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Commodification of Women in Yasunari Kawabata's *House of The Sleeping Beauties*

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Commodification of Women in Kawabata’s House of the Sleeping Beauties” by Prakash Neupane has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. The undersigned members of Thesis Committee has approved it.

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Abstract

Yasunari Kawabata's novel *House of the Sleeping Beauties* unveils women's position and condition in capitalistic patriarchal society. Their condition as shown in the novel is not better than marketable commodities. This commodification ultimately dehumanizes them and strips them of their humanness and autonomous subjectivity. They are controlled and mishandled for the pleasure of male. Eguchi, an old man is sexually inactive but he is filled up with the idea that man should be active even in old age. All the women characters are suffering from male domination caused by property handling.

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I. Introduction

This research focuses on commodification of women in Kawabata's *House of the Sleeping Beauties* with an attempt to explore the lower status of women in Japanese society in which patriarchal norms and values are dominant. The status of working class women in patriarchal Japanese society is very pathetic. They have been treated as commodities. Capitalistic system and dominant patriarchal mindset have left adverse effects in the overall process of women and their condition is deteriorating. The old impotent man Eguchi's relation with the sleeping beauties and their exploitation by the secret club owner in the novel, project the functioning of patriarchy and the pervasive practice of commodification of women under capitalism.

In *House of the Sleeping Beauties* four young girls have been employed as sleeping beauties whose duty is almost similar to the prostitutes, by a secret club owner. Men more often old ones visit the secret club to fulfill their erotic desire and get refreshment. One of them is Eguchi, a rich man, who is one of the main characters of the novel. He visits sleeping beauties whenever he feels bored outside and gets time. He pays certain amount for the secret club owner and hires one chamber where 'sleeping beauty' (a young girl) serves him the way he likes. He enters the chamber of the sleeping beauties where the sleeping beauties is sometimes awake and sometimes asleep as she is given sleeping tablets or drug. After entering the chamber, the old man, Eguchi feels sovereign over the girl. He undresses himself and the girl too. He plays with her breast, hair, lips and many more. The girls were in a sense sacrificed for the pleasure of the men. The novel puts some questions here:

There could be for an old man worn to the point of death no time of greater oblivion than when he lay enveloped in the sky of a young girl.

But was it without feelings of guilt that the old men paid money for the

young girls who were sacrificed to them; or did secret feelings of guilt actually add to the pleasure? As if, forgetting himself, he had forgotten that the girl was a sacrifice, he felt for her toes with his foot. (47)

Their sacrifice in actual sense is making the women the scapegoat for the men's pleasure. The male customers come to the secret club. They indulge upon the young girls like vulture upon the corpse. They lack all moral and humanitarian values. The girls cannot oppose because they have been trapped in the structure of capitalism and patriarchy and if they oppose, their survival itself becomes difficult. The irony of their life is that they work for survival, they serve for their owner (their service produces money) and the male customers but the sleeping beauties die because of overmuch work and inhuman treatment of their male customers whom they have been serving. Their work itself becomes the cause of death instead of survival. In the end of the novel one of the sleeping beauties dies while she was made to serve Eguchi. Though she dies, she does not receive any sympathy from the old man, Eguchi and the owner of the secret house:

“She's dead.”

“I think not.”

“What time is it?”

“After four.”

She staggered as she lifted the dark, naked body.

“Let me help you.”

“Don't bother. There's a man downstairs.”

“She's heavy.”

“Please. You needn't bother. Go on back to sleep. There is the other girl”. (98)

It shows the extremity of the inhumanity in capitalism where women especially of lower strata of the society are treated as commodity.

The *House of the Sleeping Beauties* is one of the acclaimed and most popular Japanese novels by the Nobel prize (1968) winner, Japanese novelist Yasunari Kawabata. Its most of the characters and the context resemble Japanese society. The novel captures socio-cultural scenario of the Japanese society. It had received many critical response immediately after its publication in 1961 and latter days too from the wide range of student, university scholars and critics. Critics have tried to interpret it from different angles and perspectives. Edward G. Seidensticker, Armondo Martins Janeira, Van C. Gessel, Kokusai Banka, S.M. Sinha and many others are some of the remarkable critics on Kawabata's *House of the Sleeping Beauties*.

Edward G Seidensticker acclaimed as an international literary figure and Kawabata's translator comments on the general thematic aspects of Kawabata to be the loneliness and says that this very theme is reflected in *House of the Sleeping Beauties* too. He claims that Kawabata's work does have "the great theme [of] loneliness, the impossibility of love – in short, alienation [...]" (95). Alienation is the feeling of being deserted from the fellow beings. When people lack sharing of feelings, thoughts and emotion, they suffer from alienation. Kawabata's characters also suffer from unsympathetic treatment in their surroundings.

David M. Chess, another critic, also finds the theme of alienation in *House of the Sleeping Beauties* and says that it is "the powerful and disturbing picture of alienation of various kinds [...]" (25). In this regard, he further says that "House of the Sleeping Beauties [uses] women as figures of what one can be alienated from" (10). He even views that the old man's visit to the secret house of the sleeping

beauties just to unravel and bring up his past memories, he has already been alienated from. Focusing the aspects of alienation, he comments:

This is an old man who has paid to spend a night (chaste but Lecherous) in bed with a young woman drugged into insensibility we see from this man's view point, as he spends a number of nights in this house, and his stand range truncated relationships with the sleeping women bring up memories and ideas from his unlovely past [...]. The novel [uses] young women as figures of what one can be alienated from. (49)

David M, Chess, seems more sympathetic to the old man than to the plight of the young women in the novel.

The old impotent man Eguchi's visit to the young girls of the secret house of the sleeping beauties where Eguchi can play with the parts of the sleeping beauties' body has been the most striking situation of the novel. Arthur G. Kimball puts forth a series of questions, by categorizing different features of different age factors, perhaps to emphasize on his old age, despite which the protagonist keeps on visiting and sleeping besides the young girls. For that, he analyses and inquires as follows:

People in their thirties sometimes experience the first traumatic shudder in relation of times fleetness. By the forties, horizons have constricted, doors have closed, the vocational crisis is reached. At fifty, the backward look begins, the crisis of identity becomes accurate, depression sets in. and what of the old man, nearing the end? What hopes and pleasure remain? What self-deception lures him on? What does he hope to gain from the house of the sleeping beauties? (99)

Thus, Kimball examines the effect of the growing age in a person's life. Both of the above critics advocate the pain of loneliness and alienation that arouses in an old man who is already detached from the enjoyment of life.

