

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Orientalist Gaze in Patricia McCormick's *Sold***

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**By**

**Sudan Kumar Upadhyay**

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur**

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**Tribhuvan University**  
**Central Department of English**  
**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**  
**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Sudan Kumar Upadhyay has completed his thesis on “Orientalist Gaze in Patricia McCormick's *Sold*” under my supervision. He carried out his research paper from August 2009 to March 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

-----  
Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari

Supervisor

Date: -----

**Tribhuvan University**  
**Central Department of English**  
**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**  
**Letter of Approval**

This Thesis entitled “Orientalist Gaze in Patricia McCormick's *Sold*”

Submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sudan Kumar Upadhyay has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the research committee:

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\_\_\_\_\_

Internal Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Head

Central Department of English

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

This research explores the orientalist gaze of the writer Patricia McCormick who, while writing about a Nepali woman's socio-economic condition, dwells on the binaries like one and other, civilized and uncivilized, rational and emotional etc, thereby assigning the negative attributes to the 'oriental' third world women. In *Sold* Lakshmi, the protagonist, is portrayed as dreamy, money-minded, meek and non-resistant woman confined in the traditional norms of society. By taking the case of Lakshmi, the writer not only exoticizes the reality of Nepali women but also tries to generalize the issue to the whole Nepali society. McCormick develops her orientalist perspective by using the American characters to rescue Nepalese women from the brothel. The Americans carry with them the 'burden' of rescuing the victims as they come with the promises of safety and freedom. But their project turns out to be a tool of exercising the power over the helpless 'oriental' women, thereby creating discourses about them.

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## **I. McCormick's *Sold*: Orientalizing the 'oriental'**

The American female writer Patricia McCormick has attempted to mystify Nepali culture, place and people in her novel *Sold*. It is a novel on a Nepali woman. Lakshmi, the protagonist of the novel, is described as a meek, docile, submissive and poverty-stricken. By taking the case of Lakshmi, the writer generalizes the issue to whole Nepali society. And in the name of presenting the real picture of the women she exaggerates the Nepali culture and tradition.

In the very first chapter of the novel she has titled 'A Tin Roof' where she gives her western views and tries to make a discourse. The title refers to an example of city life (dream world). She further says, "A tin roof means that the family has a father who does not gamble away the landlord's money playing cards in the tea shop. A tin roof means the family has a son working at the brick kiln in the city" (7). For that she makes her characters more ambitious, dreamy and non-resistant. Not only that, to show poor and pathetic condition of the Nepalese women she presents the main character Lakshmi always running after money. She has presented the cooked up picture of the third world people and their condition meanwhile her style of presentation also distorts the reality and that becomes mystery to westerners. By exaggerating the real condition of third world women she succeeds to give the negative picture of the orient.

Similarly, McCormick at first conjures the natural beauty of mountainous Nepal, even though the protagonist, a thirteen-year-old girl Lakshmi is dirt poor. Then, for contrast, she describes the claustrophobic penury and desire of Lakshmi city captivity. In Nepal, the protagonist lives with her *Ama* and her evil stepfather. Here, the writer tries to show it is he who ultimately gambles what little they have away and

heartlessly sells his stepdaughter into prostitution in India for money .Whether this incident is true or not she weaves the heart touching story and exaggerates the condition of Nepalese people which makes the discourse that third world people sell their children for money. The narration's voice wavers during description of customs and festivals, context descriptions that convey the particular fascination of a visitor rather than the familiarity of one speaking from within.

McCormick presents Lakshmi as naive and very curious towards the city life. She says, "Lakshmi assumes she is going off to be a maid and bravely vows to send what she earns home to her *Ama* can install a tin roof on their hut" (15). McCormick further describes the situation to valley below the hills and tries to show the superiority over the orient by saying 'magical white light'. At the same time, she makes her world is like beyond the mountain.

Likewise, the writer presents the poor condition of Nepalese negatively by describing the four seasons haphazardly, which is not so in reality and yet, she further says, "They patch the crumbling mud walls of their hut and keep the fire going so that yesterday's gruel can be stretched to make tomorrow's dinner [. . .] this is the season when they bury the children who can not be carried to the doctor on the other side of that river" (17). In the same way she mentions the cool months and says, "They prepare special food for the festivals. They make rice beer for the men and listen to them argue politics [. . .] this is the season when the women drink the blue-black juice of the marking nut tree to do away with the babies in their wombs- the ones who would be born only to be buried next season" (17).

Western feminists try to essentialize the gaze as "universal phenomena". This establishes the concept of 'one woman' in the feminists discourses. In this scenario, McCormick attempts to visualize the 'one woman' concept. Her 'one woman' concept

is furthered with the essentializing notion that degrades the position of the Lakshmi in the third world country. McCormick's universalizing gaze is somewhat negative in representation of a female Lakshmi in Nepali culture. As a woman therefore she presents the denigrating, coercive and essentializing ethos of western attitude. The novel *sold* is written in first person narrative. It is told in a series of haunting vignettes so that the readers are compelled to feel what Lakshmi is going through. Though it can be a real story of sexual slavery to some extent but it is more exaggeration than the reality "that was just a small city, we are going to a much bigger city, a grand city, a city by the water" (77). Alternating lyrical imagery with precise detail, McCormick gives voice to the terror and bewilderment of a young girl robbed of her childhood. By presenting so, she is trying to show the westerners as superior or the protector of the third world people. To protect or rescue the girl from brothel she uses the American people deliberately and shows the protagonist more emotional. When the American whispers to her she imagines the image of the flying bird (symbol of freedom). The American says, "I will come back for you. I will come back with other men, good men, from this country [. . .] who are not friends of Mumtaz, we will take you away from here" (255).

She presents the westerners as god figure who comes to rescue others in difficult situation. *Sold* is not a 'true story' in the sense of being a biographical work, it is 'true' in that the author interviewed young women who had managed to escape from their enslavement. The protagonist, a young girl from Nepal named Lakshmi was created from a composite of the stories told to the author by former 'sex workers'. From that, we can say that it is a made up story and she is trying to make it more mysterious.

In *Sold*, there are no chapters but rather a series of sequential vignettes of varying length that tell the story from Lakshmi's perspective. Because she is a simple girl from 'the hill country', the language used in this book is uncomplicated and accessible. The horrors depicted are told in respectable detail without being excessively graphic. It is almost incomprehensible that people can be vicious as they are in this book, but unfortunately it is the daily reality of millions the world over. Despite the pain and sorrow recounted, the story moves quickly and the resolution- however incomplete-is satisfying. Written in free-verse, the girl's first-person narration is horrifying and difficult to read. The spare, unadorned text matches the barrenness of Lakshmi's new life. She is told that if she works off her families, debt, she can leave, but she soon discovers that this is virtually impossible. When a boy who runs errands for the girls and their clients begins to teach her to read, she feels a bit more alive, remembering what it feels like to be the number one girl in class again. When an American comes to the brothel to rescue girls, Lakshmi finally gets a sense of hope and says, "The clean place, I want to go to there" (256). By the way, the writer's motive is to make the westerners superior at the end.

McCormick has written a series of novels that marked her as one of the major writers. Not only that, she is a bi-weekly entertainment columnist of 'The New York Times' and a contributing editor of nearly half dozen of the publication house. Similarly, she has experienced of being professor of journalism at Columbia University Graduate School. Furthermore, she has got the fellowships and honors from New York Foundation on the Arts Fellowship and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship. And she has got more than the dozen of awards in different titles. Primarily, McCormick writes on the social issues in her novel. In the novel *Cut* (2000) and *sold* (2006), she presents the female character as the protagonist where

both protagonists struggle to survive in their life. *Cut* is a riveting tale of a fifteen-year-old Callie girl who is hurting so badly she takes it out on her own body. It is a compelling and compassionate look at a young woman's struggle to overcome the impulses that lead her to inflict harm on herself. Whereas in *Sold* Lakshmi undertakes the long journey to India and arrives at 'Happiness House', a brothel, full of hope. But she soon learns the unthinkable truth. She becomes a nightmare from which she can not escape. Still, she lives by her mother's words-"simply to endure is to triumph". Likewise, her latest novel *Purple Heart* (2009) is a suspenseful psychological thriller about teenage American soldier. While researching *Purple Heart*, McCormick took part in a peace demonstration with veterans from the war in Iraq.

McCormick projects the central character Lakshmi negatively in her novel *Sold* and tries to universalize the whole third world women's issue into 'one'. By taking the case of one woman she predicts the situation of other women as well. To give the negative attitudes of the orient people or women, she exploits the views, behaviors, thinking of women towards another woman. Similarly, for exaggerating the situation she uses many orient female characters who are shown envy, jealous, brutal, and selfish towards the fellow female partner. They are shown more illiterate and conservatives that they give the instruction of do's and don'ts for women. This is the writer's discourse which she presents through different characters- "You must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head in the presence of men, cover yourself with your shawl. Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to be alone with a man who is not family" (21). By projecting the culture, tradition, place, and people negatively she reflects the tendency of western writers to orientalize the non-west.

Not only that, to show the mysterious condition of the third world she talks about the dowry system which reflects the pathetic condition of the common people.

Along with that she negativizes the women's condition by misrepresenting them. She compares the female with Tali (a female dog). Likewise, she named her protagonist Lakshmi which has double meanings: one is the girl Lakshmi and other is goddess Lakshmi. She does that knowingly either to mystify the Nepalese god /culture or to make the self irony to the character. During the story, she tries to load the western discourse by misrepresenting the culture. She gives the different names to plant, hen, goat etc. as if people do so in our society.

Throughout the novel, to project the negative picture of the orient as well as to show them mysterious, she presents Lakshmi dependent, optimistic to foreigner (American) for her freedom and money minded.

In this regard, one of the critics Hazel Rochman talks about women that they know no other way than to obey and serve the men and their family. "Lakshmi is a young village girl lives with *Ama*, baby brother and greedy stepfather in family. Soon after she gets her first period, her stepfather starts looking at her as a thing to sell for a profit, not as a human being" (52). Rochman has viewed the text as commodification and regarded that female are compelled to sell their body soon after they get her first menstruation period. In the same manner where Lakshmi feels herself mature and says "I am not a child anymore" (*Sold 48*).

