

**TRIHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Subverting the Traditional Language of Love and Sex: Body Politics in Winterson's**

*The Passion*

**A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

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**Approval Letter**

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## Abstract

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*The Passion* is romantic love story mediation on pleasure and disturbing faith in transforming power of romantic love between Henri and Villanelle. The novel however will be familiar of lesbian fiction in which “all for love” is a recurrent theme. Winterson’s story plays on our emotion and explores the root of human passion. It also poses a problem of lesbian, and recasting of modernity. Winterson allows to reimagining modern categories as sexual bodies, sexual boundaries, sexual object and sexual identities and offers instated a postmodern history construct new possibilities and realities of the virtual lesbian. The representations of heterosexual activity are most effective when they are juxtapose with the lesbian relationships of Villanelle and her lover. So, Winterson re-evolutes female desire, something distinct from male desire, a part of a ‘separate sexual economy.’

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## I. Lesbianism in Winterson's *The Passion*

Jeanette Winterson, born in England in 1959, established her as one of the most important young writers in world literature. She was raised by a family of Pentecostal evangelists and was destined to be a missionary. Instead she left home for several odd jobs before studying English at Oxford. She then worked in the theater before writing her first novel; *Orange Are Not the Only Fruit*, which won the Whitbread prize for the best first novel. In her unique and mesmerizing voice, Winterson blends reality with fantasy dream and imagination to weave a hypnotic tale with stunning effect.

Jeanette Winterson's novels have always been fantastic, toying with the convention of fantasy and stretching the limits of the short verbal refrain not until recently, however her use of fantasy and her liturgical style has been explicitly fused into a kind of fantastic language. She plays with language and narrative conventions characteristic of many feminist and postmodernist texts that have certainly not gone unnoticed by critics. As the recent explosion of scholarship on Winterson suggests, however, there is something remarkable about her texts, which perhaps stems from their precise and often beautiful, weaving of feminism and postmodernism to construct the new possibilities and new realities in and through language.

In Winterson's novel we find a disturbing faith in the transforming power of romantic love, a romantic investment in self-knowledge and sexual obsession that accords ill with postmodern convention of irony and isolation. These features of the novel, however, will be familiar to readers of lesbian fiction in which 'all for love' is a recurrent theme and romantic obsession a structuring form; such themes and forms have characterized the important intervention. Lesbian novelists have made inroads into the hegemony

of the heterosexual love story in the process creating their own canons and convention. But Winterson take on love is both romantic and romantic fusion that produces interesting result. Her Byronic investment in love as philosophy taken the form of a critique of the Cartesian subject that admirably further's the goals some postmodern the most challenge the modern regime of the subject supposed to know are those set in its originary era, European seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Winterson early modern setting allow her to make an argument about the inextricability of postmodern unraveling of the subject and the founding moments of modern subjectivity itself. Willam Pritchard says; "Winterson wishful and fantastic state is exposed through her exploration of narrative points of view that resist or exceed the boundaries of modern subjectivity with its reliance on personal history and bounded and knowable body"(121). This recasting of modernity allows Winterson to reimaging such modern categories as sexual identities and offers instead a postmodern history of the virtual lesbian.

Jeanette Winterson worked in theater before writing her first novel *Orange Are Not the Only Fruit* which won the white bread prize for best first novel she is also the author of *Sexing the Cheery*, *Written on the Body*, *Gut Symmetries*, *Art and Lies*, *art Object* and *The Passion*. *The Passion* is perhaps her most highly acclaimed work, a modern classic that confirms her special claim on the novel set during the tumultuous year of the Napoleonic wars. *The Passion* intertwines the destines of two remarkable people, Henri, a simple French solder who follows Napoleon from glory to Russian ruin, and villanelle the red-haired, web footed daughter of a venetian boatman, whose husband has gambled away her heart. In Venic, compound of carnival, chance and darkness the pain meet their singular destiny.



The novel *The Passion's* protagonist is Henri, a young soldier in Napoleon's army, lesbian or bisexual women are ubiquitous in the text; indeed, Villanelle, the woman Henri loves and follows across the European continent after the siege of Moscow, is involved in her own romantic search for the wife of a wealthy character whose lesbianism is taken for granted. For example the Henri visits kisses another prostitute after she has been brutalized by a soldier and Henri acknowledges, "she would never do that to me"(34). Henri's respect for lesbian relationship (including Villanelle's passion for the Venetian women), the way in which they seem to dwarf his own suggest a lesbian perspective made possible by Winterson's use of a male narrator. For Henri lesbian relationships exemplify the kind of passion for which he is searching. Thus lesbianism in *The Passion* is exemplary and definitive, rather than marginal and to-be-defined.

