

Tribhuvan University

Commodification of Females in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Memories of My*

Melancholy Whores

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by

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This thesis titled “Commodification of Females in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Suman Prasai, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The research tries to unveil how women have been commodified in the Colombian society where capitalism and patriarchy are dominant social values through the study of women characters in Marquez's novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. Conditions of female characters are not better than marketable commodity. Females are controlled and deserted by the males who handle the property. Patriarchy in its capitalistic form torments and exploits women in different ways. Women are not regarded as human beings rather they are taken as commodities, devoid of feelings. Patriarchy humiliates females as 'second sex', weak and passive whereas capitalism regards women as laborers. In capitalism, all means of productions are captured by males and the females are mere low paid workers. That's why, females are compelled to sell their bodies as commodities in market. Hence, there is double victimization of females in present day world. All the female characters are suffering from male domination caused by property handlings. So, to liberate them from such domination, economic distribution should be equalized and the concept of patriarchal superiority should be changed.

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Introduction

Gabriel Jose de la Concordia Garcia Marquez (born March 6, 1927) is a Colombian novelist, short-story writer, screen writer and journalist. Garcia Marquez is considered one of the most significant authors of the 20th century. In 1982, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. He pursued a self-directed education that resulted in his leaving law school for a career in journalism. He started as a journalist, and has written many acclaimed non-fiction works and short stories, but is best known for his novels, such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and *Love in The Time of Cholera* (1985). His works have achieved significant critical acclaim and widespread commercial success, most notably for popularizing a literary style labeled as musical realism, which uses magical elements and events in order to explain real experiences. Some of his works are set in a fictional village called Macondo, and most of them express the theme of solitude.

His book *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was published in 1967 and it became commercially successful. This novel was widely popular and led to Garcia Marquez's Nobel Prize as well as the Romulo Gallegos prize in 1972. The story chronicles several generations of the Buendia family from the time they found the fictional south American village Macondo through their trials and tribulations, instances of incest, birth and deaths. The history of Macondo is often generalized by critics to represent rural town throughout Latin America. This novel is a brilliant evocation of many of the Latin American concerns. It treats Latin America socially, historically, politically mythically and epically which is at the same time life like and fictive. In it the totality of Latin American society and history is expressed. The novel primarily presents the regional history of the town called 'Macondo' and the seven generations of the Buendia family that inhabit it. This local chronicle is the real representative of the

history of Colombia and of Latin America in general from its mythical founding to that of the real history followed by interminable civil wars, dictatorship and rural violence.

Love in the Time of Cholera was first published in 1985. It is considered a nontraditional love story as –lovers find love in their ‘golden years’ – in their seventies, when death is all around them. This novel is based on the stories of two couples. The young love of Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza is based on the love affairs of Garcia Marquez’s parents. The love of old people is based on a newspaper story about the death of two Americans, who were almost 80 years old, who met every year in Acapulco. They were out in a boat one day and were murdered by the boatman with his oars.

His another novel *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* revolves around Santiago Nasar’s murder. The narrator acts as a detective, uncovering the events of the murder second by second. In the first chapter, the narrator tells the reader exactly who killed Santiago Nasar and the rest of the book is left to unfold why.

Marquez’s other novels include *The Autumn of the patriarch* (1975), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981), *The General in his labyrinth* (1989), *Of love and other Demons*(1994) and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004).

Reality is an important theme in all Garcia Marquez’s works. His works like *In Evil Hour*, *Big Mama’s Funeral* reflect the reality of life in Colombia and this theme determines the rational structure of the books. In his other works he has experimented more with less traditional approaches to reality. So that “the most frightful, the most unusual things are told with the deadpan expression.” A Commonly cited example is the physical and spiritual ascending into heaven of a character while she is hanging the laundry out to dry in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The style of

these works fit in the “marvelous realm” described by the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier and has been labeled as magical realism.

This research focuses on commodification of female in *Marquez’s Memories of My Melancholy Whores* with an attempt to explore lower status of women in the society where patriarchal norms and values are dominant. In most of the societies the status of the lower class women is very pathetic. They have been treated as commodities. Capitalistic system and dominant patriarchal notion have left adverse effects in the overall process of women and their condition is deteriorating. The unnamed protagonist of the novel passes most of his time in brothels till his nineties. He purchases the female body and fulfills his desire. He says he has never slept with a woman whom he didn’t pay. This highlights the functioning of patriarchy and the pervasive practice of commodification of women under capitalism.

In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, a fourteen years old girl throws herself in the hell of prostitution as she extremely suffers from the poverty. On the other hands there is ninety years old unnamed protagonist who searches new and young girl from one brothel to another to fulfill his erotic desire. Women sell their bodies to sustain their life while the men buy them with the money power. When the men feel bored, they go to brothel for refreshment. After paying money the males establish sovereignty over the females. Males become the ruler and the females are ruled. Women are oppressed whereas the men are oppressor. Men play with the female body in the way they like. Women are sacrificed for the pleasure of the men. Hence, the existing capitalistic mode of production and the patriarchy are the determiner of the commodification of females.

In the very beginning of the novel, the unnamed protagonist of the novel says “The year I turned ninety, I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of wild love with

an adolescent virgin.” (1) This line explores the psychology of the old man who is already ninety and still not satisfied with the women’s body. He wants to pass the night with a virgin with her delicate organs. It looks as if the old man is like a vulture indulging upon the corpse. He lacks moral and humanitarian values. The prostitute including the fourteen years old girl can’t oppose because they have been trapped in the structure of capitalism and patriarchy and if they oppose their survival itself becomes difficult. Society determines a person’s fate. Societal environment, class issue, gender, economic mode of production etc. plays the most significant role in the life of persons. In the society where male norms are dominant women have to sacrifice their desires. Similarly, in capitalist society, ‘have not’ group or the poor have to tolerate all kinds of miseries.

In the novel, the old man of ninety goes for prostitution with an adolescent virgin. His intention is physical pleasure. But when he discovers the girl as very weak and miserable due to poverty, he can’t hunt her. Gradually his mentality changes and starts loving her. Throughout his life he was devoid of love. Now at the age of ninety he experiences a sincere love unmatching for a young girl of fourteen. Although he says he loves the girl but it is based on male jealousy. He doesn’t want other males to develop the relation with the girl. If she used to be awakened and not tired on bed, he would have already devoured her. Her tiredness, poor dressing and her sleeping stops him from having sex. But he enjoys looking her naked body. He might have loved her but it is based on dominating attitude and jealousy. Every night he looks her nakedness and tries to calm down his physical desire and the unfulfillment of love.

The old man counts the number of women with whom he was on bed. He has long list of women. He says “By the time I was fifty there were 514 women with whom I had been at least once.” This shows his relation to the women is only buying

and selling of the body. He is never exhausted with sex. Women are nothing for him but arithmetical number to count. By the time of fifty, he had already had intercourse with more than five hundred and this number is not less. So, for the fulfillment of physical desire, he pays a large amount of money by the time of ninety. Even in this age he is in search of young and virgin girl. This is the best example of the commodification of female. He doesn't concern with emotion of women but with the body. For him, women's body is of some value but not the sentiment. Women are mere commodities to purchase in the market. His patriarchal ideology never regards that women's heart is similar to his own. For him women are objects to be used by men.

Memories of My Melancholy Whores is Garcia Marquez's latest novel published in 2004. It came after the author's magical portrait of his own youth and an apprenticeship in a classic memoir (*Living to Tell the Tale*, 2003). This tale demonstrates that the shorter form of the story does not lend itself to Mr. Garcia Marquez's talents: his penchant for huge, looping, elliptical narratives that move back and forth in time is cramped in this format, as is his desire to map the panoramic vistas of an individual entire life. Marquez has been interested in writing from the vantage point of old age, and this story takes that impulse to an extreme. Its narrator, a former scholar known by his students as *prof. Gloomy Hills*, is turning ninety and decides to celebrate his birthday by having sex with a young virgin. He places a call to the madam of his favorite brothel and makes arrangements to spend the night with 14-years -old girl. In the course of recounting the relationship he develops with this girl, whom he calls *delgadina*, the old man also ruminates about "the miseries" of his "misguided life".

