

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Double marginalization of women in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*

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By

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Abstract

The thesis, in its conscientious and meticulous illustration of the perils and pathos of a life of a Geisha, attempts at showing whether the text holds the evidence enough to support the hypothesis assumed by the present study. The text speaks volumes which clarify that the women in general and Geisha woman in particular goes through not single but double marginalisations. Geisha being a non-western woman is a doubly silenced existence treading on the paths of thorns so laid by the male gaze and orientalist's gawk. Patriarchy's complicity with the Western imperialism's accounts for the double isolation, double subjugation and manifold ramifications that have led the life an artistic courtesan towards miseries that has been here-to-fore accepted as a doom. The history of the geisha culture, if it is culture at all, is but a tale of women subservience towards the male hegemony and the East's prostration to the self-acclaimed mighty West. Each and every male characters that the Geisha encounters in the book including those she recalls in her memoir through the pen of a western male writer and the writer himself, ends up doing injustice to her in one form or the other. When in home (Japan) she is taken for granted and when away (New York), she is most of the time misunderstood and (mis)represented in sardonic ways though unintentionally. Women then, cant do away with the deep-seated patriarchy and ambitious all-encompassing western imperialism and hegemony. Geisha's gendered sexuality and her non-west locality accounts for all her false projections and all the wrong that happens to her. To assume Geisha's fame as her happiness would then be absurd and the question whether Geisha is a prostitute has its answer in the fact that no one dies virgin in poverty.