

### **Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* and Geisha Culture**

The novel illustrates Golden's grasp of the 1930s Japanese milieu, which helps the reader immerse him or herself in a landscape interestingly opposite to the familiar Male culture, a secretive world where geisha are obliged to keep quiet about what they learn from powerful man. In other words, the world of geisha is more mysterious, because without its mysteries it cannot be survived. Geishas resemble elegant models just like artisans who train for years in the fine arts of dance, music, makeup, fashion and socializing. Compared to other Japanese women, geisha are exotic cultural creations. Their silk kimonos, the colorfully decorated robes, are often worth as much as fine arts objects. Their elaborate white makeup accentuates their skin so as to make their necks and other exposed areas more erotic. Their hairdos are elaborate enough to require geisha to use little wooden cradles for their necks when they sleep, so that these coiffures are not disturbed. In many respects, geishas are the fantastical creations of male desire, and there is an odd dissonance between their artistic ability and their more debased utilitarian function as hostesses and flirts. Ever the master at maintaining appearances, the geisha knows how to act, disguise her true emotions, and use her social wiles to further her. The geisha possesses the writer's ability to play a role in much the same way that a man may inhabit a female person in drag, which perfectly suits Golden's technique. On the job, geishas mostly attend tea house parties, pour teas, play drinking games, and entertain boorish businessmen with self-conscious glimpses of their wrists or a lewd joke. Compared to the many apprentice years of learning dance and singing, their actual work can resemble drunken fraternity parties.

Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* tells the story of a geisha known as Nitta Sayuri, who lives in New York as a hostess to Japanese businessmen. Sayuri

interprets in the beginning that as a child she was known as Sakamoto Chiyo, a peasant girl, and a daughter of a local fisherman in the small fishing village of Yoroido, Japan. Soon after her mother died, a local fish merchant, a well-off man Mr. Tanaka sells Chiyo and her sister 'Satsu' into slavery in Kyoto. While her uglier sister is sold in a "house of pleasure" and forced into prostitution, whereas Chiyo is suddenly orphaned out to an Okiya, or house of geisha, where she must work to pay off the price of her purchase and any other expenses she incurs in her apprenticeship toward becoming a geisha. If she fails, she will work in drudgery as maid life.

With her unusual blue-grey eyes, Chiyo is to train to become geisha, but is constantly antagonized by Hatsumomo, the resident (and only) geisha of the Nitta okiya. Hatsumomo is the premier geisha of the Nitta Okiya, a beautiful but viciously competitive woman who supports everyone else in the household by attending teahouse parties into the night. Hatsumomo has limitation as a character, as nothing is shown of her but her wicked side, but her instinctual loathing for Chiyo's threatening young beauty enlivens the novel. Hatsumomo incites Chiyo into trying to escape the Okiya. Not knowing the consequences of their action, Chiyo tries to escape and join her sister by climbing the rooftops of the adjoining Okiya, but she ends up trapped and further in debt than ever. Due to Hatsumomo's machinations, Chiyo is reduced to becoming a maid in the okiya, ostensibly with no future of becoming a geisha. In despair of ever breaking free from her bound servitude, she runs into the chairman of an electrical appliance company, and his unexpected act of kindness persuades her to seek her freedom through becoming a geisha instead of by escaping.

Chiyo decides to rough it out and, with the help of another nice "elder sister" geisha named Mameha, the most successful geisha in Gion, who is despised by Hatsumomo because she outshines her in every aspect and, having earned her

independence as a geisha, unlike Hatsumomo, cannot be toppled. She takes Chiyo in as her younger sister and protégé and trains Chiyo to rival Hatsumomo. Chiyo starts to succeed as an apprentice. Chiyo's entrance into apprenticeship is marked by being given a new name: Sayuri. Hatsumomo does everything she can to stop her. In the meantime, readers learn the concept of a “danna”, a wealthy man who pays extravagantly for a geisha's closer attention. In other words, a danna was typically a wealthy man, sometimes married, who had the means to support the very large expenses related to a geisha's traditional training and other costs including the cost of lessons, annual registration fee, medical expenses, and even provides lavish gifts to geisha.

Mameha orchestrates a bidding war between rich patrons for Sayuri's ‘mizuage’ (interpreted in the narrative, erroneously, as a deflowering ceremony), and Sayuri's final price is more than enough to pay off her entire debt to the Nitta okiya, establishing her as a highly successful and most desirable geisha in Gion and earning her adoption by the mistress of the okiya. Sayuri and Mameha destroy Hatsumomo's reputation entirely thereafter and Hatsumomo is thrown out of the okiya. It further says that the geisha are deeply superstitious, relying on their astrological charts to make decisions and having their servants spark flames off a piece of flint on their backs before undertaking a journey. Everyone walks to tatami mats and sleeps on futons. While Sayuri's fortunes seem to soar, even now that she has finally broken free of Hatsumomo's abuse, everything collapses in 1942 because of war.

Dr. Crab buys Sayuri's virginity by paying highest price in the ‘mizuage’ (deflowering ceremony); then he claims a sample of her hymen blood and places it in a kind of trophy case of vials labeled with the names of his different *mizuges*. Repeatedly, Golden shows the extreme chauvinism of the Japanese geisha culture.

Like, Geisha are considered to be evidence of Japan's chauvinistic society. For all her arts, Sayuri and her geisha mentors are at the mercy of men's favor. Because the men do not share their serious concerns with them, the geisha do not have much opportunity to grow intellectually. As a result, Sayuri, as a character, seems peculiarly stunted.

By the third last chapter of the novel, the narrow role of the geisha limits the possibilities of Golden's narrative. In a profession like Geisha in which sex appeal is all important, the geisha show a touching simplistic awareness of the topic of sex. Mameha instructs Sayuri in the facts of life, using the metaphor of a male "homeless eel" that looks for a woman's "cave" which is pure and untouched. The possibility of a woman enjoying sex rarely comes up. Sayuri does admit to having an affair with a younger man named, Yasuda Akira, just as Hatsumomo does earlier with Koichi, but generally their profession encourages a kind of chaste ritualized flirtation. It is believed that geisha are more artist than courtesan or wives; they sell their skills of arts not their bodies and souls. Geisha are a creative cultural creation who creates another secretive world, a place only of beauty. Geisha means artist and they are judged as moving work of art. The geisha too are involved in their roles as performers to get much pleasure out of it. Besides, economic necessity often obliges them to cater to unpleasant older man.

However, Golden's melodramatic story structure, by the end of the novel, overwhelms the carefully researched historical detail. Readers used to romance clichés will enjoy the latter third of the novel, but the more literary minded wonder what happened to all the evocative descriptions. The epidemic of World War II, a theme foreshadowed by growing reference to the Japanese military, represents, structurally, another major challenge for Sayuri and other Japanese geishas. Sayuri's

successes as geisha are quickly made irrelevant, and her physical beauty is tarnished by manual labor and malnutrition. Her life of luxury is replaced by a new reality: her personal dark valley.

During her time as a geisha before the war, she encounters the Chairman again, but finds it impossible to get close to him as she desires. Instead, she finds herself constantly being pushed to be with Nobu, the Chairman's most trusted friend. Nobu saves Sayuri from the harsh labor of the war until Gion is able to open again on the condition that she will allow him to become her *danna* (patron), even though she desires the Chairman.

However, it is not until she puts herself in an undesirable position that Sayuri's desire to be with the Chairman truly frees her to pursue her own destiny. The Chairman, at the end of the novel, tells that he is the one who ordered Mameha to take Sayuri as her younger sister and train to be a famous geisha then he frees her from the *okiya* and becomes her '*danna*', but cannot marry her because he was already a married man.

In the end, Sayuri's move to the United States collapses her foreign perspective into the familiar just as the novel finds heaven in romantic conventions. She makes one job at judging her profession as geisha by noting that what the word 'geisha' really means to most Westerners (or especially to American wives), and how many American wives is just as much debt by men as she is, but she also seems to enjoy her newfound lifestyle in America. She learned that the American wives or the woman, who says she is talking with a prostitute (Geisha), is herself later liberated or rescued by her escort by a wealthy man of a good thirty or forty years older than she is. Well, she often finds herself wondering why they (American wives) cannot sense how much they really have in common. They are a kept woman like she (Geisha) was

in her day. Geishas are now an endangered species in Japan, probably because of gains in Japanese women's right and the gradual usurpation of more Western methods for amusement such as television and movies. Golden conjures up a world of Geisha which is in the process of disappearing or vanishing until all that remains at the works of art themselves. Like the kimonos as painting in dress, the traditions in dance and music, the exotic landscape that enriches Sayuri's memoirs. Sayuri states, "Geisha is not the memoirs of Imperials nor of a Queen, rather geisha is the memoirs of another kind" (*Memoirs of a Geisha* directed by Rob Marshall, 2005). In other words, Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* uncovers the hidden world of eroticism and enchantment, exploitation and degradation.

