

**READERS' INTERPRETATION ABOUT GEISHA
PORTRAYED IN ARTHUR GOLDEN'S *MEMOIRS OF A
GEISHA***

THESIS

BY
ALIFIYAH RAHMAWATI
03320073



**ENGLISH LETTERS AND LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
HUMANITIES AND CULTURE FACULTY
THE STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF MALANG
2007**

Motto

*“If you dream about something,
and you believe in it.
Nothing is impossible.”*

∞ Dedication ∞

*This thesis
is dedicated to
Everyone who loves me,
And whom I love*

Acknowledgments



Alhamdulillah is always given to Allah who makes the researcher is able to finish this thesis. *Shalawat* and *Salam* may always be blessed upon our beloved prophet, Muhammad SAW, his relatives, companions, and those who always keep firmly his legal way of life until hereafter.

Finishing this thesis is not a simple thing for the researcher. It definitely is the researcher's valuable experience. This study would not have been completed without some contributions and supports from many people. Thus, the researcher would like to express her appreciation for them who have spare time, idea, and advice.

The researcher's gratitude is given to all of her lecturers, family and friends for their contribution until this thesis can be completed into its present form. Therefore, the researcher addresses this acknowledgement to:

1. Prof. Dr. H. Imam Suprayogo as the rector of The State Islamic University of Malang.
2. Drs. H. Dimjati Achmadin, M.Pd as the dean of Humanities and Culture Faculty.
3. Dra. Hj. Syafiyah, M.A as the head of English Letters and Language Department.

4. Sri Muniroch, S.S, M.Hum and Miftahul Huda, S.Hum as the advisors. The researcher would like to say thanks for their valuable suggestions, guidance, encouragement, patience, and attention.
5. Beloved father and mother for their endless love and support, and also beloved brother in Heaven.
6. All of lecturers who have ever or never taught the researcher. The researcher would like to give thanks for their dedication.
7. All of English Letters and Language Department students (2003) as the source of inspiration. The researcher gives thanks for their spirit, companionship, and suggestion.
8. Beloved friends, especially for Lifah, Zaini, I'im, Badrus, Tessy, Inul, and all members of 7C (Anjar, Hidha, Atul, and Devi) for their patience and support.
9. All of people who cannot be mentioned one by one. The researcher says thanks a lot for their helps, prayers, and support.

Malang, 12 July 2007

The writer

Alifiyah Rahmawati

Abstract

Rahmawati, Alifiyah. 2007. Readers' Interpretation about Geisha Portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Thesis. English Letters and Language Department. Humanities and Culture Faculty. The State Islamic University of Malang.

Advisors: 1. Sri Muniroch, S.S, M.Hum. 2. Miftahul Huda, S.Hum.

Key Words: Reader, Interpretation, Geisha, Reader-response criticism.

Reader is an important component in literature. This assumption shows that literature will exist only when it is read by the reader. In this reading process, then, the reader will try to find the meaning of text. So, it can be said that both the text and the reader cannot be separated one another. In consideration to the above reasons, this study discusses the relationship between reader and text. In this case, the topic discussed is the readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, it is not described clearly who geisha is. It makes the readers have different interpretations about it. In relation to the above reason, this study is aimed to know the readers' interpretation about geisha, including their reasons in interpreting geisha, and also the aspects that influence the readers' interpretations.

This study is categorized into literary criticism; while, in accordance with the topic studied the critical theory used is reader-response criticism. The theory is used to analyze the interpretations of informants. In this case, the informants interviewed are 12 students who have completely read the novel. To get data from them, the researcher uses questionnaire and interview sheet. Then, the data from both sources are analyzed and related to the novel.

The result of this study shows different interpretations of the informants about geisha. There are, at least, three interpretations about geisha; geisha as an artist, prostitute, and kept woman. From all interviewed informants, the researcher also finds some informants who have multiple interpretations. Those all interpretations are supported by different reasons of the informants. Generally, the informants, who interpret geisha as an artist, see geisha as a woman who has ability in art and works in art area. On the contrary, the informants, who interpret geisha as a prostitute, see geisha as a woman who works not only by performing her ability in art but also by doing sexual activity with her customers. The informants, who interpret geisha as a kept woman, on the other hand, see geisha as a woman who has a *danna* (a man who is posited as her husband) without marriage status. Besides, the different interpretations given by the informants are also influenced by some aspects. Those aspects cover the text of *Memoirs of a Geisha* which is multi interpretable, the readers' knowledge brought into interpretative process, and the way of the readers in understanding the text. Those aspects directly influence the result of their interpretation.

From the analysis on readers' interpretation, it can be concluded that a text can be interpreted by the readers differently. Thus, it also can be said that the readers hold an important role in giving and accepting meaning. So, the study on reader-response criticism directly proves the relationship between text and reader.

Table of Contents

Cover	
Approval Sheet	
Legitimation Sheet	
Motto	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
Table of Appendixes.....	viii

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statements of the Problems.....	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	6
1.4 Scope and Limitation	6
1.5 Significances of the Study.....	7
1.6 Research Method.....	7
1.6.1 Research Design.....	7
1.6.2 Data Sources	8
1.6.3 Research Subjects.....	8
1.6.4 Research Instruments	9
1.6.5 Data Collection	10
1.6.6 Data Analysis	10
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	11

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Literature and Audience.....	12
2.2 The Role of Reader	15
2.3 Interpretation	18

2.3.1 Kinds of Interpretation	20
2.4 Reader-response Criticism	23
2.4.1 Reception Theory	26
2.5 Geisha in General	29
2.6 Previous Studies	31

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS

3.1 Readers' Interpretation about Geisha Portrayed in Arthur Golden's <i>Memoirs of a Geisha</i>	34
3.1.1 Geisha as a Artist	35
3.1.2 Geisha as a Prostitute	35
3.1.3 Geisha as a Kept Woman	36
3.2 The Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha	37
3.2.1 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as a Artist	37
3.2.2 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as a Prostitute	43
3.2.3 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as a Kept Woman	51
3.3 The Aspects that Influence the Readers' Interpretations	57

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion	66
4.2 Suggestion	68

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIXES

Table of Appendixes

Appendix 1: Data of Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Data of Interview

Appendix 3: Data Classification

Appendix 4: Data of the Novel

Appendix 5: Synopsis of the Novel

Appendix 6: Questionnaire

Appendix 7: Informants

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss background of the study, statement of problems, objectives of the study, scope and limitation, significance of the study, research method, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a medium of communication which involves three components; author as the message sender, work as the message, and audience as the message receiver (Budianta et al., 2003:7). This statement shows that a literary work includes some components that support its existence. Though those three components are all important in a literary work, the audience is the aspect that might be forgotten.

In spite of the fact that the audience is the forgotten aspect, literary work has a close relation to the audience or reader. Literary work is created to be read and enjoyed by the readers. Besides, the readers are also the ones who will determine the meaning and value of a literary work. So, it can be said that a text will be meaningless without the readers.

Literature is also assumed as a performative art and reading as a performance (McManus, <http://www.library.utoronto.ca>. Accessed on 3 March 2007). It means that literature exists only when it is read. This opinion progressively supports an idea that readers have an important role in reading

process, because a literary meaning is created through the interaction of the readers and the text. The text will not give any meaning if the readers do not make an effort to interpret it. Thus, it can be said that in reading process the reader is a producer rather than a consumer of meanings, in which the meaning will be found via interpretative process.

The reader as the producer of meaning is the variable which follows along space, time, and socio-cultural class. It means that literary work is different in the process of reading, understanding, and evaluation during the time in whole certain social classes. This fact is known by everyone who is aware of the various interpretations given by the readers to a literary work (Jabrohim, 2001:117).

Talking about reader and the way they make sense of literature, people will talk about Reader-Response Criticism, which claims that the meaning of a text is the experience of the reader (Culler, 1997:63). This criticism emerged as the result of dissatisfaction on the previous criticism (especially Structuralism), which focuses merely on the text. Structuralism ignores the readers who have a role in accepting and giving a meaning.

Iser (in Lodge, 1988:211; Selden, 1993:120) stated that reading gives the readers the chance to formulate the unformulated. This statement indicates that there are some unformulated things in the text, so the readers have to formulate it by themselves. In accordance with this concept, reader-response criticism is developed as a bridge for the text and the readers. Interpretative process carried out by the readers will be an interesting discussion, because each reader has her or his own way to find the meaning of the text.

In reader-response criticism the discussion will involve the text and its potency in creating a manipulation of meaning. Literary work is a phenomenon which is concreted by the reader (Endraswara, 2003:116). The concreted form of meaning is also influenced by some reasons that formulate the background of readers' interpretation. Culler in Selden stated that the readers might be different in giving meaning, they will constantly follow the same interpretative process. Interpretation is a subjective experience of each reader (1993:127). So, there will be various interpretations from different readers.

When the readers try to find the meaning of a text, the differences of interpretations might appear. This case is usually caused by some aspects. One of them is due to the text which is multi-interpretable. There are some gaps or blanks in the text given by the author. The events and the characters may not be described completely and give ambiguous information to the readers (Bressler, 1999:72-73). This problem finally creates various interpretations to the readers.

A multi-interpretative text sometimes creates an interesting phenomenon in a reading community, because it gives some possibilities to the readers in getting the meaning. This phenomenon also happened to *Memoirs of a Geisha* (MG). The novel, which was written by Arthur Golden, can be categorized into a multi-interpretative text, because it causes a polemic in readers' interpretation. Actually, there are different interpretations about geisha that appear after the readers read the novel. In his novel, Golden does not state clearly whether a geisha is an artist or a prostitute. Even, there are some descriptions which indicate that geisha refers to a kept woman. "And in fact, the "gei" of "geisha" means

“arts”, so the word “geisha” really means “artisan” or “artist” (MG, page 146).

The quotation has mentioned directly that geisha means artist. However, though it has been mentioned that geisha is an artist, it does not mean that artist is the only correct interpretation of geisha. The quotation only describes the literal meaning of the word “geisha”; from the meaning of Japanese term. The real meaning of geisha in the novel is still ambiguous. This case finally makes the readers interpret geisha differently.

Multiple-interpretation about geisha that appears in *Memoirs of a Geisha* is an interesting phenomenon. In this case the readers have their own interpretations; it depends on their way in concretizing the meaning of the text. From all descriptions given in the text, the readers should make a final conclusion which will become the final result of their interpretation. Among many descriptions given in the text, there will be a dominate description that will point the readers’ interpretation. However, it totally depends on each reader’s understanding.

The different interpretations about geisha also appear in UIN Malang. There are some students who have completely read the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. After finishing a reading process, they have different perceptions about geisha portrayed in the novel. According to the contexts of the novel, they, of course, have some basic reasons that influence their interpretation. It is a pity to miss the above interesting phenomenon, which does not happened to all literary works.

A study on *Memoirs of a Geisha* has been conducted by Nikmal Azekiyah, a student of UIN Malang. In her study, she has analyzed plot and theme of *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Unlike the previous study, the researcher wants to analyze *Memoirs of a Geisha* from another perspective, that is, the reader. If it is related to the above phenomenon, this study will be more interesting because the object discussed is not only the literary work, but also the reader. A reader-response study, on the other hand, has ever been conducted by some researchers. Siti Hariyati Sastriyani has conducted a study which focuses on the readers' reception to *Madam Bovary*. On the contrary, Henry Jenkins has analyzed Susan Douglass' *Music of the Night* as a form of response to the film *Thelma and Louise*. Unlike the previous studies, the researcher focuses this study on another form of response of the readers; that is the readers' interpretation. Hence, the researcher finally decides to conduct a study entitled **Readers' Interpretation about Geisha Portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha***.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the problems of this study as follows:

1. What are the readers' interpretations about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*?
2. What are the basic reasons of the readers' interpretations?
3. What are the aspects that influence the readers' interpretations?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the problems formulated above, so the objectives of this study are:

1. To know the readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*.
2. To describe the basic reasons of the readers' interpretation.
3. To know the aspects that influence the readers' interpretations.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study discusses the readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The discussion explores and describes whether geisha is an artist, prostitute, or kept woman, in which it is analyzed based on the readers' interpretation. Besides, the basic reason of the readers' interpretation will be analyzed and compared to the context in the novel.