In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, his first book of fiction in ten years, a novel of a little over one hundred pages, Marquez returns to fairy-tale form that he has used in short fictions in the past. Some may see this novel as a sort of new breath of life for Garcia Marquez, who seems to have successfully triumphed over his cancer. Others may see it as the perverse dream of an old man who has nothing to look forward to other than death, at the time of the book's publication, Garcia Marquez was seventy- eight years old. Even before the official publication of *Memoria de mis putas tristes* in Spain and Latin America, the little book was eagerly anticipated, with street vendors hawking pirates' copies. To protect their investment of a million-copies release, the Spanish-language publishers were quick to report that Garcia Marquez had made significant changes at the last minute to the final chapter.

Garcia Marquez's recent work *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* is one of his widely discussed texts. Its characters and the context resemble Colombian society. The novel captures the socio-culture scenarios of the Colombian society. It has received many critical responses immediately after its publication in 2004. Critics have tried to interpret it from different angles and perspectives. Gray Paul, Lawrence Olszewski, James Buresey and many others are some of the remarkable critics on Garcia Marquez's *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* .

Lawrence Olszewski remarks,

“The novel, set in the 1950s in a Colombian coastal town, is both a paean old age and a confirmation of the empty power of love; the invincible power that has moved the world is unrequited, not happy, love.” Garcia Marquez connects to his earlier works with amorous epistles, prostitution as metaphor, the theme of regenerative love, and

the first person narrative. One also detects a situational resemblance to Yasunari Kawabata's *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. (130).

Gray Paul in his sublime folly comments:

“The year I turned 90 I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of wild love with an adolescent virgin” Thus begins Gabriel Marquez's *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, the 1982 Nobel Laureate's first work of fiction in 10 years. The new work looks decidedly sparse and subdued. The narrative is toned down, appropriately so, since it is provided by a nonagenarian; the exfoliating energy and exuberance of solitude and such other Garcia Marquez triumph as *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1982) and *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1988) are largely missing. What remains is the peculiar Garcia Marquez magic. (41-42).

James Bursey comments on his *Review of Contemporary Fiction* – Built into the memoir of a minor columnist who has contemplated writing a book called *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* are disquisition on mortality- familiar from *Love in the Time of Cholera* – and the shape of a life that has not achieved anything significant. The unnamed narrator says he once thought to write about “the miseries of my misguided life” though such miseries are apparently confined to romance for he has a modestly paying occupation, a fine house inherited from his parents, and rude good health at the age of ninety. It is on that birthday that the narrative starts. The whores are women who have possessed, fascinated, or confounded him, and it is a sign of the narrator's unreflective nature, sometimes his denseness, that they have little individuality and that he is the melancholic, not them. Aphoristic on occasion- “Love is not a condition of the spirit but a sign of Zodiac” – and almost humorless

about himself the narrator is a craftsman when it comes to words, but much less capable in real life. (149)

The Newsweek magazine states: He may not be cranking out epics of magical realism on the scale of “*One Hundred Years of Solitude*”, but as “*Memories of My Melancholy Whores*”, a slim, autumnal novel about a nonagenarian’s lust for a virgin, attests, Nobel Prize winner Garcia Marquez, now 78 remains a conjuror to reckon with (2).

Memories of My Melancholy Whores inevitably will be compared to Vladimir Nabokov’s paean to passion for a child, *Lolita* (1955), but it is Dante’s celebration of a similar love for his Beatrice that invented this kinds of romantic love story. Gabriel Aschenbach’s tragic love for the young Tadzio in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice* (1912) is perhaps the most famous twentieth century model. The most immediate comparison is suggested by Garcia Marquez’s opening epigraph from Yasunari Kawabata’s *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* (1926), another classic story of idealistic love of an older man for young girl. *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* centers on a brothel visited by old men who can no longer perform sexually. The difference between Kawabata’s story and Garcia Marquez’s new novel is that, whereas Kawabata is concerned with the inevitability of growing old and the longing for death, Garcia Marquez holds out for the romantic ideal of never being too old to fall in love. *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* is not a fairy tale for the aged but rather a fable for the romantic.

Present research tries to relate the idea of sexuality in terms of exploitation after observing all these critical responses from different critics and scholars, it has become more relevant to make research on the issue of Marxist Feminism. Some have highlighted the issue of lust in old age while some others have pointed towards the

experience of love. The critics despite the differences unanimously agree on the fact that the protagonist regards women as commodity to purchase. He has owned all the women from his youth to his old age only with the help of money. So the protagonist's general assumption is that everything can be bought. Even at this age of ninety he purchases a fourteen year old virgin to fulfill his physical desire. Yes, after encountering the girl circumstances lead him towards the experience of love, but his perspective to look women is patriarchal male notion of domination and exploitation. Even In the case of the fourteen year old virgin, he looks and observes the naked body from each and every angle.

The literature review of the novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* shows that male female relationship in terms of their works and treatment is a significant issue in the novel. The critics have elaborated the novel carrying the theme of lustful desire of male , alienation, sexual fantasy in old age. The protagonist has been analyzed from different angles. Their major concern is in the plight of the young virgin and the old protagonist. The young virgin is very pathetic as she has to put her body on sale. Although the girl feel uneasy with the new experience of being a prostitute. She has just entered into her youth. Her bodily parts are not yet fully developed and she has already been thrown in the hell of brothel. Therefore, the girl's compulsion to serve the old man to satisfy his lust is researchable issue in the novel.

The victimization and objectification of the women in the novel need to be unveiled and to be done justice to the characters who have been oppressed in the novel. Therefore the researcher attempts to uncover the underlying structure of exploitation of women under capitalistic and patriarchal system. Exploitation of women in the novel takes the form of objectification of worker unveils this problem.

The researcher will take help of Marxist feminist's theoretical insight in this research work.

Marxist feminism is a theoretical discourse that advocates for the rights of women on economic and sexual equalities. Its purpose is to give an insight to liberate women from economic and gender oppression. For this purpose the theory attempts to show how women are oppressed, exploited and objectified in the patriarchal capitalism. This doctrine redefines women's activities and goals from a female centered point of view and refutes to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex and a submissive other. According to the Marxist feminist theoretical insight, women are used as commodities in the capitalistic society. Women especially having lower status in the society are made to sell themselves as commodities for their survival. Women workers are purchased and sold according to the capitalistic desire. The research work tries to expose how the young girl and other women have been treated as playthings or commodities in the hands of capitalists and men having patriarchal mindset.

The research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction, including the literature review and a discussion on the propriety and significance of topic and its hypothesis. The second chapter deals with the discussion of theoretical tool that is applied to analyze the text. The major tool will be the Marxist feminism for analyzing the commodification of women by the protagonist. The third chapter will apply the theoretical tool to the text and prove the hypothesis. Finally the last chapter will be the conclusion of the research on the basis of chapter three.

Methodology: Feminism in Relation to Marxist Theory

Feminism

Feminism is a discourse that involves various movements, theories, and philosophies which are concerned with the issue of gender difference, advocates equality, for women, and campaign for women's rights and interests. Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values, that is against the natural law of equality, to liberate women. It, as a movement, declares that women are also human beings like men. It is a voice against the inadequacy, the dissertation as well as ideologies of the males. It is a strong complaint against patriarchal monopoly. It is a, commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination to establish a healthy and equal society for both male and female. Feminism as "The movement for women's liberation is a part of the creation of a new society in which there are any forms of discrimination. This society can't be separated from the process of its making" (Rowbothan qtd. in Bryson 257).

Major focus of feminism is on political, economic, physical, psychological and religious equality. It opposes gender roles, stereotypes and discrimination against women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless.

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is", British author and critic Rebecca West remarks, "I only know that other people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or prostitute." (219). Feminism has often focused upon what is absent rather than what is present, reflecting concern with the silencing and marginalization of women in a patriarchal culture, a culture organized in favor of men. Unlike the other approaches,

feminism is an overtly political approach and can attack other approaches for their false assumptions about women.