Likewise other critics Glantz Shelly writes, Mc Cormick reveals her gradual awakening to the harshness of the world around her. Even in their poverty-stricken rural home, Lakshmi finds pleasure in the beauty of the Himalayan Mountains, the sight of Krishna, her betrothed, and the cucumbers she lovingly tends, and then sells at market. After a monsoon wipes out their crops, her dream of going city rises, and at the same time her profligate stepfather sells Laksjmi to an "auntie" bound to the city. Shelly says:

During her journey, the girl acquires a visual and verbal vocabulary of things she has never seen before: electric light, a T.V. soon a hard-won sense of irony invades her narrative, too. Early on, a poem entitled “Everything I need to know” marks her step into womanhood (after her menstrual cycle); later, “Everything I need to know now” lists her rules as an initiated prostitute. (77)

For Lakshmi, going to city to earn money is not compulsory if her crops would not wipe out by a monsoon. But McCormick presents her as a dreamy girl, running after money and exaggerates the situation more than they really are. Further again Shelly says:

In her village, Lakshmi had rebelliously purchased her first Coca-Cola for her mother, after her stepfather sold her; later, in Calcutta, she overhears two johns talking and realizes the price of a bottle of Coca-Cola at Bajai Sita’s store. That is what he paid for [a turn with] me. (79)

Though Shelly tries to show her as bold and rebellious but McCormick shows her as meek, non-resistant and blind follower in the novel.

The present research is trying to prove the westerner’s negative attitude towards the third world as well as to show that how a western female writer sees the third world women in the female’s issue. Their attempts to exaggerating the culture, custom, tradition, place and people of the third world were the mission of orientalizing the non-west. By taking the one poverty case of Lakshmi she homogenizes the issue to whole Nepali and tries to prove that selling their own children for money is common in third world. She tries to produce the negative discourse about the orient by showing the non-resistant quality of the women in

patriarchal society and their blind faith to the male. Furthermore, mainly through the female characters like Mumtaz (the owner of the brothel), Bajai Sita (mediator for selling children in village), Auntie Bimala (agent of Mumtaz), Shilpa (Mumtaz's spy), Pushpa and Sahana (teach the city rules to Lakshmi), she shows the suppression of a woman to the fellow woman to give the negative image of the third world women. In this way, in the name of giving realistic picture of the orient she mystifies the third world in her novel *Sold*.

This research paper has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the general introduction of the whole thesis. Which will give information about the writer's attempts to mystify the third world culture, tradition, people and place. In the same manner, the second chapter will discuss the orientalist discourse, oriental gaze and the third world feminism as a theoretical tool. Similarly, the third chapter will analyze the text by applying various theorists ideas mentioned in the chapter second. At last, the fourth chapter will be the concluding section of the whole research. Where the researcher wrap up the entire work by giving the evidences to prove the hypothesis of the research that the very western writer Patricia McCormick has tried to orientalize the non-west through the negative discourse in her novel *Sold*.

## **II. Third World Feminism and the Issue of Orientalist Representation**

Third World feminism has been described as a group of feminist theories developed by feminists who acquired their values and took part in feminist politics in so called Third World countries. In many different societies women like colonized subjects have been relegated to the position of 'Other', 'colonized' by various forms of patriarchal domination. They thus share with colonized races and culture an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression. Women from third world have been engaged in the feminist movements Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gyatri Chakravarti Spivak, Sara Suleri, Ketu Katrak and Uma Narayan who criticize western feminism on the grounds that it is ethnocentric and does not take into account the unique experience of women from Third World countries. According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Women in Third World feel that western feminism bases its understanding of women feminism in internal racism, classicism and homophobia. This discourse is strongly related to African feminism and post colonial feminism" (22). Similarly, Ketu Katrak says that women in postcolonial countries were colonized and this resulted in domination.

Further, Ketu Katrak defines Third World women's body under the title "Theorizing a Politics of Female Body" and says that women's body has been colonized by patriarchy. So third world women writers try to decolonize their body in their writings and resist the patriarchy through internal and external exile. Mostly women are dominated through language and their sexuality in so called patriarchal society. By using the English language colonizers impose racial superiority as well as they make women linguistically and culturally alienated from the native language and culture. Ketu Katrak says that, "The uses of English (over indigenous languages, in this case, Shona) imposed by colonialism and how linguistic choices encode cultural

belonging or alienation and second the female body and generated inequalities in patriarchal postcolonial society" (1).

The women in the Third World postcolonial societies, become victims of gender inequalities existing both in the indigenous and the colonial culture often simultaneously oppress women. Ketu Katrak argues that, "Mahatma Gandhi's resistance to British colonial rule in India during the 1920s and 1930s used specially gendered representations for the purposes of Indian nationalism but ultimately did little to free Indian women from their patriarchal subordination to men" (26).

According to Katrak,

Gandhi's appropriated images of passive women to promote his campaign of 'passive resistance' to British colonial rule. Both men and women were encouraged to adopt a passivity exclusively associated with femininity, although only for the purposes of breaking colonial authority and not patriarchal authority. (179)

Several critics have hinted at a trend towards male chauvinism to many forms of nationalism. Such icons of the nation as mother India or mother Africa are used in nationalist representation to reconstruct the image of the passive female who depends upon the active males to protect her or restore her honor.

Helen Carby explains in her essay "White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood" that black and Asian women are barely made visible within its discourses. And when they are addressed, their representation remains highly problematic. Western feminism is criticized for its Orientalist orientation. It represents the social practices of other 'races' as backwards and barbarous, from which black and Asian women need rescuing by their western sisters. Further Carby presents the Western feminist horror concerning the arranged marriages

of Asian women. In advocating an end to arranged marriages for Asian women because they are deemed oppressive, Western feminists do not consider Asian women's views and assume instead that their 'enlightened' outlook is the most progressive and liberating.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty discusses in her essay "Under Western Eyes" that the third world feminisms address two simultaneous projects: the internal critique of hegemonic 'Western' feminists and the formulation of autonomous feminist concerns and strategies that are geographically, historically and culturally grounded. The first project is one of deconstructing; the second project is one of building and constructing. Mohanty further defines Third World geographically "the nation states of Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South east Asia, China, South Africa, and Oceania constitutes the parameters of the non- European Third World. In addition, black Latin, Asian and indigenous people in USA, Europe, Australia, some of whom have historic links with geographically defined Third Worlds, also define themselves as Third World people" (5).

The use of the term 'Third World women' by western feminist has been widely critiqued. Mohanty uses the term interchangeably with "women of color" (7). She argues that:

What seems to constitute women of color or Third World women as a viable oppositional alliance is a common content of struggle rather than color or racial identifications. Similarly, it is Third World women's oppositional political relation to sexist, racist and imperialistic structures that constitutes our political commonality. (7)

Although, she uses the term 'Third World Women' Mohanty argues that, " western feminism is responsible in the production of the third world women as a singular

monolithic subject for a 'discursive colonization" (51). Furthermore, western feminism articulates a discursive colonization through the production of third world difference, a historical act that apparently oppresses most if not all of the women in Third World countries.

In the context of west's hegemonic position today, the context of what Anouar Abdel Malek calls a struggle for "control over the orientation, regulation and decision of the process of world development on the basis of the advanced sector's monopoly of scientific knowledge and ideal creativity" (145). Western feminist scholarship on the Third World must be seen and examined precisely in terms of its inscription in these particular relations of power and struggle. There is, it should be evident, no universal patriarchal framework that this scholarship attempts to counter and resist- unless one posits an international male conspiracy or a monolithic, a historical power structure. There is, however, a particular world balance of power within which any analysis of culture, ideology, and socioeconomic conditions necessarily has to be situated. Abdel-Malek reminds us about the inherence of politics in the discourses of 'culture'. "Contemporary imperialism is, in sense, a hegemonic imperialism, exercising to a maximum degree a rationalized violence taken to a higher level than ever before- through fire and sword, but also through the attempt to control hearts and minds" (145-46).

Western feminist scholarship cannot avoid the challenge of situating itself and examining its role in such a global economic and political framework. To do any less would be ignore the complex interconnections between First and Third World economics and the profound effect of this on the lives of women in all countries. Feminist writing in the United States is still marginalized (except from the point of view of women of color addressing privileged white women), Western feminist

writing on women in the Third World must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of western scholarship- that is, the production, publication, distribution, and consumption of information and ideas. Marginal or not, this writing has political effects and implications beyond the immediate feminist or disciplinary audience. One such significant effect of the dominant 'representations' of western feminism is its conflation with imperialism in the eyes of particular Third World women.

Similarly, during the colonial process, women were became the victim in the name of marriage. In Claude Levi-Strauss's 'theory of kinship' structure as a system of the exchange itself is not constitutive of the subordination of women; women are not subordinate because of the fact of exchange but because of the modes of exchange instituted and the valves attached to these modes.

Likewise, scholar Perdita Huston has written about the effect of development policies on women in the third world. Women are affected positively or negatively by economic development policies, and this is the basis for cross- cultural comparison. She studies the effect of the development process on the "family unit and its individual members in Egypt, Kenya, Mexico and South Asia" (30). She states that the "problems and needs expressed by rural and urban women in these countries all center around education and training, work and wages, access to health and other services, political participation, and legal rights" (qtd. in "Under Western Eyes"116). Huston relates all these "needs" to insensitive development policies that exclude women as a group or category. For her, the solution is simple. She improves the policies to improve the women's situation. And for the development of such policies, she emphasizes training for women field- workers. She uses women trainees and women rural development officers; encourage women's co-operatives. Here, women are assumed to be a coherent group or category prior to their entry into 'the

development process'. Huston assumes that all third world women have similar problems and needs. Thus, they must have similar interests and goals. However, the interests to urban, middle-class educated Egyptian housewives, to take only one instance, could surely be seen as being the same house of their uneducated poor maids. Women are constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, religion, and other ideological institutions frameworks.