Even though this study discusses the readers' interpretation, the researcher only discusses the readers' interpretation about geisha. It means that the researcher does not discuss other interpretations, or other novels which also tell about geisha, because the focus of this study is the readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Besides, the subjects of this study are only 12 students who have completely read the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*, because the result of this study is not aimed at representing the whole students' interpretation, but only the interpretation of the students who have completely read the novel.

1.5 Significances of the Study

There are at least two significances of this study. Theoretically, this study is conducted to apply the literary theory, especially the theory of reader-response criticism. So, this study is expected to prove that readers hold an important role in an interpretative process, in which the readers receive, perceive, and understand literature. While practically, this study is expected to be a reference or alternative information for other researchers who want to conduct a similar study.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Research Design

This study is categorized into literary criticism. Peck and Coyle (1986:149) stated that "literary criticism is usually regarded as the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literary works; it does not mean 'finding fault with'". So, the researcher conducts this study by analyzing the readers' interpretation, that are, the readers of *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The analysis is not aimed at criticizing the faults of the novel, but at knowing the readers' interpretation.

In this study, the researcher expects to be able to get some descriptions about the readers' interpretation. To fulfill this expectation, therefore, the researcher observes some informants to get their interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* including their basic reasons. Through deep analysis on readers' interpretation and reasons, the complete description is successfully reached.

To analyze the readers' interpretations and reasons, the researcher needs a theory which is used as the critical theory. In relation to the topic of this study, the critical theory used in this study is reader-response criticism. This criticism views the current interaction between the reader and the text as paramount. It concerned with the present audience's reactions, interpretations, and experiences with the text. Therefore, it can be said that the audience is the context in which the work is studied (Goodvin, <http://www.blondelibrarian.net>. Accessed on 28 February 2007). Even though the reader is the studied context, it does not mean that the researcher ignores the novel. To get a complete analysis the researcher also uses the novel, because the analysis must consider both the reader and the novel as a unit.

1.6.2 Data Sources

The data used in this study are the interpretations of the readers who have completely read Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*; both in written and oral form. The written data will be gotten from the questionnaire given to the informants, while the oral one is from the interview. Besides, the researcher also uses the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* written by Arthur Golden and published by Random House, New York in 2005.

1.6.3 Research Subjects

The subjects of this study are 12 students who are chosen based on some considerations. These 12 students are chosen as the subjects of this study because

they have completely read the novel. Their comprehension to the story of *Memoirs of a Geisha* has also been evaluated. After evaluating their comprehension, the researcher finds that these 12 students comprehend the story of *Memoirs of a Geisha* well. Thus, they are assumed to have a better interpretation than other students. Besides, this study is also inspired by the phenomenon occurred in their community, where these 12 students have different perceptions about geisha. For this reason, then, the researcher chooses them as the subjects of this study.

1.6.4 Research Instruments

In conducting this study, the researcher employs three instruments: the first, the researcher uses questionnaire. This questionnaire is used to get the written data from the informants. The questionnaire used is the combination between open and close questionnaire. This model of questionnaire is chosen in order to get the free-directed answers from the informants. Secondly, the researcher uses interview sheet to explore more data; those are the data in oral form. The sheet is used as a guide for the researcher in interviewing the informants. The questions in the interview sheet are conditional, depends on the previous answers of the informants that need to be elaborated deeper. Besides, the researcher herself is also needed, especially to analyze the data.

1.6.5 Data Collection

The steps that are taken by the researcher to collect the data are: firstly, the researcher identifies and finds the subjects of this study who have completely read the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Then, the researcher gives questionnaire to the informants and asks them to answer the questions in written form. After getting the data from the informants, the researcher evaluates the data. This step is useful to identify the incomplete data which are gotten from the questionnaire. From those incomplete data, the researcher, then, arranges the interview sheet. The next step is interviewing the informants to get more data to complete the written ones. If it is needed, the researcher may re-interview the informants to complete the data. Finally, the researcher evaluates the appropriateness of whole data. In evaluating the appropriateness of the data the researcher also reduces the irrelevant data. So, only the relevant data are analyzed.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis includes the following steps: firstly, the researcher organizes both the written and the oral data. From those data, the researcher identifies the readers' interpretation. Then, the readers' interpretations are classified based on their categories. After classifying the readers' interpretations, the researcher describes the readers' reasons in interpreting geisha. In this step, the researcher also rechecks the readers' reasons and relates them to the data of the novel to prove the validity of the readers' reasons. Then, the researcher identifies the aspects that influence the readers' interpretation and

criticize it using the relevant theories. Finally, the researcher draws the conclusion and rechecks if the conclusion is appropriate enough to answer the stated problems.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Geisha: Based on the Japanese term, the word geisha consists of two kanji.

Gei means “art” and *sha* means “person”, so the most direct translation of geisha into English would be “artist” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisha>. Accessed on 1 March 2007).

2. Interpretation: The specific form of reception or response given by the reader. In interpretative process, the reader usually gives an interpretation systematically (Luxemburg et al, 1984:62).

3. Artist: A person who works in art or entertainment. Usually, an artist will entertain others by singing, dancing, etc.

4. Prostitute: A person who offers herself for sex in return with money.

5. Kept-woman: A woman who is given money and home by a man who visits her regularly for sex.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses some topics which are needed to clarify and define the concept of the study. The topics discussed in this chapter include literature and audience, the role of reader, interpretation and kinds of interpretation, reader response criticism and reception theory, and general description of geisha.

2.1 Literature and Audience

Formulating a definition of literature is not simple. Derived from the Latin word *littera*, meaning “letter”, the root meaning of literature refers to the written word and seems to support this broad definition. However, such definition eliminates the important oral traditions on which much of literature is based. Finally, others tend to define literature as an art by leaving open the question of its being written or oral (Bressler, 1999:9).

There have been also various attempts to define literature. Literature can be defined as imaginative writing in the sense of fiction or writing which is not literally true. However, not all fictional stories can be categorized as literature (Eagleton, 1983:1-2). Even though literature is usually related to fiction, the fictional story that can be categorized as literature should have an aesthetic value (Teeuw, 1984:22-23). This special value makes literature have special characteristic that cannot be found in other ordinary writings.

As it is assumed that literature contains aesthetic values, the values can be seen from the use of language of the author. Danziger and Johnson in Budianta et.al. stated that literature is a product of art that uses language as its media. Literature uses language to present a beauty, which can be enjoyed by the audience, and give meaning into life or a release to imaginative life (2003:7). In creating a work of literature, language offers almost limitless possibilities to an author. Author's use of language can expand a story's possibilities through its inventiveness. Creative use of a language can enrich a story and add to its overall effect (Kirszner & Mandell, 2004:7).

Grace also has his own definition of literature. He defined literature as a creative work of art, an object that an artist makes. It is not merely an idea, a theory, a system of thought, although ideas, theories and systems of thought enter into it (1965:5). A literary work is not only a media to share ideas and experiences of the author, but also a work of art that is created through a long process. Literature is not a simple work, which is defined by Wellek and Warren as a product of human creativity; both in the form of written or oral (1993:3). Its product will become the author's media to share their ideas to the audience.

As an artifact, literature cannot stand by itself and needs other elements to support its existence. In his book *the Mirror and the Lamp*, Abrams introduced four elements in the total situation of a work of art. The first is the work, the artistic product itself. The second element is the artist or the creator of the work. The third is the nature or universe. And the last is the audience: the listeners,

spectators, or readers to whom the work is addressed, or to whose attention, at any rate, it becomes available (1976:6).

According to Abrams' concept, literature is also seen as a media of communication that involves three components. Those three components are: the author as the message sender, the text as the message, and the audience as the message receiver (Budianta et.al., 2003:7). These components are the important components which are related each other. However, though those all are very important, the audience is the component that might be forgotten.

In relation to literature, audience is the one who will enjoy a literary work. The literary work, for example a novel, in one sense is simply a stack of paper covered by hieroglyphic dots, standing stagnant between covers. Only the reader who will awaken it to life (Grace, 1965:184). It means that if there are no readers who read the literary work, the work will mean nothing. The ideas or messages conveyed in the work cannot be received by the audiences.

When an author creates a work of literature, he or she will expect that the work can be enjoyed by the audience. Even, the work is also hoped to give advantages to the audience. This assumption shows that audience is the central of author. In this case, the author must devote himself to the audience, because audience holds an important role in accepting or rejecting the work of literature. So, it can be simply concluded that literature has a close relation to audience.

Talking about literature and audience will also involve the discussion about the functions of literature. For Horatious, literature must have two functions; *dulce* and *utile*. These two functions closely relate to the audience who

will enjoy the literary work (Endraswara, 2003:116). The concept delivered by Horatious is similar to Poe's concept which assumes that literature must entertain and teach something (Warren & Wellek, 1993:24-25). Based on these concepts, literature is expected not only to entertain but also to give many advantages to the audience.

From all concepts above, it is consciously known that literature is an inanimate artifact which will have meaning if only it is given by the audience (Pradopo, 1995:106). It means that literary work will be useless without audience who reads and enjoys it. As the consumer, audience will participate by giving response to literature. Besides, audience also perpetuates literary work by transforming it (Endrasawara, 2003:115). This fact proves the importance of audience in supporting the existence of literature. It can be finally said that both literature and audience cannot be separated each other.

2.2 The Role of Reader

When a reader reads a book, he or she will sit passively, absorbing the contents of the artistic creation and allowing it to dominate their thoughts and actions. From this point of view, the reader brings little to the text, because the text provides all that is needed to interpret it (Bressler, 1999:64-65). Most readers are passive; they expect the text to give them everything they need, and they do not expect to contribute much to the reading process. In contrast, there are also active readers who will participate in the reading process – thinking critically

about what they read, asking questions, and challenging ideas (Kriszner & Mandell, 2004:1).

In reading process, the readers, either the active readers or the passive ones, must try to find the meaning of the text. Selden stated that the essence of a text is not formulated by itself (1993:114). Therefore, the reader must do an interpretative process to get the meaning of the text, because the meaning of the text will not be gotten by the readers without any effort to find it by themselves.

In relation to the above idea, there is also a statement that claims literature as a performative art and reading as a performance. This statement means that literature exists only when it is read (McManus, <http://www.library.utoronto.ca>. Accessed on 3 March 2007). If there is no reader who reads the work of literature, the work will never exist. This opinion progressively supports an idea that readers have an important role in reading process, because a literary meaning is created through the interaction of the reader and the text. The text which is presented by the author is only a sequence of idea that still needs to be interpreted to get the meaning. Thus, there must be readers who will receive and understand the literary works.

When the reader reads a text and tries to find the meaning, he or she will try to understand the text well. In producing meaning, both the reader and the text must work together. This concept is asserted by Louise M. Rosenblatt in her *Literature as Exploration*. Unlike New Critics, she shifts the emphasis of textual analysis away from the text alone and views the reader and the text as the partners in the interpretative process. In other words, the reading process will involve both

the reader and the text. Both of them interact or share a transactional experience (Bressler, 1999:66).

