

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Subversion of Gender Role in Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master's of Arts in English

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May 2010

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

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Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my thesis Supervisor Mr. Pradip Raj Giri, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for his scholarly guidance and encouragement in bringing this project in completion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, Head of the CDE, who was ever helpful and encouraging. Besides, Dr. Beerendra Pandey, Mr. Ghanashyam Bhandari, Mr. Shankar Subedi and Mr. Shivahari Mainaly also deserve my due thankfulness.

At this moment of profound pleasure, I would like to remember my loving parents, father Mr. Chandra Bahadur Bohara and mother Mrs. Nara Maya Bohara, and brother, Mr. Yam Bahadur Bohara for their moral and ethical support.

I also take this moment to remember my friends Ganesh, Yogendra, Indra, Prakash, and all for their moral and academic support.

May 2010

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Abstract

The researcher tries to subvert the traditional notion of gender role in Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* by putting the lesbianism face to face with heterosexuality. The projection of lesbianism revolves around the lives of three central characters: Jove, Alice and Stella. Jove and Stella are married couple, and Alice is a young physicist, who gets involved with the couple. Alice adopts homosexual affair with Stella and rejects heterosexual relationship with Jove. Further more Alice appears to be a heroic figure who wears Jove's leather coat to blur the conventional gender role. The anti- patriarchal acts of major female characters deconstruct the hierarchical division between male and female which heterosexists regard as assignment at birth. In this reference, the novel serves Stella as a bread earner of the family but not Jove. Thus, the act of cross- dressing, the adaptation of lesbian bond between Alice and Stella and act of transgendering subvert the traditional notion of heterosexuality which is embedded with patriarchal ideology.

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I. Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* and her writing career

This research is a critical reading of Jeannette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* published in 1997 to explore the lesbian bond between two female characters, Alice and Stella. The central issue of this research is to observe Alice's confrontation with Stella and her attempts to adopt homosexual affair with her which ultimately challenges the conventional notion of gender and sexuality as constructed discourse. The novel serves numerous examples which promote this text to be an apt reading for lesbianism. To come to the point, the novel sidelines heterosexual relationship in the alternative to homosexual relationship. The majorities of the characters are female in opposition to the conventional novel where there used to be domination of male characters.

Winterson has written numerous novels focusing on the homosexual issues and she defends lesbianism in the face of the heterosexual counter argument that it is not a life enhancing philosophy because it is not reproductive. Regarding it, Mine Ozyurt Kilic who critiques upon her novel, *Power book* which has similar issue as in *Gut Symmetries*, writes: "[W]ith such a counter argument in mind, Ali, the narrator, prepares a refutation as she metaphysically reflects upon the life of bacteria. Comparing, the reproductive sex life of heterosexual to the life of bacteria, she denies heterosexual ideology for being aimed at discipline and family in the name of reproduction" (292). This crux is found in the novel, *Gut Symmetries* as well, as both female characters (especially Alice) deny the hetero-sex with Jove. As a result, Jove appears bullying and threatening to them which crystallizes male's domination upon female.

On the one hand, taking the subject matter from a marginal culture draws attention to it and thus invites the readers to see the story primarily as an enforcement of marginal groups. On the other hand, the same elements emphasize the universal nature of Winterson's themes, which are independent of mere physical reality. To connect love only with gender

and thus with sexual orientation limits the scope of human experience and undermines the potential of human mind to transcend its physical boundaries. Furthermore, Winterson comments on this issue in *Art Object* as she posits:

The Queer world has colluded in the misreading of art as sexuality. Art is difference, but not necessarily sexual difference, and while to be outside of the mainstream of imposed choice is likely to make someone more conscious, it does not automatically make that someone an artist. A great deal of gay writing around the Aids crisis, is therapy, is release, is not art. [. . .] all art, including literature, is much more than its subject matter. (104)

This passage reflects upon Winterson's view that art and literature is means of spreading Queer theory. It clarifies that literature and theory are interrelated. *The Art Object* makes the readers aware of the different issue like Aids crisis, extension of homosexual affairs and drugs addiction.

The western metaphysics always made a distinction between primary and secondary, active and passive, intelligent and unintelligent, giver and recipient, having agency and devoid of agency in which the male is connected with first categories whereas female is subjugated to the second categories. In other words, male is prioritized over female. But this text objects the traditional thought and postulates a new concept where it criss-crosses the gendered sexuality. It does so by introducing female characters as the protagonists of the novel. Moreover it portrays Alice as a student of physics, a subject which is notoriously restricted for female in traditional novels. She is the rescuer of a couple in a troubled sea. Here, to challenge tradition, Alice is presented as brave enough to wade into the troubled sea and rescue the missing team which subverts the conventional notion i.e. female as troubled/ passive and male as rescuer/ active.

Gut Symmetries is antithetical to the masculine discourse. It parodies the patriarchic

system in which male members used to be portrayed as the bread earner of the family and female figures were projected as the care givers of the child. Moreover, conventional family structure regards female characters as biologically generated for reproduction. But in contrary, the text serves Stella as the bread earner of the family as Jove lost property in previous wife's death and had no job. Similarly instead of continuing heterosexual affair with Jove, Stella involves in homosexual affair with Alice, an act in which the end is just for pleasure not to continue lineage. Therefore, lesbianism becomes the surest ways to survive love and passion. It shows lesbianism as only real emancipation from patriarchal norms. It also demythologizes the motherhood, which essentialist feminists use as a weapon against patriarchy.

Winterson carries lesbian ethos at high stake in this novel. On the surface, the text seems to be a novel that only follows the stream of science fiction but in the deeper level the text bears with itself the issue of homosex, gender and sexuality, transsexuality, cross-dressing and woman valorizing woman. The text circles around the feminist stand point that gender is constructed and it is prone to change. For instance, Alice and Stella's affair is the concrete example of it. According to the conventional notion of gender and sexuality, the sexual pleasure is gained through the copulation of male and female. But Alice says her "authentic experience of emotional pleasure was with a married woman" (67).

The novel introduces Alice and Stella as lesbian women who challenge the heterosexual imperialism of male culture. They are the type characters who embrace lesbianism as an ideology, political and philosophic means of liberation of all women from heterosexual tyranny. Their struggles are identical to worldwide struggle of all women to end all male tyranny at all levels. Heterosexuality has treated women as the passive, recipient, an object of male sexual interest as well as denied female same love as unerotic, deviant and illness. In heterosexual, male plays the role of actor, dominator, where female is considered

as merely an object. But lesbian women go contrary to it and adopt homosexual as an alternate. This is exemplified in the novel through Stella and Alice's affair. From that affair they get sheer ecstasy in homosexual activities.

The novel draws the illustration of transvestism to subvert the gender and sexuality. It is the practice of transgender and transsexuality. In theoretical modalities, it refers to people adopting a sex identity, different from their assignment at birth. That is to say, it is a practice in which one goes beyond the boundary of the gendered identity as man or woman. For instance Alice wears Jove's long coat to blur the gender distinction as male and female. Thus transvestism is the best example of transgendering where male wears female clothes and female wears male clothes to challenge binary opposition between woman and man.

In order to carry on the lesbian issues in the novel, the novel projects woman's body as a site of pleasure. Alice adores much Stella's body. Regarding it, she adores: "her color of eyes and hair, size of breast, hip" (31); just as Stella does to Alice. It is due to the woman's passion towards another woman. To valorize women body, the novel portrays Stella having a hip with a diamond. This serves as the instance that supports women worship their bodies. The story of Stella's hip with a diamond, which turns at last to be true, has a link with common theme of her fictions. Her common theme is a questioning of conventional distinctions between 'reality' and 'imaginary' and this can be seen in Winterson's first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) which is a first person account in the form of an autobiography of Young Jeanette, who grows up in a strict religious sect in the north of England. Here the 'real' and the 'imaginary' are mixed in the manner in which Winterson juxtaposes fictional elements with factual ones, that is with the 'real'. In her introduction to the 1991 Vintage edition of *Oranges*, Winterson comments on the question "Is *Oranges* an autobiographical novel? No not at all and yes of course" (xiv). She rephrases this in later interview in the *Salon Magazine*, explaining that she invented herself as a fictional character

in the novel and that there is something of her in the novel, but as “what really happened” (91) is not a fixed reality, imagination plays a significance role in the creation of *Oranges* as in all her other novels.

Regarding Winterson's theme of rupturing 'reality' and 'imaginary', a well known critic, Anne C. Hegerfeldt introduces the novel in these words:

In Winterson's novel frozen traffic wardens pale before more secular magic realist elements such as a diamond being swallowed during pregnancy and winding up lodged at the base of the baby's spine, or flashes of sunlight being reflected by brass plaques all the way from Liverpool to New York City. (105)

Nevertheless, the passage's almost imperceptible progression from the plausible to the preposterous well illustrates the overlap between magic realism and the tall tale.

Furthermore as a whole, *Gut Symmetries* recalls from in such a way that it suspends the reader between belief and skepticism which ultimately helps to deconstruct existing gender role. Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* as a magic realist work engages with Romantic tradition. Nevertheless, there are fundamental differences that allow a distinction between magic realism and Romantic mode. The main difference lies in the attitude exhibited toward the marginalized forms of knowledge under reconsideration

Winterson's work are often approached from gender or queer theory perspective because of her style which shakes up assumption about conventional literary realism and even more because of her subject matter and personal orientation. However, there is more to Winterson's work than establishing homosexuality as an equal form of sexuality in a traditionally homophobic Judaeo-Christian society. The main characters are members of sexual minorities; this is the main concern of Winterson's novels.

After the intensive study of the novel, *Gut Symmetries*, Ann McClellan views that the novel "interweaves the various discourses of alchemy, Einsteinian physics, Superstring

Theory, the Tarot, and Jewish Kabbalah to tell the story of a young physicist" (1057).