Armando Martins Janeira, another critic, describes the *House of Sleeping Beauties* as "a very strange work" (125). For him the strong desire of an erotic old man towards the beauties in the novel, even if the old man is already impotent is strange. Eguchi has already reached in his sixties. He is old, weak and lonely man. He cannot perform physical intercourse; still he visits the sleeping beauties and takes pleasure playing with their nude breasts and other organs. He visits not only once but many times. One of the sleeping beauties dies while he was sleeping with her still he doesn't stop going to them. Even though one died before him, he longed for another. This all makes Armando feel the novel to be strange. Besides this, Armando claims that the novel represents the whole oriental theme:

Kawabata is also a respected critic and in his essays, he has voiced the conviction that oriental culture is superior to western culture, that it gives him at least the greatest spiritual satisfaction [...]. This is reflected in the *House of the sleeping beauties*: it is origin of the riches, minuteness and subtlety of detail, and also, in the end a certain monotony, may be the worst of all monotonies, that of eroticism. (168)

Kokusai Banka, in *Introduction to contemporary Japanese literature*, Kawabata's longing for his mother in his woman character is absurd: "Behind Kawabata love for women is not only sexual fantasy, but also unconscious longing for his young mother whom he lost when he was three years old. This is why in this work sexual fantasies appear not in realistic way but in an extremely abstract form" (93). The present research also tries to relate the idea of sexuality in terms of exploitation

of women. Sexual exploitation that the present research tries to unveil in *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. Kawabata's personal life also matters a lot in shaping the theme, subject matter and characterization in the novel *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. So it is important to mention his birth, his growth in Japanese culture and its impact in his life. Kawabata was born in June 14, 1899, in the city of Osaka in a highly cultured family. His father was highly educated doctor and a literary genius, from whom Kawabata inherited his interest in literature. His interest in literature finally led him to become the first Japanese writer to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1968. Kawabata maintained a separation from his peers and disliked of around other people from his early life in school. It is perhaps because he was from upper class root. Being born in a high class family he has impact of bourgeoisie culture. Some traces of bourgeoisie culture can be seen in his novel *House of the Sleeping Beauties*.

Kawabata's personal sexual life is also an influential factor in his literary productions. He kept a homosexual affair with a young boy known as 'Kiyono'. He accepted that Kiyono was his first love. Kawabata's visit to the boy and the old Eguchi's visit to the sleeping beauties can have some similarities. So there is some impact of his personal life in the *Sleeping Beauties*. Loneliness, death, purified eroticism and fragile beauty are main themes prevailing in the works of Kawabata. Describing the theme of eroticism S.M.Sinha presents the westerner's view. He says, "Westerners regard him as an erotic writer whose senses and touch are sources of pleasure" (299). He further comments, "the surface of his writings may appear to be sensual, but darkness and emptiness lies under it" (299), and thus, regards this view of the westerners. Kawabata sometimes accepts that his works are on the theme of emptiness. He remarks his Nobel Prize presentation speech, "my own works have been

described as works of emptiness, but it is not to be taken for nihilism of the west” (Par.29). So, various themes hover around in Kawabata’s works.

After observing all these critical responses from different scholars, it has become more relevant to make research on the issue of Marxist Feminism. The critics, despite their differences, unanimously agree on the fact that the protagonist’s frequent visits to the house of sleeping beauties are either because of fantasies, or because of the ugliness of old age or even because of his past memories to fulfill them. But these arguments don’t seem all the way sound.

The literature review of the novel *House of the Sleeping Beauties* 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 alienation, absurdism, sexual fantasy in old age. The critics mentioned here, S.M.Sinha, David M. Chess, Armondo Martins Janeira, Edward Seidensticker have been more sympathetic to the old man Eguchi’s plight in the novel. The old man’s visit to the sleeping beauties of course is the striking issue in it .However, they have not gone thoroughly about the plight of the young girls who are bound to sleep with such aged customers. The critics have shown that the girls are also feeling uneasy. Therefore the girls’ compulsion to serve the old men to satisfy the men’s lust is a 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 social system. Exploitation of women in the novel takes the form of objectification of worker unveil 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 based on economic and sexual qualities. 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 refuses 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 girls (sleeping beauties) have been treated as playthings or commodities of 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 Eguchi. 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.

II. Feminism in Relation to Marxist Theory

Feminism

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 to men. It is a voice against the inadequacy, the distortion as well as ideologies of the males. It is a massive 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 cannot be separated from the process of its making" (Rowbotham qtd. in Bryson 257).

Feminism focuses on physical, economic, political, and psychological, religions equality and opposes gender roles, stereotypes and discrimination against women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless.

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 world-wide 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. (1)

Feminism is not only a study of problems but also it seeks its solution and its impact as well. It is a theory based on reason. That is why some critics call it 'feminist science'.

Feminism is an expression or resentment at the unjust treatment imposed upon women. It voices the women's objection to be treated as a doormat or a piece of furniture meant for the convenience of men. Women refuse to be shifted under oppression and restriction and intend to rebel against the hostile environment in which they live. It is a struggle against the hardship and neglect, imposed upon women: "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 struggles against this kind of false creation for the establishment of patriarchal regime. Thus, it is not against the males of society but against their monopoly and dictatorship. It raises question against the long standard dominant, phallogocentric ideologies, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation of literature, social science, economics, politics, religion etc. There is a strong affiliation between Marxism and feminism. Both of them attack the social injustice and discrimination.

Moreover, all feminist activities including feminist theory and literary criticism have its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting gender equality. Thus, all feminist activity can be seen as a form of activism. This activism campaigns on issue such as reproductive right, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination and sexual violence. The themes explored in

feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, especially sexual objectification, oppression etc.

The basis of feminist ideology is that rights privilege, status and obligations should not be determined by gender. Feminism however is a grass root movement which crosses the class and race boundaries. As culturally specific it addresses the issues relevant to women of the corresponding society. 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 or interests are inherently masculine, which are positive and superior and that certain characteristics or interests are inherently feminine, which are negative and inferior.