For Huston, women in the Third World countries have "needs" and "problems" but few if any have "choices" or the freedom to act. This is an interesting representation of women in the third world, one that is significant in suggesting a latent self-presentation of western women that bears looking at. She writes: "what surprised and moved me most as I listened to women in such very different cultural settings was the striking commonality- whether they were educated or illiterate, urban or rural- of their most basic values: the importance they assign to family, dignity, and service to others" (qtd. in "Under Western Eyes"115).

Western feminist writings on women in the Third World subscribe to a variety of methodologies to demonstrate the universal cross- cultural operation of male dominance and female exploitation. In other words, western feminist discourse, by assuming women as a coherent, already constituted group that is placed in kinship, legal and other structures, defines Third World women as subjects outside social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted through these very structures. Legal, economic, religious and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by western standards. When these structures are defined as "under-developed" or "developing" and women are placed within them, an implicit image of the 'average Third World women' is produced. This is the transformation of the (implicitly Western) "oppressed woman" into the "oppressed Third World

women" (40). Third World women as a group or category are automatically and necessarily defined as religious, family oriented, legally unsophisticated, illiterate, domestic and sometimes revolutionary.

Uma Narayan, in *Dislocating Cultures* aims at the related notion of nation, identity, and tradition to show how western and third world scholars have misrepresented third world culture and feminist genders. *Dislocating Cultures* contributes a philosophical perspective on areas of ongoing interest such as nationalism, post-colonial studies and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and westernization in Third World context. She says, "I am arguing that Third World feminism is not a mindless mimicking of western agendas in one clear and simple sense that for instance. Indian feminism is clearly a response to issues specially confronting many Indian women" (13).

Issues that feminist groups in India have politically engaged with are the problems of dowry murders and dowry related of women, issues related to women's education, poverty, work, health and with other issues that affect women's lives. White women in the western contexts might be unfamiliar with the violence against women connected to the contemporary functioning of the institution of dowry and arranged marriages.

The Third World women are treated as slave domestic animals who are to be confined within the four walls of house remain submissive, docile and obedient. The third world man never considers them to be important one. So the suffering of third world women is of its own kind. White feminist have founded a universal category of women and those who don't share those norms are excluded as others, unable to represent themselves, quite and ignorant.

Many third world women who do not consider themselves feminists know and acknowledge women's mistreatment within their social contexts and cultural institutions. Feminist daughters are not the only ones who see that motherlands are spaces where fathers still have most of the privileges and power, and that mothers and mother-cultures relate differently to their daughters than they do to their sons, imposing different demands and expecting different forms of conformity. Third World feminist issues are hardly 'foreign imports' or 'Westernized agendas' imposed by feminists onto contexts where 'culturally authentic' non feminist women would entirely fail to see what the feminist fuss was about. Narayan further writes in her essay "Contesting Cultures" that a number of Third World feminists are middle-class urban women who have entered formerly male professional and political spheres, combined with the fact that they often demand greater equality and participation for women in various arenas of national life rather than a return to "traditional roles", facilities casting them and their political visions as embodiments of the demon "Westernization". Third World women engage in struggles over women centered issues in third world contexts of women who are not urban or middle-class, who are ignored and marginalized by an instance on seeing only urban middle-class women as 'feminists'. Third-World feminist struggles, feminists in all nations confront problematic nationalisms and different versions of these 'burdens of history'.

Regarding the texts by postcolonial women writers and culture producers Ketu Katrak argues in her essay "Politics of the Female Body" is that the female body is in a state of exile including self-exile and self-censorship, outsider ness and unbelonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy (historicized within different cultures and histories) strengthened by British racialized colonial practices in the regions of India, Africa, and the Caribbean. Katrak says "Metaphoric connotation of exile, as

well as the concept of internal exile of the female body from patriarchy, and external exile as manifest in migration and geographical relation necessitated by political persecution, material conditions of poverty and forms of intellectual silencing in Third World societies" (2). Female protagonists undergo 'internalized exile' where the body feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it and has no agency. British colonial (ist) education accompanied by racial superiority leading to linguistic and cultural alienations; the traps of cultural tradition, both colonial and local prejudice against lesbians who endure invisibility for fear of violence, and pressures of motherhood. Several texts demonstrate female bodily exile resulting from 'forgetting' one's native language and cultural ways supported by English language and mores; or from breaking 'tradition'; or for resisting the patriarchal authority of fathers and husbands. Women resist domination and attempt to reconnect with their bodies and commonalities. In resisting exile they often use their female body via speech, silence, starvation, or illness.

Third World women writers respond the complex ways in which women's bodies are colonized. Similar to anti- colonial struggle for independence on the micro political arena, women resist bodily oppressions by using strategies and tactics that are often part of women's ways of knowing and acting. A geographical deteriorating that forces colonizers to depart parallels how women attempt reclaiming their bodies from patriarchal domination. A politics of the body involves socialization involving layers and levels of ideological influences, socio cultural and religions, which impose knowledge or ignorance of female bodies and construct woman as gendered subject or object. Women writers present the struggles of protagonists to resist patriarchal objectification and definition as daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law. Socio cultural parameters of womanhood- wifeness, mothers of sons valued

more than mothers of daughters, infertility, and widowhood are grounded within economic, political, and cultural norms that consciously and unconsciously constitute an ideological framework that controls women's bodies.

A socially responsible postcolonial critic responds as do the postcolonial women writers analyzed in this study, to material and social conditions and to sexual inequalities in societies where the long arm of British colonialism shook hands with individual patriarchies in exiling women from their bodies. This study probes literary and non-literary representation of female protagonist who resist internal exile from their bodies and who struggle to reconnect with their bodies and communities in working toward amore just society for their families and communities.

### **Literary Representation of the 'Oriental' women**

Colonial discourse had brought into currency by Edward Said who saw Foucault's notion of discourse as valuable for describing that system within which that range of practices termed 'colonial' came into being. Said's *Orientalism*, which examined the ways in which colonial discourse operated as an instrument of power, initiated what came to be knowledge as colonial discourse in 1980 that saw colonial discourse as its field of study. He says, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1). The orient has helped to define Europe (or the west) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experiences. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. *Orientalism* expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.

Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the 'Orient' and the 'Oriental'.

According to Said, "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, authoring views of it, describing it, by teaching it, setting it" (25). In short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient. Not only that, because of orientalism the orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on any occasion when that peculiar entity 'the orient' is in question. It also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.

Said's Orientalism- a specific expose of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not- represents the first phase of postcolonial theory. Rather than engaging with the ambivalent condition of the colonial aftermath or indeed with the history and motivation of anti-colonial resistance, it directs our attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial time. Said points out how the expansion and extension of empire went simultaneously with the textual production. In this regards Edward Said goes on to saying in his book *Orientalism*:

Orient was created- or, as I call it, 'orientalized'- and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, it to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex

hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K.M Panikar's *Classic Asia and Western Dominance*. (23)

Said defined Orientalism, the writing from the west to the East, as a 'discourse' that is the project of representing, imagining, translating, containing and managing the intransigent and incomprehensible 'Orient' through certain governing metaphors and tropes. Orientalists simultaneously underwrote the positional superiority of Western consciousness and in doing so, rendered the 'Orient' a playground for Western "desires, repressions, investments and projections" (8).

Thus the texts provided ideological ground for the empire to thrive of huge body of writings; formed a coherent system of Western knowledge about the Orient including Africa, and Latin America, and it served as a lens for the writers to see the real Orient. No writer or the scholar can detach him/herself from the circumstance of life, set of beliefs and his/her position in the society. Said's *Orientalism* examines European and American representations of the peoples and societies of the Orient. Said argues that traditional Western scholarship on the region, as well as popular and literary depictions of the Orient, has created a stereotype of its cultures as irrational, unchanging, violent and degenerate. Such stereotypes once established have colored subsequent representations of the area so that journalists, imaginative writers and even scholars trend to bring their writings into line with this preconceived notion of what "the Orient" is. Moreover, Said asserts, negative stereotypes of the region and its peoples have long been exploited to justify Western economic and political domination of the Orient, and they continue to inform both popular attitudes and public policy towards the region.

Said views Orientalism's past and present as an almost unmitigated failure, as an enterprise which has "failed to identify with human experience" and has "failed

also to see it as human experience" (2). 'Orientalism' is best viewed in Foucauldian terms as a discourse: a manifestation of power/knowledge. Without examining Orientalism as a discourse Said says:

It is not possible to understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period.

(3)

It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength. "Orientalism is never far from the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe" (24). The idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness.

With regard to the Oriental women Gyatri Chakravarty Spivak argues that even the Indian nationalism has failed to emancipate lower-class, subaltern women, and also challenges the assumption, predominant in western society and culture, that women's reproductive labour is unwaged, domestic work. Furthermore, Spivak has criticized the western feminism, especially its universalizing claim to speak for all women, regardless of differences in class, religion, culture, language or nationality. She has questioned the 'lie' of a global sisterhood between 'first world' and 'Third World', pointing instead of the complicity of western feminism and imperialism.

For Spivak, the traditional disciplines of rational academic inquiry have restricted the way we think about textual ideas in relation to the social, political and economic world. She says that before learning about the economic text of globalization or the patriarchal oppression of 'Third World' women, we have to first unlearn the privileged systems of western knowledge that have indirectly served the interests of colonialism and neo-colonialism. One of the most important contributions that Spivak has made to contemporary critical thought is in the effective re-working of western theoretical concepts and ideas to address contemporary political concerns in the postcolonial world. It is this persistent endeavor to make western critical theory account for contemporary forms of political, economic and social inequality and oppression in the contemporary world that makes Spivak's thought particularly engaging and valuable. Spivak uses term 'worlding' to refer the way in which writing in general or textuality, has provided a rhetorical structure to justify imperial expansion. The literal, historical, legal, and geographical texts written during the colonial period describes the colonial territory as uninscribed earth and of indigenous communities as people without writing and political sovereignty are persuasive metaphors employed to justify colonial expansion. Indeed, what these metaphors illustrate is how people and territory have been controlled, subjected, dispossessed and exploited through dominant systems of western writing, textuality and knowledge. As Spivak puts it:

As far as I understand it, the notion of textuality should be related to the notion of the worlding of a world on a supposedly uninscribed territory. When say this, I am thinking basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialized was in fact previously uninscribed. (1)

Throughout the history of western culture and thought, there are certain people, concepts and ideas that are defined as 'Other': as monsters, aliens or savages who threaten the values of civilized society, or the stability of the rational human self. Such 'Others' have included death, the unconscious and madness, as well as Oriental, non-western 'Other', the foreigner, the homosexual and the feminine (37). In the structure of western thought, the 'Other' is relegated to a place outside of or exterior to the normal, civilized values of western culture. Yet, it is in this founding moment of relegation that the sovereignty of the self or the same is constituted. The challenge that otherness or alterity poses to western thought and culture has been further developed by Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas, "Western philosophy has traditionally defined the Other as an object of consciousness for western subject" (37).