Geishas are one of the symbols of Japanese tradition. However, Geisha art only became well known worldwide after the Second World War. Some Geishas even became very famous and were admired as much as film stars nowadays. Nevertheless the Geisha life still remains a secret. Geishas seem to live in their own world which has its own principles and the Japanese give much respect to this. Though a Geisha is not prohibited from telling the outside world about her life, it seems to be an unspoken rule that a Geisha, after her retirement, will never tell anyone about her past and keep her life a secret until the day of her death.

Many people have a misconception that Geishas are prostitutes. This is completely wrong. The word "Geisha" is the combination of two parts: in Japanese, "Gei" means art, performance and "Sha" means a person. Therefore Geisha means a person who performs Japanese traditional arts. They are real artists who can play different kinds of musical instruments, sing and dance, perform the tea ceremony, arrange flowers, chant poems and especially be an expert in wearing traditional

kimonos. Geishas also have very good conversation skills and many even can speak English in order to entertain foreign guests.

Geishas live in houses called okiyas. The leader of each okiya is called Okami, who used to be a Geisha. She has the duty of taking care of Geishas and trainees, doing the accounting work and getting connections with the teahouses where Geishas work or do their internship. Young girls who want to become Geishas are sent to a special school where they can learn essential skills. All living and studying expenses of these prospective Geishas are noted carefully by the Okami and they have to be paid back when the girls become professional Geishas. The training is very harsh and often takes about six years. After that, the trainee Geisha is called Maiko and will go with a head Geisha to teahouses to get familiar with the customers. A Maiko later has to choose whether she wishes to become a professional Geisha or not, because a Geisha cannot get married at any time of her life.

Nowadays there are still Geishas entertaining at hotels and restaurants in Japan. However, fewer and fewer girls want to become Geishas now due to the rigorous and time-consuming training. That's a pity because Geishas are not only talented entertainers but also have been considered an important part of Japanese culture, to the outside world.

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Arthur Golden was educated at Harvard College, where he received a degree in art history, specializing in Japanese art. In 1980 he earned an MA in Japanese history from Columbia University, where he learned Mandarin Chinese. Following a summer at Beijing University, he worked in Tokyo, and after returning to the United States, earned an MA in English from the Boston University. His literary debut *Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1998, was listed in the New York Bestseller and made him rise in literary world.

In his literary debut, Arthur Golden parlays his academic training in Japanese history and culture into a Dickensian first-person narrative of a geisha girl's rise to prominence in pre-World War II Japan. As a product of meticulous research, *Memoirs of a Geisha* provides a detailed portrait of a little-known, but much mythologized profession.

However, many critics have observed many techniques in this text. Margaret Topping in "Writing the Self, Writing the Other in Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysantheme* and Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*" explains that it explores "the use of fictionalized autobiography and autobiographized fiction to show how generic and structural differences enable varying modalities of representation of self and other". There are "ambiguities of such representations". On the other hand, Claudia Puig claims "Geisha is more art than realism". People think of the Geisha as a prostitute, because prostitutes started wearing "white-makeup" and "silk kimonos" and calling themselves Geishas. But the actual word geisha means 'artist' not the "wives or courtesan", they sell their skills not their bodies. "Yes, they entertain men in tea houses. But more important, they are great dancers and musicians and great conversationalists. They are like supermodels" adds Puig.

Furthermore, Joseph L. Galloway cites Mineko Iwasaki (a retired geisha Golden had interviewed as a source of acknowledgement while writing the novel) in U.S. News & World Report and through her words expresses excuses for Golden: He has made a mockery of Japanese geisha culture; Geishas, she says, are more artisans than courtesans, more focused on the arts of music and dance and clever conversation which they study for years while at the same time remain submissive and exotic, than those of futon. Iwasaki adds that she told him about her life as a geisha due to the traditional code of silence about their clients and she was promised anonymity but

was named in the books of acknowledgements, and now people think she is the model for Golden's main character, Sayuri, a young rural girl sold into a geisha house. Quite contrarily, David Ansen interprets that the novel bears more than a small resemblance to 'Cinderella', though it happens to be set in Kyoto in the 1930s and '40s. The Cinderella echoes, present in Arthur Golden's best-selling novel, come through clearly in Rob Marshall's ornately appointed movie of "Memoirs of a Geisha", starring Ziyi Zhang as the exotically pale-eyed Sayuri.

Unlike Ansen, David Punter reads the novel from the postmodern ways of figuring Japan: "There are endless examples in the postmodern ways of figuring Japan: as the e-commercial master, as the producer of electronic equipment /.../ and suicidal rule of the 'slavery men', as cold violence, as repression, as an inexplicable tongue" (75). Commenting on *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Alfred A. Knopf presents different view: "It is a book of nuance and vivid metaphor, of memorable characters rendered with humor and pathos." And though the story is rich with detail and a vast knowledge of history, it is the transparent, seductive voice of Sayuri that the reader remembers.

And the writer of this novel explains about geisha: "The so-called 'got springs geisha or geiko', who frequently entertain at tea houses and official parties, are certainly prostitute women. But you have to look at the traditional arts of Japanese geisha, how well they play the shamisen (a musical instrument), and how much they know about traditional tea ceremony, and how they entertained or enchanted the boorish business men through traditional dance and flirtatious conversation before you determine whether they ought properly to call themselves geisha. However, even in the geisha districts of Kyoto and Tokyo and other large cities, a certain amount of prostitution does exist. For example, all apprentice geisha are also known as "Maiko"

which literally translates as, "dance child" go through something they call mizuage, which we might call, "deflowering ceremony." It amounts to the sale of young apprentice geisha's virginity to the highest bidder. Back in the 1930s and '40s, girls went through it as young as thirteen to fourteen, certainly no later than eighteen. It is misleading not to call this prostitution, even child prostitution.

In this context, it is quite obvious that the text has been studied from various perspectives. The present study attempts to fill up the stereotypical images of Japanese geishas as prostitute women not the artist prevalent in the text. It will also explore how Golden, through the masculinist perspectives, represents Japanese cultural girl Geisha.

Moreover, Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (volume one, 1976), and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) will from the theoretical tools for the analysis of the text. Moreover, the present study will seek to prove that Arthur Golden's novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* consists stereotypical images about the Japanese geisha culture, but these stereotypical images concerning geisha is a social and cultural constructs of particular historical period.

### **Female Sexuality as a Social and Cultural Constructs**

Female Sexuality encompasses a broad range of behaviors and procession, including female sexual identity and sexual behavior, the physiological and psychological, social, cultural, political and spiritual or religious aspects of sex. Various aspects and dimensions of female sexuality, as a part of human sexuality, have also been addressed by principles of ethics, morality and theology. In almost any historical era and culture, the arts, including literary and visual arts, as well as popular culture, present a substantial portion of a given society's views on human sexuality, which also include, implicitly or explicitly, female sexuality.

In most societies and legal jurisdiction, there are legal bounds on what sexual behavior is permitted. Sexuality varies across the culture and regions of the world as it has continually changed throughout history, and this applies equally to female sexuality. Aspects of female sexuality include issues pertaining to biological sex, body image, self-esteem, personality, sexual orientation, values and attitudes, gender roles, relationships, activity options, and communication.

Historically, female sexuality has been seen in many male-dominated cultures as subordinate to male sexuality, and as something to be controlled by society, by restrictions on female behavior. But, historical and contemporary scientific research on gender and sexuality suggests that the idea that all men and women must conform to fit into these (social and cultural) categories is the premise behind heterosexualization. Many feminists also use compulsory heterosexuality to describe the process of heterosexualization. Adrienne Rich, a prominent feminist, was one of the first public scholars to challenge the idea of heterosexuality, in which others forms of sexual expression are deviant. These other forms of sexuality include homosexuality. Rich in her important essay "Compulsive Heterosexuality and

Lesbian Existence” (1980) posits that the heterosexualization in society is the process in which individuals are conditioned to adopt heterosexual practices, by ignoring and suppressing their sexual feelings toward the same sex and then using these suppressed emotions towards the opposite gender. Society creates rules and regulations for gendered identities that establish a set construction of sexuality. Due to the overall societal institution, different adjectives define what is considered masculine and what is considered feminine. The feminine gender is usually associated with terms such as weaker, cowardly, sensitive, dependent, and compassionate while masculinity is coupled with terms such as strong, brave, and independent.