Feminism as a movement started only after Second World War especially in the decade of 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 inferior not by nature but by social mechanism. In ancient period women were taken as puppet to amuse males. They said that females lack certain qualities, which males possess.

Feminist Literary Criticism

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 restrains 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. Some feminists seek equal status as the male in society in every field. Women also should be given the position of human being equal to male. But there are some other feminists who take males as enemy of their rights, freedom etc. They want their own individual existence and identify not the identity and existence given by male members of society. Some feminists from English speaking countries try to reconstitute the ways of dealing with literature in order to do justice to female points of view, concerns and values. In this context, 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).

Notwithstanding the contribution of revolutionary nineteenth and early twentieth century authors such as Mary Willstoncraft and her daughter Mary Shelley, George Eliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Virginia Woolf, feminist literary criticism developed mostly since the beginning of the late twentieth century women's movement. The movement included the writing of Simone de Beavoir, Kate Millett, Michele Barrett, Betty Friden who examined a female 'Self' constructed in literature by male authors to embody various male fears and anxieties. They researched the social realities through the writings of male authors of contemporary era. Their main concern is on the contemporary social reality which deals with the female issues. Though these late twentieth century feminists are not standing on the base of earlier feminist directly those earlier feminists' contribution helped them to specify their field. They paved way for modern feminist's research or study.

In her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* Mary Willstoncraft 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

equalities 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 intellectual development 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 affair and feeling.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf discusses, in her book *A Room of One's 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 women 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 writes from seventeenth century to nineteenth century. She was a feminist who dislike 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, Simon 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 myth must not be confused with recognition of signification" (997).

Despite various activities, no significant development in feminism is seen before the 1960s. During the late sixties the impact of feminism began to be felt in

literacy criticism. It moved forward progressively and reached its height during the sixties with American Showalterian concept of gynocriticism. Gynocriticism refers to a type of feminist criticism that focuses on literary works written by women, rather than critiquing male authorized works or studying women as readers. Women should develop their own text and their own criticism. That is a motto of gynocriticism. Before that Kate Millett and Michele Barrett developed an idea of sexual politics out of the idea of unequal relationship and subordination of women by patriarchal culture. But Barrett sees some fundamental common issues between male and female. In her much acclaimed work *Sexual Politics* (1977) Millett examines how "Power relations work and how man manipulate and perpetuate male domination over women" (Indreni 93). But Barretts views is inclined towards Marxism as I.P Indreni writes, Barrett believes, "Change is required not only in culture but also in the position of economic production" (94).

Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1986) examines British women novelists since the Victorian period from the point of view of women's experience. Women writers did not get proper respect as males. Some of them changed their female name into male's name. Some did not publish their works due to lack of courage of competence to compete with males in the male dominated and patriarchal society. She divided the time into three phases: Feminine phase (1840.1880), Feminist phase (1880-1920) and Female phase (1920-present). These periods represent the imitation of male tradition, protest against male values, and rejection of male values and self discovery respectively.

Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968) reveals the western culture contains a widespread application of gender stereotypes to almost everything. She attacks what she calls the "phallic criticism". In this context I.P. Indreni writes, "She

associates the maleness with a certain style of writing which is oriented towards a fixity of meaning and which is rigid, definite and closed. In her views, not all men write male ways, nor do all women writers adopt a female writing style" (96).

A Literature of Their Own inspires women to take strength in their act of independent in the world and constructs a reliable map of the achievements of English women writes. Showalter says that women write differently not because they are different psychologically from men but because their social experience is different. But in *Thinking About Women* Ellman finds males who write like female and some females who write like male.

During the eighties, a major text on feminism appeared – *The Mad-Woman in The Attic* (1979) by Gilbert and Gubar. This text is a reply to Harold Bloom's *Theory of Anxiety of Influence*. Gilbert and Gubar say that women do not fit into Bloom's patriarchal model. They have not any identity of authorship, because they do not have literary tradition unlike Bloom's attitude. They say anxiety is prior to influence. Women now are well aware of patriarchal as male domination over female. The concept of patriarchy has been revealed as man-made idea according to masculine purpose. They are capable of exposing the true identity of patriarchy and realizing the significance of their own identify.

Most of the French feminists are influenced by psychoanalysis especially from Lacan's reinterpretation of Freud. Before Lacan feminism and psychoanalysis experienced a kind of hostility to each other. The French Feminists Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray challenge the inherent world view of patriarchal structure.

Julia Kristeva challenges the rigidity of the symbolic order. She brings Lacanian version of psychoanalysis and feminism together. She feels that female sexuality is open, subversive and characterized by certain fluidity against rigorous

male determinism. She challenges the symbolic order of language and culture based upon the Phallogocentric idea of Lacan which is against the feminist ideology because it revolves around the Phallus and father.

In her essay *The Laugh of Medusa* (1976) Helen Cixous tries to establish female superiority over male. In this book she asks women writers to put their body into their writing. She tries to escape from the pleasure of male and wants to seek her own pleasure. Her view is that women must be free to feel herself as independent considering her rebellion against traditional. Rosemary Tong says;

Applying Derrida's notion of difference of writing she constructed feminine writing (portraiture famine) with masculine writing (literature). Understood psychoanalytically, masculine writing as rooted in a man's genital and liberal economy, which is emphasized by the phallus. (224)

Both Cixous and Irigaray agree feminine sexuality and the female body are sources of feminine writing. Irigaray tries to liberate women from the male philosophical thought but Cixous tries to liberate from male behaviour. Irigaray focuses on liberal economy. As Tong reveals, for her "patriarchy is [. . .] the manifestation of masculine liberal economy and will remain the order of the day until the repressed 'feminine feminine' is set free" (228).

Marxist Feminism

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

Capitalist social system is main cause of women's oppression in society and its way out is to dismantle this capitalistic social system. Capitalism gives rise to

economic inequality, dependency, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women which is the root cause of women's oppressions.

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 and 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.

We live in a, as Philips says, "Class society that is also structured by gender, which means that men and women experience class in different ways" (qtd. in Bryson 258). For Marxist feminist gender oppression is class oppression and women's subordination is seen as a form of class oppression. It believes that women's situation in society cannot be understood in isolation from its socio-economic context. As the Marxists see the alienation of labour from work, self, human beings and nature women are also alienated from sex, self, children and from whole surroundings. In capitalism labour is treated as a commodity which can be sold and bought. Capitalism intensifies alienation and generalizes it throughout all level 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 distributed equally to everybody. 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 dismissal of oppression which is to follow the destruction of capitalism.(28)

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 labour. 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.