The theme of Otherness has also been a central concern in post-colonial studies. In the introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that, "the orient is one of Europe's deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (38). Said describes how Orientalism controls the non-western world by defining it as the Other of Europe, Spivak has tried to describe this fixed self-Other dichotomy in favour of an ethical response to the lives and struggles of oppressed people in the 'Third World'.

Spivak seriously considers the material histories and lives of 'Third World' women in its account of women's struggles against oppression. She challenges the universal claims of feminism to speak for all women. Together with the postcolonial feminist thinkers Mohanty, Rajeswari Sundar Rajan, Nawal El Saadawi, Kumara Jayawardana and Spivak have generated an important rethinking of feminist thought. Such rethinking has challenged the assumption that women are the same, and emphasized the importance of respecting differences in race, class, religion, citizenship and culture between women. Spivak's persistent critique of western

feminist thought aims to strengthen the arguments and urgent political claims of feminist thought. Spivak says that "women are the new source of cheap labour and super-exploitation by multinational corporations, based in the 'Third World' (72). By focusing on the plight of these women Spivak has helped to redefine the critical terms and future goals of feminist politics.

Spivak identifies a tendency in some French feminist thought to describe the experiences of 'Third World women' in terms of formation of western female subject. Such approach clearly ignores some important differences in culture, history, language and social class. The concept of unlearning in Spivak's work has also had a significant impact on feminist theory and criticism. In the essay "Under Western Eye: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" Chandra Talpade Mohanty has criticized a tendency in western feminist scholarship to "colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the Third World" (Mohanty 66). What is more, Mohanty argues "that assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of western scholarship on the 'Third World' in the context of a world system dominated by the west on the other, characterize a sizeable extent of western feminist work on women in the third world" (Mohanty 66). In Mohanty's view, these assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality can have a damaging effect on different women living in the 'Third World'.

Like Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Spivak questions the universal claims of some western feminists to speak for all women, regardless of cultural differences. She cautions against the universal claims of western feminism, and emphasizes instead how the specific material conditions, histories and struggles of 'Third World' women are often overlooked by western feminism. Even the European postmodern thinkers

do focus on non-western economics as primitive conceptual objects for western theorizing rather than examining how postcolonial /'Third World' nation states have been integrated into the global capitalist economic system. The problem with such postmodern theories of value is that they clearly overlook how workers in the developing economics of postcolonial nation states such as Mexico, India or Indonesia produce the wealth and resources for powerful nation states in the contemporary western world.

Gyatri Chakravarti Spivak's literary criticism has greatly informed and influenced the practice of reading literary texts in relation to the history of colonialism. Spivak examines how the civilizing mission of imperialism was written and disseminated in and through several classic texts from the English literary tradition. Like Edward Said, Spivak repeatedly emphasizes that the production and reception of nineteenth century English literature was bound up with the history of imperialism. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Spivak argues, "Literature provided a cultural representation of England as civilized and progressive: an idea which served to justify the economic and political project of imperialism" (112). Edward Said, who tend to focus on dominant literary tradition, Spivak has also demonstrated the rhetorical and political agency of postcolonial literary texts to question and challenge the authority of colonial master narratives. Basically, the problem with Said's early model of colonial discourse was that it seemed to offer a very persuasive theory of how the west knows, controls and dominates the non-west through an all-encompassing system of representation, but it did not offer an effective account of political resistance, or the 'real', material histories of anti-colonial resistance that were masked by this dominant system of western representation.

## **Oriental Gaze and Feminism**

Gaze normally refers to a stare which means to look at something continuously without winking our eyes so as to carefully observe or dominate what is looked at. It is a normal case that none object or cares when we look people but everyone feels uncomfortable or even angry. There is basic difference between look and gaze. To look something that our eyes can catch but gaze is different from look; it is more associated with power. When male looks at objects through this particular kind of gaze it is normally called male gaze.

The gaze does not denote a well-defined theoretical or critical movement or school. This term is used like discourse as a means to encourage a particular way of considering a text or an utterance and relating it to broader socio-historical and ideological matters. It is more concerned with culture, history, politics and most of all power. When we look at an object, we see more than just the thing itself: we see the relation between the thing and ourselves some objects while making the objects to be looked upon, a viewer is always presupposed. We can take example of different work of art in which the images of women are portrayed usually as passive, submissive, seductive, and inactive. In most of them a male is presupposed viewer."The portrayal of woman and her beauty is such position which offer us the pleasure for the spectator" (Mulvey 5). So, the male gaze here is the powerful look which projects its fantasy onto the female figures that are looked at for his pleasure.

The gaze is a concept used for "analysing visual culture [. . .] that deals with how an audience views the people presented" (Mulvey 5). The types of gaze are primarily categorized by who is doing the looking. Mulvey says that in film women are typically the objects, rather than the possessors, of gaze because the control of the camera (and thus the gaze) comes from factors such as the assumption of heterosexual

men as the default target audience for most film genres. While this was more true in the time it was written, when Hollywood protagonists were overwhelmingly male, the base concept of men as watchers and women as watched still applies today, despite the growing number of movies targeted toward women and that feature female protagonists ( "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 5).

The term gaze is often applied to other kinds of media. It is often used in critiques of advertisements, television, and the fine arts. For instance, John Berger studied the European nude (both past and present) and found that the female model is often put on display directly to the spectator/painter or indirectly through a mirror, thus viewing herself as the painter views her. For Berger these images record the inequality of gender relations and a sexualization of the female image that remains culturally central today. There is gender biasness in seeing women. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. He further says, "They reassure men of their sexual power and at the same moment deny any sexuality of women other than the male construction. They are evidence of gendered difference [ . . . ] because any effort to replace the woman in these images with a man violates the assumptions of the likely viewer" (Berger 64). That is, it does not fit with expectations but transgresses them and so seems wrong (Wykes and Gunter 38-39).

Patriarchal gaze works in a concrete way. When Trinh, T. Minh-ha says, "We can't take our eyes off her, he is speaking directly of his presumably male audience, and says loud and clear that her sexualized portrayal is for the ensure of the envisioned heterosexual male viewer" (qtd. in Karina Eileras 817 ).

Bailey Rae also talks about the different layers of male gaze, sees objectification in images where women are blatantly sexualized and speaks out against it. However she is apparently not aware that she can still be objectified and sexualized despite keeping her midriff covered. How you dress says a lot about you, from your personal style to identifying you with a particular social group – it's not a simple question of looking good/attractive vs. not looking good, there can be a huge amount of personal expression involved. More broadly, Rae says:

Male-gaze type theories aren't a good fit for reality. Both men and women enjoy looking at attractive people (granted women are usually more subtle about it). And women clearly spend time (and enjoy) looking at other women, their fashion, hair, style and figures. It's women who watch beauty pageants, read magazines and articles about style etc. As a young "feminist" guy I didn't believe or want to believe this, but really — have you ever met a guy who watches beauty pageants? I haven't, but I know many (strong, feminist) women who do. (42)

There are certainly a number of biological differences between men and women. They are all minor though, the overlap between men and women in all of those areas you mentioned is significant. The minor differences in biology cannot account for the extent of 'gender traits' we see in the population every day.

Further Frank Miller writes, "It could be that our cultural stereotypes are based on real biological differences but they are surely accentuated" (24). Women are judged first and foremost on their looks, women spend time on their appearance. And since "Men aren't around when women are spending this time[. . .] it's not really women's status that has determined this necessity that they look a certain way" (37).

Women actually spend all this time doing practically the only thing that gets them any status in society just because they feel like it. She puts forward her attitude "Male gaze just doesn't ring true for me (and I'm sorry, but Mulvey's article is gibberish). Outliers aside, most boys are not much interested in dress up (or invited to play); my daughters and their friends love it, without any traditional socialization to do so. Every woman I know likes to look nice and be noticed, in a way few men do" (39). Since studies show that attractive, well-dressed men are also far more successful than other guys in practically every field, oppression of women (having to trade on looks) doesn't make sense as an explanation (to me, anyway.)

However, individuals are not responsible for the existence of the "male gaze" nor is it possible for any of us operate entirely outside of the "gaze" according to these theories. Also all of this talks about women coming onto men or liking male attention in no way debases these theories. In fact in many ways it bolsters and brings them up to date. One of the keys to these theories is the internalization of the gaze- the gaze subsumes or stunts any other frameworks of self perception women might have inextricably linking ocular attention to pleasure in women's lives. There are many strong and interesting arguments to complicate or contest theories of "the gaze". Starting with concepts of identification with subjects of images over gazers, or arguments that take into account the readings of viewers who operate from socio-cultural positions of neither the assumed gazer nor the assumed subject etc.