The contemporary queer theory, incorporating many ideas from social constructionist, tends to look at sexuality as something that has meaning only within a given historical framework. Sexuality, then, is seen as a participation in a larger social discourse and, though in some sense fluid, not as something strictly determinable by the individual.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of queer theorists adopted the deconstructive mode of dismantling the key binary oppositions of Western Male/culture, such as male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and natural/unnatural, by which a spectrum of diverse things are forced into only two categories, and in which the first category is assigned privilege, power, and centrality, while the second is derogated, subordinated, and marginalized. A major endeavor was to identify and reclaim sexuality as social and cultural constructs rather than human innate traits - Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and other poststructuralists who decentered the earlier assumptions that lesbian and gay or heterosexual and homosexual were a unitary, stable, essential, universal and transhistorical types of human subjects, or identities, by historicizing these categories by proposing that they are social, cultural,

and discursive “constructs” that emerged under special ideological condition in a particular culture at a particular time.

A central text is the first volume of Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976) which claims that the concept of "sexual" activities and sensations is historically (as well as regionally and culturally) determined. It is, therefore, part of a changing "discourse". The sexual meanings (meanings of the erotic dimension of human sexual experience) are social and cultural constructs. They are made subjective only after cultural and social mediation. As the main force conditioning human relationships, sex is essentially political. In any social context, the construction of a "sexual universe" is fundamentally linked to the structures of power. The construction of sexual meanings is an instrument by which social institutions (religion, marketing, the educational system, psychiatry, etc.) control and shape human relationships.

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault also claims that, while there had long been a social category of sodomy as a transgressive human act, the “homosexual,” as a special type of human subject or identity, was a construction of the medical and legal discourse of the later nineteenth century. In other words, he asserts that sexuality began to be regarded as a conceptual part of human nature in the nineteenth century. For Foucault, sexuality began to be used as a means to define normality and its boundaries, and to conceive everything outside those boundaries in the realm of psychopathology. In a study of discourses on sexuality, he also wrote, “if sexuality” was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object. Thus sexuality is the name given not to some hidden or profound human reality, but rather to a historical construct organized according to strategies of knowledge and power. For Foucault, the concept of male or

female sexuality of a given period is historical and cultural discursive constructs. As he wrote in his text that:

[. . .] instead of studying the sexual behavior of men at a given period (by seeking its law in social structure, In a collective unconscious, or in a certain moral attitude), instead of describing what men thought of sexuality (what religious interpretation they gave it, to what extent they approved or disapproved of it, what conflicts of opinion or morality it gave rise to), one would ask oneself whether, in this behavior, as in these representations, a whole discursive practice is not at work; whether sexuality is quite apart from any orientation towards a scientific discourse, is not a group of objects that can be talked about or is forbidden to talk about, a field of possible enunciation [whether in lyrical or legal language] a group of concepts (notions, themes, a set of choices) which may appear in the coherence of behavior or in systems of prescription.

Foucault also believes that the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting preexisting entities and orders, brings into being the concepts, oppositions, and hierarchies of which it speaks, that these elements are both products and propagators of “power” or social forces; and that as a result, the particular discursive formations of an era determine what is at the time accounted “knowledge” and “truth” as well as what is considered to be humanly normal as against what is considered to be criminal, insane, or sexually deviant. In other words, Foucault views discourse as a social parlance or language-in-use and consider it to be both the products and manifestation not of a timeless linguistic system, but of particular social conditions, class-structures and power relationships that alter in the course of history. So, for Foucault, the

misperception regarding female sexuality was a social and cultural discursive constructs made by powerful man in patriarchal system or society.

In this text, Foucault develops an "analytics of power" the conceptual instruments that make possible the analysis of sex in terms of power. In addition, he argues that power operates not through the repression of sex, but through the discursive production of sexuality and subjects, emphasizing that the power mechanisms of sexuality are socially constructed, unstable, and historically situated.

Foucault explains, and then, raises doubts to the "repressive hypothesis." He begins by illustrating the difference between seventeenth century sexuality, where codes regulating the coarse, the obscene, and the indecent were quite lax, and nineteenth century sexuality, where sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. He again argues that this Victorian concept of sexuality influences us today, and the image of the imperial prude is emblazoned on our restrained, mute, and hypocritical sexuality.

Foucault illustrates that Victorian sexuality required repression which operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence and by implication, an admission that there was nothing to say about such subjects. Such "halting logic" was forced to make a few concessions for illegitimate sexualities. He defines repression as the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age and nothing less than a transgressive of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an irruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality, a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required to free ourselves from it but its disruption comes at considerable cost. He argues that sex is not easily deciphered, but by reconstructing repression we can analyze it. In other words, repression is a factor which brings sex into discourse so we can talk about it.

By speaking about sex, one has the appearance of a "deliberate transgression" that places the speaker, to a certain extent, outside the reach of power.

In this text, Foucault further argues that power operates not through the repression of sex, but through the discursive production of sexuality and subjects who have a "sexual nature". It has been argued that repression coincides with the development of capitalism. Sex is repressed because it is incompatible with a general and intensive work imperative. However, Foucault believes, the essential thing is not the economic factor, but the existence of a discourse in which sex, the revelation of truth, the overturning of global laws, and the promise of a new felicity are linked together. His objective is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality. He is interested in the over-all 'discursive fact,' the way in which sex is put into discourse, and the polymorphous techniques of power that influence its formation propagation.

Foucault additionally argues that the seventeenth century was the beginning of an age of repression. But since that time there has been a steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex. Christianity played a large role in this by emphasizing the importance of confession and of verbalizing sexual matters. In the eighteenth century, sex became a "police" matter, not in the repression of disorder, but in an ordered maximization of collective and individual forces. It was deemed necessary to regulate sex through useful and public discourses. These discourses on sex did not multiply apart from or against power, but in the very space and as a means of its exercise. Mechanisms in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justice incited, extracted, distributed, and institutionalized sexual discourse.

A discourse has been increased aimed at constituting a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative. In the history of sexuality, the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been an age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, and a multiple implantation of perversions. While there has been a proliferation of discourse on sex and an increase of awareness of a multiplication of sexual conducts, it nonetheless seems that by speaking of it so much, one was simply trying to conceal it: a screen discourse, a dispersion-avoidance. One also claimed to be speaking about it from the rarefied and neutral viewpoint of science, a science subordinated to the imperative of a morality whose division it reiterated under the guise of the medical norm.

Throughout the nineteenth century sex had been incorporated into two distinct order of knowledge: biology of reproduction and a medicine of sex. There was no real exchange between them, no reciprocal structuration. This disparity indicates that - there was no aim to state the truth but to prevent its very emergence. Therefore, discourse on sex had a double function: to sustain systematic blandness's and to give a paradoxical form to a fundamental petition to know. Foucault gives the example of Charcot that shows them immense apparatus around sex for producing truth, even if this truth was to be masked at the last moment. He argues that this interplay of truth and sex has perpetuated into present day.

According to Foucault, historically, there have been two great procedures for producing the truth of sex. Many societies endowed themselves with erotic art, whereby truth is drawn from pleasure itself. The Western society, however, has scientific sexuality, procedures for telling the truth of sex which is geared to a form of knowledge-power found in confession. In confession, the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks, but in the one who questions and listens. Confession is one of the main rituals used for the production of truth; Western men have become a confessing animal. He writes that the obligation to confess is so deeply ingrained in

us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to use that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, 'demands' only to surface.

Foucault further emphasizes that a hypothesis of a power of repression exerted by our society on sex for economic reasons is inadequate for explaining the proliferation of discourse, the solidification of the sexual mosaic, and the production of confessions and an establishment of a system of legitimate knowledge and of an economy of manifold pleasures.

Foucault restates his argument about the deployment of sexuality that the West has paradoxically placed a never-ending demand for truth: it is up to us to extract the truth of sex, since this truth is beyond its grasp; it is up to sex to tell us our truth, since sex is what holds it in darkness. He points out the historical break between sex as Physics, an activity or dimension of life, and a Logic of Sex, a more recent development where sex became established as an identity.

Foucault explains sex's link to identity, writing that whenever it is a question of knowing who we are, it is this logic that henceforth serves as our master key Sex, the explanation for everything. And, he asks a series of questions, that center around the question - why this great chase after the truth of sex, truth in sex?

The meaning of this inquiry is to move less toward a "theory" of power than toward an "analytics" of power, that is, toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis. This analytics can be constituted only if it frees itself completely from a certain representation of power called "juridico-discursive." This power is characterized by the negative relations between power and sex, the insistence of the rule, the cycle of prohibition, the logic of censorship, and the uniformity of the

apparatus. He wants to get rid of a juridical and negative representation of power, and cease to conceive it in terms of law, prohibition, liberty, and sovereignty. Instead he wants to advance toward a different conception of power through a closer examination of an entire historical material and through a way of thinking that can conceive of sex without the law and power without the king. That is, Foucault assumes that modern societies have not governed sexuality through law, but through a "technology of sex".