In the novel there are four sections, each of which includes a definite article in its title, thus assuming the shape of a poem with anaphora, the repetition of words at the beginning of lines as the predominant rhetorical tool

The Emperor

The Queen of spades

The Zero Winter

The Rock

The emperor of section 1 is Napoleon Bonaparte, but he is not the focus of the piece. The first-person narration is that of Henri, one of the emperor's cooks, whose job consists of first wringing the necks of chickens then serving them to suit Napoleon's peculiar taste. Henri's attitude's toward Napoleon change from admiration to love and

finally to disillusionment, as he emperor from war to wars which ostensibly are designed to bring peace but instead produce horrors.

The novel's most sustained representation of lesbian cultural objects and convention occurs in the 'Queen of spades' section, when the novelist narrated from the point of view of villanelle, a woman who cross-dresses and attracts the passions of both sexes. She is also women of action and a hard-nosed philosopher who considers all subjects including death, sex, love, religion, freedom-and most important, Passion, a recurrent motif that apparently touches all others. The daughter of a Venetian boatman, villanelle exhibits the legendary characteristics associated with her father profession; she has webbed feet and is able to walk on water. Her job in a gambling casino enables her to meet a variety of characters, the most important of whom are well-to-do married women with whom she has a passionate affair and a repulsive fat man whom she will eventually marry and then desert. Villanelle uncovers her mysteriously webbed feet, an attribute commonly rumored to allow male boatman to walk the Venetian waterways.

Out of love for Villanelle, Henri has murdered her husband and cut out his heart. Collapsed in shock, he refuse to defend him in the legal battle, nor will he permit Villanelle to see him in his prison, once it is clear that she will never consent to be his wife. Her refusal of social conventions coupled with his realization of her more tempered affection, exceeds his own tightly drawn response to social norms and need for returned affection. Henri falls into obsession with her ironically includes to any disruptive reality in his fantastic world. Commenting on his repeated rebuffs of her attempts to visit him in the madhouse at San Servelo, Villanelle reflects that "from my letters that are returned I

know I have lost him perhaps he has lost himself” (150). Whether one finds oneself through fantasy or loses oneself in madness becomes the closing question of the passion.

The passion has been analyzed and interpreted through various perspectives by different critics since its publication. In this unforgettable chronicle of perhaps the most highly acclaimed work, a modern classic that confirms her special claims on the novel. The critic James Wood says:

Winterson’s verbal refrains operate much like her romantic use of fantasy, so that repeated phrases work like musical motifs, associatively accruing different levels of meaning across the text, thus gambling is not merely a card game in the passion, but also a metaphor for how one deals with the chanciness of love and desire. (279)

In her unique and mesmerizing voice, Winterson blends reality with fantasy, dream and imagination to weave a hypnotic tale with stunning effects. The critic Judith Roof says:

By implicitly challenging the habitual heterosexual paradigm, representing lesbian sexuality consciously unmasks the gender and sexuality normally coalesce to reassert the complementary duality of sexual difference...As a point of failure [of representation], lesbian sexuality is a phenomenon that evades the rules; as a point of return, it is the example that proves the rule and reveals the premises upon which the rules depend. (107)

So, Winterson fiction poses a problem for Lesbian Theory. For it operates without reference to a founding assumption grounding many theories of Lesbian cultural production and representation.

Likewise, Julia Kristeva insists on the predominance of space over time in women's experience of the real she opines:

When evoking the name and destiny of women, one thinks more of the space generating and forming the human species than of time, becoming or history. In the passion the linear, teleological representation of time is counterbalanced by an emphasis on space as the site of the novels tensions and opposites. (120)

Similarly, Elaina Scarry says: "it is through physical pain, through the precise torture of the human body that our world-interior and exterior-are unmade. In novel abounding with the physical and psychic pain of torture, loss, and desire Winterson nonetheless show that bodies are also the way by which we can make new worlds" (32).

The text demonstrates how to take ownership of our bodies, in their excruciating pains and pleasures, and acknowledge that the experience of living is inseparable from bodily knowledge. Brutus green says; "Jeanette Winterson's manipulation of biblical stories, tropes and language in *The Passion*. Winterson herself has commented upon the considerable influence that scripture has upon her imagination and this novel bears up her claim in the profusion of allusion it makes to christen texts and practices" (195).