Regarding this issue, she further posits:

Compared to more scientific texts like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity Rainbow* and Richard Powers' *Galatea 2.2*, which utilize rocket science and computers in their narratives, respectively, *Gut Symmetries* intertwining of science and mysticism creates a postmodernism that forces the reader to challenge her definition of science and her understanding of the relationship between objectivity and reality. (1058)

This above mentioned paragraph comparatively studies *Gut Symmetries* with Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity Rainbow* especially for the traces of science fiction in both novels. But more than *Gravity Rainbow* and *Galatea 2.2*, this novel creates a postmodern world that tries to subvert the essentializing tendency of western metaphysics. Science fictions pick up so-called general truth and makes parody over it. This form of breaking hierarchy has linked with *Gut Symmetries* as it also questions western metaphysics in which female are essentialized as second categories. The novel deconstructs patriarchal hegemony in which males are given topmost position in the contrary of females. Above passage asks us to question the hierarchical relation between fiction and science as different epistemological strategies for explaining the world and our experiences within it.

Just as McClellan studies the novel from postmodernism, Shannon Holcomb studies the novel from the lens of sexuality. He writes:

The time jumps between generations, centuries were not confusing, and the plot was simple enough. Alice, a young physicist on a ship from England to New York, began an affair with Jove, an older physicist with whom she would work. Harold Brodkey said in his journal that it was to New York that one came if one were looking for sophisticated sex. In Latin, Jove is an irregular

accusative of Jupiter, god the father in Roman religion. Alice: I said there was a love affair. In fact there are two. Male and female god created them and I fell in love with them both. (33)

The passage reflects upon Holcomb's views on Alice's affair with Jove and later on Alice's affair with Stella. Further he quotes Brodkey who says America is renowned for sophisticated sex. It refers to homosex that was practiced in full fledged in the 1980s in America. He links the novel with geometry and says: "*Gut Symmetries* is solid geometry constructed of separately colored, interlaced, connect-the numbers games, each discrete and only making sense as the last numbers connect" (33).

The novel explores how the triangular love succeeds just as Euclidian theorem of geometry works. According to Euclidian theorem of geometry the angles of triangles add up to 180 degrees and parallel lines never meet. Unfortunately his theorems work only if space is flat. In the curved space, the angles over-add themselves and parallel lines always meet. Thus, Jove, his wife and his mistress meet.

The novel hints towards lesbian bond between Stella and Alice as married woman desires to confront with Alice. After going through the novel, *Gut Symmetries* Christopher Paddock comments regarding Stella in *Review of Contemporary Fiction*:

Jove's wife Stella has grown intolerant of his affairs and arranges to confront Alice. Their meeting turns erotic and they become involved in a meaningful relationship of their own. Caught in the middle and yet on both sides of a marital feud, Alice struggles to find solid ground in a newly decentered reality. (22)

This passage bears the issue of how Stella got attracted towards Alice. Actually Jove meets and brings Alice to New York as a mistress. In order to make her familiar with Stella, he sends a fake letter to her as if Alice wrote it to her. Stella, as a lesbian woman gets irritation

with heterosexual relationship between Alice and Jove. Thus she desires to confront with Alice. But the very first confrontation in the hotel Algonquin turns out to be erotic and they fall in homosexual affair.

Winterson often picks up the gender issues in her fiction. Regarding her fiction, Amanda Craig compares Winterson and A. L. Kennedy and writes:

Yet the true reader like the true writer is concerned with more than gender; and to hide behind it is to render as something less than human. Jeanette Winterson and A L Kennedy are two of the leading writers of the new generation. Both are female and have won many prizes. One has gone from wild popularity as an outspoken lesbian to a chorus of (largely male) disapprobation; the other received the accolade of being a 1996 booker judge.

(42)

Craig views that gender is the central issue of lesbian writers and Winterson also continues same stream. He tries to clarify that Winterson is one of the acclaimed lesbian writer who writes on the lesbian bond. It is evident in *Gut Symmetries* as it follows love triangle between Alice, Jove and Stella.

The novel follows the complex network of narrative structure. Piiastiina Tikka, analyses the narrative structure of *Gut Symmetries*. She writes:

In view of the original assumption of Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* providing a suitable ground for analyzing narration, a positive result has been achieved: not only does a close reading of the novel reveals various aspects of narration and creating narratives, but it also provides materials for an even more detailed study of a number of narratological topics: the naming of the characters and the intertextual effects that follow, how exactly many intertextual references rely on a common cultural background, and how

ideologies work in a text loaded with such references are all research topics worth looking into. (67-68)

Tikka observes the narratology of Winterson's novel and finds interweaved structure of narration among three central characters: Alice, Stella and Jove. The text provides materials for even more detailed study of a number of narratological topics: the naming of the characters and intertextuality. In every narrative fictions, there are focalizer and focalized. The focalizer presents his discourse over focalized. The same trace can be found in this novel in which Jove is presented as focalizer who passes discourse over Stella. Thereby, it shows hierarchal relationship between male and female.

After observing these critical responses from different scholars, it has become more relevant to make research on the issue of Lesbian relationship among the main three characters of the fiction since none of the critics above has yet dealt with this issue. Thus the researcher has assumed that this topic is research worthy in its own regard.

Similarly, the second chapter- methodology deals with lesbianism where attempts have been made to view lesbian studies as a part of Queer Politics. Moreover the second chapter has been divided into sub-topics: Introduction of Lesbianism, Gender and Sexuality, Homosexuality and Heterosexuality, Transgender and Tran sexuality, Drag Culture and Cross- dressing, and the Lesbian body under medical gaze. The third chapter, textual analysis: Subversion of Gender Role in *Gut Symmetries* seeks to find the traces of Lesbian bond between Alice and Stella in the text. Finally, the last paragraph will conclude the finding of the research.

II. Lesbianism

Lesbianism refers to a woman's attraction towards another woman. Encyclopedia Britannica defines lesbian as "the quality or state of intense emotional and usually erotic attraction of a woman to another woman". Lesbian study was founded on the theoretical intervention of lesbian feminism, which itself developed from inadequacies in heterosexual feminism and woman's studies. Heterosexual feminism shifted lesbian and gay intervention outwards from the homophile activism of the 1950s and 1960s towards a more rigorous and proactive challenge to heterosexual hegemony. From the perspective of lesbianism and gay studies, Palmer suggests: "there has been the classic split between lesbians and gays, whereby many lesbians find their interests better served by the more fully developed women's studies while gay men remain largely aloof, patronizing, naïve or simply threatened (10).

Lesbianism is not an extra-social entity that transcends the history or culture. There are historical and cultural evidences to recognize sexual activity that exists between women. Tracing the history of lesbianism, Jonathan Kurt Ned adds: "there were/ are lesbians in dynastic Egypt, pre-Columbian America, Neanderthal Europe or contemporary China, who requires only to be uncovered by sympathetic research. Lesbian-ness is a product of the shifting relationships among individual subjectivity, the body and the social (including kinship, networks, sub-cultural groups, etc), and of meanings constituted by/within those relationships" (74). Such relationships are characterized by activity and rapid change, with the result that lesbian is a word in constant flux, subject to continual negotiation and renegotiation.

The earliest known references of lesbian relationships are attitude of Sappho, who lived on the island of Lesbos in ancient Greece and wrote poems which expressed her sexual attraction to other females. Similarly such relationships were also common among the

Lacedammians of ancient Sparta. In Plutarch view “love was so esteemed among them that girls also become the erotic objects of noble women” (5). This quote reflects upon Soppo’s poem that created sensation within same sex. It connotes to the homosexual urge that arouse in the ancient women.

The major premises that lesbianism deals with are the radical nation of queer politics, the gender and sexuality, the theory of performativity, transgenering, drag culture, and search for identity and so on. Lesbianism celebrates the female body therefore it genealogically rereads and questions the history of western philosophy that presented secondness of eve in Bible, Plato’s emphasis on rationality, Aristotle’s othering of women on the basis of lack of intellectuality and so forth. When lesbian critics revisited the tradition, they found it baseless because women were doomed to be restricted into the kitchen sink. Thus social constructed gender and sexuality gets newness at the hand of lesbianism.

Lesbianism is a passion of a woman towards another woman but not necessarily sexual rather it can be emotional affection and so on. To support Lois Tyson posits:

Lesbian identity is not restricted to the sexual domain but consists of directing the bulk of one’s attention and emotional energy to other women and having other women’s as one’s primary source of emotional substance and psychological support. That is a lesbian is a women identified women. (324)

Thus Tyson posits that lesbianism does not regard that there must be sexual attachment between women but there must be some inclination of one woman towards another woman. Similarly Adrienne Rich makes use of this idea when she argues for the existence of what she calls a lesbian continuum. A lesbian continuum, Rich explains: "Include (s) a range through each woman’s life and throughout history of- women- identified experience, not simply the fact that a women has had or consciously desire genital sexual experience with another women" (239). According to Rich women identified experience includes for example

emotional bonding through shared work or play, the giving or receiving of psychological support and the shared experience of joy in any form.

Lesbianism is a version of queer politics that rejects the ironclad boundary of subjectivity, identity, gender and sexuality constructed on the basis of heterosexual matrix. In this sense, queer politics is the radical agenda that lesbianism is embedded with queer theory.

Supporting this view Chris Beasley posits:

Queer theory offers a postmodern critique of meta-narratives of identity, a critique of universal homogenous and fixed identity of gender/ sexuality categories, which are deemed essentialist. Instead of affirming such identity categories queer theory sees identity as socially constructed and internally unstable and incoherent. Such an assessment necessarily also involves deconstructing mutually reinforcing neat division of identity binaries such as men/women and heterosexuality/homosexuality. (162)

For Beasley, queer theory is a recent development that questions and even rejects the discourse of gender and sexuality, thereby rupturing the individual identity fabricated on the basis of gendered sexuality. Queer theory regards identity and subjectivity as a social construction rather than the natural and the innate one. That is supposed to be in a critique of the then binary oppositions like masculinity/femininity. Louis Tyson's argument on Queer politics goes as follows:

[Q]ueer theory defines individual subjectivity as a fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible 'selves'. Our sexuality may be different at different times over the course of our lives or even at different times over the course of the week because sexuality is a dynamic range of desire. Gay sexuality, lesbian sexuality, bisexuality and heterosexuality are for all of us possibilities along a continuum of sexual possibilities. (335)

In another words, Louis Tyson posits in these lines that queer politics searches for the multiple possibilities of human identity and sexuality. It preconditions for the contingency of human self as there can be the multiplicity of selves within an individual. Further more there is a chance of sexualities rather than (hetero) sexuality. It has open perspective towards the all practices of sexuality: homosexuality and heterosexuality.