Besides the above concept, Rosenblatt also declares that the relationship between the reader and the text is not linear, but transactional. This transactional relationship is a process or event which takes a place at a particular time and place in which the text and the reader transact and condition each other to create meaning, for meaning does not exist solely within the reader's mind or within the text (Bressler, 1999:7). Hence, the relationship between them should be created during reading process, in order that both the reader and the text can work together in creating the meaning of the text.

When the text is read by the readers, this reading process seems usual and simple. However, it is also not as simple as what people think, because the process of reading is a dynamic one, a complex movement and unfolding through time. The literary work itself is merely a set of schemata or general directions, which must be actualized by the reader. Here, the reader will bring their certain pre-understandings, a dim context of beliefs and expectations to the work (Eagleton, 1983:77). In the meantime, reader-response theorists also believe that a text does not contain a meaning which is given to the reader; rather the reader creates the meaning of a piece of literature as it is read. In other words, the reader is the most important part in creating meaning of literature. But, though the theories agree on this concept, they think about it in different ways (Rhoades, <http://www.captiveape.com/crit/reader-response.html>. Accessed on 28 February 2007).

As described before, the reader and the text must transact to create meaning. It means that the reader must be active in reading process. In this process, the reader is a producer rather than a consumer of meanings. The readers are the consumer of literary work, but they also have an important role in producing meaning. Therefore, they are assumed as the producer of meaning, especially in interpretative process of reading literary work, because literary meaning is created by the interaction of the reader and the text.

2.3 Interpretation

Every reaction of a reader to a text, directly or indirectly, is a reception or response. The text itself will be in accordance with the experience and understanding of the reader. It is a little bit different from interpretation, in which it is the specific form of reception or response given by the reader. In literary theory, interpretation is a part of literary criticism. Literary criticism interests in approaches and its various kinds of interpretation, the way of interpretation, and the report of responses. Besides, interpretation is also a topic of literary study, especially a study that discusses the relationship between text and reader (Luxemburg, et al., 1984:62).

In Abrams's perspective, interpreting a literary work means specifying the meanings of language through analysis, paraphrase, and commentary; usually such interpretation focuses on especially obscure, ambiguous, or figure passages. Based on his perspective, interpretation is regarded as a way to make clear the artistic features and purport of the overall literary work of which language is the

medium. In this sense, interpretation includes the analysis of some components of the work, like work's genre, elements, structure, theme, and effects (1993:90-91).

The above assumption shows that literary work may contain some obscure, ambiguous or figure passages. Sometimes, the author conveys uncompleted information in the text. This condition makes the texts has no specific meaning. Here, the reader must understand all components of the text, then interpret it to clarify and specify the meaning.

In interpreting the text, the readers may have different meaning each other. Meaning itself is something which the author wants to convey through the text. It is a ghostly, wordless mental act which is then fixed for all time in a particular set of material signs. Meaning is also an affair of consciousness, rather than of words. To get the meaning, the readers will be directed by their knowledge about language and world, their experiences, and their expectations to the text. The readers also bring to a text their pre-understanding which is constituted by their own temporal and personal horizons. So, the meaning of the text is an event which is always the product of a fusion of the horizons which the readers bring to the text and which the text brings to the readers (Abrams, 1993:93).

All the time, especially in interpretative process, the readers are engaged in constructing hypothesis of meaning. In this process, the readers will make implicit connection, fill in gaps, draw inferences, and test out hunches. To do this process, the readers will draw on knowledge of the worlds in general and literary conventions in particular, because literary work is full of indeterminacies, elements which depend for their effect upon the reader's interpretation, and which

can be interpreted in a number of different ways (Eagleton, 1983:76-77). Thus, literary work may give various possibilities to the readers in interpreting it differently. As the result, the readers will also have different interpretations each other.

In the meantime, the reader as the producer of meaning is also the variable that follows along place, time, and socio-cultural class. It means that literary work is different in the process of reading, understanding, and evaluation during the time in whole certain social classes. This fact is known by everyone who is aware of the various interpretations given by the readers to a literary work (Jabrohim, 2001:117). Different place, time and society actually can influence the reader's mind during reading process. It can cause different understanding among the readers, so that they have different interpretations too.

Sometimes, a literary work can create many differences in interpretation. The text itself is really no more than a series of cues to the readers. It invites the readers to construct a piece of language into meaning (Eagleton, 1983:76). Here, the readers must actively get much information from the text. Then, the information should be arranged to get the correct meaning.

2.3.1 Kinds of Interpretation

The discussion of interpretation, which is described in the previous section, makes us understand that interpretation is a form of reception or response given by the reader. Similar to the process of common reception or response, the readers who want to interpret a text will try to find the meaning first. After

understanding the meaning of the text, the readers can obtain the interpretation which will be arranged systematically. The interpretations which are obtained and reported by the readers are not totally similar. There are at least six kinds of interpretation, i.e.: the interpretation which deals with the argument, the interpretation which relates to historical experience, the hermeneutic interpretation, the interpretation which deals with the reader's view about literature, the interpretation which deals with specific problem, and the interpretation which shows some possibilities in the text.(Luxemburg et al., 1984:63-64)

The first type covers the interpretation which deals with the argument. According to this point of view, the information in the text gives a chance to the reader to find the correct meaning. Usually, this kind of interpretation can be found in an analysis made by New Criticism. In this interpretation, the interpreter (reader) can reveal the whole meaning, because he or she totally comprehends the text.

The secondly is the interpretation which relates to historical experience. This interpretation tries to dispose historical meaning. In this case, the interpreter can use the author's sense which is revealed in the text. Besides, the text can also be interpreted by disposing the reader's horizon of expectation at that time. In this interpretation, the readers will be explored from their historical background and their view about the literary work that exists in their mind.

The third is the hermeneutic interpretation which compiles both the past and the present time. The readers are conscious that they are in the middle of

historical stream, which involves the reception and interpretation. In this case, interpretation is also determined by each individual and society. Interpretation is gotten by merging the past and present horizon, until it is released from the bound of time.

The fourth is the interpretation which is disposed consciously, dealing with the reader's view about literature. This kind of interpretation is often conducted to show the basic meaning of the text. The examples of this interpretation are Marxist and Feminist interpretation, which will be concreted into literal form and pointed to the ideological analysis; both Marxist and Feminist.

The fifth is the interpretation which deals with specific problem, like psychological and sociological problem. In this kind of interpretation, the case which is interpreted is only the case that relates to certain problems, that is psychological and sociological problem. By means of this limited field of interpretation, there will be limited interpretation from the readers. In this case, the interpretation which is obtained by the readers only focuses on specific problem revealed in the text.

The last is the interpretation which shows some possibilities included in the text, so the readers can interpret by themselves. This kind of interpretation views that the authors use structural, rhetorical, or stylistic way, but there are some parts in it that are made empty. The events and the characters are not described completely and give ambiguous information to the readers. Finally, it makes the readers be more active to interpret the text as their own text. Sometimes, the text also limits the reader's freedom in interpreting it.

The different kinds of interpretation are usual in interpretative process, because in interpreting the text the readers will be influenced by their background knowledge and experience. However, though the readers have different interpretation each other, it does not mean that there will be one interpretation as the only correct interpretation. When the readers choose certain interpretation, they generally understand that there are also other interpretations that are valid (Fokkema & Kunne-ibsch, 1998:202). Hence, each reader is assumed to have his or her own valid interpretation. It is stated by Norman Holland that there are many valid interpretations of the readers, because the act of interpretation is a subjective experience (Bressler, 1999:74). From the above statement, it can be concluded that all interpretations are subjective. So, all interpretations of the readers are valid as long as they are relevant to the text.

2.4 Reader-Response Criticism

Talking about readers and the way they make sense of literature will never be separated from Reader-Response Criticism which claims that the meaning of the text is the experience of the reader (Culler, 1997:63). This criticism is emerged as the result of dissatisfaction on the previous criticism (especially Structuralism), which focuses merely on the text. Structuralism ignores the reader who has a role in accepting and giving meaning.

Reader-response criticism is a criticism that focuses on the reader rather than on the author or the text. Culler states that reader-response criticism can thus take the form of a description of the reader's progressive movement through a

text, analyzing how readers produce meaning by making a connection (1997:125). In other words, reader-response criticism can be assumed as the criticism which stresses on the importance of the reader's role in reading process.

Unlike other criticisms which often ignore the reader, reader-response criticism views the current interaction between the reader and the text as paramount. Therefore, it can be said that the reader is the context in which the work is studied as it is believed that there is no single best meaning, since the meaning of the text is created by the readers. Here, the readers will be studied concerning with their present reactions, interpretations, and experiences with the text (Goodvin, <http://www.blondelibrarian.net>. Accessed on 28 February 2007).

In reader-response criticism, there are some theorists who introduced their own concepts related to this criticism. Stanley Fish, for instance, developed a perspective which is oriented to the readers. He is concerned with the adaptation of readers' expectations during reading process (Selden, 1993:123). For Fish, the readers bring certain assumptions to a text based on the interpretative strategies they have learned in a particular interpretative community. In this interpretative community the readers will share reading strategies, values and interpretative assumptions (McManus, <http://www.library.utoronto.ca>. Accessed on 3 March 2007).

In relation to the above perspective, Fish also presented his own affective stylistic as the only one of many alternative modes of interpretation. Besides, he proposed that each communal strategy creates all objective features of the text, as well as the intentions, speakers, and authors (Abrams, 1993:271). Based on Fish's

perspective, the result of interpretation is assumed dependant on the assumptions and strategy of reading which is shared with other members of a particular community.

If Fish introduced his concept about interpretative community, Jonathan Culler has his own concept of reader-response criticism. Culler stated that reader-response theory must explore the interpretation act of the readers since different readers will create different interpretations. In accordance with this statement, Culler declared that these different interpretations must be explained by the theory. So, though the readers might be different in giving meaning, they will constantly follow the same interpretative process (Selden, 1993:127).

From all concept described above, reader becomes the central discussion in reader response-criticism. However, the readers will not be individually studied. Even though this criticism focuses on the reader, the text will not be ignored, because the reader's response cannot be separated from the text. Hence, this criticism asserts that proper study of textual analysis must consider both the reader and the text as a unit.

Along its development, many criticisms described as reader response criticism are concerned with novel. Reading as a process is much related to reading a novel rather than reading a poem-especially a lyric of poem which can be held as a finished unit more easily in the memory (Hawthorn, 1994:165). However, though it is often concerned with novel, it does not mean that poem cannot be studied using reader response criticism. All genres of literature (novel,

poetry, and drama) can be used to apply reader response criticism, as long as there are the reader's responses that will be analyzed.

2.4.1 Reception Theory

Reception theory, as defined by Hawthorn, is a term generally used in a relatively narrow sense to describe a particular group of theorists concerned with the way in which literary works are received by their readers over time, but also sometimes used in a looser sense to describe any attempt to theorize the ways in which art-works are received, individually and collectively, by their consumers. Reception refers to the activity of reading, the construction of meaning, and the reader's response to what he or she is reading (1994:170).

Like Hawthorn, Abrams also saw reception theory as the historical application of a form of reader response theory. Like other reader response criticism, it focuses on the reader's reception of a text; its prime interest, however, is not on the response of a single reader at a given time, but on the altering responses, interpretive and evaluative, of the general reading public over the course of time (1999:272). As the application of reader response theory, this theory is used to analyze the reader's reception of the text. The forms of reception are the reader's responses, interpretations, or evaluations to the text.