This avowal of Jeanette Winterson's past and subsequent differentiation from it is affirmed throughout her autobiographical comments, which emphasize the exalted place of the bible in her childhood among Pentecostal evangelicals. So the focus of this research will be the strange of carnalities a postmodern feminism. *The Passion* exhibits

its historical content and, yet it is markedly different example from the historical novel. If the some similarities can be noticed such as including of real historical figure-Bonaparte in it. Yet it seems that historical chronology is marginal, this discourse tries to show that, the passion play's with language and narrative conventions in order to expose the nexus between passion and religion, sex and Christ is but one example of the wide variety of attitudes and preferences presented in the novel. Villanelle does cross-dress, and both men and women are attracted to her even though it is not clear to them what her sex is; in fact the ambiguity seem to add to her appeal. The most erotic lovemaking related is between Villanelle and her female lover. While Villanelle and Henri do engage in heterosexual love, she prefers to think of him as a brother, thus finding more comfort in an incestuous relationship. Although Henri's love for Villanelle is sincere, he is very passive and quickly yields to her rejection of a more intense relationship. At no times does one sense any true passion between Villanelle and her husband. Villanelle defines passion in terms of the unstable no place it in habits: "Somewhere between god and the devil" (55), and "in between freezing and melting, in between love and despair, in between fear and sex passion is" (68).

Androgyny, transvestism, lesbianism, and passion alternate and intertwine, in much the same way as do the narrators: one male and one female. Although not specifically identified, the narrator makes clear, from point of view or content of the narration, his or her identity. Thus separable, the narrations are at the same time joined by the poetics. The male and female blending or ambiguity might be deceptive. Towards the end of the novel, there are various self-conscious statements within Henri's narration that reflect upon his words as parts of a diary or a journal.

Winterson plays with language and narrative convention, characteristic of many feminist and postmodernist texts, has certainly not gone unnoticed by critics. As the recent explosion of scholarship on Winterson suggest, however, there is something remarkable about her texts, which perhaps stem from their precise and often beautiful, weaving of feminism and postmodernism(and from their grounding in modernism) to construct new possibilities-new realities-in and through language. The threat of submersion of being swallowed up by the void, remains a constant problem for the female speaking subject in the symbolic economy of western culture; speaking from the place of other, many women experience an incongruence between what they want to say and what they can do. Thus, Winterson seems to suggest that lesbian experiences can be at the center not on the margins. Thus the virtual lesbianism of Winterson's fiction challenges the notion that the fragmentation of the subject also means the end of desire.

## **II. Discourse of Sexuality: Lesbianism**

The term sexuality is generally broader in meaning, encompassing erotic Desire, practices and identities. Sexuality refers to sexual attitudes, emotion, desires and behaviors. Though this is a very intimate and personal matter, it is regarded by the wider sex role system it is used to include our sense of ourselves as women or man. Similarly, the term sexuality is not limited to 'sex acts', but involves our sexual felling and relationship, the ways in which we are or aren't define sexual by other as well as the way in which we define ourselves. There is a different between sex and sexuality. Sex means biological maleness and femaleness and sexuality means the behavior related to copulation. Both are closely related as sexuality refers to the kind of relationship between male and female in copulation. Thus, sexuality refers to the whole area of personality related to sexual behavior of copulation is to occur, but this propensity is usually held to be different in male and female. In our patriarchal society, male assume the dominant position in sexuality. They shape sexual behavior to suit their own interest. Women aren't respect as autonomous individuals but are treated as dehumanized sex object.

Sexology treated sexuality as a biological and psychological phenomenon, often drawing the medical model, which regards difference from the narrowly defined heterosexual norms as pathological, mere recent approaches have given far higher priority to the social and cultural shaping of human sexuality. This new approach to sexuality lies at the heart of the historian Michel Foucaults work. He views sexuality as social construction. He tries to challenge the historical concept on sexuality, which has been defined in terms of mechanisms of power. He says that sexuality must not be seen

as drive but as especially dense transfer point for relation of power. In the same way he takes a “constructivist” position towards sexuality, as opposed to an “essentialist” position, which sees sexuality as something fixed that exists in us. The essentialist view of sexuality assumes that the sexuality is coexistence with existence. It can mean that every experience of existence has sexual significance or that sexual phenomenon has existential important, it is taken as a natural phenomenon that is universal and unchanging, something, which is a part of the biological make up of each individual. From this perspective, ‘sexuality’ is described basically as a fulfillment of heterosexual biological desire that is conceived as normal and natural.