The term 'feminism' was first used by the French dramatist Alexander Dumas in 1872 in a pamphlet "L" to designate the emerging movement for women's rights. It gradually emerged to be a worldwide cultural movement to secure a complete equality of women with men in the enjoyment of all human rights, moral, social, religious, political, educational, legal, economic and many others. It studies the dominations of women in many fields from different perspectives. Therefore, Rosemarie Tong states that:

Feminism is not one, but many theories or perspectives and that each feminist theory or perspective attempts to describe women's oppression, to explain its causes and consequences, and to describe strategies for women's liberation. The more skillful a feminist theory can combine description, explanation and perspective the better that theory is. (I)

Feminism is a reaction at the unfair treatment imposed upon women. It raises voices against the commodification of women. Women are not the object used for the convenience of men. It is an assault made by women to break all oppression and restriction. It's a battle against patriarchy and its ill treatment of the female race." Patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women's self confidence and assertiveness, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally, and therefore correctly, self effacing and submissive" (Tyson 85). Feminism wages war against all kinds of myth making tendency of men. It challenges the foundation of male norms and assumption. It questions heliocentric ideologies,

patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation of literature, economics, politics, religion etc.

Feminist ideology negates gender as the determiner of privilege and status. It focuses on physical equality and opposes the gender roles, stereotypes and discrimination against women based on assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless. It rejects the idea that certain characteristics are inherently masculine, which are positive and superior and that certain characteristics are inherently feminine, which are negative or inferior. Feminism as movement crosses the class and race boundaries.

Feminism as a movement started only after Second World War especially in the decade 1960s when the voices of minorities like African American, Jewish etc emerged as movements. In this period suppressed voices got chances to revolt so, 1960s was the beginning decade of its institutional development. Earlier also feminist felt that females are in fact made inferiors not by nature by social mechanism. In ancient period women were taken as puppet to amuse males. They said that females lack certain qualities which males possess.

Using feminist theory, this research has endeavored to identify the structural determinants of the problems, experiences and ideological conflicts that feminists have to have so eloquently written about. It is different to differentiated between concrete instances at the level of analysis of social and market relationship where male dominations and class differences may be the most important factors.

Motivated by the quest for social justice, feminist inquiry provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural and political phenomenon. Feminism supports the idea that the biological differences cannot justify any form of oppression and inequality in human societies because it is not responsible for oppression and

inequality between sexes. Marquez's novel, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* presents a world where neglecting the female the values patriarchy has established its sovereignty. The women are commodified as they are being sold and bought in market value. All the means of production, property rights, political power have been captured by men and women are living dependant life. This research tries to unveil this commodified condition of women. Moreover, feminist criticism also raises a strong voice against the injustice of patriarchy and capitalism done upon women.

Women are mostly confined in house activities and they are not allowed to go out work because their strength, skill, ability, are taken inferior than the males, in fact, which is not real but general assumption. Women are doing household activities without any paying. Their work plays vital role in outside work but they don't get any credit. In fact women enter the productive and important work before than the males of the society. They pave the way for outward activities and make base for industry. This is why Rosemarie Tong says:

No woman has to enter the productive work force, for all women are already in it, even if no one recognizes the fact. Women's work is the necessary conditions for all other labor from which, in turn surplus value is extracted. By providing current (and future) workers not only with food and clothes but also with emotional and domestic comfort, women keep the cogs of the capitalistic machine running. (54)

Therefore, some Marxist feminists ask for the wage for their household activities. They say that from the production of capitalistic factory or from surplus value some amount of money should be given to women. State should pay for housework of women. Tong brings this Marxist feminist concept from Mariarosa Dall Costa and Selma James, who, "proposed that the state (the government and employers) not

individual men (husbands, fathers and boyfriends), pay wage to housewives because capital ultimately profits from women's exploitation" (55)

The feminist movement of literary criticism is concerned with the representation of women in literature and position of women in society. The primary aim of the movement is to free women from oppressive restraints especially the cultural restraint of society which fixes the women's identity within narrow boundaries. The main strain of feminist movement strongly refuses the cultural definition of women which attempts to fix women's identity within male dominated canon. Lois Tyson says, "Feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature and other cultural productions reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women"(81).

Feminist literary criticism developed mostly since the beginning of the late twentieth century women's movement. That movement included the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and Betty Friedan, who examined a female self constructs in literature by male authors to embody various male fears and anxieties. They saw literary text as models and agents of power. In her book *The Second Sex* (1949), De Beauvoir asked what is woman, and how she is constructed differently from men. The answer was that a woman is constructed differently by men. Kate Millets' *Sexual Politics* (1970) was one of the first widely read works of feminist literary criticism. Millet's concern was upon the twin poles gender as biology and culture. In her analysis of D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, Henry Mailer and Jean Genet, she reads literature as a record of male dominance. As a "Resisting reader". Millet included critiques of capitalism, male power, crude sexuality, and violence against women. She argued that male writers distort women by associating them with deviance. She appropriately concludes that the "interior colonization" of women by

men is "sturdier than any form of segregation", such as class, "more uniform, and certainly more enduring" (24-25).

Elaine Showalter has identified three phase of modern women's literary development: the feminine phase (1840-80), during which women writers wrote under domination of male traditions; the feminist phase (1880-1920), when women advocated for their rights; and the female phase (1920-present), when dependency upon opposition that is, on uncovering misogyny in male texts- is replaced by the rediscovery of women's texts and women. Women's literature is "an imaginative continuum of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images, from generation to generation" (Feminist Criticism 11).

In her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* Mary Wollstonecraft depicted how the industrialized Europe of the eighteenth century worked against the married bourgeoisie women of the time. She is an advocate of educational and social qualities for women. She compared the women of that period with caged birds. She attacked the sentimental novels of her time for their harmful influence on women's intellectuality and said, "Feminine weakness of characters, often produced by confined education is a romantic twist of the mind, which has been very properly termed sentimental" (398). Women are given sentimental novel so that they always remain in the story of love affairs and feeling.

Similarly, Virginia Wolf discusses, in her book *A Room of Ones' Own* if a woman is given privacy and economic independency the woman also can develop and write texts as male writers produce. Due to the lack of private property and freedom woman are being prevented from realizing their creative possibilities by patriarchal society. She hopes to achieve a balance between a 'male self realization' and female 'self annihilation'. The tradition of women's writing is affected by male's tradition. She

also makes a survey of the women writers from seventeenth century to nineteenth century. She was a feminist who disliked the word 'feminist'.

While conflict between traditional ideas about women's place and increasing involvement in female activities confused and frustrated a growing number of modern women, Simone de Beauvoir published a book *The Second Sex* (1949) which played an important role in changing that outlook of women's thought and established clear idea of the fundamental questions of modern feminism in the fifties. For her women are not born as women, women are women which is just a gender concept 'other' is the place given to women. This book also deals with myths where women are shown as witch. She warns, "The myths must not be confused with recognition of significance" (997).

Feminism advocates the rights and opportunities of women in a society. It tries to collect the lost voices of women and announces its firm beliefs upon equality of human beings. It challenges the world of patriarchy which is the root cause of women's exploitation. Looking at the novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* from the lens of feminism, we find a massive dehumanization and commodification of females. Women are being regarded as commodities as they are sold and purchased in capitalism and patriarchy. Woman's body is an object, a commodity in the hand of rich capitalists. Patriarchal culture is responsible for the pathetic condition and the victimization of female race. All the time, the females are suppressed and they never enjoy political rights. In the novel, the prostitutes have nothing but their bodies to sell. They are victimized socially, politically and materially.

Marxism

Marxism is belief that capitalism is based on the exploitation of workers through the ownership of means of production. With the help of the property the

capitalist class control over everything. The workers have nothing with them but their labors. Although the labors work hard, the profit of the work goes to the owner of the means of production. Having minimal wages, the workers' basic needs are not fulfilled, so, they remain in backwards throughout their life. So, on the basis of property the society is divided into upper and lower class: 'have' and 'have-not' group. Marx refers to the exploitation of an entire segment or class of society by another. He sees it as being an inherent feature and key element of capitalism and free markets. The profit gained by the capitalist is the difference between the value of the product made by the workers and the actual wages that the worker receives, in other words, capitalism functions on the basis of paying workers less than the full value of their labor, in order to enable the capitalist class to earn a profit.