Furthermore, Naomi Wolf in her book argues that eating disorders are part of a set of symptoms arising from "the ideology of beauty that is always actually prescribing behavior and not appearance, a modern hallucination that grows ever more influential and pervasive because of what is now conscious market manipulation" (14-17). But eating disorders are now appearing in increasing numbers

in places that until recently were associated with the social and economic problems of poverty, hunger or in extreme cases, famine. "Cases of self- starvation have spread to diverse ethnicities and classes of women in Singapore, Hongkong, and Seoul in the past five years, and are now cropping up in India, Pakistan and the Philippines" (33). This phenomenon is not simply a matter of gross westernization or modernizations, for these processes have been ongoing in many of these nation-states for more than a century. Instead it points to the globalization of a patriarchal visual culture in which women's bodies and appearances are homogenized and fetishized as childlike or waiflike, subordinate, vulnerable, and thus easily regulated. Even as women around the world appear to be winning the struggle for greater equity in the labor force, they are losing the larger struggle for control over symbolic meaning and power. She further says:

Women's increasing loss of power-actual and ideological-over the representational meaning of their own bodies is related to the intensification of power accorded to global male-dominated fashion, music, entertainment, media and informational systems. As Wolf notes, today's children and young men and women have sexual identities that spiral around the Paper and celluloid phantoms: from playboy to music videos to the blank female torsos in women's magazines [. . .] they are being imprinted with a sexuality that is mass-produced, deliberately dehumanizing and inhuman. (162)

Symbolically and literally transformed in to body parts, women, constructed through this patriarchal gaze, create the demand for cosmetic surgery, for breast transplants, and for liposuction. This demand is more and more constructed as "natural" and "ordinary", and the physical reality of such "cosmetic" surgery- performed not for

medical reasons but as body mutilation deemed aesthetically pleasing and valuable because of its conformity to male – dominant notions of female beauty and sexuality – has been more and more elided.

The popularity to these racialized cosmetic procedures underlines that the subordination of women to a western, male-dominated social order does not stop at the checkpoints of national border crossings. Nor does the subordination take place only in the Lacanian “imaginary” (36). Such colonized and mutilated sexuality accompanies and facilitates the conversion of women’s bodies globally to trade goods, displayed, bartered, contracted, kidnapped and sold in the media, the mail-order bride catalog, and the sex trade industries that fuel the growth of a number of nation states. Women’s bodies are staged, manipulated, rented and displayed in the media and for entertainment.

In every areas like other conceptualization, have been male created. In a society where men have controlled the conceptual arena and have determined the social values and norms. Not only men perceive women from masculine perspectives but all the members of the society including women perceive the female from the prevailing masculine perspective. We all have inherited and internalizes attitude and values which are taught indifferent institutions that are controlled by male dominated ideals.

### **III. Orientalist Gaze and Representation of Nepali women in *Sold***

The novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormick is a story of one young Nepali girl who is sold by her stepfather into prostitution. She is sold to cover families' debts.

Lakshmi, the protagonist, is a 13-year-old meek and emotional girl in the novel. She is led to believe that she will work for a wealthy woman but in reality it is a ruse.

Gullible Lakshmi, is deceived by everyone in the novel, first by her stepfather then a stranger city woman 'Auntie', so called 'Uncle-Husband', 'Mumtaz' (the owner of brothel), and some Americans. When she crosses the border falls in an endless cycle of threats. She believes that after going city she can pay off her family's debt but soon learn that she will never be allowed to leave. Her dreams of city are scattered when she locked up in the "Happiness House"-a brothel house. The story ends as Lakshmi is waiting for a kind hearted American who promises her to rescue from the hell-hole. In the denouement, Mumtaz is already nabbed by the police but Lakshmi's fate is left ambiguous.

In the novel, there are many female characters. Some of them are involved in suppressing other females like Auntie Bimala, Mumtaz and Shilpa. Similarly, Ama is presented as a traditional and superstitious woman who instructs her daughter Lakshmi traditional patriarchal norms and values. Bajai Sita is a mediator in the story. She persuades the innocence village people and bargains with the city people. Mumtaz is an owner of "Happiness House" in India. She gives torture to the woman if they do not ready to have sex with the stranger. Shilpa, the aging-bird girl, is Mumtaz's spy. Likewise, Auntie Bimala is also an agent of Mumtaz who gives city dreams to the illiterate village woman. There are other characters like Pushpa and Sahana who love movies, and Monica who is friendly with her clients. They learn things clandestinely and hide their memorabilia. Though, the male's position are limited in the novel,

McCormick portrayed them as responsible for women's pathetic condition. She blames the patriarchal tradition indirectly by presenting the typical character 'stepfather'. He looks the woman as commodity and sells her daughter Lakshmi to pay his debt. In the same manner, 'Uncle Husband' works for Mumtaz. He helps her by crossing the women border line of Nepal-India. There are characters like Harish, an ordinary boy, who teaches Lakshmi some English words. And an American who comes to the brothel house and gives hope to Lakshmi that one day he will come to rescue her. But his big word could not save Lakshmi. He leaves them in an ambivalent situation. Mumtaz is nabbed by the police.

McCormick's *Sold* stereotypes the oriental woman as dreamy, money-minded, blind-follower, meek, docile etc. which gives negative identity to the whole third world women, "Let me go to the city, I say. I can work for a rich family like Gita does, and send my wages home to you" (1). She exaggerates the situation of woman unconvincingly and makes their identity problematic "My stepfather looks at me the same way he looks at the cucumbers I'm growing in front of our hut" (2). She shows that in patriarchal society men compare them with commodity from their early age by which their role is questionable in the society. It is a story of thirteen-year-old ordinary Nepalese girl Lakshmi told through the first-person narration is horrifying.

Lakshmi knows nothing about the world beyond her village sack in the Himalayas of Nepal. So, McCormick presents her more curious to go to city and described as:

Now that Gita is gone, to work as a maid for a wealthy woman in the city, her family has a tiny glass sun that hangs from a wire in the middle of their ceiling, a new set of pots for Gita's mother, a pair of

spectacles for her father [. . .] but for me, it feels like nightmare even in the brightest sun. (9)

She presents Lakshmi always running after money and city life. By showing her families pathetic condition she tries to show the third world people's condition derogatively.

When her family loses the little it has in monsoon, she grabs a chance to work as a maid in the city so that she can send money back home. What she does not know is that her stepfather has sold her into prostitution. She ends up in a brothel far across the border in the slums of Calcutta, raped, torn and bleeding until she submits.

Lakshmi's mother, *Ama*, works very hard caring things back and forth for betterment of her family. With that money Lakshmi's stepfather gambles it away by playing card at the tea house. Lakshmi loves school, playing with her friend Gita and her goat. But when the Himalayan rains wash away all the family's crops, the family is left with nothing. So, her stepfather sends her off to work for a family to support economically. Lakshmi is tricked by her stepfather that she will be a maid at a wealthy family.

The writer of this novel over generalizes the situation of the third world people as if selling their children is common for poor people. By taking the case of Lakshmi, she homogenizes the issue to whole Nepali society. Actually such incidents are happened due to the patriarchal notion towards the woman. They say, "A son will always be a son. But a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives you milk and butter. But not worth crying over when it's time to make a stew" (14). Women also present themselves as naïve and submissive. They become ready to be ruled. She further writes:

Ama says we are lucky we have a man at all. She says I am to honor and praise him respect and thank him for taking us in after my father

died [. . .] I bring his tea in the morning and rub his feet at night [. . .]  
joke about the difference between fathering a son and marrying off a  
daughter. (14)

Ama instructs her that she must obey and respect him whatever he says. She indirectly consents to be ruled because they made her to be so.

During the description of the 'oriental' woman, McCormick presents Lakshmi as curious towards another world. She allures the oriental people by describing west as 'magical white light' (15). She further says, "Except on nights when the moon is full on those nights, the hillside and the valley below are bathed in a magical white light[. . .] wondering what the world is like beyond my mountain home" (15).

Lakshmi imagines and enjoys the world beyond her mountain home. Not only that, McCormick exaggerates the situation of mountain through the mouth of her protagonist "On the mountain we mark time by women's work and women's woes" (16). Further, she talks about the four seasons in a negative manner as if each season represents the poverty, hunger and natural disaster of the third world people. By mystifying the third world culture and custom she makes the negative discourse about them. For that, she puts forward the reasons as:

In the cold months, the women climb high up the mountain's spine to scavenge for firewood [. . .] and silence their own churning stomach.  
This is the season when the women bury the children who die of fever.  
Similarly, in the dry months [. . .] they tie rags around their children's eyes to shield them from the dust blowing up from the empty riverbed.  
This is the season when they bury the children who die from the coughing disease. (16)

She is trying to show negative picture forcefully as if these are the common Nepali predicament. By saying so, she unnecessarily highlights the pathetic condition of the Nepalese woman which is not in reality. Though these aforementioned evidences and reasons are true, McCormick over generalizes the situation and forming orientalist discourse to represent the third world predicament.

Lakshmi is an ordinary mountain girl who is presented as meek, submissive, and blind-follower in the novel. The story of the novel is told by other victimized women who are escaped from the brothel. So, the very protagonist of the novel Lakshmi is McCormick's imaginative character. By using that character, writer makes a discourse and misrepresents the woman as well as the God by giving their name to cucumbers, goat and hen. She writes, women name cucumbers in our society- "Each of my cucumbers has a name" (19). And at last, she shows her superiority as "I treat them all as my children" (19).

Lakshmi is a young girl lives with her family in a small hut. Her family is desperately poor, but her life is full of pleasure like raising her pet goat and doing her school work by lamplight. She has many dreams in her life. But the sorry thing is that her dreams are confined only in the four walls of the house. She says, "For seven days and seven nights, I lie in the darkness of the goat shed dreaming of my future" (23). Here, the writer negativizes the dreams of the third world women. She messages that third world women are dreamier and says, "We could eat riverweed and drink snowmelt and sleep under the silver-white light of the mountain" (23). But their dreams are never been fulfilled.

In the novel, to show dryness, starvation and malaise condition of the people she names the title "Fifty Days without Rain". And prejudicially gives information that "the wind that blows up from the plains is called *Loo*. It cries all night, too,

blowing its feverish breath through the cracks in our walls[ . . . ] announcing itself all over the land" (25). But the things which is given, is not true. It is believed that *loo* is the condition caused by hot in plains. So, here, she exaggerates the hand to mouth problem as common which is forceful.

Patriarchy has been defined by feminist scholar as the rule of father, including the rule of older men over younger men and father over daughters as well as husband over wives. In patriarchal society, the status of women is no better than slaves. They have no any agency in the society. Whenever and whatever men want they can use. Like in the same manner, stepfather behaves with Lakshmi in the novel. He tells to the stranger, "Lakshmi wants to go to work in the city. She needs a thrashing on occasion, my stepfather says, but she is not as lazy as some" (58). Their position is relegated to the secondary position to male sex. They are not allowed to speak much and have critical opinion. Society does not allow them to take their decision by themselves. They look them as commodity. Such is the condition of Lakshmi in the novel *Sold*. She has sacrificed her life to improve her family status. She blindly follows her stepfather's decision. She does not know anything due to the lack of awareness because society does not allow her to take part in any public affairs. What so ever, she is hopeful and desire to equal with male "the owner of the tea shop, who my stepfather says, cheats at cards. Instead, we linger over a luxury that costs nothing: imagining what may be" (35). The very line shows the inequality between male and female because the stepfather always plays cards, never thinks about family's condition where as Lakshmi and Ama has become the victim of patriarchy.