Hence queer politics undercuts the discourse of essential identity and heterosexuality. Lesbianism as inextricably related to queer theory, subverts the gender and sexuality of traditional discourse. One of the essential aspects of lesbianism is homosexuality, a possible practice for queer theory that has been seen as an arboreal practice in the traditional discursive formation. Therefore lesbianism is a branch of queer politics that subverts gender and sexuality.

Adrienne Rich in her essay, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*, makes critique of patriarchal definition of lesbianism which limits lesbianism only with sexual acts. It becomes clear as she says:

As the term lesbian has been hold to limiting clinical associations in its patriarchal affinity, female friendship and comradeship have been set apart from erotic, thus limiting the erotic itself. But as we deep on and broaden the range of what we defined as lesbian [. . .] as that which is unconfined to any single part of the body or solely to the body itself an energy not to different but as Audro Lorde has described it omnipresent in the sharing of joy whether physical, emotional, psychic, and in the sharing of work. (87)

Thus ,Rich clearly attacks upon the patriarchal notion of lesbianism and puts forwards her argument that lesbian bond does not necessarily demand for sexual attachment but can be found in the sharing of joy, sharing of works and psychological support. In the past the lesbian affair was taken as an erotic act.

According to the heterosexist ideology, lesbianism refers to the immoral act, a sin and sexual perversion. It hints to the fact that homosexuality is not the procreative act. Its end is to gain sex-ecstasy. Regarding heterosexist's view towards lesbianism, Tamsin Wilton in her essay, *Lesbian Studies: Setting an Agenda*, writes:

Lesbianism can mean immoral behaviour, a sin, a crime, a sexual perversion, a pathological state, a site of or metaphor for resistance, a form of deviance or a social role/ life style. Among, lesbians, there is profound dissensus about lesbian identity, with essentialist and constructionist theories of varying kinds and degrees giving rise to contradictory and often competing performances of lesbian, as well as political and theoretical positions. Additionally, lesbian in common with all others social identities is open to a particular kind of theoretical dispersal within and by means of deconstructionist idiom of postmodernism. (29)

Wilton beautifully presents the traditional notion of lesbianism that it was regarded as immoral act or a sexual perversion that prevailed in the then period. But with the change of time, the concept of lesbianism changed. The political and economic independence gained by women after women movement helped for the wide dispersal of Lesbianism. Similarly there are theories like deconstructions, postmodernism, etc. that promote for the wide dispersal of lesbianism

The novel circles around the lesbian bond between Alice, a young physicist, and married woman, Stella. They adopt lesbianism as the only emancipation from patriarchal norms that demythologizes motherhood which they use as a weapon against patriarchy. Lesbians deny the heterosexual relationship and try to avoid procreation. It becomes clear when Alice says: "my first authentic emotional experience was with married woman" (69). Thus lesbians establish homosex as an alternative for heterosex.

Gender and Sexuality

Gender and sexuality are the two important issues that lesbianism deals with. Lesbianism regards Gender and sexuality as the socio- cultural construct that intertwines with the network of patriarchal power politics and the discursive practices. The notion of sexuality, homosexuality and heterosexuality, presupposes gender distinction at the heart. Therefore, lesbianism is a practice antithetical to the discourse of gender and sexuality that come in existence towards the end of twentieth century. Lesbianism challenges the roles of gender and sexuality assigned to every individual in the society; it blurs the binarism between masculinity and femininity, heterosexuality and homosexuality by introducing lesbian as the third category that neither falls into male or female categories.

Lesbianism, as an offspring of queer politics reinterprets the complex genealogy that is fundamental to the fabrication of gender and sexuality. As this point, its prime concern is to fathom up the discursive practices that iterated and reiterated the gender and sexuality roles, thereby generating the theory of performativity. If queer theory subverts the false naturalization of human identity, gender, and sexuality; the theory of performativity reinterprets the discursive practices that naturalized or essentialized these categories. According to this theory gender and sexuality are the outcome of socio-cultural performance imbued with the network of power politics and representation. Supporting this fact, Judith Butler remarks, "[P]erformativity is not singular act but a representation and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of the body understood in part as a culturally sustained temporal duration" (9). She means to say that gender and sexuality are the social construct that merely seem natural because of their repetitive development with the flow of time. Moreover, Butler basing her idea on this theory interprets gender in the following ways:

The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be

an internal essence of gender is manufactured through the sustained set of acts posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way, it showed that what take to be an internal feature of ourselves is that we anticipate and produce through certain 'bodily acts' at an extreme and hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures. (16)

Here, Butler seems anti-essentialist and anti-foundationalist since she questions the hitherto perceived notion of feminine and the masculine aspects of social discourse. Gender for her is not the natural category as supposed in the patriarchal discourse it is an outcome of the discursive practices women in the western discourse are assigned to perform the certain tasks in opposition to the duties of men. With the repeated performance of those very acts gender is constructed; it is not essential in the human nature. So gender is the socially constructed category and hence historically contingent.

Similarly, Monique Wittig, regards gender as constructed. Her theory of gender can be taken as a point of departure from Karl Marx's concept of the sexual distinction of labor in the family. Wittig analyzed the situation of women in terms of political economy. Refuting Marx implication that this distinction is natural, she identified women as a social category, an ideological construct, she declared that "there is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses" (2). In her essay, *One Is Not Born a Woman*, She writes:

Thus it is our historical task, and only ours, to define what we call oppression in materialist terms, to make it evident that women are a class, which is to say that the category "woman" as well as the category "man" are political and economic categories not eternal ones. Our fight aims to suppress men as a class, not through a genocidal, but a political struggle. Once the class "men" disappears, "women" as a class will disappear as well, for there are no slaves without masters. (160)

The above mentioned passage reflects upon Wittig's view on socio- political distinctions between man and woman. The distinction is not the natural and eternal categorization. She says that it can be blurred. For that she calls for political struggle. She says lesbian is the only concept that is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man) because the designated subject (lesbian) is not a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically.

Judith Butler in her essay, *Gender Trouble* supports Wittig's notion of gender as constructed discourse. Regarding this issue, she posits:

Gender ought not to be constructed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and style of the various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (156)

Above mentioned passage makes clear Butler's notion of gender as constructed entity. It is not stable identity but constituted in time and space. Gender for her is a norm that can't be fully internalized, as it varies in its practice according to the spacio- temporal framework.

To come to the textual evidence, the novel portrays Alice as a physicist to subvert the conventional gender role of being passive, submissive and uneducated because Alice is presented not only to succeed in higher education but also to pursue physics, field that is notoriously devoid of women. Similarly, the novel blurs the conventional gender role between male and female as bread earner and house wife. To support, Stella narrates: "he had no money at all. He was without job and his saving had gone to his divorced wife and a child. I supported us by teaching German" (96). This quote reflects upon blurring the conventional distinction of gender role as male and female.

Sexuality: Homosexuality and Heterosexuality

Lesbianism revisits traditional notion of sex and sexuality. The term 'sexuality' is generally broader in meaning encompassing erotic desires, practices and identities. Sexuality refers to sexual attitudes, emotional desires and behaviors. Though this is a very intimate and personal matter it is regulated by the wider sex role system. It is used to include our sense of ourselves as woman or man. Similarly, the term, 'sexuality' is not limited to sexual acts but involves our sexual feelings and relationship, the ways in which we are defined sexual by others and the way in which we define ourselves. There is a difference between sex and sexuality. Sex means biological maleness and femaleness and sexuality means the behaviors related to sexual orientation. Thus sexuality refers to the whole area of personality related to sexual behavior.

The concept of sexuality is not universal; it is a human constructed idea and discourse. Sexuality is so much a part of the social order that it is no longer conceived as individual or personal at all. It is the social process that creates, organizes, expresses and directs our desires. Sexuality can not be treated in isolation. We can not define anything as sexual in an absolute sense but it becomes sexual by the application of socially learned meaning. The social construction perspective focuses on the cultural and historical context in which sexuality is learned and enacted or scripted. Culture and societies organized sexual practices so; the term sexuality does not refer just to the genital sexual activities but to all attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors that might be seen to have some sexual significance in our society. To support this idea, Stevie Jackson says:

Biological factors do not determine the forms which sexuality taken but merely set parameters within which other influences operate. Although woman and man may differ genetically, hormonally and physiologically, it is not possible to leap to the conclusion that they therefore also differ in terms of

personality as behaviour. Biology is not destiny in any absolute sense it only comes to be so through the qualities which are assigned to members of each gender within society. (63)

This passage adds that biological events as physiological process-such as aging, illness and reproduction are having influenced by the socio-cultural systems in which they occur. For women aging, illness and reproduction are heavily influenced by the social-culture system in which they occur. For woman aging process has its own strain in the society that values women for their youth and beauty and aging becomes difficult social and psychological experience. Even though the reproduction is physical, its significance lies as much in its social enemy.

Simone De Beauvoir, in her classic, *The Second Sex*, laid the foundation for a feminist analysis of sex and gender. Her famous assertion emphasizes the social character of womanhood as distinct from biological femaleness. She says:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in the society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between female and eunuch, which describe as feminine. (301)

To make it clear, Beauvoir views that it is the essentializing tendency of the patriarchy to call female as a woman. It is not the inherent quality of the female as such but it is social construct that makes them as a woman.

Sexuality covers both heterosexuality and homosexuality. Heterosexuality refers to sexual behavior with, or attraction to the people of the opposite sex or a heterosexual orientation. It also refers to a community of other who share them though there is no universal rule of sexuality; society takes heterosexuality as a normal, real and true sexuality.

