culture, he fictionalizes the history of Japan including its customs, norms, values, and beliefs, ignoring the real fact and reality of this non western country. As the tradition of western, the author also expresses his colonial mentality that is explored in his representation of Japan and its native people and his fictionalization of Japanese history and culture. The author's Big Brother's attitude can be observed in the following extract:

... She used this to paint her face and neck, but left her eyes bare, as well as the area around her lips and nose. If you have ever seen a child cut holes in paper to make a mask, this was how Hatsumomo look, until she dampened some smaller brushes and used them to fill in the cutouts. After this she looked as if she'd fallen face first into a bin of rice flour, for her whole face was ghastly white. She looked like the demon she was but even so. I was sick with jealousy and shame. Because I knew that in an hour or so, men would be gazing with

astonishment at that face; and I would still be there in the okiya,  
looking sweaty and plain. (63)

In the text, Golden has been legitimizing the ghetto mentality of the west. Such concept is laid in the underlying structure of the text to marginalize the culture of orient. The colonial mentality of Arthur Golden forces him to attain the tendency of exclusiveness in his process of representation. Legacy of British colonialism can be analyzed in the portrayal of characters and historiography of Japan.

The famous phrase 'White Man's burden' can be seen in the intention of the author. As if he has been carrying the goal of civilization, he tries to represent the Asian nation very negatively to prove white superiority. His invocation of spirit of colonialism and his white colonial mentality has been traced in the above extract where he presents his homeland as the heavenly created nation. James Procter recites Hall's idea in his book *Stuart Hall*:

Through the oxymoron, Hall indicates the way in which Thatcherism's vision of the future is founded upon and legitimated through a backward looking, nostalgic turn to the past. For example, it combines, or articulates liberal free market discourses with conservative themes such as nationhood and empire. As Hall puts it, regressive modernization describes 'the attempt to "educate" and discipline the society into a particularly regressive version of modernity by, paradoxically, dragging it backwards through an equally regressive version of the past'. (101)

Nostalgic visions of westerners are the alternative agency to portray their superior mentality. Going backward to the imperial era, western writers have presented other third world countries in contemporary time as excrementally situated nations.

The research internalizing the cultural concept of Stuart Hall, argues that Golden as the member of dominant culture is trying to use Asian culture as the tool of establishing cultural hegemony on natives. He makes Japanese culture as the site of political as well as ideological struggle to have dominance on orient. The research with the help of Hall's notion of culture blames Golden saying that he has been going to make nonwestern culture inferior to the western culture. He has only regarded the western culture as the culture with the notion that the culture and civilization is "the best that had been thought and said" (Raymond Williams 17). Such elitist notion of culture associates the native culture ominously with anarchy.

Golden's attempt is to show Christian religion as the best and Asian religion as the worst in his text. He has been defending so called civilized Christian standards from corruption and anarchy of Japanese people. The researcher views that Golden is just trying to extend English values and codes and conducts of civilization in the midst of the Asian continent. As he says:

... Her face may be greasy from sleep, and her breath unpleasant. It may be true that she wears a startling hairstyle even as she struggles to open her eyes; but in every other respect she's a woman like any other, and not a geisha at all. Only when she sits before her mirror to apply her makeup with care does she become a geisha. And I don't mean that this is when she begins to look like one. This is when she begins to think like one too. (61)



While defining the natives he valorizes the racial differences between western and Japanese people. Creating the binary structure of the society, the author constructs the whole history of Japanese people and attaches the negative attributes like jealousy, to the nature of Japanese people. Making the narratives with the first person narration through the character, Sayuri, Golden has just fictionalized the tradition and culture of Japanese people. Sayuri, the representative of Japanese people, has been shown as exploring the history of Japanese people that is contaminated with the backwardness and savagery. Manipulating the narratives of Japanese people, the author tries to make her discourse objective and scientific.