The concept of sexuality is not universal. It is a human-constructed idea and discourse. Sexuality is a 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 cannot be treated in isolation. We cannot 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 which sexuality is learned and enacted, or scripted. Culture and societies organized sexual practices. So, the term sexuality does not refer just to genetics sexual activities but to all attitudes, values, belief and behavior that might be been to have some sexual significance in our society. Stevie Jackson says:

Biological factors do not determine the forms which sexuality takes, but merely set parameters within which other influence operate. Although women and men may differ genetically, hormonally and physiologically, it



is not possible to leap to the conclusion that they therefore also differ in term of personality s behavior. Biology is not destiny in any absolute sense; it only comes to be through the quantities, which are assigned to members of each gender within society. (63)

In this way, biological events as physiological process-such as aging, illness and reproduction are heavily influenced by the social-cultural systems in which they occur. For women aging process has its own strains in the society that values women for their youth and beauty and aging becomes a different social and psychological experience. Even though the reproduction is physical one, its significant lies as much in its social meaning.

Simon 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:

One is not born, but rather become 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 produce this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.(301)

Sexuality can be seen as a fluid category, which incorporate not only concrete and real activities but ruminations, fantasies and what not. Due to the individual difference, it is very hard to define a precise boundary of sexuality. Even identical sexual acts may mean

very different things to different people, sometimes, 'sex' and 'sexuality' also overlap, as Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick clarifies:

The whole realm of what modern culture refers to as 'sexuality' and also calls 'sex' - the array of acts, expectations, narratives, pleasure, identity-formation, and knowledge, in both women and men, that tends to cluster most densely around certain genital sensations but is not adequately defined by them that realm is virtually impossible to situate on a map delimited by the feminist defined sex/gender distinction. (29)

Sexuality is not matter of biological drive discharge mechanism but a matter of meaning, sexual behavior is also a product of our culture because our culture sets down the rules of proper sexual conduct and the definition of normal and abnormal sexual behavior.

Sexuality is socially constructed rather than inborn because it is based on the way in which sexuality is defined by the culture in which we live. Human sexuality has always been a social product and will continue to be so, no matter whatever form of society comes into being in the future. Sexualities are multiple not unitary, and not physiological or psychologically fixed for life but are socially shaped. As sexuality is social matter, it is essential to learn the nature of society to learn and understand sexuality. Thus sexuality is a human constructed idea and discourse, it is not natural and universal idea.

Heterosexuality is defined as 'pertaining to or characterized by the normal relation between the sexes', although it does not specify what normal means.

Heterosexuality refers to sexual behavior with, or attraction to, people of the opposite sex, or to a heterosexual orientation. It also refers to an individual's sense of personal and

social identity based on those attractions, behavior expressing them, and membership in 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. Heterosexuality is seen as an institution through which men appropriate women's bodies and their labour. It is argued that heterosexuality, as currently practiced, patronizes male pleasure in stressing penetrative sex as 'the real thing' and is perpetuating the myth of the vaginal orgasm. The construction of the heterosexuality through the binary opposition of gender helps it to produce the hierarchies, which systematically organize the oppression of homosexuality. Heterosexuality is a majority practices, which appears natural and the normal. Heterosexuality is a sexual intercourse between male and female. It is a means of procreation. Without the concept of heterosexuality, there is no possibility of human existence. Richard Dyer adds:

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 of heterosexuality something assumed to be natural, its normality does not need arguing for, it has the force of 'of course'. We don't stop to think about 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, reutilized norms by which we live. (264)

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 human existence, heterosexuality is needed to everybody. It is taken as natural because of its pervasive nature. Foucault in his book *History of Sexuality* also talks about heterosexuality. He opines:

The discursive explosion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries caused this system centered on legitimate alliances to undergo two modifications. First, a centrifugal movement with respect to heterosexual monogamy. Of course, the array of practices and pleasure continued to be referred to it as their internal standard; but it was spoken of less and less, or in any case with a growing moderation. (38)

At last, heterosexuality is a concept, used to delineate, and so regulate the nature of contemporary sexual relation. It is not simply a biological category, as often assumed, indeed biology developed for many years as a scientific study without the use of this term. Instead it is a social construct which has the power to regulate and reinforce not only particular kinds of sexual practices, but also the gender categories based on them. Heterosexuality is the concept which determines whether a man is recognized as a viable male subject and a woman as a viable female subject.