Marx refers to the alienation of the people from aspects of their 'human nature'. He believes that alienation is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to the employers, who expropriate the surplus created by others and so generate alienated labor. Alienation describes objective features of a person's situation in capitalism. Marx believes that the identity of a social class is derived from its relationship to the means of production (as opposed to the notion that class is determined by wealth alone i.e. lower class, middle class, upper class).

Marx speaks in favor of the proletarians. Proletarians have been exploited by the bourgeoisie throughout the history. They have been kept away from the means of production which makes them poorer. They have to work and work to sustain their life because the capitalists provide very low amount of money as their wages. This low-amount of money is not sufficient for them to improve their life standard. The real producer of wealth is the proletarians but their production (wealth) goes to the

pocket of capitalists and thus the proletarians are made miserable. So, the major cause of the pathetic condition of the poor is the existing exploitation in the society. Now this injustice has become unbearable, that's why, Marx encourages all the proletarians of the world to be united and fight against the capitalists. If the poor don't confront with the rich, if they don't fight for their rights, the existing situation remains the same. Hence, Marx announces all the proletarians to snatch the power and property from the hand of capitalists and establish a new form of society based on equality.

Major concern of Marxism is the dehumanization of the workers. The poor are not considered to be human being rather they are taken as commodity. The capitalists think, the poor are different from the upper class people. The lower class people, the workers are not thought to be possessing human feelings. So, the capitalists extremely exploit the workers in the industrial world. The ultimate goal of the bourgeoisie is to make more profit, more money neglecting the basic need of the proletarians. This forms two distinct worlds based on inequality.

Capitalism intensifies alienation and generalizes it throughout all levels of society. The end of alienation requires communism. So, in the society, the end of patriarchal domination requires communism. As the classless society emerges the class discrimination and gender discrimination will be diminished. Because when the classless society is established all people become equal and property will be in every bodies hand equally. Then only in such society women get their proper place and equality. In this context K. K. Ruthven writes:

Marxism identifies capitalism (and the modes of production which support it) as a material base of a class system which is the source of all oppression, and holds that the specific subject of women will end

necessarily in that general dismiss of oppression which is to follow the destruction of capitalism. (28)

The capitalist try to hide all kinds of discriminations and injustice existing in the society. Workers work very hard for the production of the factory and produce a large quantity but "none of them more which name or any other mark of their individual contribution" (Tyson 58). So, the workers are alienated from the production itself. They are alienated from themselves also when they are alienated from the product they find the work unpleasant but they are bound to do their work: "When the potential source of a workers humanization becomes the actual source of his or her dehumanization, the worker in bound to undergo a major psychological crisis" (Tong 44). Therefore, workers are alienated from themselves. Workers are alienated from other human beings as well, because they see around them their co corkers as competitor for job and promotion as the capitalistic economic system encourages. This sense of competition for job and promotion alienate workers from their co workers. In this system finally workers are alienated from the nature itself "because the kind of work they do and condition under which they do, it make them see nature as an obstacle to their survival" (Tong 44). So, they are alienated from nature itself also because of capitalistic economic system. Therefore, the most important aspect for elimination of alienation is the eradication of capitalism.

In capitalistic system, relationship between employer and employee is similar to the commodity and its owner. Capitalists have everything but proletariats have nothing except their labor. This is a wedge for their emancipation. When proletariats come to know that they are exploited, they are not getting proper wage they try to find out where and how they are exploited. Then they revolt against the exploitation imposed upon them. The class consciousness inspires them to revolt against every

kind of injustice. They revolt freely because they have nothing to lose but bourgeoisie have everything to lose. Then they establish classless society which is a society of every people. In such society women also get equal chances. Then, hierarchyless society emerges. That is the result of class consciousness.

Feminism tries to find out the root cause of women's oppression in society and a way-out from the oppression. Marxist feminism is a subtype of feminism which sees the oppression of women and seeks its resolution from Marxist point of view.

Women are treated as commodity in capitalistic society. They see freedom but cannot experience it. In family their voices do not get any place where her husbands, boyfriends, fathers, male members are dictators. Their relatives, supposed nearest persons try to impose their desire upon women. Therefore, they feel alienated from nature and surroundings. Working-class women are treated badly by the higher class women and working class men also try to manipulate working class women according to their will, but bourgeoisie women suffer only from the male members of their own class. Similar is the condition of black women. First of all, they have to suffer from racial discrimination and then patriarchal discrimination.

Marxist feminism finds similarities between male and female in the family and bourgeoisie and proletariat in society. Husband, father or male member in a family is like bourgeoisie in the society and wife in a family is like a proletariat in society. It does not mean that women are suffering only within family but family itself is initiating point for women domination. Women are being exploited in the society on the basis of patriarchal norms and values which are construction of economic power position. Women are the victims of men's comfort. "Man's control of women will cease only with the dissolution of the institution of private property" (Tong 49)

In capitalistic system, relationship between employer and employee is similar to the commodity and its owner. Capitalists have everything but proletariats have nothing except their labor. In the novel, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, Rosa Cabercas, the brothel owner and all the rich capitalists belong to the class of employer or the upper class. They exploit the poor people. The fourteen years old girl and other prostitutes are employees and belong to lower class. In a patriarchal capitalistic society, such lower class people are always tormented. They sell their labor and even their bodies in the hand of rich capitalists. Lower class people specially the women are victimized and commodified.

Marxist Feminism

Marxist Feminism tries to dismantle the capitalism as a way to liberate women. Economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and the unhealthy social relations between men and women comes in existence due to the concept of private property. So, the private property is the root of women's oppression in the current social context. According to Marxist theory, an individual is heavily influenced by the structure of society, which in all modern societies means as class structure; that is, people's opportunities, wants and interest are seen to be shaped by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit. Marxist feminism sees contemporary gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained (like racism) because it serves the interests of capital and ruling class. Marxist feminists have extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking at domestic labor as well as wage work in order to support their position.

Marxist feminism connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression and labor. Marxist feminists see women as being held down as a result of their unequal standing in both the workplace and the domestic sphere. Prostitution, domestic work, childcare and marriage are all seen by Marxist feminists as ways in which women are exploited by a patriarchal system which devalues women and the substantial work they do. Marxist feminists focus their energies on broad change that affects society as a whole rather than on an individual basis. They see the need to work alongside not just men, but all other groups, as they see the oppression of women as a part of a larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system.

Marxist feminists argue that domination of women by men is in timely connected with patriarchal capitalism, because patriarchy and capitalism are mutually supportive. For e.g. within the household women produce labor power in the sense of bearing children, and caring for their husbands, who are workers, which supports men but the women do not get benefits for their domestic work. Commenting on the operation of patriarchy, Sheila Ruth writes:

Patriarchy is probably the oldest forms of exploitation of one part of population by another. It probably has also served as the model for all other forms of relegation, by they on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or class, such a system is established, those in the high caste positions, in this case males, develop a vested interest in the maintenance of the basic structure and their own advantaged status... the short-run interests of males as males and, perhaps more importantly, as leaders of political, economic and cultural institutions

are best served by maintain and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

(115)

Capitalist social system is main cause of women's oppression in society and its way out is to dismantle this capitalist social system. Capitalism gives rise to economic inequality and dependence. Marxism can be used to help us understand "How economic forces have been manipulated by patriarchal law and customs to keep women economically, politically and socially oppressed as an underclass" (Tyson 93). Marxism which is used to understand the feminist issues, economic, political, social, is called Marxist feminism. Thus, one of the primary task of Marxist feminism "is to create the kind of world in which women will experience themselves as whole persons as integrated, rather than fragmented or splintered, beings" (Tong 45). Gender inequality is production of capitalism and determined by capitalistic mode of production.

For the elimination of the oppression of women capitalistic economy should be dismantled which also dismantles the patriarchal social system because it is based on capitalistic system. As workers are alienated from the product, self, other human being and nature, women are also alienated from sex, self, children and their surroundings. Women do not get their proper place because they are women:

Women are not paid less simply because they are unskilled, but because working class men have succeeded in protecting their own interest at women's expense they have been able to do this because dominant attitude labels any work done by women as inherently inferior to that done by men. (Bryson 241)

They are paid less because of the interest and self-protecting superiority. They evaluate women as if they are commodity of male as their sexes differ from male sex.