Richard Dyer says:

Heterosexuality appears to be the means by which human procreation is achieved, thus making it seem an indispensable and natural part of human existence. All of these make heterosexuality something that is taken for granted, something assumed to be natural; its normality doesn't need arguing for, it has the force of 'of course'. We don't stop to think the grammar we use when speaking or the chemical composition of the air we breathe; similarly, we don't stop to think about the most deeply embedded, routinized norms by which we live. (264)

Dyer means to say that heterosexuality always involves attraction and intercourse between two persons who, whatever else may be the case, are primarily differentiated by one category, gender. Heterosexuality is taken for granted because of its necessity for procreation, for the continuation of the human existence.

In contrast to heterosexuality, homosexuality refers to the sexual behaviour with or attraction to people of the same sex or to a homosexual orientation. Today the colloquial terms gay for men and lesbian for women are considered respectful ways of referring to homosexual people. Homosexuality, which Freud believes resulted from human being's failure to master Oedipus complex; is the peculiar characteristic of the human sexuality. However, he views that it is not vice or there is nothing sample.

Similarly, for Wittig, there is no distinction between sex and gender. For her "the category of 'sex' is itself a gendered category, fully politically invested, naturalized but not natural" (143). Wittig understands 'sex' to be discursively produced and circulated by a system of signification oppressive to women. Regarding this Wittig, in her essay, *One is Not Born a Woman*, adds:

Sex is taken as an "immediate given", "sensible given", "physical features", "belonging to a natural order". But what we believe to be a physical and direct

perception is only a sophisticated and mythic construction, an "imaginary formation," which reinterprets physical features (in themselves as neutral as others but marked by a social system), through the network of relationships in which they are perceived. (49)

Here, Wittig clearly says that 'sex' is a mythic construction and as imaginary formulation. It implies the constructed discourse of sex and sexuality. For her sex denotes a historically contingent epistemic regime both as discursive and perceptual.

Transgender Role

Lesbianism in practice, basing its argument on the performative aspect of gender and sexuality, subverts the discourse of gender and sexuality by means of transgenering and transsexuality. Tamsin Winton says: "transsexual discourses are those created by medico-psychological practitioners who diagnose, classify, regulate, and produce transsexual bodies and the supposed truths about their life and experiences" (259). To support it, Benjamin says "[T]ranssexual is used in two ways: first to describe someone who is in the process of becoming (transitioning) a man (and vice versa); and second, to describe someone who has completed sex reassignment surgery" (260). This practice of transgenering and transsexuality has been recently known as "Trans Politics" (153). In other words, going beyond the discursive limits of gender and sexuality by means of negation of context, lesbianism is undoubtedly a version of transpolitics, thereby subverting the discourse of (hetero) sexuality and gender distinctions.

Chris Beasley explains the practice of transgenering as "people adopting a sex identity different from their assignment at birth [. . .]" (152). This line presupposes that certain gender roles are assigned to every individual at birth. But if one goes beyond the boundary of this gendered identity (man and woman), it is the practice of transgenering. At this point, homosexuality is essentially a practice of transgenering. A lesbian, in this context does not fall under either of the category: masculine and feminine. Judith Butler in her

Indeed, a lesbian transcends the binary opposition between woman and man; a lesbian is neither a woman nor a man. But further a lesbian has no sex; she is beyond the categories of sex [. . .]. Indeed, the lesbian appears to be third gender or, as I shall show, a category that radically problematizes both sex and gender as stable political categories of description. (144)

These lines of Butler ascertain that lesbianism in practice is embedded in trans-politics, especially transgendering and transsexuality. To be a lesbian is surely to go beyond the discourse of sexuality. Moreover, having homosexual relation is the practice that makes the category men-women more problematic. In this sense, lesbians cross this limit; they are neither man nor woman since the position between man and woman sees heterosexuality the only option in normal discourse.

Here, the remark of Chris Beasley seems relevant: "It [transgendering] is used to distinguish those who wish to alter their gender in a permanent but less literal sense- that is, those who live as the opposite gender or as an ambiguous gender" (160). In this way, sexual intercourse in the traditional discourse is possible only between the two genders or sexed categories of man and woman. Hence, if there is a homosexual relation between the same sexed categories, it definitely blurs the sexual boundary, it is called transgendering

Drag Culture and Cross Dressing

Lesbianism in general and transgendering and transsexuality in particular came with 'drag culture'. In practice, it comes with cross-dressing, drag balls, street walking, and parade and so on. If Gender role is the outcome of their performance, drag culture is the counter performance that laughs at the false essentialization of gendered sexuality. It is also a practice of transgendering and transsexuality that attacks the constructedness of gender and sexuality. Judith Butler throws light on drag performance in the following way. She argues:

The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance [. . .] then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. (123)

In these lines, Butler describes the subversive aspect of drag culture. Drag performance is what she calls the "Gender Parody" (157). It questions the far-fetched relationship between sex, gender and the performance. Drag performance hence is the counter performance that blurs the traditional boundary of gendered identity invented by means of performance. The same writer in *Bodies that Matter*, presents her view on drag as, it is important to underscore that drag is an effort to negotiate cross-gendered identification [. . .]" (235).

In reference with Butler, Chris Barker presents his view on drag culture in the following ways:

Butler argues that drag can destabilize and recast general norms through resignification of the ideals of gender. Through a mixing of gender norms, drag can be subversive to the extent that it reflects on the performative character of gender. Drag suggests that gender is performativity and as such destabilizes the claims of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity as the origin that is imitated. (299-300)

Hence, as Barker explicates the lines of Butler, Drag culture is the subversive act that deconstructs the gender and sexuality roles of the traditional discourse. It presupposes the performative aspect of the identity in its heart, thereby destabilizing it by the means of performance. In this way drag culture endeavors to strike a compromise between masculinity and femininity Heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Similarly, cross-dressing is one of the prime factors that preserve the uniqueness of lesbianism. Although government authority has enacted laws against cross-dressing, some woman will socialize in bars as butches: dressed in men's clothing and mirroring traditional masculine behavior. Others wear traditionally feminine clothing and assumed a more diminutive role as femmes. Butches and femme modes of socialization are so integral within lesbian bars that women who refuse to choose between the two will be ignored, or at least unable to date anyone, and butch women becoming romantically involve with other butch women of femmes with other femmes is unacceptable.

Regarding cross-dressing Elvis Presley in her book *Cross-dressing, Gender and representation* says:

[O]ne clear space in which to explore the power of transvertism as theatricality is in contemporary popular culture, specifically the pop-rock-scene, where crossed-dressing, androgyny, and gender-bending have become almost de rigueur. David Bowie, Boy George, Kiss, Tiny Tim, Twisted Sister, Sioux, the New York Dolls, from the glam-and glitter-rock to heavy metal, from the seventies to the nineties crossed-dressing has meant deliberately and brashly- and politically-calling into question received notions of masculine and feminine, straight and gay, girl and woman, boy and man. (259)

Presley, in the above lines posits that sexuality is a mere construct and the certain customs given to a gender does not guarantee their gender role. By transvestite, she means any person, regardless of sex or gender, who cross- dresses for social presentations. Actually the term, transvestite is derived from 'trans' meaning 'across' and 'vestitus' meaning 'clothed'. Due to the concept of cross-dressing especially in popular culture (the pop-rock-scene) gender distinction is blurred.

To subvert the gendered sexuality, the novel focuses on transvertite who wears opposite sex clothes to blur the conventionally practiced gender categories. For instance Alice wears Jove's "leather jacket" (14) and her father, David wears his wife, "mink coat" (32). These above mentioned instances serves as illustrations for cross-dressing to problematized hierarchical gender role in the society.

The lesbian Body under the medical Gaze

Under the medical Gaze, lesbian that is, same–sex desire is only a symptom marking the underlying pathology of destructive, unhappy, immature and disturbed: individual. From the mid–nineteen century up until the present day, lesbian is located in the models of pathology whether physiological or psychological. In popular terms, Kronemer adds: "These people are sick" (93). As the following comments show, adherents to the medical model go to sometime farcical length, to pathology 'Lesbians'. Wilton quotes his notion:

Homosexuality is a symptom of neurosis and of a grievous personality disorder. It is an outgrowth of deeply rooted emotional deprivations and disturbances that had their origins in infancy. It is manifested, all too often, by compulsive and destructive behaviors that is the very anti-thesis of fulfillment and happiness. Buried under the 'gay' exterior of the homosexual is the hurt and rage that cripples his or her capacity for true maturation, for healthy growth and love. (qtd. in Wilton 97)

Kronemer clearly feels impelled to insist that homosexuality is very bad news indeed. The very stridency of his argument 'hurt', 'rage', 'cripples', 'neurosis', 'grievous', 'disorder', 'deprivations'. 'Disturbance', 'destructive', 'compulsive' etc are all powerfully negative words and all appear within four short sentences- strongly suggests not cool scientific commentary alone but the over determined emotionality of anxious reputation.

The anxiety to repudiate lesbian desire does not stop at making unverifiable claims

about what is really going on inside peoples head. It leads supposedly level-headed scientist to mutate observable somatic bodies in a widely improbable manner. Thus Frank Capiro, M.D., states "not only that some lesbians have an unusually elongated clitoris but provides the datum of about six centimeters" (57) while the ever knowledgeable David Reaben, M.D., informs this public that a clitoris ' as much as to or more inches in length when erect' is possible and that "lesbian with this anatomical quirk are very much in demand" (98).