But capitalists, also represent patriarchy, exercise to create false consciousness to establish their empire. They try to hide all kinds of discriminations and injustice. Workers work very hard for the production of the factory and produce a large quantity but "none of them bore 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 is bound to undergo a major psychological crisis" (Tong 44). Therefore, workers are alienated from themselves. Workers are alienated from

other human being as well, because they see around them their co-workers 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 which will help women also to emancipate from patriarchal domination.

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 label 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 protection of male superiority. They evaluate women as if they were commodity because 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.

Women are mostly confined in household activities and they are not allowed to go out and work because their strength, skill, ability are taken inferior to the males infect which is not real but general assumption. Women are doing household activities without any payment. 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 society because 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 labour 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 capitalist 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 Dalla 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).

Actually, women do not get such kind of wage nor their housework is taken as actual work. Therefore, women neither get any respect for their housework nor any wage. That is the cause of alienation of women's self. In capitalistic society workers

are like commodity and in patriarchal society women's place is also like marketable thing. Men use women as they want and get benefited according to their will.

Actually, capitalists get benefit from the exploitation of women. But there are some Marxist feminists who reject the demand of wage for housework. Housework is related to feeling and emotion for them. In her book *The Economic Emergence of Women* Barbara Bergman advocates dislike for wage of the housework. If woman demands wages for housework "the sexual division of labour would actually ossify" (Tong 56). On the other hand if it is not demanded males dominate female more.

Except housework women have to perform their natural works. One of them is childbearing which women's unquestionable task is. But in patriarchal society childcare is also women's essential work. They give birth and bring up the baby but male members do not take it a vital work and if any woman does only child caring in the house she is called workless. But the father or may be so called father takes away the child when he wants. This injustice is in patriarchal society. As Engles says, "Women give birth, the mother of any child is always known. However, the identity of the father is never certain because a woman could have been impregnated by a man other than her husband" (qtd. in Tong 49). Later this child, if male, tries to control mother.

Engles says, "To secure their wives marital fidelity, men supposedly seek to impose an institution of compulsory monogamy on women" (qtd. in Tong 49). If any woman goes to other man, she is called prostitute and socially outcasted. She should be careful while meeting other males. But in man's case it is different. Patriarchal society does not seek such strict marital fidelity from males simply because in family males' condition is similar to the condition of capitalists in society. As workers are commodity in capitalistic economic system, women are commodity in family because

of influence of capitalistic social system. Engels says, "If wives are to be emancipated from their husband, women must first become economically independent of men" (qtd .in Tong 49). For that dismantling of capitalistic economic system is needed where exploitation of labour is working very strongly. By this reason women are suffering from the adjective like weak, passive, emotional in patriarchal society.

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, and other 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 more suppressed than the higher or bourgeoisie class women because 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 feminists find similarities between male/female in the family and bourgeoisie/proletariat in society. Husband, father or male member in a family is 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 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 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. The root cause is the such oppression of economic system of the society.

Before marriage 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. If a husband or boyfriend wants to have sexual relation then that is desire of wife/girlfriend also. Tong brings the concept of Marx and Engels and sees "marriage as a form of prostitution, Marx and Engels 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. Tong again quotes from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* by Marx: "Position is only a specific expressions of the general prostitution of the labour and since it is relationship in which falls not the prostitute alone, but also the one who prostitutes- and the letters abomination is still greater- the capitalist etc. also comes under this head" (64).

Prostitution begins with marital relationship because a wife sleeps with her husband whenever he wants so that she can get support for livelihood. It does not mean that before marriage women do not suffer from sexual exploitation. For her survival a women sleeps with a man but there the woman is wronged because she is helpless, she does not have money but male has money. Money protects him whereas

lack of money is curse for the female of same participation. Women are compelled to adopt profession of prostitution. They are paid less than man although "when a man took a woman he came to live in her household activities" (Tong 47). Man exploits women in 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 to do according to the will of men, it may be sexual, emotional, physical, psychological etc. Men use women whenever and where they want because men can buy women easily, as a capitalist can buy a work or who does not have money because men /capitalist are property owner. That is why; women are commodity for men, in patriarchal society, who are source of economy in the family. Sometimes, males do not care about the problem of family then women should struggle for the survival of herself and children. And in working place they do not get proper salary for survival. Then they are compelled to sell their flesh, means they become prostitute. The economic situation of unemployed or underemployed women explains why they, like labours, sell themselves to others. Therefore, prostitute, like labour, is a class phenomenon:

There is a bourgeois 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 from 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 also of patriarchy and therefore is end of prostitution.

Prostitutes are also alienated in capitalistic society because they are treated as if they are commodity. As the wage labours are estranged from their work, themselves, human being and nature prostitutes (wives- prostitutes) are also alienated from all the aspects that laborers are alienated. Tong gives reason why prostitutes are alienated:

Selling oneself, whether as a wife or a prostitute, alienates one from one's work because that work being done for another, not for oneself. This concepts is particularly applying in the case of the prostitute, for what she is selling is what is closest to her; her body her sexuality. So under capitalism workers sexuality becomes a commodity. (104)

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 they 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). Until and unless women get living wages this dependency and exploitation remain as a social norm and rooted practice.

III. Women as Commodities: Patriarchy and Capitalism

This research unveils the position of women in Japanese society where they have been treated as commodity in the hands of capitalists and the patriarchal mind set. Sleeping beauties, the young girls employed in the house of the sleeping beauties have been exploited by the employer and the male customers. Patriarchy is a system of society where males are supposed to be superior and the females are treated as inferior. Women in patriarchy do not have equality and freedom. They have been made dependent to 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 have been compelled to serve men for their survival. They have been forced to work as prostitutes, sex workers and low paid domestic servants. The sleeping beauties of the novel *House of the Sleeping Beauties* have been compelled to work in the secret house and to be treated like the commodities in the hands of their employer and the male customer.