Women take domestic responsibilities and outward work is generally supposed to do by males which is categorized as hard work. By this cause also females are treated as weak: "women's domestic responsibilities do mean that they are less able than men to defend their own economic interests' (Bryson 241). Therefore, women's interest, capacity, vigor etc. are neglected because for male women are commodity as the workers for capitalists.

Similarities between male/female in the family and bourgeoisie/proletarian in society are found by Marxist feminists. Husband, father or male member in family like bourgeoisie in society and wife in a family is like a proletariat in society. It does not mean that women are suffering only within family but family itself is initiating point for women's domination. Women are being exploited in the society on the basis of patriarchal norms and values which are construction of economic power position. Women's are the victim of men's comfort and "man's control of women is rooted in the fact that he, not she, controls the property, the oppression of women will cease only with the dissolution of the institution of private property"(Tong 49). Women are unable to practice their freedom and desire. Their needs and feelings are condemned to be suppressed because property is in the hand of patriarchy which believes that there is no desire of women different from men's. Therefore, women are being exploited sexually, psychologically, physically etc. and the root cause is the oppression of existing economic system.

Women's exploitation is everywhere. Before and after marriage women become the victim of sexual exploitation. Marxist feminist Catharine Mackinnon compares sex to work, capitalist to man, worker to women, commodity to sex/women, capitalist accumulation to male sexual desire etc. There is no place for women's sexual desire in the society. Tong brings the concept of Marx and Engel's and sees

"marriage as a form of prostitution, Marx and Engel implicitly accepted that the services that can be prostituted are not limited to sexual. Service child care and emotional support are also services sold by the prostitute- wife" (64). Therefore in patriarchal society husband - wife relationship is like "pimp-prostitute" relation, which is similar to the bourgeoisie- proletariat or employer employee relationship. Marriage relation itself is the beginning of prostitution.

Prostitution begins with marital relationship because a wife sleeps with her husband whenever he wants so that she can get support for livelihood. It doesn't mean that before marriage women do not suffer from sexual exploitation. For her survival a woman sleeps with a man but she is wronged because she is helpless, she doesn't have money but male has money. Money protects him whereas lack of money is a curse for the female of same participation. Women are compelled to adopt the profession of prostitution. Man exploits women at home and then they are treated as weak and passive and paid less than sufficient for survival. To survive in this society they are compelled to sleep with the male who give money. They have been told to act according to the will of men, it may be sexual, emotional, physiological etc. Men use women whenever and where they want because men can buy women easily, as a capitalist can buy a worker or who doesn't have money because men/capitalist are property owners. That's why; women are commodity for men, in patriarchal society, who are source of economy in the family. In working place women do not get proper salary for survival. Then they are compelled to sell their flesh, means they like laborers, sell themselves to others. Therefore, prostitution is a class phenomenon.

There is a bourgeoisie demand for prostitutes and as long as most women are paid no wages or inadequate wages, economically dependent women will sell their bodies" to men in order to support

themselves and in some instances, their children. Thus, to fight capitalism is also to fight prostitution whatever form it takes; including marriage because most women will not have access to meaningful work at a decent wage until the capitalist system that depends upon their exploitation is smashed. (Tong 65)

End of capitalistic system is the end of patriarchy and ultimately the end of prostitution.

Prostitutes are alienated in capitalistic society because they are treated as if they are commodity. Both wives and prostitutes are alienated, essential human capacity is alienating. Both become dehumanized and their real existence and proper value as a person is turned and reduced into market value. How much they can sell themselves that much can get benefit. Selling and buying becomes the surviving method of their lives. They get examined as if they were sellable commodities in the capitalist market. To end this treatment, women as commodity, first of all women should get economic independency. If the economic basis is changed the women will get full freedom which will be an end of patriarchy also; "patriarchy cannot be ended without fundamental economic change" (Bryson 258). That's why; this dependency and exploitation remain forever until and unless women get proper wages sufficient for living. Women have to fight against the patriarchy and the capitalism to come out of their commodified condition.

Textual Analysis

Women as Commodities: Patriarchy and Capitalism

This research unveils the position of women in Colombian society where they have been treated as commodity in the hands of capitalists and the patriarchal mind set. Women, especially the young girl employed in the brothels have been exploited by the employer and the male customers. Patriarchy is a system of society where males are superior and the females are treated as inferior. Women in patriarchy do not have equality and freedom. They have been made dependent on the males in terms of their financial opportunities. The family property is owned by the males and the females do not have any property rights. They are compelled to serve men for their survival. They are forced to work as prostitutes, sex workers, and low paid domestic servants. The unnamed fourteen years old young girl of the novel throws herself in the hell of prostitution and starts working in the brother of Rosa Cabercas. She is treated like a commodity in the hand of the employer and the male customer.

“The year I turned ninety, I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of wild love with an adolescent virgin.” (1) Thus, begins the novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. In the first sentence of the novel Marquez presents the attitude of a male towards the females in the patriarchal society. Males regard female just as a commodity but nothing more than that. Lustful desires of men even at the age of ninety are not less in capitalistic and patriarchal society where everything can be bought with money. In a capitalists society everything can be sold and bought in market. A rich person can easily buy his desired objects in the market and the female’s body is not the exception. So, there is equivalence in the objects and the female’s body. Both are assets in a capitalistic society. In the very beginning sentence of the novel Marquez portrays the capitalist society where females like any other

commodities available in the market can be bought in the evening and can be thrown in the morning after its use. The unnamed protagonist who is already ninety and is at the verge of ruin is planning to celebrate his ninetieth birthday by having sex with an adolescent virgin. He wants to buy the youth and virginity by his money. He wants to buy a youthful virgin for one night for fulfilling his erotic desires. Even at the age of ninety he is not tired of prostitutes. He wants to devour the young body of a girl to calm down his desires. And his only weapon is his money that has the capacity to buy female's body.

Thus, the first line of the novel itself is enough to describe a women's position in capitalist and patriarchal society. It encompasses the whole scenario of a capitalist market where female bodies like any other commodities are put to be purchased. By male customer females are purchased, used and thrown away. Due to the incurable disease of poverty, poor girls become ready to sell their bodies putting their emotions aside. Their self respect, human sentiments are subdued to their hunger and life sustaining question.

Brothels are the places where the capitalism has left its marks. In such places women are sold for money. Poor women are confined within the walls of brothels and it's the symbols of their confinement. It's the market where men select women for their use. Among many prostitutes men choose their desired one by paying a small amount of money. In the brothel of Rose Cabercas, the ninety years old protagonist searches his best one. The protagonist narrates a small piece of bargaining occurring between him and Rosa Cabercas:

She regained mastery of her art at once and offered me half a dozen delectable options, but all of them, to be frank, were used. I said no, insisting the girl had to be a virgin and available that very night. (2)

Above lines show how much selective he is. If he is demanding a young virgin among a half dozen of prostitutes. Many prostitutes are being discarded as they are already used by him. He is selecting the best one among many as if he is selecting one object out of piles of objects. This shows that there is not a lacking number of Prostitutes. All of them are ready to sell their bodies only for their survival.