In opposition to heterosexuality, homosexuality refers to sexual behavior with or attraction to people of the same sex, or to a homosexual orientation. *New Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defined homosexuality as “a person usually a man, who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex” (747). Today the colloquial term “gay” for men or “lesbian” for women are considered respectful ways of referring to homosexual

people. Homosexuality is sexual desire or behavior directed towards a person or person of one's own sex. Homosexuality has a number of casual factors that influence its ultimate origination in individuals.

Throughout history, homosexuality has existed in most societies. Various cultures have different attitudes towards it. Societies vary widely in their tolerance of homosexuality, ranging from strict prohibition through casual acceptance to active encouragement. However, in the eyes of law and religion, homosexuality has been strictly prohibited. In Mosaic Law, it is considered to be an abomination punishable by death and Christianity has carried forward this condemnatory attitude. Though, no one knows exactly how and when homosexuality entered into human history, it is imagined that the practices associated with the erotic attraction of people to one's own gender have been around since the dawn of humanity. In his influential book *The History of Sexuality*, volume one, Foucault argues that homosexuality and homosexuals date from the 1870s.

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault speaks of the invention of homosexuality, among other exotic preventions, through the "specification of individuals" (42). Such a process affected the creation of new sexual identities around particular acts and perversions hitherto regarded as temporary aberration. Around the figure of the homosexual in particular was constructed a whole "personage, a past, a cast history and a childhood, in addition to a [...] life form and a morphology" (43). The specification of the homosexual was made possible by the confluence of a network of disparate discourses and practices targeted at the body of the pervert. The new sciences of sexology, psychiatry and medicine were particularly instrumental in the construction of

this new identity, where the articulation of power in the practices of confinement and treatment enabled such discourses to have practical effects.

At last, like other term, 'sexuality' and 'heterosexuality', homosexuality is also a social-constructed. Its meaning gets changed, when society changes. So, there is no universal and natural definition of homosexuality. Its meaning always depends upon society.

In the context of sexuality, the word lesbian always denotes female homosexuality. A lesbian is a woman who is romantically or sexuality attracted to other women. It refers to unnatural sexual relation between women. A better way to define lesbian then is to say that she is a women whose sexual desire is directed towards women. Lesbianism is a passion of a woman towards another woman. Lesbianism ultimately challenges the heterosexual imperialism of male culture. The woman who embraces lesbianism as an ideology, political and philosophical means of liberation of all women from heterosexual tyranny must also identify with the worldwide struggle of all women to end male tyranny at all levels. For a woman to be a lesbian in a male centered, capitalist, misogynist, racist, and homophobic, imperial culture is an act of resistance. Though a lesbian act, women are trying to rebel against the heterosexual system of domination. They refuse to become slaves in the male sexual market. The lesbian has decolonized her body and rejected a life of servitude heterosexual relationship and has accepted the potential of mutuality in a lesbian relationship.

Traditional thinking equates maleness and femaleness with masculinity and femininity respectively. Anybody who has male sexual organs or judged as male,

compulsively must go through certain expectations that he is supposed to fulfill as that male subject; rationally, active role in society or in the bed, and power. And the analogous process applied to femininity as well. Gender and sexuality can be seen as categories which regulate individual subjects, according to how they are prepared to perform their sexuality. At the same time, their performativity is clearly revealed these are not categories to be, but to perform. Judith Butler opines that whatever expression a subject makes can never be performance, since the 'I' cannot act due to preliminary imposition that is obligatorily orchestrated by society. Rather than performance, for Butler, it is 'performativity', which is a crucial term. Butler clarifies the modes of performativity in this manner: performativity is thus not a single "act", for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms.

Like other terms, 'sexuality' and 'heterosexuality' homosexuality is also social-construction. Its meaning gets changed, when society changes. So, there is no universal and natural definition of homosexuality. Its meaning always depends upon society. Bisexuality refers to sexual or romantic attraction toward members of both sexes. It is one of the main classifications of sexual orientation, along with a heterosexual and homosexual orientation, which all three together form the heterosexual and homosexual classifications but somewhere between. The Kinsey Scale measures sexual attraction and behavior on a seven-point scale ranging, from ("exclusively heterosexual) to (exclusively homosexual). According to Kinsey's study, most persons fall within the range of 1 to 5 "a mixture of heterosexual homosexual" (254).