In both reception theory and reader response criticism the role of the reader is seen as particularly crucial. Though reception theory has had its greatest impact in Germany and reader response criticism is associated mainly with

American criticism, there is continuity between the two, particularly through the work of Wolfgang Iser, who is commonly included in both (Newton, 1989:219).

In analyzing the activity of reading, reception theorists use a concept defined by Hans Robert Jauss – along with Wolfgang Iser. Jauss in Hawthorn proposed that although a text has no objective meaning, it does contain a variety of objectively describable features. The response of a particular reader is the joint product of the reader's own horizon of expectations and the confirmations, disappointments, refutations, and reformulations of these expectations when they are challenged by the features of the text itself (1994:272).

Horizon of expectations is a term developed by Jauss to explain how a reader's expectations or frame of reference is based on the reader's past experience of literature and what preconceived notions about literature the reader possesses, that is a reader's aesthetic experience is bound by time and historical determinants. Jauss also contented that for a work to be considered a classic it needed to exceed the reader's horizons of expectation (Siegel, <http://www.kristisiegel.com>. Accessed on 27 March 2007). This horizon of expectations will direct the reader's impression, response and reception to the literary work.

In accordance with the above concept, Segers in Jabrohim said that the concept of horizon which becomes the principle of Jauss' theory is determined by three criteria, i.e.: the first is the common norm which is dispersed from the text, the second is the reader's knowledge and experience on the previous read texts, and the last is the contradiction between fiction and reality, that is the reader's

ability in understanding many texts, either in the narrow horizon of literary expectations or in the wide horizon of knowledge about life (1995:117). These three criteria will influence the horizon of reader's expectation in reading process.

While, Iser in Newton argued "if texts actually possessed only the meaning brought to light by interpretation, then there would remain very little else for the reader" (1989:226-227). A literary work is not an object in itself, but an effect to be explained. He also asserted that the response of the reader is controlled by the text (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reader-response_criticism. Accessed on 25 March 2007). The reader is free in interpreting the text to get meaning, but the meaning must be produced based on the contexts which are revealed in the text. The text will control the reader to produce meaning which is not out of context.

For Iser, the experience of reading literary texts is a uniquely valuable consciousness-rising activity. He stated that reading gives the readers chance to formulate the unformulated (Lodge, 1988:211; Selden, 1993:120). It means that a reader must be an active reader who should read and concretize the text. The concretization which is made by the readers is the text's meaning that they get from their interpretation.

In relation to the previous statement, Iser also claimed that all texts create gaps or blanks which the reader must use his or her imagination to fill it. In this interaction between text and reader, the reception-aesthetic is created (Newton, 1989:220). These gaps or blanks stimulate the readers to construct meaning, because the text may not tell the readers everything that needs to be known about

a character, a situation, and other such textual elements clearly. So, the readers must automatically fill in these gaps using their knowledge base grounded in their worldview (Bressler, 1999: 72-73). Hence, the gaps or blanks concept in literary work, which are given by the author, ask the readers to fill it creatively (Ratna, 2004:171).

Those all concepts, both horizon of expectation and blanks, are the basic concepts in understanding reception theory. Segers in Jabrohim stated that reception theory is used to study the concretization of reader in a literary text. The reader who knows the possibilities of concretization will be able to give a logic interpretation. However, the concretization which is not based on the structure of text will be irrelevant (1995:119). Therefore, in interpretative process the reader will be controlled by the text in order to get the relevant interpretation to the text.

2.5 Geisha in General

The word geisha consists of two Japanese kanji, “*gei*” meaning “art” and “*sha*” meaning “person”. Like all Japanese nouns, there are no distinct singular or plural variants of the terms (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisha>. Accessed on 1 March 2007). If it is translated literally, geisha means “person who lives by the arts” or “artist” (<http://www.goodbookslately.com>. Accessed on 7 March 2007).

Geisha is the artisan and entertainer of traditional Japan. She sings, dances, and performs in front of audience, and is very skilled in social skill. She is often seen as the center of original Japanese culture, or the last protectors of the old values and visual art. However, a geisha, sometimes, is also called as high class

courtesan. But, this term is little bit problematic, because there are also some people who do not agree to call geisha as prostitute. A modern geisha really does not have to do sexual profession. Certainly, geisha flirts with the men, but she does it with the art and part of the game is always the certain social distance (<http://www.hanamiweb.com>. Accessed on 1 March 2007).

All this time, there remains some confusion about the nature of the geisha's profession. Her main purpose was to entertain her customer by reciting verse, playing musical or light conversation. But, geisha is frequently depicted as expensive prostitute in Western popular culture, because in the past she sold sexual favors to some clients (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisha>. Accessed on 1 March 2007). However, this assumption is not absolutely true. In fact, not all geisha sold sexual favors to men. So, this assumption is still not accepted by everyone.

If a woman has become a geisha, she will work by entertaining the clients or customers. The most important thing that must be known by geisha is that they are expected to be single women. Those who choose to marry must retire from the profession. But, it was traditional in the past for established geisha to take a *danna*, or patron. A *danna* is typically a wealthy man who had the means to support the very large expenses related to a geisha's cost (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisha>. Accessed on 1 March 2007). After having a *danna*, geisha will have a guardian who will support her life. Nevertheless, *danna* must also pay the usual hourly fee of geisha, or he will probably pay more, if he wants to spend time with her.

Throughout the century, geishas have been source of magnificent interest in abroad. In a way, geisha is a symbol of Japan; it has such a huge symbolic value (<http://www.hanamiweb.com>. Accessed on 1 March 2007). This is in a way very natural as the geishas are doing very important job of prevailing the old Japanese lifestyle and culture. Nowadays, many people (not only Japanese, but also foreigners) are interested in geisha's world. It makes the discussions about geisha become an interesting topic discussed in books, magazines, internet, etc.

2.6 Previous Studies

There are some researchers who have applied reader-response theory on a literary work. Siti Hariti Sastriyani, for instance, has conducted a study on a French literary work *Madame Bovary*. In her study, she has analyzed the readers' reception on *Madame Bovary*. The result of her study shows that though *Madame Bovary* gets a negative response from the readers in French, it does not mean that *Madam Bovary* will get a negative response from the readers in Indonesia too. In fact, the readers of *Madam Bovary* in Indonesia give a positive response. They see *Madam Bovary* as a literary work which influences the development of Indonesian literature.

Another researcher who has also conducted a study using reader-response criticism is Henry Jenkins. He has applied reader-response theory on Susan Douglass' *Music of the Night*. In his analysis, he finds that Susan Douglass' short story *Music of the Night* is a form of response to the film *Thelma and Louise*.

Thus, his study has proven that the audience's response to a work might be in the form of a new work.

From the above studies, it is known that a study on reader-response is an interesting study because it involves not only the text but also the readers. In consideration to the above study, then, the researcher wants to conduct a similar study which applies reader-response theory on a literary work. However, there are some differences between this study and the previous studies. The first difference is the topic discussed. In this case, the researcher discusses the readers' interpretation, in which it is also a form of the readers' response to a literary work. Another difference is the literary work chosen. In this study, the researcher chooses Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* as the object of this study.

A study on *Memoirs of a Geisha*, indeed, has ever been conducted by another researcher. She is Nikmal Azekiyah, a student of UIN Malang. In her study, she has analyzed plot and theme of *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The result of her study shows that she finds the structure of plot of *Memoirs of a Geisha*. She also finds the theme of the story, that is success needs struggle, courage and sacrifice. This study, directly or indirectly, inspires the researcher to conduct a study on *Memoirs of a Geisha*. There are some reasons that basically make the researcher want to complete the previous study. The previous researcher has conducted a study on *Memoirs of a Geisha*. However, the object studied is not the original version of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, but the movie script version which is adapted from the novel. As the adaptation, the movie script analyzed by the previous researcher is little bit different from the original novel. The story has been adapted

by the script writer and there are also some changes which are adjusted to a concept of the movie. It makes the story presented in the script is not complete anymore. If the story is not as complete as the original version, the analysis on the script is not as complete as the analysis on the novel. That is why in this study the researcher chooses the original version of *Memoirs of a Geisha* written by Arthur Golden, because the researcher wants to get a complete interpretation from the readers and it will be gotten if the story presented is also the complete story.

Another thing that makes this study is different from the previous one is the topic that being discussed. If the previous researcher only analyzes intrinsic aspect of *Memoirs of a Geisha*, in this study the text is not the only discussed object. The researcher wants to analyze the readers of *Memoirs of a Geisha* to know their interpretation. In this case, both the text and the readers are related each other.

Based on those all reasons, the researcher finally thinks that this study is necessary to be conducted. This study is not aimed at finding the weakness of the previous studies, but trying to complete them. In the future, it is also expected that those all studies can complete each other.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

After interviewing all subjects of this study and finding the required data from them, the researcher gets the result of the readers' interpretation, including their reasons, about geisha. In accordance with the stated problems, the researcher analyzes the readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* and their reasons in interpreting geisha. The result of the analysis is systematically discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Readers' Interpretation about Geisha Portrayed in Arthur Golden's

Memoirs of a Geisha.

The researcher has interviewed 12 students who had completely read the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. To ease the discussion, these students, later, will be known as informant 1 to 12. From the informants, the researcher finds three interpretations about geisha. Even though the informants read the same novel, they have their own interpretations which might be similar as or different from other's. The result of interview finds not only different interpretations of the readers but also multiple-interpretations of them. There are some informants who have two interpretations; even some of them have three interpretations about geisha. The result of their interpretations can be divided into three categories, i.e. the interpretations which see geisha as artist, prostitute, and kept woman.

3.1.1 Geisha as an Artist

Most of informants interpret geisha as an artist. They, who interpret geisha as an artist, are informant 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12. However, not all of them think that geisha is purely an artist. The informant who thinks that geisha is purely an artist is only informant 6, while the others who assume geisha as not purely artist are informant 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 12. These all informants have their own reasons to see geisha as an artist, but they almost have the same perception to claim geisha as an artist who works in art area and has many skills in art. Even though there are some informants who have more than one interpretation, they also agree to see geisha as an artist.

3.1.2 Geisha as a Prostitute

Among 12 informants, the researcher finds some informants who interpret geisha as a prostitute. For this category, the researcher also finds two classifications. The first is the informants who interpret geisha only as a prostitute. The second is the informants who interpret geisha not only as prostitute. In the first classification, the researcher finds four informants; they are informant 3, 8, 9 and 10. They generally see geisha as prostitute who is paid based on her hourly fees to entertain and satisfy the customers. For them, geisha works not only in art area, but also in sexual area. For the second classification, the researcher finds some informants; they are informant 2, 4, 5, and 12. These informants do not directly judge that geisha is totally a prostitute. Only in certain condition geisha can also be seen as prostitute.

3.1.3 Geisha as a Kept Woman

Besides being assumed as artist and prostitute, there are also some informants who interpret geisha as a kept woman. For this category, the researcher does not find any informants who interpret geisha purely as a kept woman, because they also have other interpretations about geisha. The informants who interpret geisha as a kept woman are informant 1, 4, 7, 11 and 12. These informants generally see geisha as a woman who has *danna* (a man or patron who fulfills her needs), but they are not married.