The protagonist gets permission from Rosa Cabercas to go and sleep with the prostitutes. He pays money and gets a chance to sleep with them. If he lacks money he is not allowed to possess them. So, money is power, money is youth. He has money so he can own the prostitutes. But on the contrary, the prostitutes are poor. Being poor they have to sell their body to the rich for their survival. It's the power of money that gives him the supremacy over the poor women. The ninety years old protagonist says: I have never gone to bed with a woman I didn't pay, and the few who weren't in the profession I persuaded, by argument or by force, to take money even if they threw it in the trash. (11)

The protagonist's every relation was that of money. His every physical relation with the women was based on money. He paid for each and never made a relation without payment. Forcefully he paid money after the relation to those women into a prostitute. There was no emotional and humanitarian value in his intercourse. After paying money he could be free from any kind of responsibility and linkage. He tries to buy forcefully to those women who do not like to sell themselves. In spite of their denial he tries to purchase such women as if they were the goods kept in a shop. These women are never regarded as human beings having soul and self respect but as emotionless objects. He further reveals:

When I was twenty I began to keep a record listing name, age, place and a brief notation on the circumstances and style of love making. By

the time I was fifty there were 514 women with whom I had been at least once. I stopped making the list when my body no longer allowed me to have so many and I could keep track of them without paper. (12)

From his early life he starts going to bed with prostitutes. It is his hobby to make a list of commodified women. He listens to each and every prostitute with their name, age, place and other details. By the age of fifty he has already established physical relation with hundreds of women. And for all of them he has paid. It is the power of money that can buy such great numbers of women. In capitalistic society the males have accumulated the property rights and females have become penniless in the society. Males have controlled the economy and power. Women are deprived of the property. By using this financial power males are dominating females. Males have been able to purchase women's body but the females are selling their own body for survival. In patriarchal society women are regarded as weak and insecure. Without financial and political freedom women have become weaker. Women's position of dependency has diminished them as they are reduced to servility. Women's dependency is hence having a negative impact upon their life. It is a case in Western capitalist society. Females especially the prostitutes including the fourteen years old girl in the novel have been reduced to servility. In patriarchy males play the role of the giver and the females play the role of the taker. But this applies only in the case of might and power. As the males have controlled the economy and power they play the role of the owner and the female play the role of the servant. The female servility is dominant in the novel. The women always live with the sense of imprisonment. Women will always remain in the same commodified condition until they get economic and political liberation.

In a capitalist society, everything is measured in terms of money. Everything can be purchased with money. Women's body is also regarded as a thing or a commodity that can be easily bought. Males fix a price of women whether they want to sell themselves or not. Forcefully they are compelled to be a commodity to be played or enjoyed in males' hands. The unnamed protagonist of the novel also forcefully buys the females although they are not willing to sell themselves. He narrates:

The only unusual relationship was the one I maintained for years with the faithful Damiana. She was almost a girl, Indian like, strong, rustic, her words few and brusque... when I happened to see her bending over in the laundry room wearing a skirt so short it bared her succulent curves. Overcome by irresistible excitement, I pulled her underwear down to her skirt up in the back Pulled her underwear down to her knees and changed her from behind. (12)

If we closely examine the protagonist's mentality, we discover that he wants to have something forcefully. He doesn't care about a woman's feelings and emotions. He thinks the females are devoid of any sentiment. Overcome by the sensory desires, he attacks Damiana and fulfills his desire. He uses her the way he likes. He charges her from behind as if she is an animal or an object. With the help of his money power he treats a female as a sellable item found in the market. He sees no need of caring others true feelings. Without any consent from Damiana he forcefully establishes sexual relation as if she is an animal without her own personal will. Patriarchy has taught him to behave accordingly. Patriarchy negates any decisive role of woman in the society. They are supposed to like things and the ways that a male likes. So, they have

developed a habit that a male's desire is that of their own. Thus, under the grip of capitalism and patriarchy they have lost their own identity. The protagonist further gives the detail in this way:

Humiliated at having humiliated her, I wanted to pay her twice what the most expensive women cost at the time, but she would not take a cent, and I had to raise her salary calculated on the basis of one mounting a month, always while she was doing the laundry, and always from the back. (13)

These above mentioned lines show how a male in patriarchy forgets the fact that women are also human being like men. Patriarchal and capitalist society has fixed a cost of any woman as if she is a commodity but not human being. The representative woman of capitalist and patriarchal society, Damiana, is compelled to have sex without her willingness. Not only that she is forced to take money in spite of her denial to receive it. It means the protagonist wants to purchase her body though she doesn't want to sell it. There is double victimization of women; one from capitalism that weighs women in money and the another patriarchy that doesn't consider the females' values. There is a massive degradation of women's values, feelings and their self-respect. Damiana has nothing to do with money but she is forced to take it one way or the another. It means existing society is an open market where females' bodies are put on sale. Rich males purchase them according to their tastes and interests. That's why, from the view point of capitalism and patriarchy, women have nothing significant but their bodies that is used by males as commodity.

The protagonist is the true representative of a capitalist society where money is power and that has the strength to purchase anything. In such society, prostitution is common. Prostitutes are born due to the socio-economic condition. Poverty stricken

women have nothing for sustaining their life but their bodies to sell for male customers. These prostitutes are the victim of the system of the society. While the rich male customers become the sole emperor of women's bodies. And thus they use the female body the way they like. The protagonist further says:

At eleven, when the edition closed, my real life began. I slept in the read-light district, the Barrio Chino, two or three times a week, and with such a variety of companions that I was twice crowned client of the year. (14-15)

This is the life pattern of a capitalist who has the power of buying women every night and the power is money. Life of the prostitutes is confined in brothels and red light area. They are just sustaining their life with the money they get. By paying some sorts of money, the males establish their superiority over females. Prostitutes are unconscious of the outer world, freedom and justice. Not only their labour but also their body has been made a means of production, surplus and profit for the capitalists. Under the patriarchal regime, women are excluded from position of power authority. Sometimes a woman is given authority and power if her work supports individual man or the patriarchal system. In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, the owner of the brothel where the narrator goes is a woman. She has been given that authority and power because her work contributes to perpetuate patriarchy. Her work benefits men especially of rich class and her work helps to exploit the women of the lower class like the fourteen years old girl and other prostitutes. The owner of the illicit brothel, Rosa Cabercas is there only to give services to the males like ninety years old protagonist. This becomes clear in the line:

You have a fool's luck, she said. I found a little thing even better than what you wanted, but there's one drawback: She just turned fourteen. I don't mind changing diapers, I said (17).

Even though Rosa Cabercas is a female but has been the means of women's exploitation. In the above lines Rosa Cabercas is informing her client that one 'little thing' has been found. She is regarding the fourteen years old girls as little thing. It means prostitutes are no longer a living being but they are just an inanimate thing. Non living matters are often regarded as thing. But here the fourteen years old girl is taken as a thing. For rich capitalists the poor prostitutes are thing to be used . They are commodity without human values, feelings and self respect. They can be used the way a capitalist likes.

Child labor abuse is one of the features of capitalism. Girls trafficking, prostitutions are the direct means of women's exploitation in capitalism. The girl mentioned above is too young to work in the brothel as prostitute. As she has just turned fourteen, she is forced to sleep with a ninety years old man. The girl is less than the old man's granddaughter's age. This shows that patriarchal society with capitalist system always subordinates, exploits and tortures women. From their very young age the women are exploited financially, socially and culturally. From their childhood women have faced harsh socio-economic reality that makes their life miserable just like living hell. The following lines explain this:

And she (Rosa Cabercas) returned to her subject: poor thing, besides all that she has to work the whole day attaching buttons in a factory. It didn't seem to me like such hard work. That's what men think, she replied, but it is worse than breaking rocks. She went on to confess that

she had given the girls a mixture of bromide and valerian to drink, and now she was asleep (24)

At the age of fourteen the little girl has to work whole day in a factory attaching buttons. She is the only person in her family who has to work. There are piles of responsibilities upon her. She has to buy medicine for her sick mother. She has to make her small brother and sister ready for school. She has to feed them. She has to handle the whole family and she is the only member who can work for the family.

In capitalist society women are commodified. After paying small amount of money a rich capitalist buys a woman's body and uses until he is satisfied. Following lines from the novel clarifies this idea:

I went into the room, my heart in confusion, and saw the girls sleeping in the enormous bed for hire, as naked and helpless as the day she was born ... She had been subjected to a regimen of hygiene and beatification that did not over look even the incipient down on her pubis. Her hair had been curled, and she wore natural polish on the nails of her finger and toes, but her molasses colored skin looked rough and mistreated. Her newborn breasts still seemed like a boy's, but they appeared full to bursting with a secret energy that was ready to explode. (25-26)

In this novel, a ninety years old man is buying a young girl for enjoyment. Although the girl is unmatching to his age, the old man has established his control over the young body of the girl. He is examining each and every part of body as if she is a doll to be played. By examining her naked body he gets satisfaction. It means satisfaction can be bought with money in a capitalist society. A male can purchase it if he is rich. On the contrary, fourteen year old girl should be naked for survival in capitalism.

What patriarchy in its capitalistic form is providing for the female is inhumanity, injustice and discrimination.