Psychoanalysis's view bisexuality as a normal part of development i.e. every human beings no matter either male or female has the ability to become bisexual at sometime in his/her life. According to prominent psychoanalyst Dr. Joseph Merlin:

Freud maintained that bisexuality was a normal part of development. That all of us went through a period of bisexuality and that, in the end, most of us came out heterosexual but that the bisexual phase we traversed remained on some unconscious level, and was dealt with in other way. (17)

At last, we can conclude that no one can escape bisexuality in his/her life because the object of sexual orientation does not remain the same throughout the life rather it is matter of degree. One who identifies or being identified as hetero-oriented can't be same and the same goes with homosexuality. Hence, the existence of bisexuality as a sexual category dismantles the assumptions of heterosexuality which always aims to privilege heterosexuality by declaring it as normal, natural and balanced sexual orientation with this concept it regards other as abnormal.

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines Lesbianism as unnatural sexual relations between women. Adrienne Rich adds, "If we think of heterosexuality as the natural emotion and sensual inclination for women., lives such as these are seen as deviant, as pathological, or as emotionally and sensually deprived"(241).

Lesbianism is a passion of a woman towards another woman but not necessarily sexual but it can be emotional, affection and so on. Louis Tyson says: "Lesbianism is not



restricted to the sexual domain but consists of directing bulk of one's attention and emotional energy to other women and having other woman as own primary source of emotional substance and psychological support. This is a lesbian is a woman-identified woman" (324).

Similarly, in her essay *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*, Adrienne Rich makes critique of patriarchal definition of Lesbianism which limits lesbianism only with sexual acts says:

As the term lesbian has been held to limiting, clinical associations in its patriarchal definition, female friendship and comradeship have been set apart from erotic, thus limiting the erotic itself. But as we deepen 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 diffuse but, as Audre Lorde has described it. Omnipresent in the sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic and in the sharing of work. (240)

Lesbians are treated differently in historical period and society as well as it appears in different ways. The earliest known reference to same sex, love between women are attributed to Sappho, who lives on the island of Lesbos in ancient Greece and wrote poems which apparently expressed her sexual attraction to other females lesbians relationship were also common among the Lacedaemonians of ancient Sparta. Plutarch writes, "Love was so esteemed among them that girls also become the erotic objects of noble women" (5). As we have noted the existence of lesbians throughout history but

they were either invisible in the eyes of patriarchy or suppressed and punished. It is done to fulfill the interest of homosexual society.

Heterosexuality, the backbone of patriarchal system hegemonies heterosexuality as pure, natural. As well as essential on the contrary lesbianism is leveled as impure. Illness and unnatural which is nothing more than patriarchal politics to control women physically, psychologically as well as economically. In her 1980 “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” Adrienne Rich characterized heterosexuality as a “violent political institution making way for the male right of physical, economical and emotional access to women” (245).

Lesbianism ultimately challenged the heterosexual imperialism of male culture. The women who embrace lesbianism as an ideology, political and philosophical means of liberation of all women from heterosexual tyranny must also identify with the worldwide struggle of all women to end male tyranny at all levels. Heterosexuality has treated women as passive, recipient, an object of male sexual interest as well as denied female same sex love as unerotically deviant and illness. In heterosexual practices male plays the role of actor, dominator where female is considered merely an object.

Simone De Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* resists heterosexual domination while defining lesbianism. She puts:

But as a matter of fact the lesbian is more an ‘undeveloped’ woman than a ‘superior’. The lesbian is distinguished by her refusal of the male and her liking for feminine flesh. They sleep together, care each other, or

indulge in breast kisses. Between women love is contemplative, caresses are intended less to gain possession of the other than gradually to re-creates the self through her separateness the self through is abolished, there is no struggle, victory, no defeat, in exact reciprocity each is at once, subject and object, sovereign and slave, duality becomes mutuality. (437)

Some lesbian would like to call themselves separatists. They disassociate themselves as much as possible from all men, including gay men, and from heterosexual women as well. They may also disassociate themselves from lesbians who don't share their views. Lesbian separatists believe that only lesbian organization will give priority to lesbian issues, for separatists, just as for the majority of lesbian feminists who are not separatists, lesbianism is a political stance, not merely an issue of personal sexuality.

Lesbian revolts against patriarchal domination by denying male. In bonding with one another sexually and denying men access to their bodies. Lesbian denies patriarchy. One of its most powerful tools: heterosexuality. They deny heterosexuality as natural sexual orientation rather takes it as a political institution in that women's subservience to men is built into heterosexual definitions of feminine sexually. Lesbians do not merely deny heterosexuality rather they deny the class 'women' and choose 'lesbian' as their class to free themselves from patriarchal domination. Monique Wittig in her book *The Straight Mind: Feminist Issues* insists that:

The adoption of lesbian identities has been advocated on the grounds that only by breaking with heterosexuality and becoming a lesbian can a women overcome sexual oppression and domination or that only by

escaping the class 'women' and joining the politically revolutionary class  
'lesbian' can feminist subjects overcome their (hetero) sexual oppression.