Biomedical and socio-biological accounts, like their social scientific counter parts, have been limited by unquestioned allegiance to a heterosexual norm and by an intellectually stiffing andocentric. Within thematically paradigm, as Silvertein remarks, "homosexuality has meant in adequately masculine men and hyper masculine women" (107). Tamsin Wilton in her essay, "*Lesbian Studies: Setting an Agenda*", quotes of Butler:

Queer desires, whether of a woman for woman or man for man, are understood as crises in masculinity, and anxiety about masculinity forms the subtext to accounts of hormone imbalance, chromosomal abnormality or hereditary 'taint'. Gender, rather than desire is at stake or rather, desire as marker and property of gender or strange inability of heterosexual scientist to disentangle gender, biological sex and sexual object. Choice has led to heterosexuality being understood as gender – confirmative behaviour and homosexuality as gender-deviant behaviour. (qtd. in Wilton 67)

Thus within this rather native paradigm, masculine means 'wishing to engage in genital penetration of a female and feminine means 'wishing to be penetrated by a penis'. Sexual desire is reduced to a desire for contact with a set of genital with a specific physiological form. It is at once alarming and comical to witness the obsessive focus on the genitals as the presumed foundation of human desire and sexual identity that pervades biomedical accounts of sexuality.

Bio medically lesbians adore their own bodies. They take women's body as the site of pleasure. They observe their body posture minutely and gain sensation. There are evidences in the text as Alice narrates Stella's body in this way: "her hair was curled, her back was upright, her waist was curved, her legs were long, her breast round" (31). It is obvious that lesbians quench their sexual passion through caressing and gazing at another woman's body.

To sum up, lesbian studies is a complex, amorphous and shifting entity. In the process of developing a distinct academic infra structure, it also remains accessible to and supportive of the grass roots lesbian community. It provides a safe and stimulating learning environment for lesbian students, teachers and researchers, while at the same time challenging heterosexist bias and anti-lesbianism in the academy more generally. It offers supports to lesbians; foreground lesbian issues and contribute lesbian prospective, deconstructing notions of lesbian identity. It encompasses affirmation of lesbian existence and of lesbian cultural production, while at the same time engaging in radical critiques of sexuality and sociological exploration of heterosexism, stigma and the disciplinary power that occurs to both. It has a crucial contribution to make to theory and activism in the context of feminisms and queer, and resists incorporation and marginalization within either. It is vigorously multi-disciplinary since it covers radical feminism, women studies, queer politics, gender and sexuality, transgenering and transsexuality, cross-dressing, drag culture and so forth.

III. Subversion of Gender Role in *Gut Symmetries*

Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* interweaves the various discourses of gender, sexuality, patriarchy, homosexuality, transvestitism, transgendering and transsexuality to tell the story of Alice, a brilliant young British physicist, who travels to America to do research at the Famed Institute for advanced studies at Princeton University. On the voyage from England to the U.S. as a lecturer on "Cunard's Spring Cruise" the world and other places, Alice falls in love with her (married) companion lecturer, Jove, a superstring theorist also working at Princeton. Once in American, Alice confronts Jove's wife Stella (renowned poet), and immediately falls in love with her. The very confrontation of Alice with Stella and her passionate love towards her lends a lesbian color to the novel.

This novel exposes a woman passion towards another woman not only in the physical form but even in the form of emotion and feelings. Putting heterosexual relationship between Jove and Stella and Jove and Alice side by side with homosexual relationship between Alice and Stella, she makes comparative studies on heterosex and homosex. Their activities attack traditional gender role; and make it clear that gender and sexuality are nothing but socio-political construction. It subverts dogmatically prioritized male over female and hetero-sex over homosex. Similarly, it attacks the patriarchal system in which women are treated as secondary categories as passionate, submissive, passive, unintelligent and subject to be ruled.

The novel begins with "Prologue" in which the main situation, the context of the novel, is set up. The narrator opens with a description of Paracelsus, whose character combines the search for answers about the universe through science (alchemy) and astrology (his birth sign governing his life to a certain degree). In addition, his physical appearance is described as some what androgynous, which in view of the bisexuality of the female characters of the novel would link Paracelsus with Stella and Alice. Furthermore, the way which Paracelsus characteristics seem to combine characteristics in both Alice and Stella, it

seems reasonable to read his character as an embodiment of both of the characters and their development.

The prologue draws attention to the concepts of journey and change in the definition of terms. The narrator posits: "here follows a story of time, universe, and love affairs and New York, the Ship of Fools, a Jewish, a diamond, a dream, a working-class boy, a baby, a river, and a sub-atomic joke of unstable matter. Ship of Fool's is defined as a medieval conceit. Lunatics/saints sailing after something which can not be found" (7). A journey or traveling is a basic theme in literature and cinema, used as a vehicle for illustrating change in characters. What is meant by defining Paracelsus as the embodiment of the change in Alice and Stella (Particularly Alice) is that the characters of Paracelsus contains what this women are the beginning of the journey and also what they become in the process of it. Here journey does not only refer to physical journey but the psychological journey of homosexuality between Alice and Stella.

"Prologue" deals with the list of definitions that defines 'river' according to the contexts in which the concept is used in the story. However, later on when Alice introduces herself and her background, she also reveals the origin of her name as "Alluvia" (64). Time has been described as a river, and alluvium is the "deposits collected and jetted by the river" (64). The imagery of time and its flow built up during the narrative gains another aspect when Alice is identified as the "deposits" (65) (Fertile soil) to be more precise: who and what is she, is a result of growth of accumulation over the years. This notion of accumulation over years is supported by Alice's account of her own anorectic youth. By the time she calls herself "Alluvia" (64). She has reached at a point where her emotional confusion has reached to maximum as she is searching for Stella and Jove. She is simultaneously afraid that one or both are dead; hoping they are both alive, and scared that perhaps they have meanwhile chosen each other and let Alice out of the equation. In the chapter, "The Lover's" Alice

sees herself as captain of the ship of the fools and realizes that she has been trying to pursue something that can not be found. Alice further says: "I chose to study in order to outwit it" (10). Alluvium also implies the formation of new land from the deposits, with that reference in mind it is possible to see Alice as gradually gaining her own individual shape as she comes to terms with herself, her past and her families past. By the end of the process Alice has come to accept herself to as the part of the flow of the river

Winterson's approach to physics suggests feminized views of science and the postmodern world. In the novel Alice appropriates the 'Masculine' scientific theories of Einstein and Heisenberg to argue for a feminist stand point theory of self and the world. Although she chooses to study physics in order to "outwit time and to work towards certainties", (10) abstract disciplines like the radical. Physics and superstring theory offers Alice a more relative and even spiritual understanding of the universe.

Although Alice claims that she "chose to study time in order to out wit it" (10), her real interest in theoretical physics arises out of a desire to impress her intellectual abilities. When she was 10 years old, Alice overheard her headmaster telling her father, David that she would "never be top drawer, intellectually" (10). Alice describes this moment as an incredibly belittling experience: "I felt myself caught between two metal plates crushing me the pressure on my head was immense. I wanted to say wait but I was so low down they could not possibly hear me. I lived in a world below their belts not an adult, smaller than small at the indeterminate age" (20). What does it mean to be top drawer in a man's world? For Alice it means gaining her father's approval. With her headmaster's condemnation ringing in her ears Alice returns home after school and looks through the top drawer of her father's chest. She finds his watch and a collection of handkerchiefs. Regarding it Alice says:

Right at the back of the drawer was his gold watch, a full hunter that chimes every fifteen minutes. Essential for a man whose time was measured in

quarter hours, in this I would not be? Solid, reliable, valuable, conspicuous, extravagant, rare? I scattered the handkerchiefs like soft jewels. Is that what I would not be? Fancy, useful, beautiful, multiple, various, witty, and gay? In what was left of the afternoon light I opened the lower drawer. Underwear, talcum, powder balled up socks. (11)

It makes clear that the watch and handkerchiefs are set in gendered opposition. As a clever woman, Alice would not be male, yet, in being clever she would never be conventionally female. This marks the characteristics of being a lesbian woman who does away with all gender biasness towards women and challenges the essentializing tendency of male patriarchal society. As a minority in her profession both as a woman scholar and as a woman scientist, Alice is in between male and female, her experience represents the “visceral places between mouth and bowel, the region of digestion and rumination” (13).

It is particularly telling that Alice, in her childhood, chooses to define herself in her father’s terms and by her father’s possession, she does not go to her mother or her accessories. She says: "while her father's top drawer was filled with expensive handkerchiefs her mother's contained jewellery and scent, the most common feminine arsenal forgetting and keeping a man" (20). As a child, Alice rejects her mother in favour of identification with father. Alice describes her mother as:

"I'm quite sure that it will be at least a week before the birth", said my mother who immediately went into labour. My mother Miss 1950s the perfect post-war wife. She was pretty; she was charming; she was clever enough but not too; she smiled at the man and gave the woman that quizzical bewilder look as if to say, ‘what, am I not the only one then?’. (31)

Perhaps it is her mother’s perfection that makes Alice resent her so much that she even goes so far as to claim that her mother obsessive womanliness almost kills her. She says “my

parents' house was so clean it made me ill. Much has been aired about the benefits of sanitation, but less is said about eczema of the washing powder, the asthma of filled carpets" (35). However, Alice worries that if she identifies with her mother she will be trapped as a child forever. She further says: "I know that she never remembered to wind the clock and that I would stay the same age forever, only with my father could there be a chance to grow up" (12). One way that Alice escapes identification with her mother is through her intellectual pursuits as a young woman, Alice mother had been "well educated and taught to conceal it" (29). While she "never gave up singing and playing the piano and she never gave up her watercolors", she disposed "of the rest of her intellectual women when she become a wife and mother" (29). As a result, Alice learned from her own familial environment that gender doesn't work well with intellect.

The novel portrays Alice as a physicist to subvert the traditional gender role of being passive, submissive and uneducated, because it presents Alice, not only does succeed in higher education while coming from a relatively working – class background, but it also decides to pursue physics, field that is notoriously devoid of woman. In not meeting her father's standards of intellect, Alice feels that she lacks something integral to her father's identity. In this sense, love, Intellectual ability translates into the missing phallus, that is, Alice lacks the symbolic power that men and masculine hold in culture. Being smart means being a man (or at least not being a woman) and being a woman means not being smart.