The novel presents a pathetic condition of women, especially prostitutes who are selling their existence in capitalist society. All the means of production have been captured by rich people. Economic equality has just become day dreaming for these women. Prostitutes are living a miserable life in the society. These lines uttered by the protagonist reveals this fact:

“At eleven I tended to my routine procedures in the bathroom. Where the poor girls clothes were folded on a chair with a rich girl’s refinement: an etamine dress with a butterfly print, cheap yellow panties, and fiber sandals. On top of the clothing were an inexpensive bracelet and a very fine chain with a medal of the virgin. On the edge of the sink, a handbag with a lipstick, a compact of rouge, a key, and some loose coins. Everything so cheap and shabby with use that I couldn’t imagine anyone as poor as she was.” (26-27)

This is decline of human values in a capitalist world. Women are not supposed to have possessed human emotions and desires. The desire of males are supposed to be the females’ desire as well. In this novel the ninety years old man plays with different parts of the body of poor young girl whom he calls Delgadina. He examines her body inch by inch and plays with it. The girl is naked and asleep and now she is his private property. These lines highlight this:

I pinched her nose with my thumb and index finger, and she shook herself, moved her head away, and turned her back to me without waking. I succumbed to an unforeseen temptation and tried to separate her legs with my knee. On the first two attempts, she resisted with

tensed things. I sang into her ear: Angles surround the bed of
Delgadina. She relaxed a little. A warm current traveled up my veins,
and my slow, retired animal woke from its long sleep (27-28).

These lines show that possessive nature of a rich capitalist who is consuming his commodity purchased with this money power. Forgetting the fact the he has just purchased her body, he behaves as if he has won her heart. And that is the opposite of what the reality is.

The unnamed protagonist has lived his life being very cruel towards the feeling and sentiment of a woman. In his view, women have body to be used up but he never tries to peep inside their hearts. He never cares about their sentiments, psychology and their delicate heart. Throughout his life he purchases them to calm down his bodily desire and throws away after their use. He remains indifferent towards the fact that a woman also has a heart and there is love in it. It is not the heart of a woman that he is concerned with but it is body that is needed all the time for him. Damiana, his old servant always remains faithful to him. There is strong affection in her for her master but he never cares about it. Forcefully he uses her body for several years but never cares about her feelings, sentiments and psychology. The following lines clarify this idea:

“I found Damiana washing the floor, on all fours in the living room,
and the youthfulness of her thighs at her age revived in me a tremor for
another time. She must have sensed it because she covered herself with
her skirt. I could not resist the temptation to ask: Tell me something,
Damiana: What do you recall? I wasn’t recalling anything, she said,
but your question makes me remember. I felt a weight in my chest.
I’ve never fallen in love, I told her. She replied without hesitation: I

have. And she concluded, not interrupting her work: I cried over you for twenty-two years.” (39-40)

The protagonist of the novel, the ninety year old man is the true representative of the patriarchal and capitalist society. In such society money is praised as the God. Rich capitalists always speak for the males. Societal structure is such that it shapes the life of people in a discriminating way. Women are not supposed to be equal to men. In social structure males stand in a higher rank and from there they command and control over women. Women are taken as objects devoid of feeling. Their sentiments are all the time neglected. They are supposed to be inferior. It's the feature of a capitalist society not to give right and property to women.

Double victimization of women

Capitalism is the primary oppressor of women as workers and that men are the agent oppressor of women in a society. Even marriage is a means of exploitation in patriarchy. Marriage is a legalization of domestic prostitution because men are decisive about having sexual relation. Women in capitalistic system do not have sufficient access to the workplace. In order to survive they must connect themselves financially to men. Good jobs are not believed for them. Therefore they are bound to sell themselves. Owner has to hire out their body as wage workers. They have to be trapped into the exploitative networks. Such is the case of prostitutes. They have been transferred into the exploited class. “ I'll send her to your house wrapped in India paper and simmered with sandalwood in the double boiler, all free of charge”(46). Customers of the prostitutes are all males. They are exploiting the females like the fourteen years old girl and other prostitutes by showing their monetary power. All these males belong to the oppressor class. They are the agents of the patriarchal capitalist society while the owner of the brothels belongs to bourgeoisie class.

Masculine chauvinism and superiority reduces women to sex object, a second sex, and a submissive other. The prostitutes and the fourteen year old girl who has just come in this profession are bound to be submissive before the protagonist and other customers. If they go out of the profession, once again there comes the question of survival for them. As the society is not providing any other job employment for them, it's there compulsion to come in this profession. But in this profession also they have to tolerate the inhuman behavior of the males. Male plays with their body savagely. They only think about their satisfaction. The men do not care how the prostitutes have been hurt. Women have to tolerate whatever male do upon them. For a woman, her father, her husband or her son, all are oppressors and all belong to the class of male. As the society has given the male stronger role, females have tolerated it submissively.

“You have the absolute right not to like her, but at least behave like an adult. I tried to explain, but with no transition she changed the subject: in any case, I have another one in mind for you who is little older, beautiful, and also virgin. Her father wants to trade her for a house, but we can discuss a discount”. (61)

It is civilization as a whole that produces the creature which is described as feminine. The prostitutes are totally feminine in nature. They are bound to be feminine by the society and their economic status. They represent the feminine myth.

Hence, if we clearly analyze the pathetic condition of women in our society two major factors are found to be responsible. The first is the patriarchy which regards women as inferior, weak, submissive and essentially other. The another is capitalism that has degraded women as labors. In patriarchy, a female is controlled and guided by her father in her childhood. She is supposed to behave according to the

codes and conducts established by her father. After she gets married she is under the grip of her husband. Her freedom is decreased. She has to sacrifice her choices and interests for her husband. In her old age, her son becomes the dictator of her life. Her young son is regarded as her guardian. And thus throughout their life women are always undermined and controlled by the males. In patriarchal society the same pattern is repeated all the time. They always remain voiceless and suppressed in patriarchy.

Capitalism is another enemy of women. In capitalism all means of production are owned by males. Economically the males are strong and play the decisive role. No better options are given to them for employment. Something should be done for survival. And thus the prostitutes are born. By employing girls in brothels and in different clubs the rich employers are generating money. Their major purpose is to earn more money by exploiting the girls. Prostitutes are treated as machines that produce services so that the owner earns money. The capitalists belong to higher class as they have the power of money. Females always remain as lower class people and they are deprived of every opportunity of life.

Alienation of women

Being poor and being women, the prostitutes have been alienated from the society. Their status is not like that of human beings. They are mistreated and have no respect. They are alien from their kit and kin. They are away from social responsibility. All the work they do is to sleep with rich capitalists whether they are young or old. Thousands of men pass through their bed but there is not any kind of emotional attachment. With the men they just share their bodies but not their heart. Men are not concerned with their hearts and sentiments. Women are expected to serve men on beds but nothing more than that. Without any identity they have to sleep on

bed with their customers. Customers never care about who they are and what is their mental state.

“What could her name be? The owner hadn’t told me. When talking about her to me she said only: the *gird, lanina*. And I had turned that into a given name like girls of my dreams, the smallest of the caravels. Besides Rosa Cabercas gave her employees a different name for each client. It amused me to guess their name from their faces, and from the beginning I was sure the girl had a long one, like Philomena, saturnine, or Nicolasa.” (55)

The prostitutes are alone in an alien world and they lose even their names, which means losing her own identity. Time and again they are given different names. Though their duty is to satisfy the male visitors they have not got any emotional satisfaction. They have been alienated from the work, their mind they think and their bodies that the men use have no attachment. So, there is alienation effect on the prostitutes from their work also. In other words they have been estranged from the work. The men get satisfaction from them but the prostitutes do not have any. They are estranged from their work, from themselves and from the humanity as a whole. They have been dehumanized.

The women do not have a very significant life. Even in their life and death they are unidentified and alienated. In their life time they have no importance and their life is isolated. While living, she never gets respect and even after her death she remains unknown and unidentified. These lines reveal this fact:

The legal reporter came out of his cubicle shouting that two bodies of unidentified girls were in the city morgue. Frightened, I asked him: what age? Young, he said. (85)

Meaninglessness of prostitutes' life has been exhibited in the lines mentioned above. Throughout their life they remain isolated and unidentified. Even in their death two girls are not getting recognition. They live in isolation because men give recognition only to their bodies. And in their death also the prostitutes are facing the same fate.