Instead, Foucault believes that power must be understood as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization. Power's condition of possibility is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. He establishes the omnipresence of power, writing that "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere, power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault *Truth, Power and Self* 1982). He advances the propositions of power asserting that,

Power is dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subject less, and productive, constituting individuals' bodies and identities. It operates through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and the shaping of the body and soul. Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations. Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and

ruled at the root of power relations. (Foucault *Truth, Power and Self* 1982)

Furthermore, Foucault states that power relations are both intentional and non-subjective. They are imbued with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives yet at the same time, this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject. The logic of power can be clear but oftentimes the inventor or formulator cannot be identified. Where there is power, there is resistance and yet this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.

Foucault argues that sexuality is a solid transfer point for relations of power: between men and women, young and old, parents and offspring, teachers and students, priests and laity, and an administration and population. In the beginning of eighteenth century four strategic unities have formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex: that were a hysterization of women's bodies, a pedagogization of children's sex, a socialization of procreative behavior and a psychiatrization of perverse behavior. These strategies also led to the "production of sexuality". Relations of sex thus gave rise to two systems: the deployment of alliance (a system of marriage, a fixation of kinship ties) and the deployment of sexuality. He distinguishes the two, writing that the deployment of alliance is built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden whereas the deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power. The deployment of alliance works toward producing the interplay of relations and maintaining the law that governs them. On the other hand, the deployment of sexuality engenders a continual extension of areas and forms of control. Then he

argues that the deployment of sexuality was constructed on the basis of a deployment of alliance.

Again, Foucault argues that the deployment of sexuality was not established as a principle of limitation of the pleasures of others by the ruling classes. Rather the first deployment of sexuality occurred within the upper classes; he writes, the most rigorous techniques were formed and, more particularly, applied first, with the greatest intensity, in the economically privileged and politically dominant classes. For a long time, the working classes escaped the deployment of "sexuality" although they were subjugated to the deployment of alliances.

Foucault uses the chronological reminders to show that the primary concern was not the repression of the sexuality of the classes to be exploited, but rather the vigor, longevity, progenitors, and descent of the classes that ruled, he writes that it was a question of techniques for maximizing life. A political ordering of life was formed, not through the enslavement of others, but through an affirmation of self.

Foucault also goes on to link sexuality with the eighteenth century bourgeois. He argues the aristocracy asserted the special character of the body through blood; the bourgeoisie's 'blood' was sex. He traces sexuality to the proletariat through "economic emergencies" and then shows how that body and sexuality was kept under surveillance. Foucault concludes the discussion, writing that sexuality then is originally, historically bourgeois, and in its successive shifts and transpositions, it induces specific class effects.

Foucault offers possible counter-arguments to his position, writing that his critics might say that he offers only groundless effects, ramifications without roots, sexuality without sex. He refutes this argument, stating that his purpose is to show how deployments of power are directly connected to the body, and by arguing that sex

is not an autonomous agency that produces sexuality, but instead sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures. He also noted that “the development of the notion of sexuality organized sex as a "fictitious unity" of “disparate parts, functions, behaviors, and feelings with no natural or necessary relation among them”; therefore the conception of what is "natural" is a social construct. To escape such cultural "sexuality", he suggested focusing on "bodies and pleasures" (Foucault, 1976:151).

To sum up, Foucault ends his discussion by emphasizing that the power mechanisms of sexuality are socially and culturally constructed, unstable, and historically situated. In other words, Foucault undertook to undermine traditional claims for the existence of self-evident foundation that guarantee the validity of knowledge and truth, and establish the possibility of determinate community. He muses of a day when another civilization will emerge that will not understand how a civilization could be so intent and patient in exacting the truth of sex. In this different economy of bodies and pleasures, people will no longer quite understand how the ruses of sexuality, and the power that sustains its organization, were able to subject us to that austere monarchy of sex, so that we became dedicated to the endless task of forcing its secret, or exacting the truest confessions from its shadow and from "having us believe that our 'liberation' is in the balance". (Foucault, 1976)

During the 1970s and 1980s, in the wake of the sexual revolution, numerous feminist writers started to address the question of female sexuality from their own female perspective, rather than allowing female sexuality to be defined in terms of largely male studies. The first such popular non-fiction book was Nancy Friday's *My Secret Garden*. Other writers such as Germaine Greer, Simone de Beauvoir and

Camille Paglia were particularly influential in this, although their views were far from being uniform. Toward the end of the twentieth century the most significant European contributions to understanding female sexuality came from psychoanalytical French feminism, with the work of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.

The social construction of gender and sexuality has been discussed by a wide variety of scholars, but, Judith Butler is notable among them. To Butler, gender identity is a person's own sense of identification as female, male, both, neither, or somewhere in between. It depends on the individual's own performances.

Like Foucault, Judith Butler, in her two influential books *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), has also inverted the standard hierarchical opposition by which homosexuality is marginalized and made unnatural by stressing the extent to which the ostensible normativity of heterosexuality is based on the suppression and denial of same-sex desires and relationships. She also opposed the notion that the feminist movement requires the concept of a feminine identity, that is, that there exist essential factors that define a woman as a woman. Instead, she elaborates the view that the fundamental features which define gender are social and cultural productions that produce the illusory effect of being natural. She proposes instead that we consider gender as a "performative"—that to be masculine or feminine or homosexual is not something that one is, but a pre-established condition that one repeatedly enacts (*Feminist Criticism* 93).

Butler, in her text *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), described the categories of gender and of sexuality as *performative*, in the sense that the features which a cultural discourse institutes as masculine or feminine, heterosexual or homosexual, it also makes happen, by establishing an identity that

the socialized individual assimilates and the patterns of behavior that he or she enacts. Homosexuality, by this view, is not a particular identity that affects a pattern of action, but a socially pre-established pattern of action that produces the effect of originating in a particular identity. Butler has also proposed that the terms we use to describe gender and sexuality are modes of the performative use of language, in that the reiterated application of such terms, in accordance with conventions that govern their use, in fact bring about (or perform) the identities and modes of behavior that they purport to describe (*Speech Act Theory* 293).

The crux of Butler's argument in *Gender Trouble* is that the coherence of the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality—the natural-seeming coherence, for example, of masculine gender and heterosexual desire in male bodies—is culturally constructed through the repetition of stylized acts in time. These stylized bodily acts, in their repetition, establish the appearance of an essential, ontological "core" gender. This is the sense in which Butler famously theorizes gender, along with sex and sexuality, as performative. The performance of gender, sex, and sexuality, however, is not a voluntary choice for Butler, who locates the construction of the gendered, sexed, desiring subject within what she calls, and borrowing from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, "regulative discourses." These, also called "frameworks of intelligibility" or "disciplinary regimes," decide in advance what possibilities of sex, gender, and sexuality are socially permitted to appear as coherent or "natural. Regulative discourse includes within it disciplinary techniques which, by coercing subjects to perform specific stylized actions, maintain the appearance in those subjects of the "core" gender, sex and sexuality the discourse itself produces.

A significant yet sometimes overlooked part of Butler's argument concerns the role of sex in the construction of "natural" or coherent gender and sexuality. Butler

explicitly challenges biological accounts of binary sex, reconceiving the sexed body as itself culturally constructed by regulative discourse. The supposed obviousness of sex as a natural biological fact attests to how deeply its production in discourse is concealed. The sexed body, once established as a “natural” and unquestioned “fact,” is the alibi for constructions of gender and sexuality, unavoidably more cultural in their appearance, which can purport to be the just-as-natural expressions or consequences of a more fundamental sex. On Butler’s account, it is on the basis of the construction of natural binary sex that binary gender and heterosexuality are likewise constructed as natural. In this way, Butler claims that without a critique of sex as produced by discourse, the sex/gender distinction as a feminist strategy for contesting constructions of binary asymmetric gender and compulsory heterosexuality will be ineffective. The concept of gender performativity is at the core of Butler's work. It extends beyond the doing of gender and can be understood as a full-fledged theory of subjectivity. Indeed, if her most recent books have shifted focus away from gender, they still treat performativity as theoretically central.

Judith Butler further explains in her text that gender and sexuality is an unstable construct. According to her to be a lesbian is to play repeatedly the performative role of the lesbian as prescribed by heteronormative values: it is through the repeated play of this sexuality that the 'I' is insistently reconstituted as a lesbian 'I'. The identity of "lesbian" is one she assumes through the performative act of "being" a lesbian. When she does her laundry or washes the dishes, does she remain a lesbian, or she does only become one when she dons the mantle of "lesbian". One might argue that being a lesbian is an essential characteristic of one's sexuality, but she seems to view lesbianism - and all sexuality - as a set of social constructs that are acknowledged and represented, generally unknowingly ("second nature"), through

performative acts of gender. Thus, only through certain acts is one defined as a lesbian.