Alice's father, David, stereotypical male worries about her obsessive focuses on science. It becomes clear as he admonishes her for "work [ing] so hard, it was not necessary to win every prize for physics at the university" (11). At the same time, however, Alice's unfeminine performance in academia provides her with the kind of attention, she so desperately lacks from her family. Alice's parents seem unable to express any affection while she was growing up, and later in her life, they use approval of her intellectual

accomplishment as a vehicle for showing love and approval. Rather than saying, "I love you", her father would simply say, "well done" (61). When Alice does achieve brilliant marks at Cambridge, she believes that her father particularly disapproves of her interest in physics.

In this regards Alice posits:

I know that my father feared for me a lonely old age and a lonely young one too- he did not say so, but the words behind the words told me that he would rather have launched me into a good marriage than me row against the tide at my own work it remains that a woman an incomplete emotional life has herself to blame while a man with no time for his heart just needs a wife. It remains that a woman with as incomplete emotional life has herself to blame, while a man no time for his heart just needs a wife. (11)

This controversial passage is laden with patriarchal discourse in which explicitly it seems that her father wants to be settled life of her, but implicitly it is a male discourse that woman as emotional creature can not do anything but regret for future . Moreover it is not clear from Alice's recollection whether her father disappointment of her interest in physics because if is not the proper choice for a woman or whether he is concerned about the struggle. She is setting up for herself by purposefully choosing a field and profession that are male domination.

In the novel, intellectuality is gendered as male and any woman who tries to break into that must assume the same genderless identity to the point where Alice believes that academia erases gender identities. She is either unknowable or considered a man like her father: "I sign myself. Dr deliberately, avoids the intrusim of Mrs.? Miss? as if my marital status had anything to do with the rest of the world .When there is no other evidence it is assumed I am a man inevitably" (71). Alice understands that language often works as a marker to delineate women's gendered role in patriarchal culture. In avoiding the feminine

markers of Mrs.? or miss ?' Alice mistakenly believes that she has escaped from all gender expectation of women. In this formation being a woman does preclude being a "doctor". In this context, Alice intends to challenge gendered sexuality rejecting patriarchal identification of female either as miss or Mrs.

The text raises the issues of sex and sexuality. Biologically there are male and female sexes from the time immemorial. But the privileging masculinity over femininity is gendered sexuality. The text does not deny the distinction between male and female sex. But it challenges gender biasness. To support it Alice says:

Always the physics presence of something split off paradise: the Eden from which we have been forcedly removed the twins; missing self other half completeness again male and female: the uniting mystery of one flesh the Christ motif: the Divine infills the human form and make it whole [. . .] it may be that here in our provisional world of dualities and oppositional pairs: black /white, good/evil, male /female, heaven/hell, predatory/prey, Consciousness/unconsciousness, we compulsively act out of the drama of our beginning ,when what was whole ,and seeks again it's wholeness. (2)

The text brings the reference of myths to imply the sex distinction. According to the myth of Eden of Garden male and female were unified whole. After the forceful removable of human from the paradise, there is a split of self: male and female. Later on the split of self is treated as binary opposition like black/white, male /female, good/ evil are all provisional and human contractedness.

Gut Symmetries argues for the rejection of (masculine) Grand Unified Theories in favors of the feminist institution of a moral and political rather than scientific "discussion of rational discourse" (12). In the novel, the very idea of truth of any Grand Unified Theories is suspected. The danger of such theories is to exclude individual experience and alternative

realities than to connect those varieties. Pervious grand unified theories have succeeded in dividing human experiences into the western binaries of male and female, white and black, heterosexual and homosexual; all of which have been used negatively to police social behaviour and relegate identity. This research raises the question of whether there can be good meta-narratives of the universal human experience and identity or whether all Grand Unified Theories are illusionary in nature.

Jove, as a man and a scientist criticizes feminist epistemology as a form of madness. He calls Stella “unhealthy”, “subjective” and ultimately, “feminine” (87). Stella’s “instability” or “failure” to make a hierarchy between inner and outer becomes justification for placing Stella outside of society and the norm. Her subjective attitude towards the universe becomes, for Jove, at least an affirmation of the inferiority of women. Because he views: “Stella had no sure grasp herself or herself in relation to the object, Jove as the more objective observer determines she is pathological” (97). But Stella does see herself in relation to other object, or, perhaps more importantly to other subject. Her definition of the universe and people’s experience within, it is completely along relational lines. Perhaps the fluidity of her definition is too much for Jove while he also wants to define the cosmos as a place of “active relationships his superstring theory is sympathetic to the symmetry to the universe (49). Jove is merely replacing one Grand Unified Theory with another.

Stella’s Jewish heritage has taught her to resist such conceptualization. She says: “the method of the Kabbalah is to free the individual from conceptual frameworks which are all and always provisional” (56). Thus Stella’s relativism is free and therefore, more persuasive than Jove’s hierarchical Grand Unified Theories. The novel juxtaposes her seemingly objective analysis of science with more “mystical” system of faith and knowledge ostensibly to force the reader into recognizing the similarities – not the dissimilarities – between the two. While Stella's poetry is often put in opposition to Alice’s and Jove’s physics, her vision

of the universe as connected and whole is very similar to Alice's search for metanarrative that would explain and clarify the universe and her own identity. Stella asks:

Is the truth we do not know? What we do not know does not satisfy us – what know constantly reveals itself as partial. What we know, generation by generation, is discarded into new knowing which in their turn slowly cease to interest us. In the Torah, the Hebrew to know often used in a sexual context is not about facts but about connections. Knowledge, not as accumulation but as charge and discharge. A release of energy from one site to another [. . .] the patterns rhythm , multiplicities ,paradoxes, shifts, currents cross- currents, irregularities , irrationalities , geniuses, joints , pivots worked over time and through time, to find the lines of thought that still transmit [. . .]what is the separateness of things when the currents that flows each to each is live? (42)

While traditional masculine theories of science argue the importance of objectivity; Stella recognizes the connection which underlines knowledge and human experience. Rather than viewing the two as separate and necessarily so Stella sees knowledge making as an evolutionary process, connected between past, present and future. Her character serves to express the need many feminist scientists' feels to reject objectivity as masculine idea in favor of a felt connection to the objective studies.

Feminist have proposed two possible solution to this gendered opposition between objectivity (male) and subjectivity (female) in science: feminist empiricism and feminist stands point theory. Feminist empiricism argues that gender prejudice is correctable by a stricter adherence to the scientific method. In contrast, stand point theories argues that men's dominating position in social life results in partial and perverse understanding whereas women's subjugated position provides the possibility of more complete and less perverse understanding . On the surface, *Gut Symmetries* seems to support the stand point position for

women scientists. For example, Alice points out in the beginning of the novel that “any measurement must take into account the position of the observer” (5). Along a similar vein she continues, “Observer and observed are part of the same process” (84). Ultimately Alice realizes as she posits:

The separation of our lives is a shame. Physics mathematics music painting , my politics, my love of you, the star – dust of my body , the spirit that impels it, clocks, clinical time perpetually the roll, rough, tender, swamping, liberating, breathing, moving thinking nature. Human nature and the cosmos are patterned together. (50)

In this view, identity becomes a conglomeration of experience. But this notation can be dangerous for women in a male dominated field. For instance, Alice believes her sense of self is threatened by the continuous invasions and influence of other psyches. With all her education and intellectual accomplishments, she worries that other knowledge and beliefs are essentially echoes of other people’s ideas. She admits, “I interpret the world by confusing other people's psychology with my own. I say; I am open-minded but what I think is” (6). Alice’s fears that she has no original self, she worries that she is simply a collection of other people ideas and identities.

The lesbian bond between Alice, a young and unmarried physicist, and a married woman, Stella shows lesbianism as the only real emancipation from patriarchal norms. It also demythologizes motherhood which essentialist use as a weapon against patriarchy. Lesbian women deny the heterosexual relationship and try to avoid pro-creation. The text presents problematic heterosexual relationship even between husband and wife, Jove and Stella. It becomes clear through a dialogue between Alice and Jove who talks about marital life of Jove and Stella:

HE: Are you married?

SHE: No

SHE: Are you married?

HE: Yes

There was a long pause.

HE: My wife and I live on different planets.

SHE: Are you separated. (26)

The conversation between Jove (HE) and Alice (SHE), reflects the tensed relationship between Stella and Jove as they both live under the same roof but they don't share the same bathroom. The prime cause lies on Stella's hatred towards heterosex. To be more precise Stella derides Jove because there is an age gap between them. Regarding it Alice says to Stella: "But Jove is Younger than You [. . .] You were born in 1940. He was born in 1947" (61) and Jove as a representative of patriarchy seeks for a sex partner and gets Alice. But controversially Jove and Alice's heterosexual affair turns to the homosexual affair between Alice and Stella.

The novel circles around the complex networks of how strangely women fall in homosexual relationships in which Jove plays the role of catalyst in their affair. Because it is Jove who meets Alice in the boat on voyage from Southampton to New York, first and falls in love with her. He makes Alice known to Stella through writing a fake letter to Stella presuming himself as Alice. Stella narrates "that there was a letter addressed to me. The handwriting was educated the envelope was circle and square. I had no idea who it could be [. . .]. I opened it. It was from a woman called Alice who said she was having an affair with my husband. Cling. Pain upwards, pain downwards" (19). It clarifies that Stella envies on Alice's affair with Jove.

But the text as a criticism of the twentieth-century Grand Unified Theories (GUTs) of science, projects the scientific formula of how man, mistress and wife meet. It exposes the

complex network of kinship among them. Regarding it, Alice Says:

If you want to know how a mistress's marriage works, ask a triangle. In Euclidean geometry the angles of triangles add up to 180 degrees and parallel lines never meet. Every one knows the score, and the women are held in tension, away from one another. The shape is beginning and it could be understood as new geometry of family life. Unfortunately, Euclidean theorems work only if space is flat lines always meet. His wife his mistress met. (9)

This text with the reference of Euclidean theorem of geometry projects that just as three angles of triangle under the even surfaces seem impossible to meet together; in the like manner it is unconventional to adjust mistress and wife under a same roof in a conventional familial structure. But Euclidean theorem does not work in curved space, the angles over-add themselves, and parallel lines always meet. In the like manner Jove's disguised letter to Stella as a letter written by Alice with sexual appeal and interest in homosexual, also plays the vital role for the mistress and wife to adjust themselves the.