(47)

For a woman to be a lesbian in male centered, capitalist, misogynist, racist, homophobic, imperial culture is an act of resistance. Though a lesbian act, women are trying to rebel against the heterosexuality system of domination.

Feminism is above all a politics, aimed at changing existing power relations between women and men. Its starting point, as Maggie Himm points out, is "the understanding that, in all societies which divide the sexes into different cultural, economic or political spheres, women are less valued than men" (45). As a social or political movement, its theoretical developments have been bound up with demands for political change. The emergence of 'second-wave' feminism, the term now usually used to describe the post-1968. Women's Liberation Movement was marked by new political groupings and campaigns, organized around abortion legislation, demands for legal and financial equality, and against pornography and sexual violence against women. But it was also marked by the publication of ambitious theoretical works such as Kate Millet's *Sexual politics* and Shulamith Firestones *The dialectic of sex*. Both works offered themselves as texts of revolution. Firestone insisted that what she called pioneer Western feminist movement of the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries should be seen as merely the first onslaught of the most important revolution in the history.

Other feminist however, while not wishing to return to a unitary concept of feminism which embraces post modernism. These theories point to a number of major

problem in this project alliance. At the heart of all these is the issue of power post modernism unlike feminism, as Linda Hutcheon remains us is not a politics it has no strategies of resistance and is not concerned with social and political changes. A post modernist feminism in which sexual difference is no longer seen as a fundamental organizing category but is replaced by the concept of multiple and shifting differences threatens to make feminist politics impossible. Such a politics must assume women to be a specific- and a specifically oppressed –constituency. If we turn for example to the political strategy proposed by Judith Butler, we find this problem. Butler proposes a strategy of “gender parody”, in which gender itself consciously and periodically performed in a masquerade which subverts because it draws attention to the gender and sexuality, to the multiple sexualities which can be written in our body. This is as Tania Modleski points out in *Feminism Without Women* (1991), an extremely individualistic solution to the problem of women’s oppression. It is also which is imbued with the political ambiguities of the post modernism. Parody, after all, depends on the stability of that which it imitates for its critical force. It oscillates as Butler herself concedes between complicity and critique. It is difficult to see the new configuration of politics advocated by Butler as extending beyond a repeated movement to displacement and excess and into strategy for social change.

In throwing in its lot with postmodern then might not feminism be colliding in its own eradication accepting the demise of metanarratives of emancipation at a point when women’s own emancipation is far from complete Feminists are understandably divided as to the answer to this question some like Sabina Lovibond, insist that feminism must not be seduced by the attractions of postmodernism for if feminism disowns the impulse to

enlighten it loses the possibility of all political and social action. Other take a very different line arguing that the critique of enlightenment belief which feminist theory has mounted most places it as a type of postmodern philosophy. Jane Flax for example argues that feminist theories like other form of postmodernism should encourage us to tolerate and interpret ambivalence, ambiguity, and multiplicity as well as to expose the roots of our needs for imposing order and structure no matter how arbitrary and oppressive these need may be (feminism and postmodernism). In this argument postmodernism becomes a sort of therapeutic corrective to feminism universalizing tendency. In a similar vein, Nancy Nicholson whilst rejecting the philosophical pessimism of Lyotard wish to adopt his critique of metanarrative's for a feminist social criticism. Such a feminist theory they argue would eschew the analysis of grand cause of women oppression focusing instead on its historically and culturally specific manifesto. It would also replace unitary conception of women and female identity with plural and complexly structured conception of social identity treating gender as one relevant strand among others, attending also to class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. In a thoroughly feminizing metaphor, they conclude that such a theory would look more like a tapestry composed of thread of many different hues than one woven in a single color (feminism and postmodernism).

Perhaps, Winterson novel will be the last we read as new form of representation emerge under the pressure of the postmodern condition in which the inadequate as a medium of exchange. Like the fantasies of the net and 'zines'. Winterson characters offer us hirthetro unrepresentation experience of the body as disparately gendered, inconsistently sexuality capable of acts and emotion that never make it to the realm of the

physical. The bodily moments that don't add up to recognizable identities are the ones we have been trained not to acknowledge. These lesbian fiction are troubling because they insisted on the intransigence of these disruptive moments –moments that under the glare of these fiction. We can no longer successfully deny, even while we suspect that they may be neither innocent nor wholly liberating of course this has also been true of other periods for the novel and history have frequently revealed their natural affinities through their narrative common denominators.