According to Butler, the argument regarding the social construction of the lesbian origin is that there might be specificity to lesbian sexuality has seemed a necessary counterpoint to the claim that lesbian sexuality is just heterosexuality once removed, or that it is derived, or that it doesn't exist. These notions are not necessarily contradictory to her belief in sexuality as a construct. This specific lesbian sexuality that she identifies can exist as a "copy" or "derivative" as long as one acknowledges the notion that all sexuality is essentially a "copy" without an original.

Butler also eliminates the commonly held convictions regarding sexuality and gender in a rather tenuous and undefined state. In other words, her argument effectively demolishes any essentialist notion of sexuality. While gay and lesbian activists seek to bring social equality to homosexuals, her constructionism attempts to philosophically erode the power of heterosexuality (and homosexuality with it) and reduce every participant to a level playing field. What makes her argument more revolutionary is that her theories rob heteronormativity of its normative power. The very nature of the homosexual identity as a site of resistance only exists with the implicit acknowledgement that heterosexuality is a naturally dominant norm. Butler hypothesizes that the very categories of sex are produced and maintained in the *effects* of this compulsory performance, yet also recognizes the difficulty in [exposing] the causal lines as retrospectively and performatively produced fabrications.

Butler borrows a bit of logic from Thomas Aquinas, every effect requires a cause. And, Butler argues, all gender roles are "performative identities" created as an effect of "compulsory performance," there must be some ideal and pure original, free of society's imprint. Thus, she seems to view lesbianism –and all sexuality – as a set

of social constructs that are acknowledged, represented, generally unknowingly through performative acts of gender. Thus, only through certain acts is one defined as a lesbian or gay.

To sum up, a constructivist, like Butler also undertook to decenter essentialist assumptions about the naturalness of sexuality; rather, she attributes the postmodernist's thought which see sexuality as constructed through a complex scripting process influenced by various historically and culturally determined factors like religion, laws, social conventions etc. There is a physiology of sexuality and arousal, but the meaning associated with aspects such as desire, objects of desire, and the interpretation of sexual experiences is substantially shaped by culture and experience. Such an approach defines sexuality beyond intercourse and involves elements of biology, individual characteristics and social influences.

Now it is understood that there is a relationship between the studies of Gender and Sexuality and Literature. It is because literature has become helpful to create the false and imaginary images of the female sexuality on the one hand, and on the other hand, it has become successful to make many people and others to accept historical and cultural construction of female sexuality as reality. Because of this, the study of gender and sexuality is regarded as an academic discipline which reconstructs the nature of female sexuality and pleads for equal treatment between male and female gender roles.

Obviously the writer who succumbs to the mainstream male culture creates stereotypical images about the female and their sexuality. And these stereotypical images help these writers to portray the female as weak, submissive, irrational, exotic, and feminine and so on. However, it cannot be said that the female are inborn with these feminine qualities rather the role of female was created or constructed by

society and culture with interplay with discourse and power. And each and every individual's identity or gender role can be understood as performative identities.

### **Reconstructing Female Sexuality in Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha***

Undoubtedly, it is true that Golden has closely researched for years about the Japanese cultural girl "Geisha" and brings them into the form of the novel. However, Golden applies some confusing misconceptions about geishas and also creates discourses that certainly "Geisha are more courtesan than artisan". From his statement, we can say that Golden is dominated and preoccupied with male ideology which prevents him from avoiding the stereotypical images of women's sexuality created by powerful men in the society as he is born and has lived in the same society and culture that is entirely administrated by patriarchal ideology. In patriarchal system, women's sexuality is always seen as inactive, exploitative, mysterious, exotic and inferior to men's sexuality to prove their superiority over female.

The term "Reconstruction" here means the process of retrieving images of historical oppression and resistance for the purpose of investigating the circumstances surrounding the oppression and resistance in order to redefine our conception and understanding of the past.

Unlike Golden, Sayuri Nitta, in the novel, assumes the multifaceted role of a mediator and story-teller and historian as she remembers and represents the Japanese cultural history of Geisha from 1930s to the Post World War II era through the eyes of (geisha) women who lived, experienced the affected changes within the then Japanese historical period. She exposes her true story of being geisha in Kyoto. And, she claims that there are several misconceptions regarding geisha and geisha culture within Japan and especially Western countries. The first and most confusing misconception concerning geisha is that 'they are courtesan and engaged in sexual acts (prostitutions). But, to Sayuri, it is not true. Rather, she argues that most of the Westerners thought of geisha as courtesans are social, cultural and historical

constructs to prove female are subordinate and dependent to men. But, in reality they are ‘artist person’. As she comments in the novel: “/.../ the ‘gei’ of geisha means ‘arts’ and ‘sha’ means ‘person’ or ‘doer’, so the word ‘geisha’ really means ‘artisan’ or ‘artist person’ (158). Sayuri further explains ‘geisha are more artisan than courtesan’; they are like elegant model just like artist who enchants her clients through her artistic performances which she learned for years in the Geisha schools” (158). She masters in music, dance, clever conversations and doing geisha make-up, hair dressing and wearing elegant silk kimonos in style.

You must remember that a geisha, above all, is an entertainer and a performer. We may pour sake or tea for a man, but we never go and fetch another serving of pickles. And in fact, we geisha are so well pampered by our maids that we scarcely know how to look after ourselves or keep our own rooms orderly, much less adorn a room in a teahouse with flowers. (160)

In the above mentioned lines, Sayuri asserts that being a top geisha or an entertainer, they knew how to enchant or entertained the boorish businessman through their artistic performances which they learnt for years like pouring a sake or tea in the tea houses but they did not know how to care themselves and clean their rooms because of their servants.

Further Sayuri states that a geisha must study a great many arts besides shamisen. They also learned about different kinds of musical instrument including small drums (tsutsumi), largest drum (taiko) and Japanese flute (fue) :“So you see, a geisha must try her hand at all of these instruments, even though eventually she’ll be encouraged to specialized in one or two (158). Similarly, they are also trained in how to communicate cleverly with their clients in tea ceremony or other official parties.

She states

. . . A man might turn to the geisha beside him and say, ‘The weather certainly is unusually warm, and don’t you think?’ And the geisha would reply with something like, ‘Oh, yes, very warm!’ Then she’d begin playing a drinking game with him, or try to get all the men singing, and soon the man who’d spoken with her was too drunk to remember he wasn’t having as good a time as he’d hoped. For my part, I always considered this a terrible waste. (331)

From the above aforementioned lines, we can say that how cleverly geishas can deal with their wealthy customers through the tactical speeches and playing drinking games with them.

According to Sayuri, “in fact, many of the men are accustomed to being treated with a great deal of respect. Sitting back with their hands on their on their knees and big frowns on their faces is about as much work as they plan to do in the way of being entertaining” (332). This kind of treatment of men also linked to pre-establish construction of society and culture where men is given superior position of ‘self made-man’ or ‘self independent’ in opposition to women’s inferiority and dependency over men.

Sayuri further explains that “why most of the parties were so dull, I think probably there are two reasons. First, just because a young girl has been sold by her family and raised from an early age to be a geisha doesn’t mean she’ll turn out to be clever, or have anything interesting to say. And second, the same thing goes for the men. Just because a man has made enough money to come to Gion and waste it however he chooses doesn’t mean he’s fun to be around” (332). From these above lines, we can assume that it is the social and cultural discursive constructs which

treats women as irrational, dull, economically powerless and exploitative object whereas men are portrait as economically powerful to choose and get object of their desire in social gatherings or tea house parties. Sayuri explains in the novel about the term *danna*, a lower-class geisha and a true geisha through the narration of most desirable geisha of the contemporary period named Mameha. As Mameha defines the meaning of the term *danna* as - "It's the term a wife uses for her husband- or rather, it was in my day. But a geisha who refers to her *danna* isn't talking about a husband. Geisha never marry. Or at least those who do no longer continue as geisha" (165). The term *danna* can be defined as a wealthy man who pays extravagantly for the geisha's closer look and also give precious gifts to them. Sometimes *danna* can be a married man who cannot marry with geisha.

