

## I. Introduction: Exploration of Homosexuality

This research focuses on the homo-social bond with Ali Smith's retelling of Ovid's tale of the girl-boy Iphis from his *Metamorphoses* (9.666-797) in her 2007 novel *Girl Meets Boy*. By taking the idea of Judith Butler, gender as "the regulation of personal attributes along culturally established lines of coherence" (33), Ali Smith tries to show the fluid gender categories as seen throughout *Girl Meets Boy*, the characters performance of 'male' or 'female' at the same time.

Ali Smith's most recent collection of short stories is *The Whole Story and Other Stories* (2003). In 2004, her novel, *The Accidental* (2004), was published, and won the 2005 Whitbread Novel Award. *Girl Meets Boy* was published in 2007. She has also published a play, *The Seer* (2006), and her most recent collection of short stories is *The First Person and Other Stories* (2008). *The Book Lover* (2008) is a personal anthology of favourite pieces of writing gathered over the course of her life.

Ali Smith in the *Girl Meets Boy* shows issues of homophobia, corporate and social responsibility and the sheer vertiginous feeling of falling in love. Throughout the novel she tries to show that gays and lesbians are not only submissive as we assume, but they can have the life of their own with freedom of physicality and sexuality by breaking the line of heterosexist culture/societies' norms which gives inferior and lower status and has deprived and suffocated them. The mouthpiece characters of Smith, Anthea and Robin challenging against heterosexist norms, bring out female infanticide and women inequality at workplace, wage discrimination, abortion of girl foetus, homosexual activity and same-sex marriage in surface to maintain equality between genders and assert their political, economic and social equality with individuality and selfhood with the revolutionary task.

Ali Smith, concerning with the sex and sexuality develops the plot of the novel investigating the sexuality and gender of her time. While developing the novel she defines culture, society and physical markers that ‘construct’ sex and gender, and explores that the consequences for the exploitation of the people who do not fit into rigid culturally determined categories as a gay men and lesbian.

The novel can be interpreted and analyzed in various ways as by different critics, some critics analyzed the novel from inter-textual analysis with Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, some others have interpreted it with Marxist, socio-economic, cultural- hybridism, and so on. But the present research applies the queer theory, which is unique method that tries to capture the issues of queer sexuality with social inclusion and acceptance in mainstream society which is not used by others. While developing this research it will answer the questions: Why being marginalized gay men and lesbian in modern era face discrimination in all sectors of public and private facilities in complex system of discrimination even all human beings are running for democratic equality?, How do gays and lesbians fight against the oppression in heterosexist culture that heavily stigmatized in their own communities?, which is the main focus of the study of this research.

Ali Smith’s novel *Girl Meets Boy* is a retelling of a myth from Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* which is relocated into the present scenario of twenty first century’s conception of gay culture distorting the original ancient setting and of the characters intact. Myth in her words “are universal and timeless stories that reflect and shape our lives – they explore our desires, our fears, our longings and provide narratives that remind us what it means to be human” (165). She, being a famous openly gay Scottish novelist frames love, sex and gender by her own version of self. She actually depicts her real experiences of life taking the myth of Ianthe and Iphis to utter her lesbian

feelings as her mouthpiece character is eager to marry with her homosexual partner in the novel; also lives with her partner Sarah Wood, that is enabled by her positioning to discursive site in which one may reexamine the unthinkable in the heterosexist society. The novel deals with a butch dyke and femme's romantic love story of Inverness, Scotland. The main narrative of the novel is set in modern Scotland with multi-perspective fashion of same sex love, with the five chapters; I, You, Us, Them and All together now, being alternatively told from the perspectives of two sisters, Anthea and Imogen, and the myth of Iphis and Ianthe is featured as a story within the story. Particularly it concerns with love, sex and marriage of same-sex, which is double marginalized in heterosexual society.

*Girl Meets Boy* is about love and rebellion which is directly related to sexuality, of the queer people: especially women. Queer is fluidity, a conscientious rejection of inflexible, exclusive social norms. *Girl Meets Boy* involves in all of these things. This is clear with the critic, who reviews the book.

Calorine in her book review says:

*Girl Meets Boy* is rewriting - and then some. A glorious, wide-awake dream of a book that has, right at its beating heart, one of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Smith's hands, the story of the Greek lovers Iphis and Ianthe, who are brought together both because of, and in spite of, the sameness of their sex, jumps straight out of classical mythology. Nobody else in the series has managed to carry through the sense and timbre of the original work while at the same time energizing and making entirely necessary the original story. "Let me tell you about when I was a girl, our grandfather says,' is *Girl Meets Boy's* opening line - and off we go. The plasticity of Smith's sentences merges gender

from the outset, and the confusion is just that, a fusion, of identity, gender, humanity. (Para 1<sup>st</sup>)

Here Calorine shows the Smith's notion of gender fluidity which is merged identity within the intrapersonal sexuality, i.e., is a fluid, fragmented and dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities. The above quoted line shows the novel's concerns with the recent issues of the world of queer, quest for identity, and so on.

Another critic Stuart Kelly, in the criticism in Scotland on Sunday: *Sex is a Hit and Myth Affair* argues that Smith's text mingles with the pits of fluid, shape changing and exuberance of sexuality of gays and lesbians in monolithic heterosexual society and adds:

*Girl Meets Boy* is a joyful, experimental work. Smith deftly employs all kind of linguistic tricks to paint her characters. Imogen thinks almost entirely inside brackets when she is shocked by her sister's lesbianism, as she juggles causes, signs, anxieties and conflicting emotions - (There are so many words I don't know for what my little sister is), (Gay people are just the same as heterosexual people, except for the being gay, of course). Robin narrates the story of Iphis to Anthea in bed. Smith's work is fundamentally a parable about acceptance, and it pits the fluid, shape-changing, exuberance of sexuality with the monolithic Pure. If there is a message here, it is an instinctive mistrust of the unchanging. (Para 5<sup>th</sup>)

The above mentioned lines indicate phallogentric passion of the people can't be changed at once. It takes a time to be transformed. The main protagonist of the novel Imogen cannot even think about the homosexuality openly in the beginning of the novel which was symbolically presented by writer using the linguistic device, i.e. the

shock-ness of lesbianism of her sister by Imogen is uttered in the parenthesis, which is the burning issue in today's world which can be in the real state.

According to the critics of Kirkus Reviews the text revolves with gender boundaries and frequently raises the issues of gender sex and sexuality of gays and lesbians. They argue:

Robin is a girl, as was Iphis, the Cretan teenager who passed as a boy, fell in love with Ianthe, became betrothed to her but panicked over the question of satisfying her sexually after the wedding. Iphis's prayer to the gods was answered: She was changed into a male. Girl thus met boy in a whole new way, as Smith underlines in a sexual riff—"I was a she was a he was a we"—that further mingles gender boundaries. For the other sister, boy (Paul, a colleague) meets girl (Imogen) after a trip which has revealed Pure's not-so-spotless ambitions for global domination. Paul first shows Imogen some new, bold, feminist graffiti, then takes her to bed. There's an appropriately happy ending: "Reader, I married him/her." (Para 2<sup>nd</sup>)

These above lines by the critics show that the book deals with the issues of the gender, identity and humanity of people who are living in the age of twenty first century but still are backward who believe in the conservative norms and values which repress and dominate in the sense of the gender issue.