From the above description, there is no single interpretation to determine who geisha actually is. As stated by Holland, all interpretations are subjective. It means that each interpretation is valid as long as it is relevant to the novel (Bressler, 1999:74). Those three interpretations are valid if they are related to some facts in the novel. In the novel, the author gives some information that direct the readers to interpret geisha as artist, kept woman, and prostitute. Thus, the readers' multiple interpretation is not surprising at all. In reading process, as said by Iser, the reader is given a chance to formulate the unformulated in the novel (Lodge, 1988:211; Selden, 1993, 1993:120). In this case, the unformulated thing is the position of geisha, which is not stated clearly by the author whether she is an artist, prostitute, or kept woman. It is due to the unformulated position of geisha that the readers try to find the interpretation by constructing the meaning of the text based on their own understanding.

3.2 The Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha

After discussing the readers' interpretations about geisha, the researcher is going to discuss the readers' reasons in interpreting geisha. As described before, the informants have different interpretations. It means that they also have different reasons in interpreting geisha. Here, the researcher also divides the readers' reasons into three classifications.

3.2.1 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as an Artist

As discussed before, there are some informants who interpret geisha as an artist. In interpreting geisha as an artist, the informants have their own reasons which influence their interpretation. It is explicitly stated in the novel:

I know I've described something of what it was like to study shamisen with Teacher Mouse. But a geisha must study a great many arts besides shamisen. And in fact, the "gei" of "geisha" means "arts", so the word "geisha" really means "artisan" or "artist". (*MG*, p.146)

The above quotation states that geisha is an artist. In Japanese term, geisha truly means artist. This statement is supported by informant 4 who interprets geisha as an artist. Informant 4 simply thinks that geisha will not be named geisha if she is not truly an artist. The word geisha means artist as it is translated from Japanese term. So, the term geisha which is given to the artist is assumed as the appropriate term because geisha is really an artist.

In interpreting geisha as an artist, informant 4 only considers the sentence which mentions that the meaning of geisha in Japanese term. It is mentioned that geisha means artist, so that informant 4 also has the same assumption, that is as an

artist. In her point of view, Japanese people will not give this name if geisha is not really an artist.

Informant 1 and 2, on the other hand, have different assumption about geisha. Informant 1 and 2 interpret geisha as an artist because geisha must be skillful in art, like pouring tea beautifully, dancing, playing music and singing in front of the customers. It is due to her ability in art that geisha can be called artist.

From the reason of informant 1 and 2, it is known that they see geisha as an artist in consideration of her artistic values. Here, informant 1 and 2 see the artistic values as the most important aspects of geisha. If geisha is required to master all kinds of art, it means that her profession is an artist.

The reason of informant 1 and 2 is not too far from that of informant 6 and 7. However, informant 6 and 7 tend to emphasize their reason on the area of geisha's job. Informant 6 and 7 interpret geisha as an artist because she primarily works in the art area. In fact, geisha works in art area where she should entertain the customers through her dance or song. From what geisha usually does, it can be inferred that geisha is an artist.

Besides, informant 6 considers geisha's training to interpret geisha. Actually, geisha needs a long process to be the real geisha. The process is not so easy as that geisha must pass this process well. In this process, geisha will be trained in art, not only to improve her skills but also to develop her attitude. Through the training process geisha can get her ability in art. From the training process, geisha has seriously trained herself in arts to be the real artist.

If the reasons of informant 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 are compared, it will be known that they have different reasons in interpreting geisha as an artist. These different reasons are caused by their way of interpretation, which are also different. In this case, the informants understand some facts given by the author throughout the novel differently. However, though they have different understanding, their reasons are still relevant to the novel.

The reason of informant 6, for instance, is in accordance with the fact about geisha's training which is revealed in the novel. As described in the novel, a woman must be trained before becoming a geisha.

Mother had told me I could begin my training within a few months if I worked hard and behave myself. As I learned from Pumpkin, beginning my training meant going to a school in another section of Gion to take lessons in things like music, dance, and tea ceremony. All the girls studying to be geisha took classes at this same school. (*MG*, p.47)
I was twelve years old by then, and nearly as tall as Mameha. Having grown older may seem like an advantage, but I can assure you it wasn't some cases at traditional age of three years and three days. Those few who'd started as young as this were mostly the daughters of geisha themselves, and had been raised in such a way that dance and tea ceremony formed as much a part of their daily life as swimming in the pond had for me. (*MG*, p.146)

Based on the above quotation, it is known that a girl who wishes to be a geisha must pass the training. In this training, geisha is trained in dancing, singing, playing music, and pouring tea beautifully. Besides, the training is also intended to improve geisha's manners, because as an artist, geisha is required to have not only ability in art but also a good attitude in package.

In all of these classes, music and dance were only part of what we learned. Because a girl who has mastered the various arts will still come off badly at a party if she hasn't learned proper comportment and behavior. This is one reason the teachers always insist upon good manners and bearing in their students, even when a girl is only scurrying down toward the toilet.

When you're taking a lesson in shamisen, for example, you'll be corrected for speaking in anything but the most proper language, or for speaking in a regional accent rather than Kyoto speech, or for slouching, or walking in lumbering steps. In fact, the most severe scolding a girl is likely to receive probably won't be for playing her instrument badly or failing to learn the words to a song, but rather for having dirty fingernails, or being disrespectful, or something of that sort. (*MG*, p.148)

The previous quotation shows that a girl who wishes to be a geisha must also learn manners, because the ability in dancing or singing is not the only requirement to be a geisha. In this case, a good ability in art will not be complete without a good manner. A geisha who does not have good manners will come off badly in front of her customers. So, as a professional artist, geisha is required to be a perfect figure that is good in skills and manners.

Information about geisha's training, indirectly, is also in relation to other informants' reasons. As described before, during the training geisha will be trained in dancing, singing, playing music, etc, these all will be part of her ability in art. The training is also an important process in geisha's career. Geisha will have no skills in art without the training process. This consideration, then, supports the informants also to see this fact as the basic reason in interpreting geisha.

You may wonder why she was at the school at all, since she was already an accomplished dancer and certainly everything she needed to know about being a geisha. But even the most renowned geisha continued to take advanced lessons in dance throughout their careers, some of them even into their fifties and sixties. (*MG*, p.112)

The above quotation is perceived by the informants with different point of view. For the informants, the quotation shows the diligence of geisha in training her skill. Informant 1 thinks that geisha should take advanced lesson because she

must maintain her skill throughout her career. By learning intensively geisha will not lose her skill, so that she will be known as a professional artist. Informant 2, likewise, assumes that geisha's ability in art should be improved by taking advanced training. Geisha is always expected to be an artist with excellent skill. So, advanced lesson will be useful to sharpen geisha's excellent skill.

Informant 4, on the other hand, see advanced lesson taken by geisha as a way to make her ability better than before. For informant 4, geisha is an artist who works by entertaining her costumers. To entertain the customer well, geisha should continually improve her ability. If her ability is getting better, it will directly influence the success of her career.

Informant 7, in contrast, has different opinion about geisha's advanced training. Informant 7 sees hidden motivation behind geisha's effort to improve her skill. The intensive training taken by geisha throughout her career is aimed to raise her popularity and fees. Geisha, with her excellent skills, will be more popular and paid higher.

The different assumptions asserted by the informants about geisha's training really show that they have different view points in understanding all facts in the novel. Even though they have different assumptions about it, their assumptions direct at the same point, i.e. the training is intended to improve geisha's ability in art. From this ability, then, geisha can be called an artist. Even, for informant 12, her ability in art also makes geisha different from prostitute, because prostitute does not need to learn hard in art. In other words, it can be simply said that artist uses her ability in art to entertain the customers, while

prostitute only sells her beauty and sexuality. It is due to her job in art, geisha can be seen as artist.

However, with different point of view, informant 5 sees the position of geisha as an ambiguous thing. To know whether geisha is an artist or not, depends on geisha herself. If geisha uses her ability to show the artistic values of her performance, geisha can be called an artist. However, if her ability is used to attract men, flirting with them, she is not the real artist.

From the above perspective, then, informant 5 also assumes that the position of geisha as artist, sometimes, is not too different from prostitute. Geisha's job is to entertain the customers. For informant 5, this job is almost similar to prostitute. Both geisha and prostitute work for men community. The costumers are the men who want to seek pleasure with other women. However, informant 5 thinks that geisha is not totally the same as prostitute. Even though geisha entertains men, geisha entertains them in different way.

To begin with, a popular geisha in Gion is welcome at nearly any party, and will drop in on many of them for only five minutes. Her costumers will be happy to pay the fees, even though she's only saying hello. They know that the next time they visit Gion, she'll probably join them at the table for a while to give them the pleasure of her company. An apprentice, on the other hand, can't possibly get away with such behavior. Her role is to build relationships. Until she becomes a full-fledged geisha at the age of eighteen, she doesn't consider flitting from party to party.
(*MG*, p. 198)

Informant 5 sees the quotation as a proof that geisha is not totally the same as prostitute. The quotation shows the way geisha uses to entertain the customers. In this case, geisha is paid for accompanying her customers. Her customers will also pay her, even though she only says hello. Compared to prostitute's, geisha's

job is different. Prostitute will give pleasure to the customers not only in the same way, but also by doing sexual favor.

Informant 11, on the other hand, sees geisha's job as only a special guest of a party. Geisha will come to party to perform her abilities in dancing, singing and playing music, or usually she accompanies the customers in tea ceremony. It is due to this reason, then, informant 11 also see geisha as an artist who relies on her abilities in art, not a prostitute who only sells her sexuality.

From all reasons given by the informants, it is known that the informants are directed by some facts in the novel. In this case, the informants tend to interpret geisha as an artist because they find some information that supports their interpretation. The information includes the meaning of geisha in Japanese term, the training that must be passed by geisha, and the job of geisha. From these considerations, then, the informants determine their interpretation, even though it is not the only interpretation they make. In the meantime, although the informants have different reasons in interpreting geisha as an artist, their reasons flows at the same point, that geisha is a woman who works in art area. Geisha is skillful in both arts, i.e.: singing, dancing, playing music, etc. This fact becomes the basic reason of the informants in interpreting geisha as an artist.

3.2.2 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as a Prostitute

Even though there is a statement which indicates that geisha means artist, but not all informants agree about it. They have another opinion about geisha. In

this section, the researcher will discuss the reasons of the informants who interpret geisha as a prostitute.

As described before, there are some informants who interpret geisha as prostitute. Informant 3 and 9, for instance, extremely interpret geisha as a prostitute. They see geisha's ability in art as a value to raise her fee. The reason of informant 3 and 9 is almost similar to the reason given by informant 7 in the previous section. However, though they have the same assumption, the result of their interpretation is different. Informant 7 assumes that geisha's ability is used to get higher payment from the customers, while informant 3 and 9 believe that the geisha's ability in art is only used to raise her fee in *mizuage* ceremony. Considering this reason, informant 3 and 9 see geisha as a prostitute, because geisha learns art in order to sell her *mizuage* or virginity with the high payment.

Besides the above reason, informant 3 also assumes that geisha is like a common prostitute in whole countries. For informant 3, geisha is the same as prostitute who has pimp and customers. Even, geisha is also located in a special house called Okiya. The only difference between geisha and common prostitute is the art she has. Finally, informant 3 concludes geisha as a prostitute which is wrapped by the arts.

The reason given by informant 3 above shows that readers may consider not only the information in the novel as their reason. Here, informant 3 draws on her knowledge to interpret geisha as a prostitute. Related to her knowledge, both geisha and prostitute are organized by a pimp. Based on this consideration, informant 3 sees geisha and prostitute as similar profession.

Similar to Informant 3 and 9, informant 8 and 10 also interpret geisha as a prostitute. For informant 8 and 10, the art that must be mastered by geisha is only a consequence, in which all women who wish to be a geisha must master it. However, geisha's mastery in art does not guarantee her status as an artist.. Informant 8 thinks that if geisha is really an artist, she should not sell her virginity. In fact, geisha sells her virginity in *mizuage* ceremony. Thus, it means that she is a prostitute.