The setting of the work place is like a cell of a jail. The sleeping beauties always live there and wait for the costumers like Eguchi. The rooms of the secret inn are small. The sleeping beauties are not allowed to go out freely. The narrow rooms of the inn suggest their confinement. Perceiving the setting Kawabata writes:

There were this room, some yards square, and the one next to it, but apparently no other rooms upstairs; and, since the downstairs seem too restricted for guest rooms, the place could scarcely be called an inn at all. Probably because its secret allowed none, there was no sign at the gate. All was silence. Admitted through locked gate, old Eguchi led seen only the woman to whom he was now talking. (13)

The 'too restricted' room in the downstairs suggests that the position of the sleeping beauties working there also do not have freedom. They are too restricted. The complete silence of the place also suggests that the sleeping beauties had not given any chance to speak. They have to silently otherwise their employer would take actions against them. Even though they had some pain or difficulties they could not speak there. They could not raise their voice for any more rights. They have been kept as slaves, animals or some commodities.

Eguchi is a customer in the secret house. He gets permission to go to the sleeping beauties from the owner of the inn. He pays the money and get chance to sleep with the sleeping beauties. If he had not have money he could not possess them. So money is power, money is youth. He has money so he could own the sleeping beauties. But the sleeping beauties are poor. Being poor they had to sell their body for the rich for survival. The man pays the money and the owner of the secret house provides him the key of the room where the sleeping beauties have been locked.

“Here is the key. I hope you sleep well. If you have trouble getting to sleep, you will find some sleeping medicine by the pillow.”

“Have you anything to drink?”

“I can't even have a drink to put myself to sleep?”

“She's in the next room?”

“She's asleep, waiting for you.”(15)

The key of the room given by the owner of the secret club is not only the key of the room but also the key for Eguchi to exploit the sleeping beauties the way he wants. Before Eguchi, some other people also make similar visits to the house of the sleeping beauties and feel themselves 'alive' beside the beauties. In the despair of old age and impotency, they always go there. By going there, sitting beside the beauties and

closely observing the secret organs of the beauties, he tries to overcome the sense of sexual impotence and asserts his superiority there. He does not easily feel to be defeated. He does not concern the problem of those beauties. They are used as male wants. They are like things. But on the other hand they are compelled to join for their belly and made them hypnotized, means they and compelled to stay there without restrict.

Woman'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 capitalistic society. The female characters especially the sleeping beauties in the novel have been reduced to servility in the novel. In patriarchy males supposed to 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. Males have controlled the economy and power. They provide it to female only in rare cases. They play the role of the owner and the female play the role of the servants. Sleeping beauties' condition is even worse than that of the servants. So, female servility is dominant in the novel. The women always live with the sense of imprisonment. Their world has been made narrow. They can not go away out of the four walls of the house. Similarly the sleeping beauties also could not go out of the secret club. One of the sleeping expresses her sense of imprisonment. "Don't you suppose their after us? I have a feeling they will catch us when we get to Kyoto. Once they take me back they won't let me out of the house again" (29).

The women characters are treated like the instruments of domestic use. They are kept like instrument. They are used when they are needed only. The sleeping beauties are used to generate money when the customers like Eguchi come in the

secret chamber of the inn. They have been locked in the secret chambers. Whenever the customers come, the owner of the inn opens the door.

The woman got up and unlocked the door to the next room. She used her left hand. There was nothing remarkable about the act, but Eguchi held his breath as we watched her. She looked into the other room. [...]

The woman closed the door without locking it, and put the key on the table before Eguchi. (14-15)

In the novel, sleeping beauties are treated as if they are the things to be stored in the room and used when they are needed.

The sleeping beauties are employed to serve men sexually. As most of the visitors are old man in the secret club the girls (Sleeping Beauties) don't have to be sexually active. The old men just come there and play with their breast, hips, nipples and other parts including their vagina. The men satisfy their lust the way they want. Being human beings the sleeping beauties get tired also. But as the costumers come frequently they have to serve them even when they are tired. Because of this they have been given drug and made to remain in the beds almost all the time. Therefore the owner tells Eguchi:

“And please don't try to awake her. Not that you could, whatever you did. She's sound asleep and knows nothing.” The women said it again, “She will sleep on and on and know nothing at all, from start to finish. Not even who's been with her. You needn't worry.”

Eguchi said nothing of the doubts that were coming over him.

“She's a very pretty girl. I only take guests I know I can trust.”(14)

Men get women under their control through alcohol, drugs, hunger, desperation and malnutrition made to depend on them not simply for livelihood but also for their very

lives. Women specially prostitute, geisha, or the sleeping beauties hand over their body to their men who literally use them up or waste them. In *House of the Sleeping Beauties* almost all the means have been applied to control, use up an exploit woman. The sleeping beauties have been controlled by drug and hunger. They have been given drug and their food is limited. They are paid very limitedly or not paid at all. They have been made unconscious not only of their rights but also of their bodies. They have made to sleep in the bed unconscious of the outer world for freedom and justice. Not only their labour but also their body have been made a means of production, surplus and profit for the capitalists. Under the patriarchal regime, women are excluded from position of power authority. But sometimes a woman is given authority and power if her work supports individual man or the patriarchal system. In the *House of the Sleeping Beauties* the owner of the house of the sleeping beauties 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 sleeping beauties. The owner of the sleeping beauties is there only to give services to the male like Eguchi. This idea becomes clear in the following lines:

Her voice strangely young, the woman laughed a laugh to soothe an old man.

“If you’re so fond of the other girl, I can have her here the next time you come; but you’ll admit afterwards that this one is better.”

“Oh? What do you mean when you say she’s more experienced? After all she’s sound asleep.”

“Yes.” The woman got up, unlocked the door to the next room, looked inside, and put the key before old Eguchi. “I hope you sleep well.”(38)

The woman is very conscious for the comfort of the men. She helps to perpetuate patriarchal ideology. The woman, in the name of virginity, the very young girls are also exploited, the following lines explain this:

“The one tonight is still in training”, said the woman of the house as she made tea. “You may be disappointed, but please put up with her.”

“A different one again?” [...]

“I see. But what do you mean when you say she’s in training?”

She’s new, and smart. Old Eguchi was startled.

“She was frightened.” (57)

Child labour abuse is one of the features of capitalism. Girl trafficking, prostitution are the direct means of women’s exploitation in capitalism. The girl described above is too young to work in the secret clubhouse. Still she has been forced to sleep with such an old man, Eguchi. This shows that patriarchal society with capitalistic system always subordinate, exploit and torture women.