Lakshmi has dreamed her own world which she wants to achieve but her dreams are confined in the brothel house. She has to pay her debt first which her stepfather has taken from Bimala. Her dreams are scattered at the early childhood

when Mumtaz, the owner of the 'Happiness House' says, "You think the money goes home to your family? Bimala may have given your family a little sum when you left home. But the rest –the money from the customers- goes to Mumtaz. Your family will never see one rupee more" (244). From these lines, McCormick gives a negative message about the oriental that the third world people are heavily in debt and leaves their houses of dreaming better future.

In patriarchal social system, women are constantly subjected to gender discrimination and differentiated as secondary object. Such discrimination too is depicted in the very novel. Ama and Lakshmi both is the victim of such discrimination. Males are always indifference towards the female's worry. Female has to maintain their household problem even if there is male. Ama says, "It is she who will pay the rent this time. We eat rice and lentils with the money Ama got for her earrings. The baby eats curds and fruit and grows fat and feisty again" (42). Lakshmi's father is the burden for family who always spends money unnecessarily. So, Lakshmi says, "How many nights until my stepfather comes home with another debt to repay" (42). Here, McCormick shows the extremity of male in non-western context. But in the name of male domination, she encourages to colonize woman's body and resist within non-western society. She says, "Even a man who gambles away what little we have on a fancy hat and a new coat is better than no man at all" (44).

Lakshmi, is a female character juxtaposed with the non-western culture. The character Lakshmi and the goddess Lakshmi (symbol of money and prosperity) is presented together to ironize the eastern culture and god. "The goddess Lakshmi will see our lights and bring us good fortune. This is the night when the goddess favours gamblers" (47). But in reality, Lakshmi (goddess) never brings good fortune to the protagonist Lakshmi rather she always running after money. McCormick deliberately

gives that quality to her character because she wants to show their superiority over oriental culture. Not only that, she wants to alienate women from their native culture and shows oriental women's weak position in the culture.

McCormick arouses the greed and curiosity over Lakshmi to construct the image of the money minded female who always greed for the city life. She described as: "Where I live, she says, the girls have sweet cakes every day. City girls have pretty dresses. She says from behind her yellow cloud and fancy baubles. They eat oranges, dates and mangoes every day. It is the easy life" (49). She shows them as passionate and illiterate who are ready to follow their males blindly. Here, when a city woman describes their daily city life, Lakshmi becomes ready to work as a maid which was the evil plan of her stepfather and city woman.

Lakshmi, an oriental woman, follows her stepfather and others to some extent that she becomes ready to say a stranger man 'uncle husband' and a woman 'auntie' without thinking anything beyond money. McCormick presents her dream world, hope, aspiration and optimism to satirize the dream of third world. Lakshmi says, "We will buy back Ama's earrings. We will have enough money for a drum of cooking oil, a barrel of flour, a new dress for me and one for Ama, a jacket for the baby, a tin roof" (51). Instantly, after giving the description she shows her dream scattered "The beast is nowhere to be seen, and my stepfather is on foot, without his city coat or even his hat" (53).

Western feminists concerns and strategies are geographically, historically and culturally grounded. They first try to install the dream of city on the third world people. They make them more curious so that orientals start to think emotionally. They become success to break the cultural norms of the third world and start to refill their own ideas. Similarly, in the book, first, she presents Ama more rigid towards the

city life. She has not given permission to Lakshmi to go to city. But when she sees 'a tin roof ' in Gita's house and the life style of a stranger city woman, she allows her indirectly- "Your stepfather has said you must go to the city and earn you keep as a maid" (54). Then after, she teaches Lakshmi city rules. That is the influence of westerners. Here, writer seems clever because she does not impose rules directly upon them rather Ama makes her inferior by instructing rules of caste system and daily life. She says:

In the city, people clean the floors with one rag and the dishes with another. Take care not to mix them up, or you will risk a beating [ . . . ] do not eat any food that comes in a paper wrapper. You do not know who has cooked it. You will make us proud as the first member of our family to leave the mountain. (57)

According to the plan of writer, Ama instructs Lakshmi and plants the seed of caste system which make them inferior. To make westerners superior McCormick explores the problem of traditional patriarchy of the non-west which makes her successful in divide and rules the third world people. As she says, "Stay two steps behind your mistress if you are helping her with the marketing, and keep your head bowed when you are in public so that the city men cannot see your face. Wash your skirt and blouse once a month" (57).

McCormick makes her so traditional to negative the oriental culture and tradition. To make the negative discourse about orient, sometimes she presents the third world culture and tradition so derogatively and exaggerates it unnecessarily. Likewise, she usually presents the characters so dreamy as if third women are more emotional and passionate towards the city life.

In the name of showing the real picture of Nepalese culture, tradition and people she mystifies all these things. She makes the third world mysterious by presenting their culture, custom and behaviour time and again. She tries to rule indirectly in the name of improving their social status. She has still the colonial mentality. McCormick enjoys in the feeling of Lakshmi's vain superiority. When she is sold in one thousand rupee she says, "There are not that many rupees in the world. I cringe at his backwardness and pray this refined and lovely city woman does not laugh him out of this store" (59). McCormick ironizes woman's position because Lakshmi is proud of getting that much money. And she is unknown about her own selling. She is presented as a meek woman. She wants to fulfill her dream at any cost. So, she accepts her stepfather's decision amidst her dream world of city. She is doubly victimized in the society. On the one hand, the patriarchy looks her as a commodity and force to earn money. On the other hand, she has the negative impact that city is a dream world where everybody can fulfill their needs. Lakshmi affords a bottle of Coca-Cola for Ama and says, "Today I am no mere girl" (61). She tries to be bold and says, "My stepfather scowls, but he does not say anything. On any other day, he would not tolerate such defiance, especially from a mere girl" (61).

McCormick presents the city luxury under the title "A New World" which makes the non-western inferior and force to be ruled. She expresses those through Lakshmi and generalizes the condition of orient that they are emotional to get city luxury. As Lakshmi says:

A river that runs white.

A man with teeth entirely of gold. It is a new world. But there is one constant: the mighty swallow tailed peak. It grows smaller the farther we walk, but still, it is always there, waiting to guide me back. (64-65)

She describes the things of the new world. And hopes these are always be there waiting to guide her back while coming.

Most of the characters in the novel are woman from third world context. And they are presented as if they themselves are the cause of domination in the society. They satirize their own position while 'Auntie' (the agent of Mumtaz) says, "We are simply following the footsteps of all the others who have gone before us" (64). In reality also, she is following the others.

Though Lakshmi is going towards her dream world, she cannot forget her past memory. Memory always haunts her. It controls their activities and affects while making decision. She says:

Inside my head I carry:  
My baby brother,  
My Ama's face  
Our family's future  
My bundle is light  
My burden is heavy. (66)

She has become nostalgic in the new world. Though she has the aim of achieving dream world, she has carried the lowly things in her mind. She is pressed by her familial burden. Through these lines, McCormick shows the common fate of the third world woman. Which indirectly appeal to the westerners to lift their social and mental status.

Auntie Bimala is an agent who works for Mumtaz, shows Lakshmi's ignorance and proudness while talking about the city. As auntie asks, "Where did you hear that all the roofs are covered in gold? She says "in school". "I am not a backward girl; I am educated" (67). Through the self-irony, writer satirizes the third world's education

system and its authenticity. That could be the symptom of contemporary imperialism exercising to a maximum degree in the name of rationalized the third world. They are attempting to control the orient's heart and mind.

McCormick is a western female writer writing on the oriental subject matter. Though feminist writing in the United States is still marginalized, she is writing on the issue of unprivileged third world women and their social status. Western feminist writing on women in the third world must be considered in the context of global hegemony of western scholarship. They make us feel inferior that orientals should not speak more "Don't speak to anyone here. If they hear you talk they will know you're from the mountains and they will try to take advantage of you" (87). Marginal writing may be the political strategy of western. In the name of representation of woman they are practicing imperialism in the eyes of third world women.

Lakshmi, an innocent girl, is being sold second time to Uncle Husband. She has no any agency. She is sold like goods which her stepfather does in the village. So the word 'sold' is symbolic to Lakshmi. Neither the city people behave her like human nor can she ever feel so during her journey to city. As he says:

One of the men in the crowd throws his cigarette butt at her feet.

Another one spits in her direction. Then another-a fat old man with a boil on his neck-picks up a handful of gravel and throws it at her [ . . . ]

one look bat that head of hers and anyone can tell she's a disgraced woman. (91-92)

In the colonial process, woman becomes the victim of their choice. Nobody likes their profession and declare them as disgraced women. This is also the hidden motif of the writer. She presents the incident to give the negative picture of the oriental women. She spits upon the dream of third world women through imagined character.

In the midst of her journey Lakshmi realizes the failure of her dream reality. In her realization she depicts the clear picture of the city. She makes aware the other third world women and discloses the western's hidden colonial motive in the third world. She describes the city as:

There are no roofs of gold. No date or mango or orange trees. And no movie stars. Only rows of sleeping bodies. Side by side by side are men, women and children in rags, asleep on the ground [. . .] I am afraid of this city where the lying-down people look like the dead. And the standing-up ones, like the walking dead. (93-94)

This is the real picture of the city. Which McCormick presents as it is because she wants to show the condition of middle-class subaltern people in the crowd of city. Especially, in the name of getting job they become victim of the city buzz and oblige to face such condition.