Informant 10, in contrary, has another reason to interpret geisha as a prostitute. According to informant 10, the fact that geisha is prostitute can be seen from the main purpose when a woman wants to be a geisha. As being told in the novel, each woman has different purposes to be a geisha, but it can be simply concluded that all women wish to be a geisha because they want to have a better financial life. Actually, geisha will get much money from her customers because she is paid hourly based on her tariff. This profession is also dreamed by the poor women who want to have a better life, because it can be a short cut to get much money. Thus, geisha seems like a commercial prostitute who sells sexuality to get much money. This reason, for informant 10, is a proof that geisha is not different from commercial prostitute.

Throughout the novel, the author never states clearly that geisha is a prostitute. However, the author provides information that finally makes the readers interpret geisha as prostitute. One information that influence the readers to think that geisha is a prostitute is the description about geisha's appearance.

When she'd finished applying blush, she still had no eyebrows or lips. But for the moment she left her face like a bizarre white mask and asked

Auntie to paint the back of her neck. I must tell you something about necks in Japan, if you don't know it; namely, that Japanese men, as a rule, feel about a woman's neck and throat the same way that men in the West might feel about a woman's legs. This is why geisha wear the collars of their kimono so low in the back that the first few bumps of the spine are visible; I suppose it's like a woman in Paris wearing a short skirt. Auntie painted onto the back of Hatsumomo's neck a design called *sanbon-ashi*—"three legs". It makes a very dramatic picture, for you feel as if you're looking at the bare skin of the neck through little tapering points of a white fence. It was years before I understood the erotic effect it has on men; but in a way, it's like a woman peering out from between her fingers. In fact, a geisha leaves a tiny margin of skin bare all around the hairline, causing her makeup to look even more artificial, something like a mask worn in Noh drama. When a man sits beside her and sees her makeup like a mask, he becomes that much more aware of the bare skin beneath. (*MG*, p. 65)

From the above quotation, it is known that geisha has special appearance that is different from other common Japanese women. For informant 8, geisha's appearance seems like a prostitute. Even, informant 3 sees geisha's appearance really represents a figure of prostitute. Geisha expressively wears kimono with lower collars which can give erotic effect on men. Considering this fact, then, the informants assume that geisha is a prostitute.

Informant 8, on the other hand, regards geisha as a tempter. Relying on her appearance, geisha can easily tempt the men. It means that geisha not only relies on her skills but also sells the beauty of her body. So, it can be concluded that geisha is like a prostitute because she behaves like a prostitute.

Unlike the above reasons, informant 5 sees geisha's appearance as part of art. As described before, informant 5 also interprets geisha as an artist, so she does not extremely assume that geisha's appearance really represents the figure of prostitute. For informant 5, geisha's appearance has artificial value that can be seen from *Sanbon-ashi* design which is painted on the back of her neck. However,

even though the picture gives artificial value, it can also give erotic effect on men.

In another side, geisha's appearance is also like a prostitute.

Actually, the information about geisha's appearance is not the only information that directs the readers to interpret geisha as prostitute. Informant 9 and 10 declare that information about geisha's job also indicates that geisha is a prostitute. Informant 9 sees geisha as a profession related to prostitution. To do her job, geisha must entertain and satisfy the customers, not only by singing or dancing, but also, sometimes, by doing more than that sort.

Perhaps it seems odd to you that we all bathed together, men and women, and that we planned to sleep in the same room later that night. But actually, geisha do this sort of thing all the time with their best customer- or at least they did in my day. A single geisha who values her reputation will reputation will certainly never be caught alone with a man who isn't her *danna*. But to bathe innocently in a group like this, with the murky water cloaking us...that's quite another matter. And as for sleeping in a group, we even have a word for it in Japanese-*zakone*, "fish sleeping". If you picture a bunch of mackerel thrown together into a basket, I suppose that's what it means. (*MG*, p. 414-415)

From the above quotation it is known what geisha does with her customers. The quotation shows that geisha may bath together and sleep with her customers. Although not all geisha will do this activities with her customers, but there are some geisha who agree to sleep with her best costumers or at least with her *danna*. For informant 9, this fact really shows that the profession of geisha is similar to prostitute.

Besides the above quotation, the following quotation also gives information to the readers about what geisha does with her costumers.

You see, sometimes after a party with geisha, certain men don't feel satisfied with all the flirting and begin to long for something a bit more. Some of these men are content to make their way to places like Miyagawa-

cho, where they'll add the odor of their own sweat to the unpleasant houses I saw on the night I found my sister. Other men work up their courage to lean in bleary-eyed and whisper to the geisha beside them a question about what her "fees" might be. (MG, p. 152)

The quotation, directly or indirectly, also drives the readers to interpret geisha as a prostitute. From the sentence "*Other men work up their courage to lean in bleary-eyed and whisper to the geisha beside them a question about what her "fees" might be*", informant 8 concludes that the man will not ask her fees if geisha is not really a prostitute. Besides, the customers will also invite her to go to *Miyagawa-cho*, a place or complex where prostitution is organized, to get more service and pleasure. From this facts, then, informant 8 thinks that geisha is really a prostitute.

Informant 12, on the other hand, has her own opinion. Informant 12, who does not interpret geisha purely as a prostitute, believes that not all geisha will do sexual favor with her customers. Even though there are some of them who agree to do it, informant 12 believes that popular geisha will not do this sort because it can taint her reputation. So, informant 12 assumes that each geisha is free to choose whether she will do sexual activity with her costumers or not. If geisha wants to keep her reputation, she should ignore her costumer's offer.

With different point of view, informant 4 sees the profession of geisha as the occupation which cannot be separated from prostitution. Since the profession is associated with the men who want to seek pleasure, it is not separated from sexual activity. The customer, sometimes, does not be satisfied only by watching geisha dances, sings, or plays music. So, if the customer wants to be satisfied, he will pay more to get more satisfying services from geisha. In consideration to this

fact, informant 4 assumes that in certain condition geisha is like a prostitute that must be able to give her customers pleasure.

Besides the information about geisha's job, there is also information which directs the readers to interpret geisha as prostitute. This is the information about *mizuage* tradition. In geisha's life, there will be a tradition called *mizuage*. In this tradition, geisha will sell her *mizuage* or virginity to a man who agrees to pay it in the highest price. Informant 12 sees this tradition as a part of tradition in geisha's life, in which apprentice geisha will be called the real geisha after this tradition.

“The first time a woman's cave is explored by a man's eel. That is what we call *mizuage*.”

Now, *mizu* means “water” and *age* means “raise up” or “place on”; so that the term *mizuage* sounds as if it might have something to do with raising up water or placing something in the water. (*MG*, p.240)

From the above description, it is known what *mizuage* means. As described before, *mizuage* means the first time geisha does sexual activity with a man. In this case, geisha will auction off her *mizuage*, and it will be given to the highest bidder. Before the time, geisha must also promote herself in order to get many bidders of her *mizuage*. Usually, men compete one another to bid geisha with the higher price. This condition will indirectly make geisha's price rise higher and higher. Finally, she will get the highest payment of the man who is success to bid her.

Clearly we had to reclaim Dr. Crab's affection. Without him Nobu could offer what he wanted for my *mizuage*-that is, if he turned out to have any interest in it at all. I wasn't sure he would, but Mameha assured me that a man doesn't cultivate a relationship with a fifteen-years-old apprentice geisha unless he has her *mizuage* in mind. (*MG*, p.242)

In fact, a man who cultivates a relationship with a geisha usually wishes to get the geisha's *mizuege*. This situation, then, becomes a good chance to get much money as the payment of her *mizuage*. Even, informant 8 sees *mizuage* tradition as a competitive arena among geisha. A geisha who gets the highest payment for her *mizuage* will be popular.

The above fact really shows that a geisha expressively competes with other geishas in raising their fees. It means that they consciously want to get the highest payment from the costumers for their virginity. Thus, geisha is not too much different from prostitute who sells herself to a man who agrees to pay her virginity in highest price.

In the end, Dr. Crab agreed to pay ¥11,500 for my *mizuage*. Up to that time, this was the highest ever paid for *mizuage* in Gion, and possibly in any of the geisha districts of Japan. Keep in mind that in those days, one hour of a geisha's time cost about ¥4, and an extravagant kimono might have sold for ¥1500. So it may not sound like a lot, but it's much more than, say, a laborer might have earned in a year. (*MG*, p. 290)

From the above quotation, it is known that finally Sayuri gets the highest payment for her *mizuage*. The payment is the highest ever in her day. Based on the fact about *mizuage* tradition, some informants agree on seeing geisha as a prostitute. Informant 3, for instance, sees geisha as prostitute because she sells her virginity. What geisha does is not different from prostitute's activity which sells sexuality. Informant 3 also thinks that there are many facts which indicates that geisha is a prostitute, like geisha's appearance and job. Based on this consideration, informant 3 directly interprets geisha as prostitute.

Like informant 3, informant 9 and 10 also see geisha as prostitute. In their opinion, geisha is like common prostitute who sells sexuality. Even, informant 9

adds that the art which is mastered by geisha is a value to attract the men. This condition makes the art she has becomes meaningless, because finally she also sells her virginity to the bidder. Here, there is no difference between geisha and prostitute.

All reasons given by the informants differs one another. These different reasons are caused by different ways the informants use in understanding the given facts. Besides, there are some informants who are confused to determine the exact position of geisha. For this reason, the informants who interpret geisha as both artist and prostitute do not extremely see geisha as prostitute. However, they consciously agree that in certain condition geisha is like a prostitute. Hence, whether geisha is really a prostitute or not depends on each individual. If geisha prostitutes herself, she will be called as a prostitute.

In fact, there are some information which indicate that geisha is really a prostitute. *Mizuage* tradition obviously shows that geisha sells not only her ability in art but also her virginity. It can be finally understood that geisha is really similar to prostitute. Even though geisha sells her virginity only once, it becomes a proof that geisha works not only in art area but also in sexual area.

3.2.3 Readers' Reasons in Interpreting Geisha as a Kept Woman

The last interpretation given by the informants is geisha as a kept woman. As described before, there are five informants who interpret geisha as a kept woman. All of them do not see kept woman as the only profession of geisha.

Informant 1, 7 and 11 also interpret geisha as an artist, while informant 4 and 12 interpret geisha as both artist and prostitute too.

The informants do not interpret geisha purely as a kept woman because in the beginning of her career geisha is not kept woman. Actually, geisha starts her career as an artist who is paid to entertain her customers. However, in her career geisha always wishes to have a man who will support her life in the next time.

The reason a busy and successful geisha goes to all this trouble for a younger girl is because everyone in Gion benefits when an apprentice succeeds. The apprentice herself benefits by paying off her debts over time, of course; if she's lucky, she'll end up mistress to a wealthy man. (MG, p. 134)

For Informant 11, the above quotation shows that geisha must work hard to pay off all of her debts. Actually, every geisha is too much in debts to the owner of *Okiya*. Those debts come from her living and training fees. After being able to get money from the customers, a geisha is demanded to pay her debts in the installment. Unfortunately, geisha's fee is not enough to pay all of her debts and fulfill her needs. Geisha who needs an elegant life cannot live only from her own fees. Here, geisha will be a mistress of a wealthy man who is able to support her life. If geisha has found the wealthy man who supports her life, she can be called a lucky woman.

In the meantime, informant 12 sees geisha's struggle throughout her career as an effort to get the right man who will support her life. It is understandable, then, that geisha works hard to raise her popularity. With her popularity, geisha can get the man who will become her guardian and save her life.