Humanity has no place in capitalistic social system. If the bourgeois are benefited by the death of an innocent labour they grin their teeth than to express their sympathy. One of the sleeping beauties dies while she was serving the customer in the secret house of the sleeping beauties. The client, Eguchi was frightened of what had happened. But the owner of the business does not feel any sympathy towards the recently dead girl. Rather the owner persuades the customer saying that he could use another girl. The following conversation from the novel clarifies this idea.

"Is something wrong?" the owner of the house came in.

"She’s dead". His teeth were chattering. [...]

"She's dead. She's not breathing and there is no pulse".

“Dead, isn’t she?”

The women rolled back the bedding and inspected the girl.

“Did you do anything to her?”

"Not a thing."

"She's not dead," she said with forced coolness. "You needn't worry".

"She's dead. Call a doctor".

The woman didn't answer. (97-98)

The passage shows that humanistic values are crushed in capitalistic machine. The girl was really dead. She died while an old man was sleeping with her and doing anything he liked. He was playing with her as if she was a play thing, a doll or a corpse. He exploited her until she turned to a corpse. It is nothing different than killing. It is similar to a case of murder. But he does not want to take any responsibility. In patriarchy men are responsible for pain, torture and even death of women but they wipe of their hands easily.

Similarly the capitalists are responsible for death of thousands of laborers. By paying less they kill the laborers by slow starvation. They employ them with risky works and finally the laborers are killed there. The black girl, one of the young sleeping beauties dies in the inn because she had been extremely exploited. She had not been given nutritious food. She had not been paid properly. She had been given drug to hypnotize her. Besides these a lusty man was doing anything with her in the whole night. So she had not died rather, she had been killed being crushed in the machine of patriarchy and capitalism. But the death of the girl does not touch the owner of the secret house and the old lusty Eguchi. The following conversation depicts the extreme of exploitation, objectification and dehumanization of women.

"What did you give her?"

May be she was allergic". "Don't be alarmed. We won't cause you any trouble.

"We won't tell your name".

"She's dead".

"I think not".

"What time is it?"

"After four"

She staggered as she lifted the dark naked body.

"Let me help you."

"Don't bother. There's a man down stairs".

"She's heavy.'

"Please you needn't bother. Go on back to sleep. There is the other girl." (98)

After causing death to a young beautiful girl the owner sends Eguchi to the next girl.

Eguchi also goes to the next girl to satisfy his lust. Both of them, the owner and

Eguchi show extreme in humanity. Eguchi goes to the next girl.

"There was another girl-no remark had ever struck him more sharply.

There was of course a fair skinned girl still a sleep in the next room.

[...]

The woman came back with two white tablets.

"Here you are. Sleep late tomorrow."

"Oh?" He opened the door to the next room [...]

The naked form of the fair girl lay in shining beauty

He gazes at her. (98-99)

The sleeping beauties suffer helplessly. They have been commodified. They have been trapped in patriarchal as well as capitalistic structure.

Alienation:

People suffer alienation of self in the capitalistic system. Being poor and being women the sleeping beauties 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. They are given drug and made unconscious. They have been put to sleep. When they are at the unawakening condition some men like Eguchi come and sleeping with them.

In his sixty-seven years old age Eguchi had parsed ugly nights with women. [...] But, could there be anything uglier than an old man lying the night through beside a girl put to sleeping unawakening? [...] The man who had told Eguchi of the house was so old that he was no longer a man. He seemed to think that Eguchi has reached the same age of senility. (17)

It shows that there is no connection between service the sleeping beauties provide and the satisfaction they receive. Though their duty is to satisfy the male visitors they have not got any emotional satisfaction. They have been alienated from the work also. Their mind they think and their bodies that the men use have no attachment. So, there is alienation effect on the sleeping beauties from their work also. In other words they have been estranged from the work. Their alienation heightens more because of being hypnotized and made to sleep so that the men could approach them easily. The men get satisfaction from them but the sleeping beauties do not have any. They are estranged from their work, from themselves and from the humanity as a whole. They have been dehumanized.

Men do not expect intelligence in women in patriarchy. What counts more is their beauty. If intelligence is expected in them their thoughts also have to be respected. That is why men do not mark intellectuality in women. They expect beauty only from women. They regard women as inferior sex. A woman is an enticer. She is an emotional being her beauty is to entice men. That might even spoil male. Such is the belief. By focusing on beauty, Men want to exploit her physically. In capitalism their beauty is exploited in generating money. Women have been made the object of advertisement of different products in television, newspapers and so on. They have been employed in restaurants, hotels, and various shopping centers so that the male would be attracted to those places. They have been made models to advertise various products like cars, soaps, shampoos and many others. Their status is not better than that of the products themselves.

Sleeping beauties are beautiful young girls. They are valued only for their physical beauty to quench the erotic thirst of men. Their beauty is bought and sold like soaps and shampoos. No intellectual response is expected from them. They have been totally commodified. They have been made the play things for men like Eguchi. In an encounter Eguchi himself tells:

She was not a living doll, for there could be no living doll, but, so as not to shame an old man no longer a man, she had been made into a living toy. No, not a toy for the old men, she could be life itself. Such life was perhaps, life to be touched with confidence. To Eguchi's farsighted old eyes the hand from close up was yet smoother and more beautiful. It was smooth to touch, but he could not see the texture. (20)

The given description shows that Eguchi a representative of the patriarchal capitalistic society that treats a woman as a playing doll. Woman's status is nothing more than that of a doll.

Eguchi as well as other old men who visit the sleeping beauties who are the age of their grand daughter shamelessly play with the secret organs of the girls' body. They feel themselves safe because they have paid money to the owner of the secret club house. They have bought the sleeping beauties by paying their cost. So for them they are nothing than the objects bought to play. So they play with the leaps, hips, hairs and breasts of the sleeping beauties. Eguchi feels that

The girl's hair was long, possibly for old men to play with. Lying back on his pillow, Eguchi brushed it aside to expose her ear. The sheen of the hair behind the ear was white. The neck and the shoulder too were young and fresh. [...] The breast was not one that had given milk. He touched it softly with his finger. It was not wet. The girl was approaching twenty. (20-21)

There is no any other purpose in employing the girls than generating money. So the owner thinks nothing of their comfort for the sleeping beauties. Their main purpose is to earn money by exploiting the girls. Therefore the sleeping beauties do not have any emotional relation with the owner also. They have Sense of alienation. Alienation comes when one does not get friendly and sympathetic behaviour from the other people. They are treated as machines that produce services so that the owner earns money.