Gender equality as the main issue of this research is highly discussed subject matter of modern society which is only limited in theory but not in practicality.

Gender identity of Lesbian is always used to present as monolithic and homogenous by social terrorists and mainstream queer theorist. This research reinforces lesbian as a form of isolation in society and challenging ideologies which compel to construct

and manufacture the identities. With the existing norms and values of today's world creates a huge gap to overcome and encounter so many obstacles that it is privileged in recent timeframe. In recent practice of the world there used to seem gender equality and all have equal right in the cases of the saying and in the paper but it is till sterile. All norms, values and traditions are mainly imposed for gay men and lesbian are superior in society they are beyond such rituals and values, which the text ensures.

Presenting the voice of minorities by applying the queer perspective is one of the bases of this research. Heterosexual treats homosexual as inferior, submissive, minor and secondary being. There is dichotomy between the homosexuals and heterosexuals. Here, in the text of the Ali Smith, *Girl Meets Boy* despite of all the boundaries of heterosexual society, homosexuals try to come out in equal line with heterosexuals, they attempt to live free life bringing happiness in their life by taking social and economic space in society though they have been dominated, marginalized, subordinated by social structure. Heterosexual people enjoy all kinds of privilege of society but gays and lesbians are always confined with domesticity in the today's world but in this novel woman, gay men and lesbians are revolutionary and they are fully conscious about domination and deprivation of so-called superior heterosexual world. And they try to blur its' hierarchy.

In the text, Ali Smith shows the ambiguities of gender, Anthea who being female continues her life living with the female character Robin by wedding indicates that she would be able to continue living her life with Robin as a 'male' despite her biological sex, perhaps hinting at the idea that gender performance may be primary to sex in identity. Examined from a postmodern perspective, these ambiguities disrupt the normative version of the categories of sex, gender and sexuality and allow for pluralities of identity and sexual subjectivity. And it is not only the question for the

notion of sex of the traditional normalcy of heterosexuality but also a subversion of tradition and posits sexuality as a matter of performance rather than naturally given.

Through a radical queer perspective the female homoerotic experience is invisible to us in the each meeting of the Robin and Anthea, where Smith invites us to speculate on the love that could be between the two girls, with the happy ending of the marriage of two girls. Thus today's phallogentric gender model does not allow for any other notions of sexuality based on sexual object-choice, Anthea and Robin show the possibility of an alternative sexuality.

According to the traditional view of sex, it is categorized and judged as a sexual relationship, the sexual orientation of the two partners than the roles assumed in the text, the sex of same sex. As a poststructuralist queer theorists Judith Butler believes strongly in the fluidity and instability of gender categories and suggest that we should discard gender categories altogether. Butler as Critic arguing against the normative view of sex utters:

If the bounding, forming and deforming of sexed bodies is animated by a set of founding prohibitions, a set of enforced criteria of intelligibility, then we are not merely considering how bodies appear from the vantage point of a theoretical position or epistemic locate at a distance from bodies themselves. (55)

Butler deconstructs the traditional view of the body and sex and she apparently stands in the side of changing nature of the body and sex. This view can be profoundly seen in the Smith's energy to establish new way of presenting the queerness. As Butler states in the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble*:

I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to

received notions of masculinity and femininity... I opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original . . . the aim of the text was to open up the field of possibility for gender. . . Is the breakdown of gender binaries . . . so monstrous, so frightening, that it must be held as definitionally impossible . . . ? (vii-ix)

Gender for Butler is not static and monolithic; it is a changing matter over time to time. It is not a fragile thing that follows the rigidness of phallogentric world. Butler is against any set notions of a binary division of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ based on essential qualities. Gender for Butler is an unstable category; that one becomes a gender through the discursive practices that she terms ‘performativity’, which in the text, Ali Smith adheres.

Moreover the novel *Girl Meets Boy* wants to show the independency of females and free insight as males; they raise the voice against the suppression is the insight of this research. As Ali Smith raises the issues of millions of girls killed or aborted for not being boys, about hugely unequal pay for women and men, and political power and assets. The female characters of the novel are revolting for the above mentioned issues also proves that women of this era are no more submissive and fragile; they are revolutionary and self -dependent. So this research is mainly concerned with women as equal with male, they cannot bear such biasness of patriarchal ideologies. So, they are fighting against patriarchy with bold determination. With the eyes of heterosexist lens a sexual relations are defined essentially and exclusively as an encounter between two unequal partners, in which one takes the dominant and active role, and the other the submissive and passive role



i.e., male obviously the active role taker, while the submissive role can be taken by either a woman or a man, without that preference reflecting in any way upon the dominant partner. It will, however, be considered unnatural if the submissive role is assumed voluntarily and with pleasure. Women as the sexual objects of desire, regardless of physical sex, were understood to be of a fundamentally lower social status than the men who penetrated them.

This thesis is an attempt to prove that homosexual people are physically, politically, culturally, socially exploited because of rigid orthodoxy of heterosexist society. Since 1980's gays and lesbians are fighting against the discrimination but, is still grappling with a host of social, political and economic problems that Smith raises in *Girl Meets Boy*; those who did not rigorously adhere to these laws were relegated to the place of the 'other'. As the main character the novel's experience of Imogen about her sister Anthea's and Robin, "(My little sister is going to have a terrible sad life)" (56) is about dilemmas as a minority communities face; it is the question about survival and extinction, assimilation and identity that traditional norm and the modern world does not purely accept. But Smith tries to show that it is not by numbers that this community can be judged.

While agreeing with queer critic, exploitation is created due to the identity, status and socials' lens which becomes an important issue in the study of any literary work with the emergence of post-modern feminist theories. Queer theory is a collection of movements and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for lesbian and gay man. A queer advocates or supports the rights and equality of lesbian and gay man, which emerged from the feminists movement, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining minorities' social roles and lived experience; it has developed

theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender.

As two sisters of the novel Anthea and Imogen are the narrators who are initially distinguished from each other by their response to the dominant norm of sexuality, the whole world becomes fragment in the view of homosexuality and heterosexuality. Anthea, twenty-one years old and on the brink of adulthood, struggles with the task of choosing her place in society and defining her social identity. She is confronted on all sides – both in public and in private – with instructions on how to behave and the compulsion to decide and define, once and for all, who she is. She feels that the rigid and inauthentic structures of society do not do her individuality justice, keeps breaking ‘the rules’ and soon breaks free for good because she cannot subject herself to them. She desires for freedom and for dissolution of boundaries, and again, this dissolution is thought in images of water and fluidity, as dissolution of bodily boundaries and the merging with the body of another, a beloved person:

I wished that my bones were unbound, I wished that they were mingling, picked clean by fish, with the bones of another body, a body my bones and heart and soul had loved with unfathomable certainty for decades, and both of us deep now, lost to everything but the fact of bare bones on a dark seabed. (24-5)

On the other hand, Iphis (Imogen) was forced at a very young age to replace her mother and adopt the stereotypical female role of her mother had consciously rejected. The mother was a like with the nature of her sister Anthea. Imogen acts as the patriarchal man wants. She creates her identity as the expectations of men like her father and those of normative society, and internalized it and made the mould of her

identity. She feels disgusting for her sister's act of homosexuality and parenthetically utters:

I mean, when men do it, poofs, in sexual terms, I mean, it's fucking disgusting and it leads to queer paedophilia and everything, but at least it's real sex they have, eh? But women. It's, like, how can they? . . .  
(Oh my God my sister who is related to me is a greg, a lack, unfuckable, not properly developed, and even worth making illegal.)  
(Smith, 70)

She portrays the word "homosexuality" and "lesbianism" as unthinkable for her, the word 'lesbian' is treated like a taboo and always paraphrased with terms like "female homosexuals" (51) or obviously blanked out by phrases like "that word" (55) or "one of them" (55).