Informant 7, on the other hand, assumes that the success of geisha is not seen from popularity, but is viewed from her success in having a wealthy man. Hence, geisha is very lucky if she ends up her career as the mistress of wealthy man. So, it is not amazing if a geisha tries to find the right man since the beginning of her career.

Talking about geisha as a kept woman will always be related to *danna*.

Danna is a man who will be geisha's patron or guardian.

I'd already been in Gion long enough to know something of what Mameha meant by a *danna*. It's the term a wife uses for her husbands-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. (*MG*, p.152)

The above quotation shows who a *danna* is. Based on the quotation, *danna* is like a husband for geisha. In line with this statement, informant 1 sees geisha as the second wife of *danna*. Since they are not married, informant 1 finally sees geisha as a kept woman.

Informant 4, on the other hand, sees geisha as mistress of *danna*, because *danna* will guard geisha's life. Informant 4 assumes that geisha will not be able to live well without a *danna*. The reason of informant 4 conforms to the following quotation.

Parties and so on are all very nice; but the real money in Gion comes from having a *danna*, and a geisha without one-such as Hatsumomo is like a stray cat on the street without a master to feed it. (*MG*, p.153)

A *danna*, as stated by informant 4, is the one who will guard geisha's life.

The quotation also shows the importance of *danna* in geisha's life. Geisha who does not have *danna* is like a stray cat without a master. Indirectly, geisha who

has no one as her *danna* is assumed as neglected person. Besides, informant 4 thinks that having a *danna* can raise her reputation. Geisha who becomes a mistress of man will have a better status in the society.

“Very well. Then I have only two things to say to you. First, you’re a fourteen-year-old girl with no reputation whatever. You’ll be very fortunate ever to become a geisha with sufficient status for a man like Nobu to consider proposing himself as your *danna*. Secondly, Nobu-san has never found a geisha he likes well enough to take as a mistress. If you’re the first, I expect you feel very flattered.” (MG, p.220)

The quotation proves that the importance of *danna* is not only as a guardian who will support geisha’s life. Indirectly, *danna* can also give better reputation to a geisha. Geisha will also seek wealthy man to be her *danna*, because he is the one who will fulfill her needs to keep her life elegant.

These would be the arrangements for an average geisha. But a very top geisha, of which 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; what’s more, he’ll provide her with spending money, sponsor dance recital for her, and buy her gifts of kimono and jewelry. And when he spends time with her, he won’t pay her usual hourly fee; he’ll probably pay more, as a gesture of goodwill. (MG, p. 154)

Based on the above description, informant 7 assumes that *danna* will give whatever his geisha needs. However, it is not given without any tendencies. Geisha who becomes a mistress must serve her *danna*, like a wife serves her husband. In this case, geisha is a kept woman who must be able to give her *danna* pleasure whenever he wants. As the compensation, the *danna* will cover all of her living expanses.

Similar to informant 7, informant 12 sees generosity of *danna* as a way to possess geisha. By possessing geisha as his mistress, a *danna* will get special service from the geisha. Geisha will not only entertain *danna*, but also give more services because the *danna* is like her husband. Besides, geisha who has become mistress of a *danna* is not allowed to serve other men. It means that geisha is only possessed by her *danna*, and she will devote her life to serve her *danna* all life.

After becoming mistress of a wealthy man, a geisha will have better life than before. Geisha who has no one as her *danna* will not be assumed as a successful geisha. The following quotation tells the different condition between two geisha; one of them has a *danna* and the other one does not. The quotation shows how lucky a geisha who has *danna* is.

“Cheer up Chiyo-chan, there’s an answer to this riddle. My *danna* is a generous man and bought me most of these robes. That’s why I’m more successful than Hatsumomo. I have a wealthy *danna*. She hasn’t had one in years. (MG, p.152)

Having a *danna* is the important thing in geisha’s life. Hence, informant 11 assumes that the success of geisha is determined not only by her popularity, but also by her success in having *danna*. In this case, both Hatsumomo and Mameha are popular geisha in their day. However, Hatsumomo is not as fortunate as Mameha who has Baron as her *danna*. Baron is a rich man who supports Mameha’s life. Based on this reason, Mameha is believed more successful than Hatsumomo.

Beside Mameha, Sayuri is also assumed as a lucky geisha because she has Mr. Chairman as her *danna*. Even though Nobu is the first man who wishes to be

her *danna*, finally Sayuri can get the man whom she loves, Mr. Chairman, as her *danna*.

In the spring of the year after I became his mistress, the Chairman purchased a luxurious house in the northeast of Kyoto and named it Eishin-an-“Prosperous Truth Retreat.” It was intended for guests of the company, but in fact the Chairman made more use of it than anyone. This was where he and I met to spend the evenings together three or four nights a week, sometimes even more. (*MG*, p. 441)

From the quotation the readers know that Sayuri live very well after she has *danna*. This quotation informs that the position of geisha is like a kept woman of the *danna*. The quotation shows that geisha will get some facilities as if she is *danna*'s wife. She will be visited by her *danna* regularly to spend time and get pleasure. Considering this fact, then, the informants assume that geisha is also a kept woman.

Informant 1 believes that geisha is a kept woman because in the end of her career, she will be the mistress of man. The relationship between geisha and her *danna* is like married couple, but they are not married. Even, the man who becomes her *danna* is usually a married man. So, informant 1 tends to see geisha as kept woman who has close relationship with married man.

Like informant 1, informant 11 also sees geisha as a kept woman because she will be posited as *danna*'s wife. However, geisha is not the legal wife, because geisha is not married by her *danna*. Even though she is not legal wife, her *danna* will fulfill all of her needs. Here, geisha can also be called as ‘second wife’ who will serve the *danna* as her husband.

According to informant 1, 4, 7, 11 and 12, their interpretation of geisha as kept woman is based on the information about the relationship between geisha and

her *danna*. Generally, the informants agree to see geisha as a kept woman because she belongs to her *danna*. Indirectly, she is like a wife. However, she is only a kept woman because she is not married by her *danna*. Geisha will devote her life to serve her *danna* without any marriage status. If geisha is married, she will not be called geisha anymore.

3.3 The Aspects that Influence the Readers' Interpretations

From all interpretations and reasons given by the informants, the researcher argues that the result of their interpretations is influenced by some aspects. One of the influential factors is the information in the text which is multi interpretable. Sometimes, there are some parts in the text which are made empty. The events and the characters may not be described clearly and give ambiguous information to the readers (Luxemburg et.al., 1984:64). In this case, the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* contains an ambiguous thing that needs to be clarified. The ambiguous thing which is found in *Memoirs of Geisha* covers the position of geisha, which is not stated clearly by the author. The novel only gives information which describes geisha in whole sides. However, since the author does not clearly state who geisha is, the position of geisha becomes multi interpretable. It means that the readers themselves have to interpret it based on their understanding.

Throughout the novel, the author provides some information which indicates that geisha is an artist, prostitute, and kept woman. A statement in page 146 of *MG*, for instance, gives information that geisha really means artist. In this statement, the meaning of word *gei* in Japanese term is art, so the word *geisha* is

translated as artist. Based on this statement, the position of geisha is known by the readers. Since the meaning of word geisha is artist, geisha can be called an artist. A name will not be given without any reason. In this case, the name geisha will not be given if she is not really an artist. Hence, the readers are influenced by this statement in interpreting geisha as an artist. The readers see this statement as a fact which proves the truth that geisha is an artist.

Though the above statement gives information about geisha, the statement is not the only information which drives the readers' interpretation. Information in page 47 of *MG* informs that geisha must be trained in art. This information shows that all women who wish to be a geisha will take a lesson to learn music, dance, and tea ceremony. The training also shows the geisha's effort in mastering all arts. It means that art is an important part of geisha. Considering this fact, geisha is really an artist who lives in art.

In page 148 of *MG*, even, it is described that geisha will learn dancing throughout her career. A geisha, who is skillful in dancing, has to take advanced lesson to keep her skill well. This fact shows that geisha seriously maintains her skill to be the professional artist. Besides, geisha is demanded to have a good manners. It means that geisha's skill in art is not enough to make her become an artist. The skill will not be complete without a good behavior. By having these two aspects, geisha can be called the real artist.

Considering the above facts, the readers finally interpret geisha as an artist. In the novel, geisha is described as a figure who has good behavior and many abilities in art. Looking at this fact, the figure of geisha which is etched into

readers' mind is an artist. Moreover, it is stated in the novel that the word geisha means artist. The statement strengthens the image of geisha as an artist. Based on this image, then, the readers get an illustration that geisha is really an artist.

However in other parts of the novel, another image of geisha is described. In page 65 of *MG*, for example, geisha is described as a woman who has special appearance. Actually, geisha's appearance is similar to other Japanese women who wear kimono. The only difference between them is the collar she wears. Geisha wears kimono with a lower collar. It makes the back of her neck visible. This appearance makes the readers think that geisha's style in dressings is like prostitute. In fact, geisha does not wear sexy clothes, but geisha's way of dressing gives erotic effect to men. In Japanese tradition, wearing a kimono with lower collar has the same effect as wearing a short skirt. For men, the back of geisha's neck has the same erotic effect as the woman's leg. This image indicates that the figure of geisha is close to prostitute.

Another fact about geisha's job also indicates that geisha cannot be separated from prostitution. It is revealed in the novel, especially in page 152, that a customer may invite geisha to go to a place called *Miyagawa-cho* to give him more services. From the name *Miyagawa-cho* the readers find an indication that geisha is a prostitute. *Miyagawa-cho* is a place where prostitution is organized. Over there, the customer will get more satisfying services from geisha. For this service, the customer must pay more payment too. This fact reveals that geisha works not only by dancing, singing, or playing music but also by doing sexual

activity. Considering this fact, geisha is seen as a prostitute who sells her body for money.

In another part of the novel, it is revealed that geisha may bath and sleep together with her customer. This condition gives negative image to geisha. It means that geisha is the same as prostitute because a respectable woman will not give her body for money. Even though geisha does not sleep with all men, the figure of geisha will always be related to prostitution. In geisha's life, there is a tradition called *Mizuage*. In this tradition, geisha sells her virginity to a man who bids her virginity with a highest price. Actually, virginity is the most valuable thing of a woman. However, geisha sells her virginity for money, even though it is very valuable for her. For this reason, geisha is similar to a commercial prostitute who sells her body for money.

Besides the facts which indicates geisha as an artist and prostitute, the readers find some indications that geisha is a kept woman. In page 134 of *MG*, geisha will be said as a lucky woman if she becomes a mistress to a wealthy woman. The word mistress directly means a kept woman. Thus, being a mistress of a man means that geisha is a kept woman. A man who becomes her patron is called *danna*, in which this name refers to husband. However, it does not mean that *danna* is a geisha's husband. Actually, *danna* is like geisha's husband. He fulfills her geisha's needs as if she is his wife. He buys his geisha a house and visits her regularly. On the contrary, geisha serves her *danna* as a wife who serves her husband, but they are not under marriage status. For this unmarried relationship, geisha is consequently seen as kept woman.

The facts revealed in the novel, which indicate geisha either as an artist, prostitute or kept woman, show a multi interpretable illustration of geisha. In some parts of the novel geisha is described as an artist, while in other parts she is also described as a prostitute and kept woman. The illustration revealed in the novel makes the readers confused in interpreting geisha. It directly influences the readers' interpretation. As the result, the readers have different interpretation. Even, the readers also have multiple interpretations due to the multi interpretable information in the novel.