A woman in capitalistic patriarchy experiences her oppression and exploitation. She also experiences it differently than a woman of another class or race in the same context. Rich women enjoy some privileges while the poor class women

suffer exploitation. However they are all subordinate to men. In *House of the Sleeping Beauties* the owner of the secret club house is a woman from a richer class. So, enjoys more privileges. She has been the owner and earning money while the sleeping beauties have more troublesome experiences. However both are subordinate to men. Underlying structure of oppression lies in both the classes of women. So, patriarchy and capitalism exploit women systematically and parallelly.

Gender labour relations are primary and this makes all other aspects of identity secondary or immaterial. Here the sleeping beauties are labourer. What matters is what they do than what they are. How far they can generate money is basic thing. Being female of lower class they experience double exploitation, exploitation of patriarchy and exploitation of capitalism. Women's subordination is the central issue if political economy as well as patriarchal culture. In *House of the Sleeping Beauties* the relation between of the sleeping beauties to the owner of the club and the male customers like Eguchi is patriarchal capitalistic labour relation.

Capital a Primary Oppressor

Capital is the primary oppressor of women as workers and that men are the agent oppressor of women as women. Even marriage is a means of exploitation in patriarchy. Marriage is a legalization of domestic prostitution because men and 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 to financially to men. Good jobs are not believed for them therefore they are bound to sell themselves that is their sexual services. Owner has to hire out their body as a wage-worker. They have to be trapped into the exploitative networks. Such is the case for the sleeping beauties. They have been transferred into the exploited class. "The guests here were of course free to kiss. Kissing was not among forbidden acts. A man

could kiss however senile he was. The girl would not avoid him, and she would never know” (88). Here the guests are males alone. They are exploiting the sleeping beauties by showing their monetary power. They also in a sense belong to the oppressor class. They are the agents of the patriarchal capitalistic society while the owner of the secret club is the bourgeoisie class.

Masculine chauvinism and superiority reduces women to sex object, a second sex, and a submissive other. The sleeping beauties are bound to be submissive before the old Eguchi and other customers. They have been submissive in two ways. Firstly they are bound to adopt prostitution secondly they have been given drugs while the men came to play with their bodies. The men do not care how the sleeping beauties have been hurt. This can be realized in Eguchi's behaviour to one of the sleeping beauties in the novel:

He put her arms under bedding and covered her breasts he lay down beside her. She turned over. Then, with a groan she thrust her arms abruptly out. The old man was pushed cleanly away. He laughed on and on. A most valiant sort of apprentice, he said to himself.

Because she had been put into a sleep from which she would not awaken, and because her body was probably numbed, he could do as he wished. (89)

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

Fate, Curse or Hegemony

The sleeping beauties suffer from poverty their economic status is not discussed in the novel because they do not have any property. They have accepted

their plight. They have thought it to be their fate or curse of their earlier birth.

Therefore, they do not question their status. They have been taught by the society that to be poor or rich is the matter of one's fate. Rich are rich because that is their luck. They are lucky and happy people. This kind of discourse is prevalent in the society. Japanese society also suffered from this capitalistic mind set.

In capitalistic social context, the working class people fall victim to what is known as false consciousnesses. By false consciousness, there is the hierarchical creation of two classes as bourgeois and proletariat. The former deceives the latter into believing that the working class people or proletariats are weak, inferior and subordinate and hence the bourgeois are doing in the interest of the working class. In a sense, the bourgeois are tricking them into falsely believing that at least some members of the bourgeois are concerned about the best interest of the proletariat.

Truly speaking, it's a myth created by the bourgeois. It's not the fate or lot or destiny as perceived by the working class. The very thing can be analyzed in the novel as the owner of the secret club house represents these exploited classes. "The naked girl would know nothing, would open her eyes, if one of the old men were to hold her tight in his arms, shed cold tears, even sob and wail. The old man need feel no shame, no damage to his pride" (67). It shows how they suffer from the false consciousness that their life is not good because of exploitation instead it is their fate. They still do not have sense of class consciousness they could have protested. But due to the lack of it they have satisfied themselves in the present status quo. They perceive the reality not through their own eyes but through the eyes of the ruling class.

People are largely free to do what they want to do within the confines under capitalism, but they have little say in determining those confines, which make them behave like self interested egoists. Personality is confined and determined by quite

definite class relationships. The people like sleeping beauties do certain jobs in society. They tend to acquire certain character traits, interests, habits, and so on. Without such adaptations to the demands of their particular occupations, they would not be able to do a great job. A capitalist who can not bear to win in competition or to outsmart someone will not be a capitalist for long. A worker who is unwilling to take orders will not be able to get a job very often. In this way, the sleeping beauties are shaped by the work environment, and this fact limits personal freedom for it limits what we can choose to be. The sleeping beauties work the way they have been given order. They no longer oppose their master or the oppressor. They behave the way the customer and their owner feel comfortable. Otherwise, they will lose their jobs, losing jobs means losing right to survive under capitalism. The following description suggests how the girls had been trapped and shaped up by the capitalistic environment to obey the way their customers or the employer want:

He took her hands. The fingers and the nails were long. She would be tall, in modern fashion. What sort of voice would she have, what would be her way of speaking? There were numbers of women on radio and TV whose voices he liked. He would close his eyes and listen to them. He wanted to hear this girl's voice. There was of course no way of really talking to a girl who was asleep. How could he make her speak? A voice was different when it came from a sleeping person. Most women have several voices but this girl would probably, have only one. (87)

The girl would have different personalities but all of her other potentialities have been crushed under capitalistic system. She is expected to behave, speak or fashion herself the way her employer and the male clients want her.