The primary objective of the study is to dig out the contemporary queer discourse with revolutionary female characters of the *Girl Meets Boy*. Through the critical analysis of Smith often centered on female characters, Imogen, Anthea and Robin, who are challenging the contemporary conservative male gaze and heterosexist society, this study aims to deconstruct the patriarchal norms and values which are in favor of male and heterosexist people. Likewise, this research highlights over the female characters and proves that women too are equal to male which is discarded by patriarchal society. The Lesbian characters of the novel, Anthea and Robin challenge the society by involving in love, same sex romance and same sex marriage which can't allow in the patriarchal society/ heterosexist society.

This thesis is an attempt to reinforce the burgeoning use of queer critical theories in Classical methodologies, racking the development influence of contemporary post-feminist and queer theories from the 1990s onwards. The aim of

this thesis is to examine the representation of gender and sex in *Girl Meets Boy* with particular reference to the direct influence of queer critic Judith Butler's theoretical work *Gender Trouble*, and *Bodies that Matter*, Lois Tyson's *Critical Theory Today*, Chris Beasley's *Gender & Sexuality* and other queer critics with the collaborated reading of lesbian experimental writing of Ali Smith. Being a library based research; it will use a close, discursive analytical style which will draw on gender concepts and vocabularies. This research deals with the issues raised by queer theorist Judith Butler profoundly importance of same-sex emotional ties to privilege homo-social identity and community in devalued, marginalized and trivialized homosexual culture.

A queer literary analysis of the novella shows suffocation of homo-social bond and centres upon questions of gender roles, sexuality, and sexual desire both within and beyond the boundaries of normality. The same sex lovers are in search of their identity in relation to social norms and expectations within their lesbian love story. The protagonists of the novel are once and again excluded from the dominant discourse – they are female, of a different, mythical 'race', homosexual. They feel misrepresented and oppressed by the dominant narrative which is associated with structures of normative rigidity, boundaries and oppression. Smith ends the novel with the happy married life of Robin and Anthea shows that homosexual couple also have right to live own way of life as per their own wish.

It is almost harder to judge the text with the lens of gender discrimination. Thought there are several readings of this text, the present study has drawn a distinct conclusion through an application of gender discrimination through the eyes of postmodern feminist critics Judith Butler, Louis Tyson, Chris Beasley and others. There is clearly suggestion in the novel by means of the thought of the then period

unchangeable rooted ethic of gender discrimination various conflicts have been raging and boiling over to shake the foundations of heterosexist society.

The thesis has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces the writer Ali Smith, her text the *Girl Meets Boy* and the issues raised in the text exploring about the homosexuality with the different views of the critic and queer theorist which highlights the homosexual bond. The second chapter entitled “Queer Theory as a Discursive Strategy in Modern Era” will critically examine and analyze Ali Smith's text *Girl Meets Boy* with the help of queer critic Judith Butler's theoretical work *Gender Trouble*, and *Bodies that Matter*, Louis Tyson's *Critical Theory Today*, Chris Beasley's *Gender & Sexuality* and other queer critics' text. It will study how the voices of gay men and lesbian are unheard; their labor goes in vain; their identities are smeared in the conservative male gaze and heterosexist society and the process of overcoming the heterosexual. Finally the third chapter entitled Conclusion: Empowering Homo-social Bond over Heterosexist Society/culture will conclude the whole research work.

## II. Queer Theory as a Discursive Strategy in Modern Era

In this chapter, the research excavates the contemporary issue of queer with romantic love and highlights on the multiplicity of sexuality. It reinforces the use of queer theories in classical methodologies, through analysis of gender influence by contemporary post-feminist and queer theories from the 1990s onwards. As sexual minorities such as queer are forced to exclude from the mainstream society and represents as other, *Girl Meets Boy* presents the burning subject matter of queering in modern era where many revolutionary deeds are done by the focal character to challenge the stereotypical images of phallogentric society. The whole text revolves around the dispute of homosexuality is right or wrong, through the maltreatment and marginalization of queer from the inferiority complex. And the celebration of queer is traced through sexually queer characters such as: Anthea, Robin, Grandfather, Grandmother etc, the novel denaturalizes and subverts the binary division made by phallogentric world like masculinity/femininity, and heterosexuality/homosexuality. The aim of this chapter is to examine the representation of gender in *Girl Meets Boy* with particular reference to the direct influence of queer critic Judith Butler's theoretical work *Gender Trouble*, *Bodies that Matters* and others which concludes that gender and sex are both culturally constructed phenomena and believes it as fluid, dynamic and multiple.

The critic Lois Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* defines the queer theory, as it "is based on the insights of deconstruction and is relevant to issues of heterosexual identity as well as to issues of gay and lesbian sexual identity" (322). It means queer theory is judgment into heterosexuality and, natural and unnatural behavior with respect to homosexual behavior. Queer theory involves both a challenge to the notion of unitary identity as in gay or straight, and rejection of binary

models such as gay/lesbian, homosexual/ heterosexual, masculinity/ femininity etc.

Likewise queer theorist, Judith Butler in her text of 1993 points out queer and queering as follows:

The term “queer” emerges as an interpellation that raises the question of the status of force and opposition, of stability and variability, with performativity . . . the point may be taken for queer studies as well, such that “queering” might signal an inquiry into (a) the *formation* of homosexualities (a historical inquiry which cannot take the stability of the term for granted, despite the political pressure to do so) and (b) the *deformative* and *misappropriative* power that the term currently enjoys. At stake in such a history will be the differential formation of homosexuality across racial boundaries, including the question of how racial and reproductive relations become articulated through one another. (226)

From the above statement it is clear that queer theory expands its focus to encompass any kind of sexual activity or identity that falls into normative and deviant categories, i.e. inequality between sex, gender and desire. It is related with bisexual, lesbian and gay subjects, but analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, intersexuality, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Queer theory attempts debunking of stable (and correlated) sexes, genders and sexualities develops out of the specifically lesbian and gay reworking of the post-structuralist figuring of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions. Queer theory grows with feminist challenges to the idea that gender is part of the essential self and upon gay/lesbian studies' close examination of the socially constructed nature of sexual acts and identities, it vary with both but it is inclusive than other theory. In the words of Butler,

“the term “queer” itself has been precisely the discursive rallying point for young lesbians and gay man and, in yet other contexts, for lesbian interventions and, in yet other contexts, for bisexuals and straights for whom the term expresses an affiliation with anti-homophobic politics” (230).

Postmodern feminism’s major departure from other branches of feminism is perhaps the argument that sex, or at least gender is itself constructed through language, a view notably propounded in Judith Butler’s book, *Gender Trouble*. She argues, “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (33). Butler while examining how it is that some people are recognized in society as women, she rejects the idea that those acts that identify a person as a woman reflect an internal, feminine essence. Rather social forces pressure us to behave either as men or as women, and the belief that there exists an internal feminine identity is then the result of those repeated behaviours. Butler criticizes the distinction drawn by previous feminisms between biological sex and socially constructed gender. She asks why we assume that material things (such as the body) are not subject to processes of social construction themselves. Butler argues that this does not allow for a sufficient criticism of essentialism: though recognizing that gender is a social construct, feminists assume it’s always constructed in the same way. Her argument implies that women’s subordination has no single cause or single solution; postmodern feminism is thus criticized for offering no clear path to action.