The letter, which reveals Jove relationship with Alice, makes a great impact on Stella because she desires to know every ins and outs of their relationship open. She wants the room they share, should be unlatched. Moreover the awareness of their affair arouses the sexual thirst on Stella. Therefore Stella says:

[T]he pictures in my head are sex and sex. I have become my own pornographer. His body. My body, unseparated twisting, dark. The grinning collusion of skulls boned in lust. The silent gravity gone somersault of she on he on she. There we are the internal triangles, turning in the lubricious air, breasts, coke cunt, oversized inflated parachutes of skin I know we are falling all three but the ground is still a long way off. Until we grab each other like

sky divers he was me I was him, are we her? (20)

This passage clarifies Stella's sexual passion. Lesbian women do have abnormal sexual thirst which is clear from Stella's fantasy. She daydreams of sex and sex. She wants the unification of 'his body', 'her body, and 'my body'. It means Stella desires to be unified for sex-ecstasy.

The novel sets the Algonquin hotel in New York as "meatspace", (a term used by Winterson to denote the flesh and blood existence of two people in a real room rather than in that room on the internet), where Alice and Stella met face to face for the first time . They share their family background and each of them gets sexually attracted. Regarding their relationship Alice says “she was still holding my hand and what I did was outside of anything I had imagined I would do” (63). The situation goes out of control as a result in extreme passion; Alice leans across the narrow table and kisses her. Regarding their affairs in a public place, Alice says that she was afraid and wanted to escape from there. The kiss is a smoke bomb to cause confusion and distraction. She thinks Stella might slap her. She think she will rush away. In fact she does nothing rather in turn she kisses her back violently. Alice narrates the situation in this way:

When Stella kissed me I remember thinking, 'this is not allowed. I was glad of the fog and dark because I knew that if anyone saw us, the totality of our lives, history, complexity, nationality, intelligence, age, achievement status would be shrunk up to the assumption of our kiss. Whoever saw us will say, there is a couple of ..., and this kiss, tentative, ambivalent, would become a lock and key. I had seen it happen to others. I did not want to happen to me. As the same time I realized that it would like to do much more kissing it. It was not so complicated. So complicated. My first serious emotion was for a married man. My first experience of authentic desire was with a married woman. (64)

This passage reflects upon the homosexual relationship and the impact of it on the lesbian

women aftermaths of their relationship. This passage projects passionate affair between Stella and Alice in a hotel. It deals with homosexuality as an alternative of heterosexuality. As the people of the hotel are not in the favor of homosexuality, Alice gets scared if anyone sees them their lives, history, complexity, nationality, intelligence, achievements will vanish. It is only because such type of relationship is not in practice. Therefore, Alice is afraid of being called a lesbian woman which is emphasized in text by missing content in the phrase "there is couple of [. . .]" (46). But Alice openly accepts that she realizes the sheer ecstasy in homosexuality which she has never experienced in hetero sexual relation with Jove. It is clear from her statement "my first serious emotion was for a married man. My first experience of authentic desire was with a married woman" (46).

Stella's passion boils up in the hotel, Algonquin as a result she takes Alice home. She does not put any lights, takes off her clothes and has her lie down beside her on what seem to be a very narrow bed. Alice too wants to touch her. The reflecting image of a woman with a woman is seductive. She enjoys looking at her in a way that is forbidden to her. Desiring her she feels her own desirability. It is an act of power but not power over it. She is her own conquest. In Alice's own words:

Her breasts as my breasts, her mouth as my mouth, were more than Narcissus hypnotized by his own likeness. Everybody knows how the story changes when he disturbs the water. I did disturb the water and the perfect picture broke. You see, I could have rested there beside her, perhaps forever, it felt like forever a mirror confusion of bodies and sighs undifferentiated she in me, me in she and no longer exhausted by someone else shape over mine. And I had not expected such physical pleasure [. . .]. It was not myself I fell in love with. It was her. Deeper now where the water is not clear. What pattern do the numbers make? One plus one is not necessarily two. I do the sum and the

answer is an incipient third. The pairs of two: Jove and Stella, Jove and Alice, Alice and Stella, and under the surface of each the head of the other. (65)

This passage brings the reference of myth of Narcissus hypnotism to deal with the attraction between Alice and Stella. According to the Greek myth, Narcissus is unaware of his charm. He is pursued by nymphs but he does not care them the moment he sees his reflected face on the pond he realizes the hypnotism of the nymphs. This spellbound attraction is expressed in the homosexual relationship between two female characters. They are bound each other breast upon breast, hands upon hands, mouth upon mouth, body upon body. They share deep sexual thirst each other which they have not realized in the copulation with Jove.

At this point, there comes a great turning point on homosexual relationship between Stella and Alice. It splits their relationship not to weaken it but to magnify it because in absence, sexual passion gets multiplied. She does so by discontinuing the linear plot construction fragment. To make it clear after the union of his mistress, and wife, Jove plans to go on boating. But the plot does not forward as planned because Alice gets a call from her mother about her father's death. As a result she goes back to home. On the other hand the climax of plot plays a great role for unification because the "yatch sailing off Capri on Sunday. June 16 at 18:00 hours" (19) in which Jove and Stella are boarded presumed capsized.

Stella though has hard time on a yatch due to storm, can not forget her attachment with Alice. She writes a death wish to Alice thinking that she will receive it after her death:

My dear Alice, I do not know if or when you will receive this letter [. . .] up and above I could hear Jove cursing the indifferent circuit board. If we were officially dead did it matter that we considered ourselves alive? [. . .] Will you understand? I am not sure that I understand it myself. Give me your hand. Put it to my mouth. Kiss you! Tongue, teeth, language. (99)

This letter reveals Stella's unquenched homosexual passion towards Alice. Stella is concerned with their relationship because she is afraid that their lesbian bond will vanish after their death. Stella is so lust that she desires to consume Alice's bodies. In frenzied mood Stella says: "Give me your hand. Put it to my mouth. Kiss you (99). Stella valorizes Alice as valuable gems: "I thought you were a jeweled bird of the kind Byzantine emperors kept rare, fabulous, told of but unseen" (95).

Unlike conventional woman, Alice is a heroic figure who comes to rescue Jove and Stella on a troubled Sea. As a new woman, she wants to challenge the gendered biasness on womanhood who, she wants to prove, can act like man. Moreover her motivation to rescue the missing yacht, is just to save her homosexual partner as she says, "my gut was still connected to her" (107). She thinks that the present is not cut off from the future emptied of blood. She further says "It is not Stella who was dead, not Stella and Jove, playing the games of the living" (107). Alice is crazy of Stella. She always cares of her. She remembers her in both consciousness and unconsciousness. It is clear from the fact than when she is on half sheep. She presupposes someone's touch and shouts: "Stella? Stella! Who touched me?" (109)

Lesbian relationship doe have some loopholes as a lesbian woman does have a sex but there is sexual perversion because there is no procreation. It is just for physical pleasure. Lesbians are further disadvantaged in familial power system since they do not even occupy the few positions sanctioned for woman in the heterosexual system of marriage and inheritance. It becomes clear through the narration of Alice in relationship with Stella:

Would it natural? You are not of my clan not of my kind; there is no biological necessity to want you. Instincts of tribal survival do not apply. I do not want to reproduce myself nor do I need your money. You will not grant me status. You will not make my life easier. Capacity for love in its higher

forms seems to be peculiarly human although even in humans it is still peculiar. This love suggests there is something beyond self-interest. The geneticists will scoff and since I can not prove them wrong any more than they can prove themselves right. (69)

Alice accepts openly that their homosexual relationship is not natural. She has already internalized their relation is not biological. There is no life generating force. She is well aware that she does not find status. There is a frustration on her identity. She is not stable. Actually she was born on a tug-boat in the River Mersey. As a result her father wants to call her Mersey but her mother does not allow him to do so. Her real name is Alluvia from which she shortens into Alice. "Alluvia" means "deposited by the river" (46) which implies she is fertile for reproduction. But it is ironical because she does not accept traditional heterosexual relationship.

The text presents the reaction of homosexual relationship through the eyes of male. Alice and Stella's affair is the question over the masculinity of Jove. Lesbian women discard the male sex partner. Jove, as a conventional male, is not prepared to let his mistress and wife to have lesbian relationship. Their relationship makes him furious. He ill-treats both women. To support it Alice says: "If he was not raving and threatening, he was cracking jokes about the man who had intended to remain a bachelor and ended up with two wives" (70). Jove's anxiety towards their illusive relationship is crystallized through the conversation with Alice:

HE: You went to bed with my wife?

ME: With Stella, yes.

HE: What did you think you were playing it?

ME: I didn't think we were playing chess.

HE: I don't believe it.

ME: It was sex not a miracle. (It was a miracle)

HE: How could you?

ME: I didn't plan it. (70)

The conversation between Jove and Alice reflects upon Jove's anxiety towards lesbian bond between Alice and Stella. It is a sock for male patriarchy who regards Alice as a kind of Spore, a unicellular asexual, reproductive body (70). In reacting over the women relationship, he insists on the rights of his penis, that is, "he has fucked Stella and Alice and ought to be allowed to continue to do so" (71).

The text filters in the projection of lesbian relationship openly with Stella and Alice while dealing with society. It leaves no stone upturned to unveil sexual relation between the two women characters. But it conceals their relationship in the society. It is safe to say that society does not accept non-reproductive sexual relationship. To avoid it, Alice is presented very careful to unfold her relationship with Stella as she says, "I told Captain Ahab about my relationship with Love. I did not tell him about my relationship with Stella" (107). It is not that Alice does not love Stella but it is because she fears the society will not digest their affair.