Women are affected negatively by economic development policies of the western. Which directly effects on the lives of the third world women. They want to get equal position in the society so they become ready to do everything. But, they do not care things what they are going to do. They are more guided by emotion. As she says:

I do not know why I am in this strange house or where Auntie Bimala is. She is a strict one, to be sure, but I will prove myself to her. And then my mother will have a new dress, shoes for the cold season, even a new shawl made of the finest yarn [. . .] and our roof, our new tin roof, will be the shiniest one on the mountain side. (100)

Women hardly use reason and always think emotionally whether they will success or not they knits the web of dreams. Women in the different cultural settings, was the

striking commonality. They give the importance to family, dignity and service to others. So does the Lakshmi in the novel also.

Third world women's images are constructed through the economic, religious and familial structures which are treated as phenomena to be judged by western standards. Here, mainly Lakshmi's present is hostile, past was problematic. So, she has become conscious about her future. She says, "The city is not what I had hoped" (103). But the memory which let out in her mind forces her to be more dreamy and emotional. Though she knows that she could not achieve success in her life, writer tricks her by bringing the past memory and identifies her negatively as the representative of whole third world woman.

The third world women are treated as domestic slave who are to be confined within house, remain submissive, docile and obedient. The third world man never considers them to be important one. So, the suffering of third world woman is of its own kind. Ama wants to save things for Lakshmi and the society also practices same- "My stepfather says- his brother received one TV as a dowry when his son married a wealthy girl" (105). Western writer forms a category of women and those who follow traditional norms represent them as quite and ignorant.

Female protagonist Lakshmi, undergo 'internalized exile' where the body feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it and has no agency. Lakshmi says, "I smile at this new Lakshmi. And she smiles back. Uncertainly" (107). Here, female body is in a state of exile within the indigenous patriarchy. She adores her own body while Mumtaz make-up her for the customers. She forgets her body and becomes happy in her beauty. She says, "I see my face reflected in a silver glass on the wall. Another Lakshmi-looks back at me. She has black-rimmed tiger eyes, a mouth red as a pomegranate, and flowing hair like the tiny gold-plants woman in the

TV like a movie star" (107). This is a self-adoration of Lakshmi where she forgets herself. Through these lines, McCormick tries to prove that third world women are emotional and forget their own position. Yet she further says, "You ignorant girl" for colonizing women's body" (109).

Time and again, McCormick tries to make Lakshmi inferior because that is her weapon to colonize oriental. She forces her to remember home from the brothel house-"Each night, I dream that Ama and I are sitting outside our hut, looking down the mountain at the festival lights, and she is twining my hair into long dark braids" (115). By showing her present situation, memory and violence, writer constructs their ambivalent situation. They are always in dual position. Whenever she feels pain, she remembers her home "I am going home, I am going home" (111). Home always comes in her mind which reminds her painful past and makes her silent. At the same time, Mumtaz says, "Do whatever they ask of you. You will work here, like the other girls, until your debt is paid off, you ignorant mountain hill girl" (112). This is the writer's politics to rule the third world. She makes to keep them silent by revealing their weaknesses publically.

Mumtaz is a middle-class urban woman who could not try to understand a fellow woman. It messages that city women are indifference towards the third world problem. Rather they highlight it negatively and exaggerate more than the real situation. They do not let to feel them even in hunger. We have to feel and think according to their plan. Lakshmi is prohibited to feel, smell and dream also. She says, "Mumtaz does not realize my hunger. I do not permit myself to smell the aroma of the bowl of curried rice that Mumtaz passes under my nose. Even in my sleep, I do not allow myself to dream of even a single roti" (118).

Westerners feel themselves superior when they become success to make fell the third world people inferior. They misrepresent the women in the name of valorizing their internal problem. First, they provide dream and hope of prosperous life. And teach them to imitate city rules and life style to be like them. They copy it easily but could not forget and fall in the prey of city luxury. They swing in both poles and remain neither side. Gradually, they become ready to follow the footsteps of city people which is the beginning phase of colonization. Similarly, in the novel, Lakshmi, Ama, Pushpa, Sahana and Harish are the victim of city luxury. Though, they have the poor economic condition, they are fascinated by the city dream. And, at the same time, they are forced to earn money by their male also.

Orient is a playground for western desires, repressions, investments and projections. Westerner keeps them silent to hide their reality. They show violence within third world women and success to make a negative discourse about them-"I try to speak, but there is no voice in my throat, words won't come" (120). They give extreme torture physically and mentally to dehumanize the women. As Mumtaz says, "You are no better than a dog" (121). McCormick has never tried to find out the reality of the women rather she generalizes the issue by taking one case of Lakshmi. She has not presented the third world woman's issue fairly. She never bothers about their profession that what they are doing rather she blames Lakshmi "You have become one of them" (128). As if many Nepalese woman dreams about city luxury and engages in prostitution in the city as a profession. In the name of making them movie star, they teach some American words. And for that McCormick uses a boy named Harish who teaches some American word to Lakshmi which makes her feel alive again in the brothel house. Lakshmi says:

The American lady is kind. Anita is wrong about the Americans, that they do not shame the children of the brothels. Everyone there is as rich as king. The birds there are as big as men. They eat a sweet treat made from snow. (180)

Through an ordinary boy, McCormick gives clarification of American and tries to remove negative impact from the third world people. She valorizes the American people and their living status. Where she deliberately uses the word 'bird' which here symbolizes freedom. She messages that the America is the only one who can bring freedom back of the suffered people.

In the text, we can see the impact of colonialism in the character. They practice western's life style, culture and language within their own culture. Harish is a son of a Nepalese woman who works in the brothel house. He follows the life style of city people. As Lakshmi says, "He gives Pushpa a kiss on the cheek and tickles baby Jeena under her chin" (146). Not only that, he has changed his name 'David Beckham' and speak with Lakshmi in different languages. But he wants freedom from the colonialism of western in the third world. He is a David Beckham boy with 'kite'. Kite symbolizes the freedom where the boy wants to fly like 'kite'. Likewise, Ama and Bajai Sita want a prosperous life like Gita- a Nepalese woman works in city, so they can not hesitate to sell a girl Lakshmi. Being a mother, *Ama* becomes ready to send a 13 year old girl Lakshmi to city with an unknown woman. Similarly, being a Nepali, Bajai Sita plays a mediator in the village for girls-trafficking. Though these are the real picture of the Nepalese society, McCormick exaggerates and highlights it more for not the real purpose rather for negative purpose.

Lakshmi could not forget her painful past memory even in the city which binds her in the brothel house. And she becomes ready to do her job for money. In the

previous days, it was forceful but nowadays, she beautifies herself to attract the rich customers who give her tip. Shahanna teaches her tricks to be free from the brothel. She says, "Do whatever Mumtaz says. Now, if you want to pay off your debt, you must do what it takes. If the customer likes you, he may give you extra money" (147). These things remind her a little freedom but she does not want to go because of shame. She says, "These days of dreaming to be free, that my feet will not obey" (141). They are working in a friendly manner to be free from the hell. They know that no one will come to save them. But, they have a false belief in their unconscious mind that they can be 'bold and beautiful' by watching American TV show. As Shahanna says, "It's the bold and the beautiful. It's from America. It brings life; strange words appear on the glass, and loud, happy music plays. It's our favourite show" (142). Western feminism claims to speak for all women, regardless of differences in class, religion, culture, language or nationality but they are guided by American so-called hegemonic ideology. Westerners put all the women in 'one' category. They give emphasis in sisterhood and universalize the women's problem. But, the identity of third world women evade from that category. Here, by over exaggerating the Nepalese woman's pathetic condition in India, she has developed a negative attitude to look the prostitute woman. Due to which, they could not come back to their own country even they get freedom and becomes ready to work like Pushpa to their whole life.

Westerns think themselves as a god figure that can bring back the freedom of the victimized people. Though they can bring back freedom, still they have not become successful to make believe the suppressed one. As Anita says to Lakshmi "The American will try to trick you into running away and they will shame you and make you walk naked through the streets. Don't be fooled" (148). In the novel also,

they only give hope to Lakshmi and others. They take her nowhere rather leave in hope and despair position. In the brothel house, women pretend themselves of being mad to save from foreigners. As Shahanna says, "We all need to pretend mad if we did not pretend, how we would live" (150).

This is the vicious circle of girls trafficking in Nepal and other country as well. So, to stop it, we have to first break the patriarchal tradition and oppression of women in the name of dowry. Then after, we have to unclean the privileged system of western knowledge that has indirectly served the interests of colonialism. Like, McCormick deliberately engages Shilpa to this profession because her mother was in this business and now she is in the same business. It is the family trade. So, Shahanna says, "Shilpa is here of her own choice. She has no debt to Mumtaz she can leave any time she likes" (173). By showing that, McCormick indirectly encourages the Nepalese to engage in that profession. And, at last, makes a negative discourse by exaggerating their pathetic condition.

In the text, she is heading to fulfill the colonial desire. She chooses the place Nepal to show the burning issue of girls trafficking. Because she wants to give the message that America is serious about the issue and able to rescue the women from the brothel like India. So, McCormick uses as American agent under the title "An Accidental Kindness" but it reveals their devil mind. He engages in a sexual activity with Lakshmi. Lakshmi says:

He did not simply stand and zip his trousers when he was finished or fall heavily asleep on the top of me the way some do. He did not fix his hair in the mirror and walk out without a word. Perhaps he forget where he was, imagining for a moment he was his sweetheart. But I

could feel myself, my true self; give in to the simple pleasure of being held. (182)

It explores their hidden self. They exploit the Nepalese woman like Lakshmi in the name of giving freedom to them. He gives her useless sympathy and goes without paying. But his word succeeds to make a place in Lakshmi's heart and mind. This shows her emotional and naive quality. She begins to dream and compare his body and activity with the homeland. She says, "His body warmed mine the way the Himalayan sun warms the soil. His skin was soft-like the velvet of Tali's nose. And his contentment soaked through to me like an evening rain shower" (182).

McCormick illustrates different incidents and shows how people and territory have been controlled, subjected, disposed and exploited through dominant systems of western knowledge. Through Harish McCormick teaches her to look up and sense of knowledge. One day he hands a shiny yellow pencil to Lakshmi and possibility of flying kite in the sky. That gives Lakshmi another kind of hope which she describes as "Something strange is happening, something surprising and unstoppable" (188).