Furthermore, queer theory treats humanity into gay and straight people, working for a society where everyone’s sexuality would be liberated and male and female gender roles abolished. As it is clear with the definition of the queer by Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today*,



For queer theory, categories of the sexuality cannot be defined by such oppositions as homosexual/ heterosexual. Building on deconstruction's insights into human subjectivity (selfhood) as a fluid, fragment, dynamic collectivity of possible "selves", queer theory defines individual sexuality as a fluid, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities. Our sexuality may be different at different times over the courses of our lives or even at different times over the course of a week because sexuality is a dynamic range of desire. (335)

Binary opposition lacks the space in the sphere of queer theory. It treats human selfhood as a fluid, dynamic and multiplicity, which indicates that our sexuality can be change time to time according to our desire. While making argument about the human selfhood as fluid, dynamic and multiplicity there is clash between the critics, who carries the same dimension. In the context of the liberation of same sex marriage, some gay men rejected marriage as an institution, others wanted same-sex marriage legalized, and described a monogamous gay couple, reflect a crucial component of a "respectable" lesbian or gay identity, the rejection of masculine/feminine role-playing and indeed of any gender variance--gay men are in this view as masculine as straight men, lesbian women as feminine as straight women. These above things are raised in the novel, where we can easily trace out how homophobic affects the lives of the characters directly or indirectly in the novel with the textual analysis with brief description of the plot and characters.

Smith's version of the tale is retelling of story of Iphis, i.e. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the immediate source for the myth of Iphis and Ianthe. The story of Iphis and Ianthe is featured in the ninth book of the *Metamorphoses*. Iphis is located in a socio-historical context of two thousand years apart from Ovid's, when

there was no term to define what we now call lesbianism; indeed it would be anachronistic to label Iphis a lesbian. Yet Smith uses her reception of Ovid to queer the text and to give voice to a female desiring subjectivity that is impossibility in Ovid's version and which is almost wholly missing in the texts of antiquity.

In Ovid's original, set in Crete, the story tells of a woman, Telethusa, who is expecting a child, and who is told by her husband that because of their poverty they cannot afford to bring up a girl child, so that unless the infant turns out to be a boy, she is to kill it. Shortly before the birth, the benevolent Egyptian goddess Isis appears to Telethusa in a dream, and instructs her to disobey her husband's command, and rear whatever is born. As a female infant is born, Telethusa conceals this fact from her husband, and raises the child, who is given the gender-neutral name 'Iphis', as a boy. The ambiguities of gender are hinted at; that is, that if it were not for the wedding, Iphis would be able to continue living her life as a 'male' despite her biological sex, perhaps hinting at the idea that gender performance may be primary to sex in identity. Examined from a postmodern perspective, these ambiguities disrupt the normative categories of sex, gender and sexuality and allow for pluralities of identity and sexual subjectivity. To the point, Ovidian myth of Iphis and Ianthe, centres upon questions of gender roles, sexuality, and sexual desire both within and beyond the boundaries of normality, It is sort of 'denaturalising' or 'desubstantialising' side-effect to Ovid's thorough exploration of the world's sexual diversity. The retelling version of Iphis and Ianthe's story by Ali Smith make it queer with it's full strength. The love between the Anthea and Robin would be one of equality and mutuality – they are the same age, they have received the same education, and they are equally in love. In fact, theirs would have the equality and mutuality of power associated with modern lesbian relationships.

The story of *Girl Meets Boy* with modern perspective of queer tone, is set in modern Scotland and is essentially a new story, narrated in a multi-perspectival fashion, with the five chapters, I, You, Us, Them and All together now, being alternatively told from the perspectives of two sisters, Anthea and Imogen. The myth of Iphis and Ianthe is featured as a story within the story. Furthermore, on a more abstract level of motifs and themes, parallels can be identified. *Girl Meets Boy* does not interpret its hypertext as the instrument of an oppressive normative culture, but as an empowering tale that celebrates and legitimizes difference and indefinability. The novel can therefore not be said to be a revisionist re-telling in the sense that it construes its source as a text in need of correction. Instead, the novel practices revision in the sense of looking back to forge a link of solidarity between past and present, underlining the timelessness of certain experiences and difficulties. At the same time, however, the story also documents the differences between then and now. Like in the myth of Iphis, the love between two girls is at odds with the norms and conventions of society that are fixed in the categories and concepts which structure the perception of reality. However, while in the Ovidian myth these norms and conventions are not seriously questioned and perceived as unalterable, *Girl Meets Boy* scrutinizes the origins of such norms, and challenges the legitimacy and truthfulness of the dominant narrative. In fact, the novel explores the interplay between individuals and society as well as the discrepancy between the idiosyncrasies of reality and the pre-fabricated social roles and normative ideals, and propagates the disengagement from oppressive norms by various means of the character's role play.

The novel reveals the childhood of two girls and the clear portion of diversity between the two girls can be seen while they listen to their grandfather's story. The elder sister Imogen shows her annoyances with grandfather with his refusal to tell his

stories according to the laws and conventions of the reality. On the other hand younger sister, Anthea, with eagerness listens to the story regardless of its ontological status. The difference between the two sisters, while the developing of the story is seen clear. One adopts the homosexuality and other's the heterosexuality. One the continuation of the tradition and other needs the break of the tradition according to the need of time. While the story develops Imogen is always in sense to know the right words for things and fit the thing she encounters and experiences and makes into clear categories.

On the other hand, Anthea and Robin are such revolutionary characters who economically and socially powerful. In modern societies there is everywhere domination and discrimination, stereotyping, sexual objectification upon females in this or that way but women are challenging and revolting against them by different means. Anthea and Robin do boldly challenges the patriarchal norms to maintain equality between two sexes and makes resistance where as sexuality as a force. It is through sexually motivated activities, Anthea and Robin assert their freedom, individuality and selfhood. In the novel they create their own identity and individuality by blurring the rules and regulations, norms and values constructed by patriarchy as well by phallus- centric world. The protagonists of the novel spend their life through the pleasure of sexual experience and free sex of same sex. They are revolutionist character who is indulging in both the physical and spiritual life. In heterosexual society though men and women play equal role in the sexual acts but men do not care about the working of female body so that women taken sex as a burden. They consider sex is only for male pleasure and entertainment. Women are created by males in patriarchal society, the story of women are created by males. If

the women involve in new and important work in the society that is shadowed by males.

Though the female of the novel *Girl Meets Boy*, Anthea and Robin are tortured for their activities as per their desires and passions are watered on the sand when they have been arrested by the police and dominated physically and sexually, but when Imogen, the sister of Anthea bail for them they have changed their view as per their need. Their revolutionary nature can be seen when they adopts homo-social bond and setting the same sex marriage. The conservative heterosexual culture cannot allow such freedom and live colorful life to such lesbian but they revolutionarily change their same sex love into marriage.