Similarly, through the narration of Mameha, Sayuri also tries to uncover the hidden differences between a lower-class geisha (prostitute) and a true (legitimate) geisha. As Mameha comments in the text

. . . A lower-class geisha may be perfectly agreeable to such an arrangement probably she's happy to take whatever income is offered her. A woman like this may call herself a geisha and be listed at the registry office; but I think you should take a look at how she dances, and how well she plays shamisen, and what she knows about tea ceremony before you decide whether or not she really is a proper geisha. A true geisha will never soil her reputation by making herself available to men on a nightly basis. (165)

By the above mentioned differences (between a lower-class geisha and a true geisha), we can definitely say that a true geisha would never sell her body or sex for the sake of money like the lower-class geisha does; rather a true geisha sold her skills

which she learnt for years to entertain the bourgeoisie man. So, according to Sayuri, it is the misperception of Western people to misunderstand a true geisha as a prostitute which in reality were true entertainers or artist persons.

Furthermore, she condemns that “I won’t pretend a geisha never gives in casually to a man she finds attractive. But whether she does or not is her private affair. Geisha have passions like everyone else, and they make the same mistakes. A geisha who takes such a risk can only hope she isn’t found out. Her reputation is certainly at stake; but more important, so is her standing with her danna, if she has one. What’s more, she invites the wrath of the woman who runs her okiya. A geisha determined to follow her passions might take this risk; but she certainly won’t do it for spending money she might just as easily earn in some legitimate way” (165).

According to Judith Butler, ‘to be a prostitute’ or courtesan is a set of social and cultural constructs that are acknowledged and represented, generally unknowingly ("second nature"), through performative acts of gender. Thus, only through certain acts is one defined as a prostitute. Though there are some differences between geishas and courtesan those courtesans engaged in sexual acts whereas it is strictly forbidden for legitimate geisha to involve in such sexual intercourse as Sayuri explicates in the text. Geisha sells her skills not the bodies as courtesan does. In her narration, Sayuri comments: “Geisha are not wives, nor courtesan; rather they are artisan and we sell our skills not the flesh” (478).

Furthermore, Sayuri tries to resolve a misunderstanding in western society regarding geishas that Geishas are prostitutes. There are two main reasons for these misconceptions: the first reason is after World War II when Japan was occupied by American and Australian soldiers many Japanese prostitutes referred to themselves as Geisha. They also wear the elegant kimonos and put the white make-up and hairdos

just like geisha of Gion does. This was probably done to make them seem more exotic to the soldiers who would have not known the difference between Geisha and Prostitute. There are only few powerful officers of Westerns (America or Australia) who knew the differences between a lower-class geisha and a true geisha because they only get the chance to acquainted with full and original Geisha of Gion.

Secondly, in the past, right to take the virginity of a Geisha (an event called a mizuage) was sold by the Geisha house. This right was sold many years earlier when a Geisha had just started as Maiko (a trainee Geisha). In reality this was more the sponsorship for all the Maiko training which was very expensive. Only a very wealthy man could afford to pay for this right. After the mizuage, the Geisha were not obliged to have sex with any customers, even the men who paid dearly for their virginity. Thus, Golden has built this cultural construction of geisha as prostitute is attempting to make a false image considering his male perception rather than to provide the reality of Japanese geisha culture.

Similarly, Sayuri claims that “a geisha of the first or second tier in Gion can’t be bought for single night, not by anyone. But if the right sort of man is interested in something else- not a night together, but a much longer time- and if he’s willing to offer suitable terms, well, in that case a geisha will be happy to accept such an arrangement. But the real money in Goin comes from having a *danna*, a geisha without one is like a stray cat on the street without a master to feed it.” (171)

In a movie adaptation of the novel produced by Steven Spielberg and directed by Rob Marshall, starring Ziyi Zyang as the narrator Sayuri Nitta narrates her life as a geisha from the New York with the wisdom of age and in a voice at once haunting and startlingly immediate. In a movie, named as same as in the novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, we enter a world where appearances are paramount; where a girl's virginity is

auctioned to the highest bidder; where women are trained to beguile the most powerful men; and where love, always elusive, is scorned as illusion. The story is told in flashback format with continuous references to the time between Sayuri's career and the time she is being interviewed. She also periodically explained different aspects of geisha life.

Sayuri Nitta confronts the challenges breaking the traditional norms and values for female, set by the patriarchal society and conventions. Like geisha are strictly restricted to tell the delicate, mysterious and secretive story of their lives, they are bounded with the unwritten laws of their geisha world. They were taught that without its mysterious history, the world of geisha cannot continue to exist anymore. Like what they learned from powerful businessmen who came regularly in the geisha houses. But, all this secretiveness or mystery of a geisha culture presents it in a very complicated and negative way. In this context, we can say that women are always controlled and governed by patriarchal society in the name of family, religion, culture etc. So, all these mysteries and secretiveness regarding Geisha culture and Geisha world is social and cultural constructs due to conceal the secrets of men's flaws or weaknesses for women which they thought as an object of desire. Thus, Sayuri realizes the importance of reconstructing various historical and cultural constructions of female sexual identity and images specially, the importance of reconstructing female gender roles including sex and sexuality within male-dominated cultures. Sayuri, in the text, discloses her life of geisha without merely act as a narrator of historical "facts", applying her impressions and ideas about the personalities and thoughts of these marginalized, oppressed geisha women and historically, utilizing first and secondhand accounts and information about the Geishas and Geisha culture which is in the stage of vanishing, to reclaim the misconception and misperception of

Westerners regarding Geisha as prostitutes. In other words, Sayuri tries to reconstruct the knowledge of the individual who thought that the object geisha is prostitute but she refutes and uncovers the geisha's truth of sex and reveals its assumed hidden secrets.

Like Simone de Beauvoir states in her essay *The Second Sex* that "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman...it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature. This is described as feminine /.../" (*feminist criticism*: 89). Sayuri also claims that "I certainly was not born to the life of geisha but became the renowned geisha of the Gion because I had no choice". It means that woman is not born as woman but rather becomes a woman. It is simply because of the social and cultural construction of the human history which defined and differentiated women with reference to men and not he with reference to her; she is defined as permanent 'other', excluded from the realm of true humanity, never an equal and so never a threat. Women are portrait as dependent, timid, emotional, and conventional in opposition to men as independent, active, dominating, rational, creative, powerful and adventurous. She does not have any choice but to live like woman administrated by patriarchal society and culture.

In the final chapter in which Sayuri relates the events of last four decades of her life: the realization of her dream of being loved by the Chairman and her decision to establish a tea house in New York. When Sayuri moved to the New York, she makes one job at judging her profession (a geisha) by noting that what the word geisha really means to most mainstream male culture and how many American wives is just as much debt by men as she is. She comments:

Since moving to [New York] I've learned what the word 'geisha' really means to most westerners. From time to time at elegant parties,

I've been introduced to some young women or other in a splendid dress and jewelry. When she learns I was once a geisha in Kyoto, she forms her mouth into a sort of smile, although the corners don't turn up quite as they should. She has no idea what to say! And then the burden of conversation falls to the [man] or woman who has introduced us- because I've never really learned much English, even after all these years. Of Course, by this time there's little point even in trying, because this women is thinking, 'My goodness /.../ I'm to talking with a prostitute...' (333)

Indeed, the woman, who says she is talking with a prostitute, is herself rescued by a wealthy man later. "A moment later she's rescued by her escort, a wealthy man of a good thirty or forty years older than she is. Well, I often find myself wondering why she can't sense how much we really have in common. She is a kept woman, you see, and in my day, so was I" (333). What a prejudice feeling a Westerner woman has over Japanese Geisha women. She is not ready to accept herself as a prostitute though she is, she says other women (Japanese Geisha) prostitute. And this proves that these all prejudices of Americans women regarding Japanese geisha are the influence of male culture in which they have lived and grown up. In other words, it is an effect of social, cultural and political construction of the particular time and place because women themselves are taught, in the process of being socialized, to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology (that is, the conscious and unconscious presuppositions about male superiority), and so are conditioned to derogate their own sex and to cooperate in their own subordination, which they considered as real, abstract and universal.

In the novel, Sayuri's attempt to reconstruct female sexuality (of geisha) is necessary due to their status as "other" in patriarchal culture and their status and story as "myths" or "legends" within that culture. So, Sayuri tries to reconstruct the female sexuality of geisha as superstitious, dependent and subordinate to male and as something to be controlled by society; by restrictions on their (female) behavior are all cultural and social constructs. Americans soldiers are amongst the very few Westerners/ males to appear in Sayuri's account. She critically explains how "All the stories about invading American soldiers raping and killing us had turned out to be wrong; and in fact we gradually came to realize that the Americans on the whole were remarkably kind" (400). These kind soldiers are also presented as the innocent victims of Mother's commercialism. She sells them worthless, geisha trinkets (403). Thus, we can assert that Golden includes stereotypes correction in favor of the male characters.