In the text, the Japanese people character, Sayuri, is portrayed as praising the culture and manners of western people and criticizing the nature of Japanese people. Such fake representation of Japanese people cannot make the text scientific and objective because of his intention of creating cultural imperialism on the oriental nation. So, the text is full of subjective expressions of Golden on Geisha culture. His views and ideas on the Japanese culture seem to be one sided and loaded with the western mentality. He sounds as if he is fond of performing as interpreter of eastern culture. His big brother attitude is reflected in the text and he assumes himself as the superior than the non-west people. His words in the text forces the researcher to realize that the westerner think themselves as the superior upon the eastern culturally rich people.

### **Japan as Uncivilized World**

Derogatory representation and ethical depiction of Japan is the most problematic issue throughout Golden's text. In *Memoirs of A Geisha* in the text, Golden through his literary depictions of the Asian nation, is trying to portray Japan

as an uncivilized and static world. Through stereotypical representation, he has presented Japan as the heart of backwardness. The researcher through this research analyzes the biased representation of Japan and its native people through misrepresenting different images of people, culture, customs, language, etc. Therefore Stuart Hall in his book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* further adds:

Heavily emphasized was the historical case against the Asian/Black people man based on his supposed failure to develop a civilized way of life in Africa/Asia. As portrayed in pro-slavery writing, Africa/Asia was and always had been the scene of unmitigated savagery, cannibalism, devil worship, and licentiousness. (143)

Stuart Hall with his argument explains that dominant class tries to show mental and physical inferiority in the other. He says that there is deep-seated white fear of widespread anxieties in white psychology. So, they present the other with a rigid polemical pattern.

The research deals with Japan's socio-political and cultural scenario, dismantling the politics of orientalizing the Asian nation as heart of irrationality and evaluates the causes behind the stereotypical representations. In this western discourse, there is fascination of others. The author, in his text, representation of Japanese people with the help of popular figures and stereotypes is colored with power politics. In such representation, the author declares the oriental obscurity, strangeness, and frustration. The writer as the westerner feeling the responsibilities to maintain the western supremacy plays the role to make the orient identify with westerners.

The identification created by Golden to study the orient becomes a set of symbol and image which estranges the orient rather than to make it familiar. The images and symbols used to refer to the orients are made for the purpose of degenerating and demoralizing the orients. *Memoirs of A Geisha* as the discourse represents the oriental as savage, barbaric, uncivilized, immoral, and unfinished. The research exposes the characterization of Japan by the western writer as intentional and political because it is asserted in relation to an opposite, a 'rest' of the world and the other. The binary structure has the opposite pole that takes the form of servant, slave, beast, and it becomes the colonized a category of representation which subsumes within itself those other significant of difference. The western knowledge produces body of text representing the stereotypes of oriental culture, religion and politics. The British colonial mentality has manipulated his writing by making their culture and politics as epitome that is essential to be followed by the orient. His knowledge has defined Japanese culture as primitive, religion as conservative and heretical and the political practices as terror-stricken. But in reality, the discourse made by Golden's imperial policy can't involve the orient as it is. His representation has taken Japan as uncivilized and static land and its people as barbaric and savage.

Arthur Golden as the generation of western colonial mentality has seen Japan in particular and orient in general as a fascinating realm of the uncivilized and static, the mystical and the seductive behaviors. People are represented as anonymous masses rather than individuals. They are portrayed as if their action is determined by instinctive emotions like lust, terror, fury etc rather than by conscious choices or decisions. Moreover, Golden employs negative stereotypes of the region and its

people have been exploited to justify western economic and political domination of the orient. In this regard Stuart Hall in his work *The Spectacle of the Other* says:

So far, we have been arguing that ‘stereotyping’ has its own poetics- its own ways of working – and its *politics* – the ways in which it is invested with power. We have also argued that this is a particular type of power – a *hegemonic* and *discursive* form of power which operates as much through culture, the production of knowledge, imagery and representation, as through other means. (263)