Lakshmi becomes so sad because it has been thirty days since the hugging man came. He forgets her by giving torture where she is living in the hope to be free. She says, "I am dreaming again. Of flying-on the wings of kite-high above the snow, swallow-tailed peak" (195). Now, she does not want to bring back her dreams because the outside world is not in favour of them. They see them as 'living dead'.

After the first meeting with an American, she meets many Americans in the brothel house. They all give her empty word 'hope' which makes her feel humiliation. She says, "They say America is a clean place" (211). Though America is clean, its people are dirty. She describes another man as "This one comes to the door looking somewhat lost [. . .] he seizes my braid and pulls me down on top of him as the white

card flutters to the floor. He is not a good American. He is just another drunk" (228). They humiliate and misrepresent the women before doing their job so that Nepalese women cannot imagine a life outside this place. They never think good for the third world people because in the name of civilization and knowledge they can do politics upon the Nepal like other third world countries till hundred and thousand years.

Orientalism examines European and American representations of the people and societies of the orient. Western scholarship has created a stereotype of orient as irrational, emotional, unchanging, violent and degenerate. In the novel, almost all the female characters are engaged to suppress and dominate the fellow woman. Many characters in the novel are Nepalese except Mumtaz. Mumtaz is so brutal and humiliates the Nepalese worker. She is the agent of western who messages the writer's objective. Whereas, Lakshmi is so innocent, Shilpa (Mumtaz's spy) says, "You actually believe what she's told you, you stupid hill girl" (236). The writer presents her so submissive and does not give any solution so that 'anyone can open this door'.

McCormick presents different types of American for a negative stereotype of the Nepal and its people. Though Lakshmi knows that the Americans are not for good purpose, but sometimes she happens to believe them blindly. She says, "Every day I have prayed for an American to come" (251). The American shows her a digital TV and says, "It can take you a clean place" (253). They show her the image of other poor Nepalese girl by which they bargain with her. But it is ironical that she does not believe them totally and says, "I don't know this word, but it must be the name of strange American magic he has that allows him to put me in his silver box" (252).

When she sees the image of the flying bird given to her by an American she becomes doubtful to herself and says:

I don't know what to believe. I believed that the stranger in the yellow cloud dress was taking me to the city to work as a maid. I believed that uncle husband would protect me from the bad city people. I believed that if I worked hard enough here at Happiness House, I could pay down my debt. And I believed it was all worth it for the sake of my family. I am too afraid to believe him. (256)

She accepts that over believing to an unknown man is the cause of her suffering in the city. But she is happy because she is doing all this for the sake of the family. She cannot be happy with the present so she always dreams of new world and tries to live in her own world happily. So, she says, "I am going to believe that this strange pink man is a dream, a cruel trick to the mind. I am going to believe that when I open my eyes he will be gone. The clean place, I want to go there" (256).

The American makes their life more miserable because they already expose their reality which the Nepalese society cannot digest and think them as living dead. Due to which Lakshmi says, "This affliction-hope-is so cruel and stubborn, I believe it will kill me" (262). She further says, "They are liars; I cannot walk away from my crooked-face" (268). She shows her anger to the American man because by giving her hope of free life they portray the Nepalese women negatively.

Most of the female characters in the novel are Nepalese. They all look Lakshmi as goods. From the very beginning, she is a victim of male as well as female gaze. Patriarchal gaze works in a concrete way. It creates an image that the women are passive, submissive, seductive and inactive. As Lakshmi says, "My stepfather looks at me the same way he looks at the cucumbers I'm growing in front of our hut" (7). The male gaze is the powerful look which projects its fantasy on to the female figure.

The gaze is not a well-defined theoretical movement. This term is used like a discourse by which the writer has made a negative discourse that the female are jealous, emotional and superstitious. Ama, Bajai Sita, Shilpa and Mumtaz are presented as the typical women who define female negatively. Cormick presents Ama as a conservative Nepalese woman who tries to manipulate her daughter in the name of culture. Lakshmi has got her first blood so Ama teaches her to follow patriarchal tradition. She says:

You must stay out of sight for seven days. Even the sun cannot see you until you've been purified. Don't come out for any reason. If you must use the privy, cover your face and head with your shawl. At night, when your stepfather has gone out and the baby has gone to sleep, I will return. And then, I will tell you everything you need to know. (20)

She unknowingly tries to dominate the woman for adopting the patriarchal norms that women should not see the face of their male directly as well as should not call by their name. Not only that, Ama restricts Lakshmi's freedom from her early age and made her submissive towards the male. She says:

Before today, you could run as free as a leaf in the wind. Now, you must carry yourself with modesty, bow your head in the presence of men, and cover yourself with your shawl. Never look a man in the eye. Never allow yourself to be alone with a man who is not family. (21)

She makes a female discourse that they should be modesty and they should cut-off their freedom because they are the object to be possessed. Gaze controls the activities of women or they themselves are ready to be gazed. They think that the men as watchers and women as watched.

Though, McCormick tries to portray the domination of a woman by their male or themselves, she shows them more superstitious towards the culture. And she makes a negative discourse about Nepalese culture and women. As Ama says, "This is our fate, so simply to endure is to triumph" (22). She has already internalized the discourse and teaches others to be so.

Lakshmi is doubly victimized in her family. On the one hand, Ama behaves her like a child and gives a coin to her and says, "Run off and buy yourself a sweet cake like the other children" (48). Which Lakshmi does not like. Because she thinks herself mature and says, "I am not a child anymore" (48). On the other hand, Lakshmi's stepfather looks her as economically and forces her to go city to earn money like mature man or women. So, here, we can say that gaze determines the identity of the woman.

Lakshmi is not fit in the eye of male gaze because they have to maintain their body according to the spectator. Otherwise the viewers won't pay enough for her. A stranger woman bargains with Bajai Sita and stepfather and makes a discourse for woman that they should have a big hip to be beautiful. As a stranger says, "She has no hips, and she's plain as porridge. I'll give you only five hundred" (59). Big hip is one of the criteria for women to earn money.

The image of modesty, submissive and sexually attractive women record the inequality of gender relation. Male and female both try to fit themselves sexually attractive. Male has the sexual power so women deny any sexuality other than the male construction. Lakshmi is decorated according to city norms to attract the male customers. They are following the norms what the male has constructed. Lakshmi says, "She opens a tin box and removes a small bottle of red liquid. Then she takes my hand and paints the liquid on my nails, while the other girl uses a black crayon and

draws on my eyelids" (106). She does not know anything that why they are doing so and says, "They do for me what only my Ama has done before" (106). She has neither feelings nor pride rather she is the victim of female suppression and violence.

McCormick portrays the female's violence upon the female as it is in the text. These are the burning issues in the Asian countries like Nepal, India etc. The suppression of a woman to a woman in the house, office, industries and public or private places are the result of caste, economy and gender discrimination. Mumtaz is an Indian business woman who thinks herself superior where as Pushpa is a common Nepali woman bounded by debt like Lakshmi. Once Pushpa has been in bed for three days and nights Mumtaz says, "If you do not get out of bed and see the customers, you are out on the street" (201). She shows the colonizers perspective through a wealthy Indian woman because she is projecting to colonize the Nepalese woman's body. By which, the writer makes a conclusion that women's violence in the third world are common. Even they keep the children as a worker in place of mother for big money. Mumtaz says to Pushpa, "Sell your little daughter Jenna to me. Men would pay dearly for pure one. In a few years, when you become old enough, I can make a lot of money with her" (201-202).

Similarly, Lakshmi knows the women's destructive role and scolds for their nefarious behaviour with female. She says, "Mumtaz is a monster. Only a monster could do what she does to innocent girls" (237). Mumtaz is so brutal that through her nature, we can guess the city woman's gaze towards the Nepali innocent girl. She is the representative of civilized, educated wealthy city woman who is practicing the human body trade, contracted and sold for the male. Women's bodies are colonized through sex trade display in media for entertainment. At the same time, women perceive the female from the prevailing masculine perspective that are controlled by male dominated ideals.

#### IV. Conclusion

Third world feminism is useful to critique dominating, essential and coercive ethos of colonial, western, and even third world patriarchal culture. The very relegation of women to the position of the 'other' by patriarchal domination is rigorously criticized in this domain. Male gaze is that 'panopticon surveillance' which creates certain notion of truth by imposing certain discourses. By these discursive constructions of gaze, male creates the rhetoric of domination upon women. The subtle and unidentified issue of gaze under third world feminism nowadays is female's gaze upon female. It is more vicious and noxious for women's own protection of values, institution and ethos because it shows that women are the very cause for the obliteration of women's own progress.

McCormick's *Sold* projects the western woman's gaze upon female at the same time through the representation of female character Lakshmi. McCormick paints Lakshmi as sensual, emotional, submissive and innocent in all parts of the novel. And in the same way, she projects her as meek woman who becomes ready to do whatever her stepfather says for improving her family's status. But, due to the lack of knowledge and awareness, she does not know about herself being sold to a stranger woman by her stepfather. McCormick presents her as a beautiful and attractive object of voyeuristic male gaze.

Women are expected to serve men physically. Men look them as commodity and try to make them inferior by birth. They say, "A son will always be son, but a girl is like a goat. Good as long as she gives milk and butter" (14). Lakshmi, an imaginative character of the writer, is a narrator of the story. She tells her obsessive experience from the very beginning of her life in a brothel house. Lakshmi's family is so poor. So, McCormick presents her as a dreamy and submissive Nepalese girl from

the beginning to the end of the text. Lakshmi is defined by her outward appearance, as an innocent and stupid hill girl. Not only males, but females also exploit women. In the text, Ama, Bajai Sita and Mumtaz use Lakshmi for earning money. Even Mumtaz rules woman's body.

Lakshmi, a protagonist is being sold by her own parents with the help of Bajai Sita. She is brought as a unique and exotic object to attract the male in the brothel house. She has no intrinsic value as human being to them. She is used as an object for pleasure through viewing and consuming. Though McCormick seems to be serious in those matters, it is only on the surface level. On the deeper level she is also serving the same traditional limiting views of women. Thus, McCormick's *Sold* reflects the fusion of western and orientalist gaze on the reality of third world women.

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