Anthea and Robin are not such characters who passively accept each and every dogmas of the society. By talking about the society, it is referring to the patriarchal society where there is the prevalence of male culture. Males are discounted for his every vile behavior, where as women are not. Father, mother and children have their close relationship of blood and marriage but sometimes they are like criminal, demonic figure which made them by their chauvinistic manner-less patriarchal so-called society. By birth an individual is obsessed with the traditions constructed by the society. Being united to rules and regulations of the society, sometimes, even unwillingly, male becomes follower of the system. Society constructs men most crude, selfish, demon like figure and women as 'second sex' as Simone De Beauvoir says and gives men the superior position. Though men are fragile, they pretend as capable, fit and fine in every sector which make them as demons. Through the character of Robin, Smith cleverly touches on this issue when Robin explains that through her metamorphosis into a boy, Iphis becomes:

Exactly the boy that she and her girl needed to be... And [exactly the boy] the particular historic era with its own views on what was excitingly perverse in a love story needed. And [exactly the boy] the writer of *Metamorphoses* needed, who really, really needed a happy love story to carry him through the several much more scurrilous stories [of Book X]. (99-100)

This is the right way to shows us that nothing in life is simply black and white: Ovid's poetry is a matter of gender and story-telling. It is not only the debate of transformation but of the fluidness, which is core theme of the novel, where Smith work out to shows the real condition of today's world view about it.

Poststructuralist queer theorist Judith Butler believes strongly in the fluidity and instability of gender categories and suggests that we should discard gender categories altogether. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler argues against any set notions of a binary division of 'man' and 'woman' based on essential qualities and draws on the theories of Michel Foucault to argue that humans are simply social products organized by societal discourses and power relations. She put a similar argument in *Gender Trouble*, where she wrote, in a style that echoed Foucault, that, "power can neither be withdrawn nor refused, but only redeployed. Indeed, in my view, the normative focus for gay and lesbian practice ought to be on the subversive and parodic redeployment of power rather than on the impossible fantasy of its full-scale transcendence." (158)

Discourses are expressions of power as they have the power to define individuals in particular ways and the power to oppress people because they do or do not fit into particular categories, but these discourses vary according to time and place. Butler furthermore argues that the presence of power dynamics is not same as what the heterosexist/phallogocentric think. She argues:

The “presence” of so-called heterosexual conventions within homosexual contexts as well as the proliferation of specifically gay discourses of sexual difference, as in the case of “butch” and “femme” as historical identities of sexual style, cannot be explained as chimerical representations of originally heterosexual identities. And either can they be understood as the pernicious insistence of heterosexist constructs within gay sexuality and identity. The repetition of heterosexual constructs within sexual cultures both gay and straight may well be the inevitable site of the denaturalization and mobilization of gender categories. The replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. Thus, gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy. (41)

Thus, as a continuous discursive practice and an effect of social discourse, gender is an unstable category; that one becomes a gender through these discursive practices Butler terms ‘performativity’ in her text *Bodies that Matters* (1993). It means gender and sex are as a constructed-ness through the performance and heterosexuality itself is not a natural category but rather a system built up by repeating over and over. Indeed, those acts must be repeated because the task is never fully complete; we never quite achieve success at being a man or a woman:

This “being a man” and “being a woman” are internally unstable affairs. They are always beset by ambivalence precisely because there is a cost in every identification, the loss of some other set of identifications, the forcible approximation of a norm one never chooses. (126)

Now, one could argue that “homosexuals” and “heterosexuals”, or particular understandings of “women” and “men”, are specific to certain times and places but it changed time to time. To refer to someone as ‘a man’ or ‘a woman’, therefore, is not simply to state a fact: such statements always to some extent draw on and reinforce ideas about gender. *Gender Trouble* thus constitutes, in part, a polemic against feminist identity politics, conceived as a monolithic solidarity between all women, who have in common precisely that internal, feminine essence whose existence Butler denies.

Ali Smith starts the novel with the fantastical and unrealistic statement, the grandfather tells of the time when he was a girl, “let me tell you about when I was a girl, our grandfather says” (3), which represents the gender fluidity. Some more example from the novel that represents gender fluidity are putting on the wrong clothes as by “Burning” Lily dressed as a message boy to evade the police (15) and; Anthea’s description of Robin when she sees her for the first time (‘She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life’) (45) and of herself after meeting Robin as having ‘taken a whole new shape’ (81). While describing her lover, Anthea shows the fluidity of gender as she describes her soul mate Robin's features:

She had the swagger of girl. She blushed like a boy. She had a girl’s toughness. She had a boy’s gentleness. She was a meaty as a girl. She was a graceful as a boy. She was as brave and handsome and rough as a girl. She was as pretty and delicate and dainty as boy. She turned boys' heads like a girl. She turned girls' head like a boy. She made love like a boy. She made love like a girl. She was so boyish it was girlish, so girlish it was boyish, she made me want to rove the world writing our names on every tree. (84)



The elder sister, Imogen works in the Pure, Water Company and wants to evolve in her own instinct role despite being surrounded by sexist men. Imogen tells Paul, to whom she thinks is the only nice character working at their employer Pure, she loves him a lot but she fears he might be gay, “I know I’m not supposed to say, but I think if you like me too, and if you're not gay or anything” (130).

As we go through the novel we see a metaphor for gender fluidity in the water imagery. Water in this text is used with the reference to show the fluidity of gender as it is clear with the statement, “How water is smart, how water is graceful, how water, since it can change shape and form, can make us versatile” (38). Smith with the uses of water as plasticity to merges gender from the outset, and creates the confusion with the fusion of identity, gender and humanity. To make fusion with the gender, identity and humanity, the water imageries are used. As water is evoked as a symbol of liberation, fluidity and boundless, Anthea, twenty-one years old and on the brink of adulthood, struggles with the task of choosing her place in society and defining her social identity, as the novel moves on we find the full of gender fluidity where, Anthea watches the river flow and change before her, “The river laughed . . . and it changed as I watched. As it changed, it stayed the same” (28). It represents the fact that her desire of the changing nature of her gender, i.e. her desire to be fluid. While she is believing in the nature of gender to be dynamic, fluid and multiple, she finds it to be hard to think it in the heterosexual world and she finds her identity in crisis as she narrates, “one morning I’d wake up and try to log on to find that not even that version of ‘I’ existed anymore, because the servers all over the world were all down. And that's how rootless. And that's how fragile. And what would poor Anthea do then, poor thing?” (23-4). She is confronted on all sides – both in public and in private – with instructions on how to behave and the compulsion to decide and define, once and

for all, who she is. People are around her treats her as mad; she suffers because she feels that the rigid and inauthentic structures of society do not do her individuality justice: “they looked down at me like I was mad” (26) and she keeps breaking the rules because she cannot subject herself to them. She does what is good for her.