So, the representation of geography and culture with stereotypes of its culture as irrational, violent and degenerate is very derogative. It implicates that the subject of power and the object of power are inter-related to each other. In the process of defining and renaming the natives, Golden has started classifying them as barbaric and degenerate. Stuart Hall’s claim about ethnic cultural identity echoes with that of Golden:

We are all, ethnically located and our ethnic cultural identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are. But this is also recognition that this is not an ethnicity which is doomed to survive. Only by marginalizing, dispossessing, displacing and forgetting other ethnicities. This precisely the politics of ethnicity predicted on difference and diversity. (Hall 94)

Westerners show some reluctance to use biological evolution to explain differences between specific cultures and the society as a whole. Hall’s approach to culture allows for distinctions between “civilized” and “primitive” or “tribal” cultures.

#### IV. Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha*: A Misrepresentation of Japan and Geisha Women

Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of A Geisha* is the western discourse that produces the essence and meaning of Japan in particular and orient in general. It is the discourse created by generation of westerner who assumes him/her as the human being of supreme culture. Arthur Golden's text takes the form of discourse that involves representation. The orient is represented by the West and the representations are created in the network of power and they create certain truths about the orient which are based of binary opposition. In the text, *Memoirs of A Geisha*, with the Eurocentric notion, Golden has defined the orient as the matter of interpretation for them. To maintain the superior identity of the west, the text as the discourse plays vital role for analyzing and imposing the oriental stereotype which dominate and proves their hegemonic nature. Arthur Golden as the westerner has tried to prove that the relationship between occident and orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of carrying degree of complex hegemony. Thus, *Memoirs of A Geisha* is a discourse created by the westerners by generating political, sociological, ideological and imaginative power over the orient. Arthur Golden's creation of the work of art is the political project that is targeted to legitimize the western imperialism upon the non-westerners.

The thesis carries the objective of exposing the stereotypical representation of Japan and its native people. The researcher while analyzing the Golden's text finds out that representation of other culture with the known western symbolic system is really a misleading. It is proved in each case when Golden tries to interpret non west

society, culture, values as well as social customs and symbols. The research has explored the process of the author's production of the stereotypical images of the non-west as 'the other' of Europe. *Memoirs of A Geisha* as the colonial literary text has carried along the colonial ethos. In general, the colonial discourse exhibits a tinge of colonial color, of feature colonial motifs. There is the exhibition of colonial experiences and perceptions, by the researcher, in the form of writing from the imperial perspective. And the research says when west finds other culture dissimilar to their culture, it represents subordinate representation of its binary with different propagations. The non-Western nation Japan and its people are derogatively portrayed in the line of binary structure. The positive categories like enlightened, rationality, scientific technology developed, civilized, educated, kind, etc are assigned to the westerns where as negative categories like primitive, barbarian, irrational, superstitious, brutal, violent, etc are associated with the world of geisha. Here, in the text, Japan has been represented as the land of violence, primitivism, irrationality, ignorance and barbarism. Golden's ethical representation tries to show that geisha by nature are violent and brutal and attempts to justify that geisha are subordinate to westerns.

The research has taken the help of cultural criticism of Stuart Hall and has studied the western text focusing on the culture and civilization of the orient. With the internalization of Hall's cultural studies, the research has generated the demonstration of the politicality of culture. Asserting the view that culture is the site of ongoing struggle, critical site of social action, the research has just tried to expose western politics on orient's culture. It is the view of the researcher that Golden's encountering third world's culture is guided by western ideology and his motive of establishing the

racIALIZED regime of representation. With the help of stereotypical representation, the western writer has tried to reproduce cultural identity of the geisha. Within his representation the geisha women experience is either or when it does it appears, stereotypical in nature. Geisha in Golden text, tend to be the objects rather than subjects of representation. The construction of a hegemonic or unified geisha women identity has formulated itself in terms of critique of the way the geisha are positioned as the invisible “other” of predominantly white aesthetic. In this cultural discourse of Golden, representation takes the forms of delegation and interpretation. The researcher has been making a link here between the marginal status of geisha to the dominant modes of representation and the construction of representative geisha women experience.