Nobody wants to understand the life of a prostitute. Male customers pay money for the body of a prostitute. Nobody cares what a prostitute feels like. One after another men come and go but they remain silent. Men are not thinking of a prostitute's feelings. These women may have affection towards some men but not considered to be important. They are not the deserving one to express their feeling. These lines reveal this fact:

“We dozed in the dense torpor of two o'clock and continued talking until the immense fiery sun sank into the ocean. Reality seemed fantastic to me. Look where our honeymoon has ended up, she mocked. But then she was serious: today I look back, I see the line of thousands of men who passed through my beds, and I'd give my soul to have stayed with even the worst of them. Thank God I found my Chinaman in time. It's like being married to your little finger, but he's all mine. (99)

Casilda Armenta, a prostitute is in love with the protagonist of the novel. They live together for some time. But he never loves her. To quench the thirst of erotic desires he is near to her. But in reality he never cares about her. He never respects her feelings. Though he is very near to her but she is alone and isolated. She is helpless and proceeding her life without any fixed direction. Luckily she gets some kind of support for another person. But there is huge gulf of lacking in her heart. The desire for the man still remains inside her unfulfilled. So, there is no end of her isolation.

Women exploit women

Women are excluded from the benefit of trades and professions. Only some aristocratic women enjoy some privilege. The owner of the brothels enjoys more privilege than the prostitutes. Being a woman of a higher class family, she exploits the other women. Women themselves can be the exploiter of females. They have been hegemonized by patriarchal values. The wife of the master exploits the servants especially maids. Mother-in-laws exploit the daughter-in-laws. Patriarchy has been so deeply rooted that women themselves do not know how they are exploiting and how they are exploited. They have learnt the patriarchal values. But, they call it their culture and tradition. In the name of culture and tradition a mother also exploits her daughter by teaching her to follow the patriarchal values.

In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* the brothel owner has been an agent of patriarchy as well as capitalism. She has been running the brothel to serve men. It shows that women themselves play a vital role in exploiting women. It is not because of the individual but because of the systems that are deeply rooted in the society. The owner of the brothel is a woman. She has employed the young beautiful girls to satisfy the erotic desires of young and old men so that she could earn a lot for the comfort of her family. She manages everything in the house to serve the male.

“On the other hand, the girl came right away, in such bad shape that I bathed her for you, dressed her for you, sent her to the hairdressers for you, and told them to make her as pretty as queen. You saw how she looked: perfect. Her luxury clothes? One of the dresses I rent to my poorest girls when they have to go dancing with their tenants. The jewels? They’re mine, she said: all you have to do is to touch them to see that stones are glass and precious metals tin.” (94).

Here, Rosa Cabercas is preparing the fourteen years old girl for the ninety years old man. She is making the girl neatly dressed. As a thing or object, Rosa Cabercas is preparing the girl to be used by old man. She is decorating the girl as if she is a material thing to be put in any exhibition. She is beautifying the girl so that she looks attractive and old men can pay much for her. For making more money, the brother owner Cabercas is making the girl ready. It means she is doing all things for the betterment of her business. Being a woman, she is trapping and supporting the patriarchy.

Rosa Cabercas, being a woman, doesn't care about women's rights. She is happy in her business. It is her work to find young girls for her old tenants. She is serving the patriarchy which has indicated a price for women's body. She is happy to provide poor and young girls for the rich males. She is selling the virginity of young girls who are of her daughter's age only for money. She doesn't know what women's liberation is. Other women's rights, desires, compulsions are not cared by her. Being a woman, she is doing great injustice upon women.

At almost the same time the telephone woke me, and the rusted voice of Rosa Cabercas brought me back to life. You have a fool's luck, she said. I found a little thing even better than what you wanted, but there's one drawback: she just turned fourteen. I don't mind changing diapers,' I said as a joke, not understanding her motives. I'm not worried about you, she said, but who's going to pay one for three years in jail? (17).

The lines mentioned above clarify the fact that Rosa Cabercas being a woman is selling a young girl, a child to the hand of the client who is already ninety. This is better example how women are the enemies of women. If in the name of helping

patriarchy women are imposing injustice upon women rather than preserving the women's rights, they themselves are destroying it. If the women are acting as the agents of patriarchy, then patriarchy naturally flourishes. Until and unless women are unified to overthrow the norms and values of patriarchy and capitalism, pathetic situation of women will remain the same.

In order to liberate women from the culturally constructed cages of patriarchy and capitalism they have to be awakened from the long sleep of false consciousness. That is, they think that their present plight is their own fate. Their false consciousness should be replaced with Marxist class consciousness. They should be made aware that they need to struggle for their rights. They should rise above the narrow thoughts of personal needs and struggles for their women race in general and poor women in particular. Moreover, for the liberation of women from male domination, economic distribution should be equalized and the concept of patriarchal superiority, which is mainly caused by property distribution, should be changed.

Conclusion

The research has tried to unveil how women have been commodified in the Colombian society where capitalism and patriarchy are dominant social values by studying the women characters in Marquez's novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. After the study of male-female relation similar to the master-worker relation in the patriarchal capitalistic system, the women are treated not as individual human beings but as the commodities in the hands of people who have been privileged by patriarchal and capitalistic norms and values. The prostitutes of the brotherly sleep with rich old and young men and let men play with their body speechlessly because they have been made to suffer as they belong to lower class women.

The young girls work in brothel in the novel. They have to be confined within the territory of the brothels. They are frequently visited by some rich men of the city to quench their lust and assert their so called masculinity. One of the visitors is the protagonist of the novel who is in his nineties. He is old, weak and sexually impotent but still he believes that he has to show his masculinity. For that he visits the prostitutes. Throughout his life he regards women as objects to be used by men. He assumes to be superior while the prostitutes have been treated as his inferiors. His superiority lies not in his age, strength or sexual vitality but in his being privileged as a male and in his ability to spend money on the prostitutes. He doesn't feel morally guilty to visit the fourteen years old girl though he is too old for sexual activities. The protagonist's behavior reveals men's attitude towards women in the patriarchal society.

The research shows that women have been exploited not only by the men but women also. Women themselves have become the exploiters of the women in capitalistic society. The owner of the brothel is a woman. She has employed the

prostitutes. The prostitutes have been stripped off their freedom and rights while the owner has been enjoying some privileges. Therefore she is an example of a woman who has been brainwashed by patriarchy and made to play the role of an agent to exploit other women. Her service is dedicated to serve the man. She has been employed to make other women prepare and sustain patriarchy. She also enjoys some privileges because she has some economic rights. She is richer than the prostitutes. So she is more powerful than them, however the power she has been granted is to maintain exploitation of women. Patriarchy is a system that employs women themselves to exploit women. They have been hegemonized in such a way that men do not have to impose their authority time and again. The women have been forced to internalize such values so that they can maintain the patriarchal values themselves.

The prostitutes in the novel are extremely commodified. They have been misused by the males. The fourteen years old girl is compelled to sleep with the ninety years old protagonist. Socio-economic circumstances have thrown her into the hell of prostitution. The state is not concerned with the life sustaining problem of these poor women. Rules and laws of the government are always in favor of the males and the patriarchy. As the manual work of the factory is not sufficient to run her family, she becomes ready to sell her body for survival. Moreover, the prostitutes are given drug to intoxicate her so that it would be easier for the customer to handle her. Prostitutes are tormented physically and psychologically. After a rich male has paid certain amount of money to the brothel, he chooses the best one for his use. It means a man buys a woman as a commodity. Even the prostitutes are found dead in streets in the morning, it can't draw the proper attention of the state and the public.

Commodification of the women has ever resulted in alienation. They have been alienated from their family, relatives and friends as they have to sell their whole

time in earning their livelihood. Beside this they have been alienated from the work they do as their work does not profit them rather than it gives profit to the capitalists. That's why, women's life is becoming a corpse in the hand of capitalism and patriarchy. So, to liberate them from such domination, economic distribution should be equalized and the concept of patriarchal superiority should be changed.

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