Like Penelope, however, Anthea is not happy with the choices. Her sister’s attempt to install her at the company where she works is symbolic of the way society pressures her to redefine her identity by taking on a specific social function or role, determining not only “what she is” but also “who she is”, which is clear with her own assertion “I was a Creative. That's what I was. That's who I was” (24). She is frustrate with the occupation she holds, to her, it seems to blank out individuality, just like the faceless representations of ‘individuals’ on an advertising poster for a dating agency, in which the differences between persons are reduced to their occupations: “They didn’t have faces, they had cartoon blank circles instead, but they were wearing uniforms or outfits and holding things to make it clearer what they were” (31). The same poster, also reduces gender to minimalistic outer markers, as “the difference between male and female is breasts and hair” (31), and as the attribution of gender to occupations strictly follows common stereotypes, as if gender were an inherent part of the respective occupational roles and identities a “A nurse (female) and a policeman (Male) . . . A pirate (male) and a person holding a baby (female). A cook (female) and a truck driver (male)” (31). Anthea is unable to identify with any of these pre-fabricated roles. Nor is the conundrum of her identity solved by her name, which, she perceives, does not have a constitutive meaning: “I was named after some girl from the past I’d never seen, a girl on a Saturday evening tv show” (25). She is frustrated with the apparent necessity to define oneself and reduce oneself to a restrictive role and “tired of having to be anything at all” (23). Similarly to Atlas, the restrictions

imposed on her identity kindle in Anthea the desire for freedom and for a dissolution of boundaries, and again, this dissolution is thought in images of water and fluidity, as a dissolution of bodily boundaries and the merging with the body of another, a beloved person:

. . . I wished that my bones were unbound, I wished that they were mingling, picked clean by fish, with the bones of another body, a body my bones and heart and soul had loved with unfathomable certainty for decades, and both of us deep now, lost to everything but the fact of bare bones on a dark seabed. (24-5)

Anthea's and Robin's bodies and minds are imagined to fuse, and, together, create fluid new shapes and forms that keep shifting into each other. The entire passage is formulated in questions, as if it could never be quite certain what one or both of them embodies at any given point. Water imagery again plays a certain role: "Was I melting? Would I melt? Was I gold? Was I magnesium? Was I briny, were my whole insides a piece of sea, was I nothing but salty water with a mind of its own, was I some kind of fountain, was I the force of water through stone?" (102).

Nature functions as a temporary refuge from the pressures of society, and on her way to work Anthea briefly escapes the structures of civilization and climbs down to the river Ness that runs through her hometown. The bewildered reactions of passers-by however, recall the 'digressiveness' of this behaviour: "People looked down at me like I was mad . . . Clearly nobody ever went down to the riverbank. Clearly nobody was supposed to". (26) To Anthea, however, the proximity of the river has a soothing effect, and its age helps to put the constructions and efforts of humanity into perspective: "The river changed as I watched. As it changed, it stayed the same. The river was all about time, it was about how little time actually mattered"

(28). In Anthea's case, it seems as if the short-lived escape from structures and schedules foreshadows the more radical escape from regulative norms that Anthea is to perform later. However, for now it is not permanent, and the pressure to oblige her sister and "to be a good girl, whatever good means" (30) makes her return to her workplace . . . Anthea watches the river flow and change before her 'It laughed and it changed . . . As it changed, it stayed the same' (28). We see images of transgressed boundaries that are symbolic of transgressed gender behaviours, for example, Anthea decides to go and sit by the riverbank, but people walking on the bridge above look at her as if she is mad "Clearly nobody ever went down to the riverbank. Clearly nobody was supposed to." (26); no one dares trouble gender, except Anthea, who is beginning to explore the 'grey areas'.

As well as re-writing Classical myths, Smith is also re-writing the socially constructed twentieth-century myths about gay people. Water imagery is a trope in feminist theory and literature as a metaphor for gender fluidity with the tales of same-sex lovers, while those with homophobic attitudes are portrayed negatively as the boorish Pure employees Dominic and Norman who call Robin a 'fucking dyke' (68). Likewise Imogen thinks about her sister's condition, "(Oh my God my sister who is related to me is a greg, a lack, unfuckable, not properly developed, and not even worth making illegal.) (There are so many words I don't know for what my little sister is)" (70) and the happy ending to the tale aims to dissolve some of the stigmas attached to gay culture voiced by the character Imogen, that gay people are melancholy, 'are always dying all the time' (58), and that her sister will have 'a terrible sad life with no real love' (56).

*Girl Meets Boy*, being a lesbian retelling of a classical myth, can be read as a fictional account of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*; key points of her gender theory

are acted out for us by the characters, demonstrating the true instability of gender categories -particularly over time - and the fallacy of the existing rigid, binary model of gender that assigns aspects of a person's behaviour or attributes to one of two definitive genders. Smith's Iphis and Ianthe 'trouble' received notions of gender and sexuality and demonstrate the fluidity of gender categories espoused by queer theorists. Butler herself wonders how best we can begin to transform and 'trouble' set notions of gender and sexuality and I want to suggest that Smith in effect answers Butler's call to arms. As Butler states in the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble*: Butler 1999: xxx

I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity . . . I opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original . . . the aim of the text was to open up the field of possibility for gender . . . Is the breakdown of gender binaries . . . so monstrous, so frightening, that it must be held as definitionally impossible . . . ?  
(Butler 1999: viii-ix)

This troubling of gender and of the notion that gender follows biological sex can be seen most strongly in the character of Robin in *Girl Meets Boy*. When we enter in the chapter 'You', we see the three characters; Robin and Imogen, Anthea's sister together, in which they plays out Foucault and Butler's theory of that language and definitive naming categories of gender and sexuality are societal devices of control and power to enforce compulsory heterosexuality. "(Oh my God my sister is A Gay)" (Smith 49) shows Imogen feeling stressed toward her sister. She is stressed with her

sister's appearance. She has been mentally wrestling with her sister's apparent transformation from 'straight' to 'lesbian', and has been struggling to 'name' her sister, "(is that the right way to say it, a gay? Is there a correct word for it)" and she tries to find a category into which she can be placed. Concerning with Robin's androgynous name, "she had a boy's name instead of a girl's name (55) Imogen asks Robin to tell her what the 'correct' word for her is "what is the correct word for it, I mean, for you? I need to know it. I need to know the proper word."(77), to which Robin replies, "The proper word for me... is me." (77) As Imogen is confuse whether to use the word "gay" to her sister and Robin, the novelist is trying to explore the desire to classify human through their behavior; Imogen is not trying to impose heterosexuality here, but she is looking for a definition, and in doing so exposes to the reader the inadequacies of language to do this. Through Robin, Smith is also playing with the notions of subjectivity and subject knowledge.

Butler as a queer critic objects the definitive categorization of gender and challenges society's need for definitive categories: 'What does "transparency" keep obscure' (Butler 1999: xix), in a society 'where the price of not conforming is the loss of intelligibility itself' (xix). Robin the revolutionary character too resists definition, she answer Imogen, "the proper word for me . . . is me" (Smith 77), nor does she care for definitions, she 'is the kind of person who does not really care what she is wearing or what she looks like' (75). As Butler rejoices for the revolution:

"I . . . came to understand something of the violence of the foreclose life, the one that does not get named as "living", the one whose incarceration implies a suspension of life, or a sustained death sentence. The dogged effort to "denaturalize" gender . . . from a strong desire both to counter the normative violence implied by ideal

morphologies of sex and to uproot the pervasive assumption about natural or presumptive heterosexuality” (Butler xx)

Likewise, instead of causing an identity crisis, for Anthea, falling in love with a girl proves liberating, and actually resolves her unhappiness with the choices provided by normative society by showing her an alternative. Falling in love with Robin opens up a whole new world of experience for Anthea, “Now I had taken a whole new shape. No, I had taken the shape I was always supposed to, the shape that let me hold my head high. Me, Anthea Gunn, head turned towards the sun” (Smith81). Anthea’s realization of that she can be so much more than herself when she is love by same sex lover and makes her feel virtually transformed challenges the normativity of heterosexuality. Anthea and Robin want to challenge the society by taking bold determination and rejection of those norms and values which are for the domination of other sexes in the heterosexual society. They want to challenge that society, which tells sex is the secret subject matter, it only limited with prescriptiveness in the heterosexual society. Imogen, who somehow represents heterosexual society, can only bring herself to say ‘it’, to call her sister, “is that the right way to say it, a gay? Is there a correct word for it?” (Smith 50), and Pure Dominic comments on the Imogen's nature of using the word for her sister, “Aw She doesn’t like not knowing the politically correct terms for things” (67). And Imogen's acceptance of unknowns' nature to represent with correct word to her sister “There are so many words I don’t know for what my little sister is” (70) is the dynamic survival depends on this fluidity of gender. Androgyny introduction to Robin that “She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life” (45) troubles the notion that gender follows biological sex; Robin's sex may be female, but her gender is male – she has been given a unisex name, dressed as a boy, and loves a girl.