In the meantime, the text may not tell the readers everything that needs to be known about a character, situation, and other such textual elements clearly. Thus, the readers must automatically fill in these gaps using their knowledge base grounded in their worldview (Bressler, 1999:72-73). In relation to this assumption, the information given in the novel, actually, is not enough to get interpretation about geisha. Therefore, the information in the novel is not the only aspect that influences the readers' interpretation. The readers can be influenced by their knowledge. In this case, their knowledge automatically helps them in interpreting the text.

The influence of the reader's knowledge can be seen from the given reasons. In interpreting geisha as a prostitute, for example, the informant is not only influenced by the information which is given in the novel, but the informant relates it to her knowledge too. In this case, the informant claims that geisha has similarities to the common prostitutes. The informant compares geisha with prostitute and finally finds similarities between them because the informant knows

about prostitute. In fact, the informant really finds the similarities between geisha and prostitute, in which based on the novel geisha is organized by the pimp and located in special place called Okiya, while based on her knowledge prostitute is also commonly organized by pimp and located in special house. Considering this fact, the informant finally concludes that geisha is similar to prostitute.

In interpretative process, the background knowledge of the readers can influence their interpretation. The readers think that the information provided in the novel is not enough to get the meaning of geisha. Here, the readers automatically draw on their knowledge which helps them in interpreting geisha. In this case, the informant finds that geisha is organized by a pimp and located in special house. The informant, then, relates the information in the novel to her knowledge. As the result, the informant finds the similarities between geisha and prostitute. For this reason, geisha is finally seen as the same as prostitute.

Even though their knowledge can support their interpretation, the interpretation cannot be obtained only by considering the facts and their knowledge. In fact, the result of interpretation is also influenced by the way the readers use in understanding all facts in the novel. In this case, the readers interpret geisha differently based on their point of view and understanding. It is in accordance with the concept which declares that in interpretative process the readers will draw on knowledge of the worlds in general and literary conventions in particular. Literary work, according to Eagleton, is full of indeterminacies, elements which depend for their effect upon the reader's interpretation, and which can be interpreted in a number of different ways (1983:76-77). It can be simply

concluded that the text gives the readers chance to interpret it in different ways. Their way in understanding the facts in the text is the important thing in interpretative process, because it can influence the result of their interpretation.

Different point of view in understanding all facts in the novel can really influence the result of their interpretations. Through different perspective, the facts can be viewed in different understanding. In this case, the facts about geisha which are revealed in the novel are understood by the readers based on their point of view. The fact about the meaning of geisha in Japanese term, for instance, can be understood using different view. There are some informants who see the statement in page 146 of *MG* which states that geisha means artist as a proof that geisha is really an artist. However, there are other informants who understand the statement as only literal meaning of geisha. They argue that the statement is not enough to prove that geisha is an artist. In their opinion, geisha cannot be simply seen as an artist even though the terminological fact is revealed in page 146. Based on their understanding they get by considering the facts in the novel, geisha is not purely an artist. So, the statement in page 146 of *MG* does not make them agree on seeing geisha as an artist.

Besides the fact about the meaning of geisha literally, the fact about geisha's appearance is also understood differently. In page 65 of *MG*, the author gives information about geisha's appearance which is different from other Japanese women. It is described that geisha has artificial values on her appearance. However, this fact is viewed by the informants in different ways. Some informants assume that the appearance of geisha really represents her as

prostitute, because geisha wears kimono with low collars which makes her neck visible. This appearance can give erotic effect to men. Other informants, in contrast, assume the appearance of geisha which shows the back of her neck as part of art. Though it has erotic effect on men, it also has artificial value which can be seen from *Sanbon-ashi* design painted in her neck. From the same fact which is viewed differently, the informants have different interpretations about geisha. The informants who see the appearance of geisha as the representation of prostitute, then, interpret geisha as a prostitute, while the informants who see it as part of art interpret geisha as an artist.

Considering the multi interpretable information in the novel, the readers finally get not only single interpretation about geisha. Based on those all considerations, they also find other correct interpretations. All information about geisha indirectly gives them possibility to have multiple-interpretations. They assume that their interpretation is valid as other interpretations because they are supported by some relevant reasons. This kind of interpretation has been introduced by Luxemburg et.al., in which interpretation shows some possibilities included in the text (1984:64). In this case, *Memoirs of a Geisha* gives some possibilities to the readers to interpret geisha differently. Even, it also makes the readers to have multiple-interpretations.

The possibilities given by the novel can be seen from the unformulated meaning of geisha. The author only gives information which must be interpreted by the readers. Hence, the readers can interpret it based on their understanding by their own point of view. However, though they have different interpretations and

reasons, their interpretations are obtained through the same process. As stated by Culler in Selden, though the readers might be different in giving meaning, they will constantly follow the same interpretative process (1993:127). Here, the readers of *Memoirs of a Geisha* also follow the same interpretative process, in which they try to comprehend the text by understanding all facts which are revealed in the novel. It can be seen from the effort of the readers in understanding all information provided in the novel.

In this case, the readers cannot interpret geisha by themselves without any consideration which is related to the novel. Though they have different interpretations about geisha, their interpretations always refer to the facts which are revealed in the novel. Thus, in interpretative process the readers follow the same phase; that is the process when the readers have to comprehend the text. All facts, which indicate geisha as either artist, prostitute or kept woman, are understood based on their understanding, so that they can get a complete description about geisha. Their knowledge can also be used as another consideration in interpreting geisha to get the correct meaning in their point of view.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 CONCLUSION

After discussing the result of this study in the previous chapter, the researcher can conclude that there are three interpretations about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a geisha*. Those three interpretations see geisha as either an artist, prostitute, or kept woman. From 12 interviewed informants, the researcher finds different interpretations among them. There are some informants that have one interpretation only, and there are also some others that have two or even three interpretations about geisha.

The researcher can assert that informant 1, 7 and 11 have two interpretations about geisha; that is geisha as both an artist and kept woman. Informant 2 and 5 also have two interpretations, but they think that geisha is an artist and prostitute. Even, informant 4 and 12 have three interpretations about geisha; that is geisha as artist, prostitute and kept woman. Informant 3, 8, 9 and 10, on the other hand, only interpret geisha as a prostitute. While, informant 6 have only one interpretation about geisha; she assumes that geisha is an artist.

From all informants who interpret geisha as an artist, it can be generally concluded that geisha is an artist who work in art area. They think that geisha is an artist because she is skillful in many arts, like singing, dancing, playing music and pouring tea beautifully. This ability, then, become her special value which makes her deserve being called an artist.

On the other hand, the informants who interpret geisha as a prostitute tends to see geisha as a woman who uses her beauty to attract and flirt the men. Geisha is like a prostitute because she, sometimes, also sells her sexuality. Even, there is a *mizuage* ceremony when geisha sells her virginity to the highest bidder. Based on this consideration, then, the informants assume that geisha is a prostitute.

Besides, there are some informants who interpret geisha as a kept woman. The informants see geisha as kept woman because in her career geisha will have a *danna* who is posited as her husband. However, the relationship between geisha and her *danna* is not legalized under marriage relationship. So, it can be said that geisha is only a mistress or kept woman of her *danna*.

From all interpretations obtained by the informants, it can also be concluded that each interpretation is influenced by some aspects. Since *Memoirs of a Geisha* is known to give multi interpretable information, the informants finally have various interpretations. The figure of geisha is described as either an artist, prostitute, and kept woman. It makes the reader interpret it differently. However, in interpreting geisha the informants are influenced not only by the information which is provided in the novel, but also by their knowledge. The informants' knowledge can be used as supporting consideration in interpreting geisha because their knowledge is also relevant to the novel. Besides, through different view point, the readers also have different understanding about geisha. Finally the readers have different interpretations about geisha too.

4.2 SUGGESTION

In this study, the researcher has conducted a study on readers' interpretation about geisha portrayed in Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The researcher is really open minded if there are other researchers who will conduct the similar studies. However, the researcher has some suggestions for the following researchers:

1. The next researcher who wants to conduct a research with the same topic as this study should interview more informants than this study. By observing more informants, it is expected that the next researcher can find more various interpretations and reasons from the readers.
2. The next researcher who wants to conduct a study on *Memoirs of a Geisha* may criticize other aspects of the novel which are not discussed yet. For example, the next researcher may use sociological approach, which is not used yet by other researchers, to analyze *Memoirs of a Geisha*.
3. For the next researchers who want to conduct a study on different novel, the researcher suggests her or him to apply reader-response using reader-response criticism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M. H. 1993. *A Glossary of Literary Terms (6th Edition)*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Collage Publisher.
- Abrams, M.H. 1976. *The Mirror and the Lamp*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bressler, Charles E. 1999. *Literary Theory: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (2nd Edition)*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Budianta, Melani., et. al. 2003. *Membaca Sastra (Pengantar Memahami Sastra untuk Perguruan Tinggi)*. Magelang: IndonesiaTera.
- Culler, Jonathan. 1997. *Literary Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1983. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Endraswara, Suwardi. 2003. *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Widyatama.
- Fokkema, D.W, and Kunne-ibsch, Elrud. 1998. *Teori Sastra Abad Kedua Puluh*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Golden, Arthur. 2005. *Memoirs of a Geisha*. New York: Random House.
- Goodvin, Renee. 2005. *Literary Criticism*. <http://www.blondelibrarian.net>. Accessed on 28 February 2007.
- Grace, William. 1965. *Response to Literature*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill, Inc.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. 1994. *A Concise Glossary Contemporary Literary Theory (2nd Edition)*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Jabrohim (Ed). 2001. *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: PT. Hanindita Graha Widia.
- Kirszner, Laurie G & Mandell, Stephen R. 2004. *Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing (5th Edition)*. Massachusetts: Wadsworth.
- Lodge, David (Ed.). 1988. *Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader*. New York: Longman, Inc.
- Luxemburg, Jan van., et. al. 1984. *Pengantar Ilmu Sastra*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

- McManus, Barbara F. 1998. *Reader-Response Criticism*.
<http://www.library.utoronto.ca>. Accessed on 3 March 2007.
- Newton, K. M (Ed). 1989. *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: A Reader*.
London: Macmillan.
- Peck, John & Coyle, Martin. 1986. *Literary Terms and Criticism*. London:
Macmillan.
- Pradopo, Rahmat Djoko. 1995. *Beberapa Teori Sastra, Metode Kritik, dan
Penerapannya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Ratna, Nyoman Kutha. 2004. *Metode dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta:
Pustaka Pelajar.
- Rhoades, Jens. *Literary Criticism*. <http://www.captiveape.com/crit/reader-response.html>. Accessed on 28 February 2007.
- Selden, Raman. 1993. *Panduan Pembaca Teori Sastra Masa Kini* (Trans.
Rachmat Djoko Pradopo). Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Siegel, Kristi. 2006. *Introduction to Modern Literary: Reception and Reader-
Response Theory*. <http://www.kristisiegel.com/>. Accessed on 27 March
2007.
- Teeuw, A. 1984. *Sastra dan Ilmu Sastra*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- Wellek, Rene & Warren, Austin. 1993. *Teori Kesusastaan* (Trans. Melani
Budianta). Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- _____. 2007. *Geisha*. <http://www.hanamiweb.com>. Accessed on 1 March 2007.
- _____. 2007. *Geisha*. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geisha>. Accessed on 1 March
2007.
- _____. 2000. *ReadSmartGuide Memoirs of a Geisha*.
<http://www.goodbookslately.com>. Accessed on 7 March 2007.
- _____. 2006. *Reader-response Criticism*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reader-response_criticism. Accessed on 28 February 2007.