Women Exploit Women

Women are excluded from the benefit of trades and professions. Only some aristocratic women enjoy some privilege. The owner of the secret club enjoys more privileges than the sleeping beauties. Being a woman of a higher class family she has exploited the other women. Women themselves can be the exploiters of females. They have been hegemonised by patriarchal values. The wife of the master exploits the servants especially maids. Mother in laws exploits the daughter in laws. Patriarchy has been so deeply rooted that women themselves do not know how they have been exploiting and how they have been 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 *House of the Sleeping Beauties* the club owner has been an agent of patriarchy and as well as capitalism. She has been running the club to serve men. At the same time she has earned money for her husband. So 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 secret club house is a woman. She has employed the young beautiful girls to satisfy the erotic needs of old men so that could earn a lot for the comfort of her husband and herself. She manages everything in the house to serve the male. One day when the old Eguchi reached in her inn she talks to the old Eguchi:

"It was good of you to come on such a cold night." At the house of the sleeping beauties, the woman opened the door.

"That's why I've come," said old Eguchi. "To die on a night like this, with a young girl's skin to warm him-that would be paradise for an old man."

"You say such pleasant things." (81)

This shows that the woman of the secret club is hegemonious to creat a heaven for male. She lives, works and thinks for the comfort of male. To comfort males she has exploited her sisters like sleeping beauties. It is an extreme state of patriarchal hegemony. Patriarchy as a system has been able to employ women to exploit women themselves.

The owner of the secret house is a woman herself but she does not respect the feelings and thoughts of the girls she has employed. She is very strict in granting leave for them. She treats them so inhumanly that she makes them take drug and get hypnotized so that she herself and her customer can treat them as they like. The inhumanity of the woman and the old man Eguchi can be realized in the following lines.

She seemed like a girl who could easily be made pregnant. Although she had been put to sleep her physiological processes had not stopped, and she would be awoken in course of the next day. If she were to become pregnant, it would be quite without her knowledge. Suppose Eguchi, now sixty-seven, were to leave such a child behind it was the body of woman that invited man into the lower circles of hell. (76)

The body of a woman is treated as an object or a corpse. Her feeling and sentiments are neglected. Such is the plight of women in capitalistic patriarchal social system.

A woman does not have any dignity or self respect in capitalistic society. "She had been stripped of all defenses, for the sake of her aged guest, of the sad old man. She was naked, and she would not awake" (78). Her defenses not only suggest her clothes here but also her social and self dignity. She was stripped of not only of her dresses but also of power, economy and any privileges in the society. The main cause

of her being stripped off and selling her body is of course her gender and economy. If she had been a man or a rich lady perhaps she wouldn't have to bear that much injustice.

Passivity is a female stereotype but passivity in *House of the Sleeping Beauties* is injected upon the women. The sleeping beauties are passive not because they are passive by nature but they have been made passive. They have been paralyzed by their poor economic conditions. They have even been given drug. They have been hypnotized. Symbolically speaking, the drug is patriarchal as well as capitalistic hegemony and its domination upon the women. They can be even sold and bought like commodities for their own livelihood. They are treated like a resting place or a picnic spot and finally deserted. The rich women also suffer from that mentality and treat poor girl accordingly. Society remains structured in ways that favour men and disfavour women in the competitive race for the goods with which our society rewards us: power, prestige, and money. This structure puts obstacles in the freedom and progress of women. By denying personal freedom the structure changes women into more objects.

Selling them as a Prostitute alienates the sleeping beauties from their work because the work is for another, not for them. They are dehumanized and their real existence and proper value as a person is turned and reduced into market value. As long as they can sell themselves they can survive. Selling and buying becomes the surviving method of their lives. They get experienced as if they were sellable commodities in the capitalistic market.

To end this exploitation, women should get freedom from economic dependency. They should first understand the capitalistic working system of how they have been exploited. By raising them to class consciousness from the false

consciousness only they can fight for economic independence. Economic independency is not easy. They need to struggle unitedly for their rights, equality, power and at last freedom. As long as women do not get economic independence from men and remain in poverty, the sleeping beauties will keep on dying.

In order to liberate women from the culturally constructed cages of patriarchy and capitalism they have to be awakening 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 Marxists class consciousness. They should be made aware that they need to struggle for their rights. They should raise above the narrow thoughts of personal needs and struggle for their women race in general and poor women in particular. The sleeping beauties now should wake up and turned to be revolting beauties:

IV- Conclusion

The research has tried to unveil how women have been commodified in the Japanese society where capitalism and patriarchy are dominant social values by studying the women characters in Yasunari Kawabata's novel the *House of the Sleeping Beauties*. After the study of the male-female relation similar to the master-worker relation in the patriarchal capitalistic system, the researcher comes to the conclusion that 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 sleeping beauties of the secret club house sleep with the old impotent men like Eguchi and let the men play with their body speechlessly because they have been made to suffer as they belong to lower class women.

The sleeping beauties (young girls) work in a secret club house in the novel. The nature of their work is very complicated they have to remain in the small chambers of the secret club house. 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 Eguchi, an old man of sixties. He is old, weak and sexually impotent but still he believes that he has to show his masculinity. For that he visits the sleeping beauties. His relationship with the sleeping beauties is very lopsided. He assumes to be superior while the sleeping beauties 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 sleeping beauties. He does not feel morally guilty to visit the girls even though he is too old for sexual activities. Old Eguchi's behaviour reveals men's attitude towards women in the patriarchal society.

The research also shows that women have been exploited not only by the men but women also. Women themselves have become the exploiter of the women in

capitalistic society. The owner of the secret club house is a woman. She has employed the sleeping beauties. The sleeping beauties have been stripped off their freedom and rights while the owner has been enjoying some privilege. 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 men. She has been employed to make other women to prepare and sustain patriarchy. She also enjoys some privileges because she has some economic rights. She is richer than the sleeping beauties so she is more powerful than them. However the power she has been granted is to maintain exploitation of women of lower class. 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 force to internalize such values so that they can maintain the patriarchal values themselves.

The sleeping beauties in the novel have been extremely commodified. They have been misused by the males. One of the sleeping beauties dies while she was sleeping with Eguchi. He played with her body as if she was a doll to play. The sleeping beauty has been given drug to intoxicate her so that it would be easier for the customer to handle her. Because of excessive drug and misbehaviour of Eguchi and the owner of the secret club, the sleeping beauty dies. But even at her death there is no any human feeling and sentiment toward her. At her death the owner of the house feels that one of her object has been destroyed. Eguchi feels that his object of pleasure has been lost. She is not given any ceremonial or cultural respect.

Commodification of the sleeping beauties has even 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. Besides this they have been alienated from the work they do as their work does not profit them rather it gives profit to the capitalists.

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