Meanwhile Anthea first saw the boy/girl, Robin; it also shows us the clear glimpse of drag. Butler briefly discussed in *Gender Trouble* about drag, and she argued that drag as “part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of casual unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary” (175). This was understood to mean that Butler was advocating drag and theatricality as ways of subverting hetero-normativity, and was asserting that being a man or a woman was by its nature a *performance*— a confusion between “performative” and “performance” seems part of this. Butler clearly mention about the use of drag as “the notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch /femme identities” (174).

Butler states that society controls gender categories through ‘the regulation of attributes along culturally established lines of coherence’ (32-3), and thinks that the fact that one can describe a man as having feminine attributes or a woman as having masculine attributes without disturbing the integrity of their gender demonstrates that gender identity does not follow automatically from biological sex, which itself is also discursively constructed. As Robin says (of society’s rigid categories of sex and gender) ‘It’s easy to think it’s a mistake, or you’re a mistake . . . when everything and everyone you know tells you you’re the wrong shape . . .’ (Smith 97) Butler states that the notion of fixed gendered attributes is a fallacy, Butler continues:

‘It is of course always possible to argue that dissonant adjectives work retroactively to redefine the substantive identities they are said to modify and, hence, to expand the substantive categories of gender to include possibilities that they previously excluded. But if these



substances are nothing other than the coherences contingently created through the regulation of attributes, it would seem that the ontology of substances itself is not only an artificial effect, but essentially superfluous.’ (Butler 34)

We unfortunately live in a society using gendered binary language, so subverting this language as Smith has done is certainly a good start at breaking down these gender adjective and assumption.

In *Bodies That Matter* Butler clarified her views: she did not believe “that one woke in the morning, perused the closet or some more open space for the gender of choice, donned that gender for the day, and then restored the garment to its place at night”.(x) As regards drag, she commented, “Although many readers understood *Gender Trouble* to be arguing for the proliferation of drag performances as a way of subverting dominant gender norms, I want to underscore that there is no necessary relation between drag and subversion”. (125) The point is of importance because a widespread common-sense had developed that Butler has endorsed certain styles of political protest and ways of living as politically effective, when she has not.

Some lesbian literature is overtly political, connecting lesbianism to resistance to patriarchy, and whilst *Girl Meets Boy* is predominantly a love story, Robin and Anthea are feminist political activists, painting feminist slogans that highlight the statistics of domestic violence, wage discrepancies and female infanticide. We also see recurring images of female resistance and strength throughout the novel, for example, Flora MacDonald, and the war memorial in London where the empty men’s clothes hint at the form of the women beneath that once wore them, leaving their traditional domestic roles to help the war effort (114-15).

Traditionally sex is treated as one of a problem, or a biological fact or as a guilty secret so it is hard for women in misogynistic society to allow themselves the pleasure of sexual fantasies. In order to challenge the dominant sexual ideology of society, feminists have to attack sexism as representative of male power rather than attacking sexual material as representative of male sexuality. Here in the novel too taking sexuality as the power, the main character questions the narrow definition of gender roles in literature from which reader can see many gender fuelled injustices and also the power hold by economic self dependent. Nowadays female fetuses are killed because not being of boy. As the message girls Iphis and Ianthe write the wall painting:

ACROSS THE WORLD, MILLION GIRLS, KILLED BEFORE THE BIRTH OR AT BIRTH BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T BOYS. THAT'S ON RECORD. ADD TO THAT THE OFF-RECORD ESTIMATE OF FIFTY-EIGHT MILLION MORE GIRLS, KILLED BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T BOYS. THAT'S SIXTY MILLION GIRLS. (134)

The miserable condition for the female fetus in this world is presented through the line indicate that the view of phallogocentric world's view of human being. It should be change because to provide equal justice to both male and female.

In heterosexual society males easily expose their sexual passion but women are not allowed to evoke sexual subject matters openly. If they openly expose the sexual subject matter, patriarchy named them as a prostitute. Though, sex is physical needs for both males and females. Every rules and regulations are made by males which might be loveless, a kind of passionate desire for sexual thrust and uses female like a commodity, which crushes the equal thirst for passion in female. Knowing the fact that sex is personal subject matter. In society no one questions about the relation

of male with other women but women should listen various questions which are raised by patriarchy. Women are treated like servant in husband's home, their daily routine is to prepare food, feed to family members, care them after completing all domestic activities fulfill their husband's wishes and desires show the miserable condition of women who have to sacrifice their whole life to make other happy.

Most to the practice of the recent world's marriage is an eternal, biological and psychological relationship between a male and a female joined as husband and wife, which is proved by the prevailing social norms, values, and laws. Marriage is taken to be top of the utmost importance which is the precious gift of god and bond of two souls, and couple is considered two sides of the same coin. There should mutual understanding between couple to run the life smoothly. But when we come toward the ending part of the novel, the chapter titled, "All together now", we are mindful of the blurring of gender norm of the heterosexist society. "Reader, I married him/her. It's the happy ending. Lo and behind. I don't mean we had a civil ceremony. I don't mean we had a civil partnership. I mean we did what's still impossible after all these centuries."(Smith, 149) Anthea while sharing her narration of the married life with the same sex partner Robin, she feels excited she has done the work that was impossible throughout these centuries. Such a marriage plays to convention and defies it in Robin and Anthea's wedding as here the power relationship is balanced. In fact it is the characters around them that have reached maturity, particularly Imogen, who finally accepts her sister and herself for who each of them really are.