*Memoirs of A Geisha*, the literary creation of Golden, is criticized on the grounds of boosting colonial attitude. Golden represents Japan as an exotic, mysterious, traditional and backward space. Japanese world is referred by the western writer as the location of poverty, racial conflict, political instability, migration and unemployment. Golden, here, seems to generalize that all the natives are superstitious and barbarian and nothing more. And also the research comes to the conclusion that Golden has presented Japan as a land of mystery, of religious rites and beliefs not easily comprehensible to the ordinary westerner who has been taught to judge everything by the yardstick of rationality and modernity. Thus, the representation of the orient in general and Japanese natives in particular by the western writer has become an ideological construct, exerting power over the orient. Arthur Golden’s representation of Japan inherits the tradition of the discursive strategy of the west as

he has represented Japan along with the line of long cherished stereotypical practices Japanese natives are effeminate, irrational and incapable of independence.

The politics of representation can be analysed thematically and structurally. Thematically, the research has studied the primary text and has dug out the derogatory representation of Japan and its native people with the help of binary structure. How the Japanese culture is represented is the main problematic issue of this research. And the research also has find out that the myth of western supremacy and the process of misrepresenting Japanese culture, language and the native people through the analysis of narratives, created by the Christian Golden. From the multiple angles and perspectives, the researcher has been claiming that there is motto of establishing cultural imperialism in Japan by the western writer.

There is circulation of knowledge, truth and power in the western text *Memoirs of A Geisha*. There is politics behind the stereotypical representation of Japan and its native people. The objective behind the fake portrayals of Japan and its native people is to create cultural hegemony on the native people. Through this discursive practice, Golden has tried to create Japan as the hegemonic state. With the help of false characterizations, Golden has attempted to create inferiority complex in the non-Westerner to establish cultural imperialism in Japan, Golden is celebrating the sense of Britishness and is playing the role of agent of spreading western civilization in the third world and justifying the phrase 'White Man's Burden', while developing this discourse. The colonial mentality, according to the researcher, is naturalized in the psychology of Arthur Golden. In his representation of Japanese culture, Golden has been employing the established western parameters that are directed to dominate and hegemonize the orient. According to research, the western



writer has attempted to fulfill his objective of imposing the cultural hegemony on the geisha with his colonial gaze. The research finds out that Golden has tried to create cultural imperialism with the construction of community, with ethical representation of backwardness and derogatory representation of Japan as '*Memoirs of A Geisha*' with creation of myths and fixing superstition to the world of geisha. But the research says that colonial mentality still lingers in the psyche of Golden due to the lack of quality of respecting differences. He has prioritized the marginalization of geisha and canonization of westerns.

The narration of Japan never becomes complete, neutral and objective since the narrative of the nation becomes ambivalent because of the temporality involved in the act of narration. The language used to narrate the nation by its nature becomes rhetorical. In the novel, the writer and the two protagonists are narrating the Japan nation and to narrate, he has to enter into the centre of the nation by erasing the frontiers. So, the narration of Japanese culture and people becomes the interpretation of Japan from the perspective of west. Christiana Golden has just articulated the difference, the otherness which is at the centre of the narration. Here, the inversion in the privileged position of the author and the inherent figurality of the language always hinders direct representation of the reality.

Thus, through Stuart Hall's notion of cultural studies, the researcher has explored the imperial intention of Arthur Golden in his process of creating the historiography of Japan thematically and structurally. The exposition of politics of stereotypical representation questions the colonial mindset of Golden and digs out the derogative connotations throughout the text. The representation of the third world as the fountainhead of barbarism, irrationality, spirituality and terrorism is problematized

by the researcher. So, the last but not the list, the research reaches to the conclusion that Arthur Golden has attempted to orientalize the natives of Japan with the establishment of the cultural hegemony on them.

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