The novel portrays women's bodies very minutely. It reflects two women characters adoring their bodies. They regard their bodies as the site of pleasure. They find the sensation creating on their bodies. It is at once alarming and comical to witness the obsessive focus on the genitals as the presumed foundation of human desire and sexual identity that pervades biomedical account of sexuality. Bio-medical accounts of homosexuality falls into three Strands, all of which follow logically from a biological determinism which posits biochemical processes of one sort or another as the cause of women wanting other women for their sexual partners. The first focuses on endocrinology-that is, on the influence of hormones on the body, either pre-or-postnatal. The second focuses on brain structure. The third concerns itself with heredity, seeing sexual identity as being passed on genetically, like eye's color.

The novel provides much detailing about women's posture, body's parts, builds and dress up. As a Lesbian writer she knows well what parts of women do attract sexually.

Regarding her mother's body posture Alice narrates:

Her stocking seams were straight, her hair was curled, her back was upright, her waist was curved, her legs were long, her breasts round, her stomach was flat, her bottom was not. Black hair, blue eyes, red mouth, pale skin, and all this packed as neatly as picnic Tupperware. There was nothing of the whore about her and this father liked. (31)

This passage deals with adoring women's body. Alice posits her mother's body part, like her hair, her breasts, her stomach, blue eyes, red mouth all together attract the beholder. Their body parts seduce even the male who watches her. Women adore woman's body in Lesbianism. Women regard their body as precious gems and jewel. Stella finds her mother's body contained gem. As Jove says when they are lost in yacht, she has been talking about the diamond. He adds: "When we were first married she told me the story of her gem-besotted mother" (105). Moreover Jove finds out that Stella has a precious stone in her hip. The diamond on her hip tells about women's uniqueness which is lacked in male.

The novel portrays Stella as a passionate woman figure whose gaze upon Alice is full of Sexual appeal. In her first meeting with Alice, she finds her sex urging woman. She narrates her body sensationally in this way:

I looked at her. She was slim, wired; a greyhound body, half bent forward now, shapes of her back muscles contouring her shirt, while, starched, expensive. Her left arm looked like the front window of "Tiffany" I was not sure how a woman could wear so much silver and sit without a lean. Her hair was dark red, dogwood red, leather red with suppleness to it that it part gift, part effort. I guessed that the look of hers was as artful as it was artless. (60)

The above mentioned passage reflects upon the lesbian woman's body. Under the medical gaze Lesbian woman's body is taken somehow differently from normal woman body. The portrayal of Alice slim body hints towards sexually attractive figure. Stella examines every shape and size of Alice's body's posture. She finds her look artful and passionate.

The text questions over male chauvinism in patriarchal society. It raises the question upon the traditional female role. This novel is about women especially a homosexual woman which becomes clear from the domination of sexually minorities, women characters: Alice and Stella, in contrast to a single male character, Jove. It portrays characters like Stella who hates traditional heterosexual relationship and adopts the twentieth Century fashion of homosexuality. Instead of being just a sex toy in the hands of male, just as in traditional narrative fiction; the novel presents both main female characters bold enough to object male's domination.

The novel depicts Stella as a radical woman because she possesses things whereas her husband does not have any things, "Jove Stalks the apartment throwing things into a canvas as Stella circles him and picks them our again" (71). This is symbolic only. Jove wants her to know that every thing is his; she wants him to realize that it all belongs to her. Moreover to challenge patriarchy and subvert gendered distinction, the novel portrays that it is Stella who earns bread for family not Jove:

At least I never had to cook. Meals were taken with the rest of the extended family, eighteen of them plus two priests, all around a long table at the back of the dinner. Jove had no money at all. He was without a job and his savings had gone to his divorced wife and child. I supported us by teaching German to businessman and English literature to students who hardly know which way up to hold a book. (96)

This passage displays upon the subversion of the conventional hierarchy between male and

female. Traditionally female figures are introduced being enclosed in the kitchen sink world. They were the passive recipient of male. But this novel presents vice versa because Stella is presented as bread earner in the family. Furthermore being a woman she teaches for a businessman, a masculine figure whereas conventionally women are treated as unintelligent.

The novel, in order to problematize gender distinction as male and female, brings the concept of transvertism, an act of enjoying dressings as a member of the opposite sex, cross-dressing and transgendering and trans-sexuality. The reference of drag culture in the novel is applied to laugh at the essentializing tendency of gendered sexuality and to attack the constructedness of gender and sexuality. It tries to show that sexuality is a mere construct and the certain customs given to a gender does not guarantee their gender role. Due to the concept of cross-dressing especially in popular culture gender distinction is blurred. Regarding the cross-dressing the novel portrays Alice who posits: "I walked quickly purposefully wearing Jove's leather jacket. I wanted clothes about me because I felt I had been one stripped." (14). The novel makes a remark of cross-dressing, a tinge of lesbianism through the narration of Alice about her parents. Alice's father is a transvestite who enjoys wearing her mother's "mink coat" (31). Alice says:

My father no longer wanted herring heads. He wanted mink and pearls and he got them like most men he was a transvestite at one remove, if his wife was part of him so were her clothes. She was his rib and as such he too wore a silk shift. He loved her clothes loved to see her dressed up it satisfied a part of him that was deeper than vanity. It was a part of himself. (32)

This passage questions the gendered distinction between masculine and feminine through the description of Alice about her father's cross-dressing who himself is a transvestite. The issue of cross-dressing raised on this quote manifests the constructivism of patriarchal society about the discourse of sexuality. Alice's father willingness for wearing women's dress and

jeweler are the traces of transsexuality and transgender.

The text carefully constructs representation of a world that seems not altogether different from what could be considered the real world. The difference is that elements which are either fictional are introduced as the basis of the reality in the novel. The novelist tries to question the masculine theory of western metaphysics and prove the constructedness of discourse. In the novel, Stella explains that she has a diamond in her hip and that it somehow got there when her mother had a craving for diamonds while she was pregnant with Stella. The incident as it is described is incredible, but also possible and even natural. The twists in the realities come through Jove's skepticism. He, as a scientist with a strong faith in the universe as he himself has described (and therefore created) it through science, can't accept that a diamond could be embedded in Stella's hip. Regarding this issue the narrator says:

Physics can't rig evidence, either it is honest science or it is not science or all. Call it alchemy astrology spoon-bonding, wishful thinking. All of which, my wife enjoyed along with a mystical disposition that sadly, some of my colleagues share. There is nothing mystical about the universe those are things we can't explain yet. That is all. (95)

This passage presents the scientific world view in which the reality is constructed fantastically. The story of the diamond is like a fairy tale injected into a representation of reality. The reality is constructed in this novel through extensive use of physics mathematical and cosmology and in the end, the fairy-tale turns out to be true. In a real world it would have been something else embedded in Stella's hip, but here the fantastical is real, and the scientific reality does not necessarily apply. In the end, the diamond turns out to be real. Against all the scientific arguments, the fantastical is real and the scientific has no more authority over the functions of the universe than alchemy or astrology. Thereby the Grand Unified Theory of masculinity is challenged and proved to be constructed reality.

To sum up, Winterson's *Gut Symmetries* deals with lesbian bond between Alice and Stella; where this researcher tries to establish homosexuality as an alternative to heterosexuality. The heterosexuality always treated female as recipients, passive and dominated. But the female characters like Alice and Stella in this novel raise the voice against it, and prove it other way around. It also helps to seek for lesbian distinct from being gendered biasness. It challenges the patriarchic family structure since it portrays women characters not as a conventional female but as a new woman who deny the imposed gender role of female.

IV. Conclusion

After a thorough analysis of Jeanette Winterson's *Gut Symmetries*, the present researcher has come to a conclusion that the novel subverts traditional gender role and highlights lesbian bond. The lesbian reading of this novel leads to the findings of exploring new women who blur traditional male and female categories and as well deny the assigned gender roles. The novelist seems to challenge the masculine discourse where males were presented as actors, dominators and having agents whereas females were their play things, domineers and devoid of agency. But she portrays a world where there are women who are themselves actors and have their own agency.

Gut Symmetries is a beautiful piece of art that portrays the triangular love relationship between a couple and a young physicist. In the beginning of the novel Alice, one of the central characters among three is presented as a young physicist who goes to New York from England with old physicist, Jove, on the same boat. She falls in love with him. Later Alice meets Jove's wife, Stella and falls in love with her too. The bond between Alice and Stella is the central issue of lesbianism since they (especially Alice) reject heterosexual relationship and gets much involved in homosexual affair with Stella.

At this moment the researcher finds Alice as a new woman who does away with masculine discourse because she is a student of physics, a subject notoriously devoid of female in patriarchal system. Similarly, Stella is portrayed as the bread earner of the family. This proves that with the rise of the voice from minorities especially lesbian; women come to the forefront from their conventional roles.

Gut Symmetries sheds light on the issue of trans-gendering and transsexuality to diminish the boundaries of assigned gender role. There are some instances of transvertism where the characters like Alice and Jove willfully wear cross-dressings to blur the conventional notion of gender and sexuality. For instance, Alice wears Jove's long coat

whereas Alice's father, David wears his wife's mink coat. Further, Alice rejects the politics of motherhood by denying her biological instinct of reproduction who wants to involve in sex-ecstasy but avoids the responsibility of motherhood.

The plot structure of split, union, and split and at last union among the three characters, the novel focuses on the lesbian bond between Alice and Stella by comparing and contrasting their homosexual relationship with their heterosexual affair with Jove. To make it clear the novel serves at first Stella living in separation with Alice and Jove as she lives in U.S.A. but they live in England. Later they come into union with Jove's fake letter to Stella. Their union splits due to Alice's father's death who goes to attend the funeral whereas Jove and Stella go on boating. Unfortunately their boat gets on the trouble sea. Again Alice comes as a rescuer and saves them thereby showing union among them.

Thus, this research work circles around the issues of gender and sexuality, transgendering, transvertism, drag culture and lesbian bond between Alice and Stella to subvert the traditional notion of heterosexuality which is embedded with patriarchal ideology. It blurs the conventional division of masculinity and femininity by introducing lesbian as the third category which neither falls into the category of male or female but exists with its own independent identity.

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