Anthea begins the chapter, entitled *All Together Now*, with the line, "Reader, I married him/her" which problematized gender pronoun is followed by the account of a wedding – her own wedding with Robin. And Anthea expresses clearly that they will not settle for compromises: "I don't mean we had a civil ceremony. I don't mean

we had a civil partnership. I mean we did what's still impossible after all these centuries. I mean we did the still-miraculous, in this day and age. I mean we got married" (149). Huge and pompous celebration draws a crowd – "there must have been hundreds" (151) – and not only magically reunites all the lost family members, but also "all the people from the rest of the tale" (152), meaning 'supporting' characters like receptionists and work colleagues, though Anthea is careful to exclude particular antagonists like Norman, Dominic or Keith. Anthea's account, blatantly mimicking conventions of literature and cinema, becomes increasingly unbelievable. It turns out that Anthea and Robin's interventionist protest art, instead of turning into a scandal, is now publicly celebrated: "Inverness . . . once famed for its faith in unexpected ancient creatures of the deep, had now become famous for something new: for fairness, for art, and for the art of fairness. Inverness, now world-renowned for its humane and galvanizing public works of art, had quadrupled its tourist intake" (153). It is quite problematic, perhaps, how their subversive art is here portrayed as being appropriated for boosting the tourist trade and making money, but Anthea does not dwell on it. She continues the fantastical tale, which the reader finds increasingly hard to believe, and at the moment where the first gods are mentioned, it is clear that her story has gone beyond the frame of reference of our reality, and has outed itself as a fantasy. Again, however, ironical awareness is not far away. At the end of her fantastic and utopian tale, Anthea returns to 'reality':

Uh-huh. Okay. I know. In my dreams. What I mean is, we stood on the bank of the river under the trees, the pair of us, and we promised the nothing that was there, the nothing that made us, the nothing that was listening, that we truly desired to go beyond ourselves. And that's the message. That's it. That's all. (159)

And the message, it seems, could not be clearer. As Anthea sums up at the end of the last chapter, how stories can help individual persons, to persevere in their struggle with real life – especially the struggle to make life better: “It was always the stories that needed the telling that gave us the rope we could cross any river with. They balanced us high above any crevasse. They made us be natural acrobats. They made us brave. They met us well. They changed us. It was in their nature to” (160). The whole analysis of the texts shows that queerness of the characters and their way of accepting the sexual orientation, their coherence with the mainstream society, and their feelings towards their sexual identities reveal the queer sensibility in the text.

### **III. Conclusion: Empowering Homosocial Bond Over Heterosexual Society/Culture**

A queer literary analysis of the novel shows the suffocation of homosocial bond and centres upon questions of gender roles, sexuality, and sexual desire both within and beyond the boundaries of normality. The same sex lovers are in search of their identity in relation to social norms and expectations within their lesbian love story. The main character's way of their life, their emotion, feeling and revolution are the major attentions that estimate the queer sensibility in the text that empowers the homosexual's bond.

The protagonists of the novel are once and again excluded from the dominant discourse – they are female, of a different mythical 'race' and homosexual. They feel misrepresented and oppressed by the dominant narrative which is associated with structures of normative rigidity, boundaries and oppression. *Girl Meets Boy* features a lesbian love story and blurs the heterosexual normality redefining the gender, love and sex. For example, Robin has a gender neutral name. Her last name Goodman might be an allusion to her androgynous appearance, Anthea's name, on the other hand, has a similar meaning as Ianthe's, being associated with flowers. The contrast to the portrayal of the love between Anthea and Robin is significant. There is none of that distress or anxiety. Instead of causing an identity crisis, for Anthea falling in love with a girl proves liberating, and actually resolves her unhappiness with the choices provided by normative society by showing her an alternative.

Falling in love with the same sex in the text is associated with the utopian notion of gaining a superior perception of reality and self, recognizing the concepts and categories of life before as limiting lies and finding the *true* meaning beneath them. There is no mention of the negative aspects of love, like dependence and

vulnerability as in the heterosexual love. Dependence and vulnerability as well as all notions of hierarchies and restrictions seem to be relegated to heterosexual relationships. A feeling of liberating fluidity, here, is expressed by the water imagery that Anthea used to describe her desire for freedom.

While talking about the gender role and blurring the traditionally institutionalized marriage, it is crucial that lesbian love does not comply with the dominant ideal of a heterosexual relationship built along a power differential, but represents an idealized, almost utopian alternative. The relationship between Anthea and Robin is characterized by an unusual balance and mutuality. There is no role differentiation, or mimicking of heterosexual relationships, this is not interpreted as a lack but as enrichment while presentation of strengthens of same sex- marriage. After falling in love and having marriage with Robin opens up a whole new world of experience for Anthea. Through love, the mystery of Anthea's identity is resolved, independent of socially and medially prescribed role models.

Focusing upon constructed-ness of sex of gender through performance, Robin embodies an androgynous ideal that combines the best features of both genders. It is crucial to note that although traditionally masculine characteristics play a role in the description of Robin's beauty, masculinity does not dominate her appearance. Instead, what characterizes her is a certain indefinability, which plays with people's expectations regarding gender characteristics, upturning and subverting them, until it can no longer be certainly said which characteristic is 'properly' assigned to which gender. In Anthea's loving eyes this in definability is not perceived as a threat, but as a fascinating and titillating experience, and she welcomes the shattering of rigid binaries like a range of new, unseen colours. So, it is convinced that compulsory

heterosexuality is not a natural category but rather a system built by repeating over and over.

Anthea and Robin seem to realize a sort of utopian vision of female identity, as self-defined, self-loving, woman-identified, neither an imitation man nor its objectified opposite through the sensual activities among them. Physical sensuality plays an important role in the portrayal of the love between Anthea and Robin, the phallogentric myth claims that lesbian love is asexual and that there cannot be any sex without penetration is consciously refuted in the Ali Smith's *Girl Meets Boy*. Mimicking the climactic excitement of sex, with ecstatic and fantastic images chasing each other with ever growing pace shows sensuality and sexuality portrayed in *Girl Meets Boy* necessarily differs from the patriarchal and heterosexual conception of it, which is "genitally centered" and partitions off particular, discrete parts of the body for an exclusively sexual function. In contrast, the lesbian love portrayed by Ali Smith is 'ex-centric', and consequently does away with the compartmentalization of the body into areas 'central' and 'marginal' to sex.

While empowering homosocial bond over phallogentric world the body is represented in a holistic way, as an organ of sensuality in its wholeness. The body is not thought as separate or antithetical to the mind and the psyche in *Girl Meets Boy*, so that sensuality transcends the merely physical realm and affects body, mind and soul in equal ways. In fact, sex is not only thought of as an entanglement of bodies, which consequently leads to a blurring and possible transcendence of boundaries, but simultaneously as an entanglement and blurring of images while destabilizing the act of love making in phallogentric world. Anthea's and Robin's bodies and minds are imagined to fuse, and, together, create fluid new shapes and forms that keep shifting into each other.



In fact, by presenting a host of characters and their distinct sexual desires, the shifting notion of sexuality is successfully presented in *Girl Meets Boy*, which is largely dominated norm of compulsory heterosexuality. *Girl Meets Boy* features a very utopian portrayal of love – and specifically lesbian love – which works as an enlightening and liberating force in the life of the two lovers. This can be seen as a conscious reaction to the negative and resigned view of lesbian love that is featured in the myth of Iphis, and which lives in homophobic ‘myths’ until the modern day. By the fictional account of the text, Writer bridged the gap between theory and praxis, and the abstract theories practically applied in society both ‘questioning’ and ‘troubling’ the dominant narrative of heterosexuality.

To sum up, the novel being a queer novel by a famous lesbian writer is famous re-telling story of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. The celebrations of homosexuality through the revolutionary characters create a new taste for the readers. The deeds done by the homosexual character with their feeling, emotions and passion tries to establish homosexuality same as heterosexuality. The successful portrayal of the sexual minorities, with the disproved myth about queer and their sexual behavior proves the text as a most remarkable text of queer sexuality and sensibility. With the light of sexuality as a social constructivism, the text proves that the identity with which we born would be same to which we will take to the grave is not same at all. Our sexual desire is based on social and cultural phenomenon.

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