Moreover, in the novel, Sayuri claims that she found mistake in an article a friend has sent to her, she found somewhere which listed the twenty or thirty greatest geisha of Gion's past and she was included in a list as she is born in Kyoto as geisha which is absolutely wrong (because she was born in the small village of Yoroido in the family of fisherman). Sayuri comments:

The Twenty Greatest Geisha of Gion's Past'. Or maybe it was the thirty greatest geisha, I don't remember. But there I was on the list of with a little paragraph telling some things about me, including that I'd been born in Kyoto- which of course I wasn't. I can assure you I wasn't one of Gion's twenty greatest geisha either; some people have difficulty telling the difference between something great and something they've simply heard of. In any case, I would have been

lucky to end up as nothing more than a bad geisha and unhappy one,  
like so many other poor girls, /.../. (406)

From the above mention lines, we can assume that the writer of article cannot differentiate between what is true and what is false about geisha and writes something they have simply heard from another people. And, like Golden, the writer is too influenced by social and cultural construction of female sexuality by the principles of male.

Golden opposes the Sayuri's representation of geisha as artist and tries to prove that Geisha are prostitutes who auctioned their virginity to the highest bidders in the process of deflowering an apprentice geisha which is also called '*mizuage*' in Japanese term. In this process of deflowering, geisha are introduced with the term 'danna' a wealthy man who pays all the debts of apprentice geisha to her masters and brought her independency.

Golden explains through Sayuri Nitta that without a danna (a wealthy man who pays extravagantly for a geisha's closer attention) many of geishas are struggling to establish themselves, "I often have the feeling that without their wealthy husbands or boyfriends, many of them would be struggling to get by and might not have the same proud opinions of themselves. And, of course, the same thing is true for a first class geisha" (333).

Indeed, the geisha can live without having wealthy clients and some of them are doing the same thing. But it is the writer (Arthur Golden) who constructs the images of the Geisha like Hatsumomo, Sayuri and Mameha as dependent cultural creations, and he is quite successful in portraying women as always submissive and dependent upon men.

As Golden, in his novel tries to stereotypes geisha as subordinate, inferior and dependent women who cannot survive without the help of wealthy men called 'danna'. It is said that without the danna no geisha can compete with the present harsh world around them and it is their danna who helps to rescue from it. Moreover, they need wealthy patrons in order to maintain their career as Sayuri comments:

But a very top geisha, of whom there were probably thirty or forty in Gion, would expect much more. To begin with she wouldn't even consider tarnishing her reputation with a string of *danna*, but might instead have only one or two in her entire life. Not only will her *danna* cover all of her living expenses, such as her registration fee, her lesson fees, and her meals /.../. He won't pay her usual [hourly] fee; he'll probably pay more, as a gesture of good will /.../. But geisha who wishes to become a star is completely [dependent] on having a *danna*. Even Mameha, who became famous on her own because of International advertising campaign, would soon have lost her standing and been just another geisha if the Baron hadn't covered the expenses to advance her career. (167-334)

In the novel, Golden also explains through Sayuri that: “/.../ but the real money comes from having a *danna*, and a geisha without one- such as Hatsumomo- is like a stray cat on the street without master to feed it.” (165)

Similarly, Golden tries to represent Geisha as loveliest commodity that can be bought and sold in a geisha houses in the 1930s and 40s Japanese milieu, but he does not know that he extends the length of stereotyped construction of the geisha as- 'seductive commercial commodity'. For instances, Chiyo (Sayuri) is sold by Mr. Tanaka and is first bought by Mrs. Nitta ('Mother') and brought up in the Okiya to be

a slave and Geisha. Like Chiyo (Sayuri) is sold to the Okiya geisha house to be a slave and geisha whereas her sister Satsu is also sold in the brothel house of Kyoto (also known as “houses of pleasure”), Gion as artifact by Mr. Tanaka. From this Golden tries to construct those women (geisha) are the object of deployment and she can be used as the source of entertainment in the tea houses and other social parties. He further presents geisha as an object of male’s desire which was showcased in brothels and tea houses to entertain and satisfy their sexual needs.

Golden, throughout the novel, has used many negative images to portray Japanese geisha culture and its subjects as traditional, superstitious, seductive, poor, exotic, unrealistic, inferior and dependent whereas to define mainstream male and its culture, he used adjectives like modern, rational, civilized, realistic, kind, sociable and above all superior to Japanese geishas.

Golden presents Hatsumomo as a beautiful woman who had in fact had a *danna* at one time but after damaging her relationship with the mistress of one of the tea house, Hatsumomo had hurt no one so much but herself. Hatsumomo, ‘As a very popular geisha, she made enough money to keep Mother happy; but as a geisha without a *danna*, she didn’t make enough to gain her independence and move out of the okiya once and for all. Nor could she simply change her registration to another teahouse whose mistress might be more accommodating in helping her find a *danna*; none of the other mistresses would want to damage their relationships with the Mizuki.’(166)

In the same way, Golden presents Mrs. Nitta or ‘Mother’ as the representation of the male culture. She only values the money or financial benefit and does not care for other thing such as promises, feelings or emotions. For instances, in fact Mother had already decided to adopt Pumpkin as her daughter. But she later changed her

mind and adopted Sayuri. Why has she changed the mind? It is easy for everyone to understand that she did for the sake of wealth, not for promise. Now, after becoming a well-known geisha in the Okiya with huge amount of money and Mother decided to adopt Sayuri as her daughter instead of Pumpkin: “You and I will perform a ceremony next week. After that you’ll be my daughter just as if you’d been born to me. I’ve come to the decision to adopt you” (314). “/.../Because of my connection with Mameha and my popularity in Gion, my standing was such that Mother had plenty of cause for excitement- excitement being, in Mother’s case, just another word for money.”(333)

Furthermore, Mrs. Nitta or Mother also exploits children-turn geisha (Sayuri and Pumpkin) in terms of their earning in the tea houses or other parties. Geishas (like Mameha, Hatsumomo, Sayuri, Pumpkin and many other apprentice geisha) are presented as commodity in the tea houses and other official parties where their purpose is to entertain businessmen through her artistic performances. Therefore, Golden proves geisha woman as prostitute as Sayuri in the deflowering ceremony sells her virginity to the highest bidder named Dr. Crab and later she becomes the mistresses of General and Chairman.

Thus, Golden through the characterization of Sayuri, Hatsumomo, Mameha, Pumpkin, Mrs. Nitta, Chairman and Nobu tries to prove geisha inherent female characteristics like superstitious, irrational, exploitative, suppressive, submissive, and dependent whereas male characters attributes kindness, opportunity, autonomous, self-independency and so on. Therefore, Golden fails to prove himself as neutral writer. He must have understood the norms and values of geisha culture and accordingly should write.

However, these stereotyped images of Japanese geisha are not grounded on reality rather it has been constructed in the society and culture for centuries by male-oriented perception. Obviously, some images may correspond to some Japanese geisha but not all. In this sense, the novel holds no reality of Japanese geisha culture. But, it holds more significance to men and men's culture. It undermines the Japanese geisha a lot so that male could feel proud by defining themselves as superior 'selves' in opposition to the inferior Japanese geisha as 'other'. In this respect, the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* is seen as created story rather than the memoir as claimed by the writer.

These all negative images help create the discourse regarding Japanese geisha culture because they are all parts of social languages, and it itself creates a discourse as stated by Michel Foucault. And, this discourse is a good means to expand the knowledge all over the world and to establish the knowledge as truth. With the help of these countless binary images, Golden has created many discourses about the position of Japanese geisha culture as 'other' and subordinate to male culture. This sort of discourse, as a result, purports the knowledge all over the world that Japanese geisha are inferior to male characters (Chairman, Nobu etc.) as presented in the text. And, as commented by Foucault, after the expansion of the knowledge, it changes into the truth, which makes male characters (Chairman, Nobu, General, American soldiers etc) superior to Japanese geishas (Sayuri, Mameha, Hatsumomo, Pumpkin etc)

As we know the male writers always tries to present the women with so many adjectives in their text, and being the male writer, Arthur Golden also in his novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* repeats the same as he presents a Japanese geisha women as 'superstitious'. The men think that women more superstitious; they cannot change themselves into the modern light, always trapped in their traditional and inferior

norms and values even though they are harmful for them. As Golden through Sayuri states: “[...] but, you see, geisha are more superstitious even than fisherman. A geisha will never go out for the evening until someone has sparked a flint on her back for good luck” (36-37).

In this text, there are several illustrations where Golden presents Japanese geisha as traditional and superstitious whereas Japanese men are autonomous, advanced and modern. To begin with: “Geisha are a very superstitious lot, as I’ve said. Auntie and Mother, and even the cook and the maids, scarcely made a decision as simple as buying a new pair of shoes without consulting an almanacs” (140). But does anyone need to consult an almanac to buy something like a pair of shoes? This Golden presents deliberately to show the negative image of the Japanese women as superstitious.

Similarly, Golden stereotyped Japanese geisha women as inferior identities that have not their own personal choice of doing, eating, moving and like and so is of Sayuri and Mameha, rather follow what the almanacs says to do and follows their destiny. As Mameha says:

Mameha told her maid to bring an almanac for that year and then after asking my sign ... checking and cross-checking various charts, as well as page that gave my general outlook for the month. Finally she read ...“A most inauspicious time”. Needles, unusual foods, and travel must be avoided at all costs... Mameha asked my sister’s sign and looked up the same information about her. /.../ and when she brought out a map and found Yoroido, it lay to the north northeast of Kyoto, which was indeed the direction corresponding to the Zodiac sign of the Sheep. ...And she’d certainly been right to do it; she had escaped, while I

hadn't. This was the moment when I began to understand unaware I'd been- not only in planning to run away, but in everything. (140-41)

Mameha further asserts that geisha have 'cruel' destiny which none of us can escape from it: 'Neither you nor I can know our destiny. You may never know it! Destiny isn't always like a party at the end of evening. Sometimes it's nothing more than struggling through life from day to day' (337). Geisha has no rights to choose their destiny; rather we became geisha because we have no other choice. When Mameha tells to Sayuri that: "We don't become geisha so our lives will be satisfying. We become geisha because we have no other choice" (338). Golden through these lines of Mameha tries to assert that women (geisha) are destined to be a pathetic creature, sexually exploited, and subordinate to men because of their economic dependence upon men, their all hopes are illusive or foolish things which cannot be truth.

However, Golden applies the pre-established cultural and historical construction to prove the Japanese geisha as inferior, a pathetic creature and economically dependent upon men; and he cannot avoid the stereotypical images for the Geisha (female sexuality) created by the male ideology because he is inborn and lived in the same society and culture that is totally subjugated by men's perception. For the male, the female has always been the object of desire, mysterious and exotic, seductive and emotional. But this representation of the female (geisha) is simply a social, cultural, political and historical constructs influenced by male ideology. In this text of Golden, we can trace the same exclusive patriarchal ideology in the characterization and, above all, the climax of Sayuri's narration- calls into question its apparent cultural neutrality. Golden's representation of the Chairman of the Iwamura Electric Company and its President, Nobu, as independent, powerful and kind that

implicitly valorizes the male-oriented ideology. Encountering, by chance, the orphaned girl Chiyo (Sayuri's previous name) crying in the street, the Chairman speaks gently and kindly to her; buys sweets for her and gives her his handkerchief and money. She comments:

Ordinarily a man in the streets of Gion wouldn't notice a girl like me, particularly while I was making a fool of myself by crying. If he didn't notice me, he certainly wouldn't speak to me, unless it was to order me out of his way, or some such thing. Yet not only had this man bothered to speak to me, he'd actually spoken kindly. He'd addressed me in a way that suggested I might be a young woman of standing- the daughter of good friend, perhaps. For a flicker of a moment, I imagined a world completely different from the one I'd always known, a world in which I was treated with fairness, even kindness- a world in which father's didn't sell their daughters. (121)

The Chairman, who will become Sayuri's hidden danna, is presented as an exception amongst Japanese men. Certainly in the text, girls are granted little status and superstitions concerning women abound, providing a vision of authoritarian, hierarchical and patriarchal Japan. From this moment, the Chairman's handkerchief becomes a talisman for Chiyo and she associates him with opportunity. Most significantly, the Chairman's attributes (kindness, independent and opportunity) are metonymically linked to the male culture. Moreover, the story of a self-made man or man as autonomous and independent individual is the social and cultural constructions made by male themselves.

Golden through the characterization of Nobu considered geisha women as more superstitious, dependent, irritating and foolish in all over Gion. For instances, he

reacts scornfully to Sayuri's dependence on fortune-tellers and astrological almanacs: "You geisha! There was never more irritating group of people. You go around consulting your almanacs, saying, "Oh I can't walk toward the east today, because my horoscope says it's unlucky" (360). Further, Nobu angrily condemns Sayuri—"If life is a stream, you're still free to be in this part of it or that part, aren't you? [...] if you bump, and tussle, and fight and make use of whatever advantages you might have [...]'" (361). And, Sayuri's ultimate decision to take control of her destiny—significantly in an American plane, a privileged position from which she enjoys a broader perspectives not only on the land and sea below but also her own fate (369) only elevates further Nobu's male ideology. He thought geishas are always advocates the acceptance of fate or destiny.

As we know, discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experiences and it also plays an important role in any community or nation's history to create differences between gender and sexuality of female and male; where sexuality of male and female varies across the culture and regions of the world, has continually changed throughout history.

Golden, in his text *Memoirs of a Geisha* adopting the actions and conception of men tries to construct stereotypical images of the geisha as irrational, powerless and subordinate to powerful businessmen. And Golden's men's perception changes the reality of geisha as artisan into geisha as courtesans is universal truth through the means of discourse constructed in his text. That is why, we would not be wrong if we say Golden is preoccupied with patriarchal ideology who degraded and marginalized females sexuality. However, we cannot forget that as Foucault says: all the time all the knowledge cannot be objective; cannot demonstrate the particular spirit of time

because no knowledge can be understood in isolation from the web of discourse.

To sum up, in *Memoirs of Geisha*, Sayuri tries to reconstruct the female sexuality of Geisha as social and cultural discursive constructs, opposing the misconception represented by the writer of the novel- Arthur Golden that “geisha is more courtesan than artist”. So, Sayuri interprets the extraordinary tale of her life of geisha summoning up a quarter century, from 1929 to the post-war years of Japan’s dramatic history and uncovering the half-hidden world of eroticism and enchantment, exploitation and degradation of a geisha. At last, she emphasized that the power mechanisms of sexuality are socially and culturally constructed, unstable, and historically situated. In other words, sexuality is not a purely natural phenomenon characterized by fixed, inherent drives that are essentially different for men and women; rather sexuality is fluid, constructed in relation to, and in interaction with, historically and culturally variable social practices like religion, education and medicine. Due to Sayuri’s reconstruction, the secret and half-hidden stories of Geishas finally have the potential for further dissemination in the future with possibility to affect other oppressed peoples. Thus, Sayuri’s reconstruction of female gender roles including sex and sexuality in Geisha culture produces the capacity for additional resistance in the field of women’s Right and emancipation.

## Conclusion

The research on *Memoirs of a Geisha* attempts to examine Arthur Golden as an anti-feminist in terms of his use of popular but stereotypical images regarding Geisha as prostitute and also maintains that these images were constructed by culture and society as discourse for many years.

The source of the novel, as declared by the author in his acknowledgements, is memoirs of Mineko Iwasaki, one of Gion Kobu's top Geisha during 1960s and '70s. But in an interview done by U.S. News and World Report, she doubts for helping Golden with his research into delicate and secretive world. She says Golden has made a ridicule of Japanese culture and geisha are 'more artisan than courtesans'. Therefore, the writer's claim to be done on extensive research is exaggerations, and there are numerous examples which prove that images of geisha like superstitious, exploitative and so on are not fixed into the reality of geisha rather these were the pre-established traits given to women to dominate and govern them as other. Obviously, they do not coincide to the geisha. They do not represent the intact geisha culture in reality.

These are historical and cultural stereotypes constructed to create binary opposition between male and female sexuality. Indeed, the binary is very essential in constructing ideological meaning with the help of discourse. The male-made images of geisha only present the role of linguistic artifact in the form of discourse. And through the interplay of discourse, Golden has extended the knowledge that geisha as inferior, inactive, irrational, and dependent whereas male as superior, active, rational, independent and kind. And, this knowledge about geisha propagated through the male discourse that assumes the position of truth. In fact, Arthur Golden has used aforesaid images to create a negative portrayal of Japanese geisha by accepting the male culture

as 'self'. Being a male writer, it is his nature that forces him to define male perception in the constructive light as civilized, rational, independent and modern.

However, the narrator of the novel, Sayuri Nitta undermines Author Golden's views regarding geisha. To reconstruct the female sexuality as social and cultural discursive constructs, she borrows the lines of Foucault's text that "all the time all knowledge cannot be objective; cannot demonstrate the particular spirit of time because no knowledge can be understood in isolation from the web of discourse" (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*). As Sayuri described that Arthur Golden also tries to prove geisha or women sexuality as dependent, superstitious, passive, emotional whereas male as a independent, rational, active, and modern through Foucault's discourse theory. But, she also claimed that Golden tries to govern, dominate, reconstruct and to have authority over female by presenting geisha as subordinate and powerless; and by showing male-oriented culture gained authority and identity of setting itself of against the female culture as a sort of "subordinated Self".

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