So lesbianism of course is the term under fierce debate in current theory debates too complex to details here. The notion of fragmented multiple, impossible, subjectivities of the break down of distinctions between the body and technology between technology and natural and of a consequent alienation from or irony about both subjectivity and the body. Which has tended to imply a refusal of the possibility of romantic love because of its presumed status as an illusory discourse of authenticity for lesbian it is a slightly narrow field that of lesbian romance fiction with its investment in the discovery of an authentic sexual identity in romantic love and in community and in the possibility of political action and change made possible by such connection. More accurately, we might say that Winterson is not imagining such a body but simply trying to describe it. Since such a chaotic relation to the material is presumably what identity exists distract us from and hence something we do not on some level experience.

My argument then is not that Winterson herself is uninterested in lesbian politics but that the political intervention made by her fiction is one that breaks with certain

convention of lesbian representation conventions that insists on the depiction of the challenges faced by lesbian as part of their critique of homophobia.



### III. Body politics in Winterson's *The Passion*

*The Passion* by Jeanette Winterson is set in Napoleonic France and Venice in the first year of the nineteenth century. It sidesteps the contentious first phase of the French revolution and the overthrow of Louis xvi to begin with the institution of the empire in 1804, an event many histories consider to signal the end of the first revolutionary period. The choice of this historical background of empire and expansionist warfare over that of revolution is not arbitrary; rather it is constitutive of a text of political focus, while manifestly gender and sexuality rather than politics in the national sense. The novel is set within the zone of the romantic dreaming into existence of the modern nation state and while a concept so fraught with historical complexity cannot be traced to any kind of simple root cause, it has become a modern excuse for the compulsively repetitive European “tradition of senseless nationalist warfare”.

*The Passion* is a romantic love story, a meditation on pleasure and its limits a poetic novel written in a style that is wholly original. Winterson's fiction presents a real atavistic approach, preventing the possibility of any definitive truth. The novel perhaps has disturbing faith in the transforming power of romantic love, a romantic investment in self knowledge and sexuality obsession that accords ill with postmodern conventions. The novel however, will be familiar to reader of lesbian fiction in which “all for love” is a recurrent theme and romantic obsession a structuring form; such theme and forms have characterized the important intervention lesbian novelist have made into the hegemony of the heterosexual love story in the process of creating their owns canons and conventions

The word lesbian always denotes female homosexuality. A lesbian is a woman who is romantically or sexually attracted to other women. It refers to "unnatural" sexual relation between women. A better way to define lesbian then is to say that she is a woman whose sexual desire is directed towards women. Lesbianism is a passion of a woman towards another woman

Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* mixes the cosmic and the carnal into a Napoleonic era, surrealistic romance. The plot and subject matter are nothing new. *The Passion* creates, not so much a psychological identification with the main characters, Henri and Villanelle, as a loss of traditional bearings through Winterson's juxtaposition of the mystical and the violent and the psychical, elements linked only by the word passion. The text avoids the cerebral, claiming the existence of webbed feet that walk on water and live women with no hearts in their chests, but the subtext asked questions about language. Where would this book have been without the word passion, its catalyst? Winterson's story plays on our emotions and explores the roots of human passion. Passion motivates every turn of the plot, every thought her characters have. Would these plot twists have happened or these character's emotions have been realized if the word passion did not exist?

Technically, this story is brilliant. The title word creates both an emotional framework for the characters and a thematic background. Henri and Villanelle's voices pace the book, maintaining a tight plot. Winterson's diction is sparse and dense, such as when Henri describes Napoleon, "But he had furs to keep his blood optimistic." Her text is moody and emotional. On one page Villanelle writes after making love with her female

lover, "I took to going to service twice a day to bask in the assurance of Our Lord & my body loosens then, my mind floats away" (123) A few pages later her lover goes vacationing with her husband, and Villanelle describes her religion again, "What a wonder, joining yourself to God, pitting your wits against him, knowing that you win and lose simultaneously. Where else could you indulge without fear the exquisite masochism of the victim?" (137).

Winterson wisely chose not to answer *The Passion's* subtextual questions directly but allows her narrative to convince us to answer, "Language impresses life and history, and vice versa." The language, the words passion, love, and hate, guide the narrative. If we don't have the words to describe what we sense or feel or desire, we can't discuss it or demand it. What if Villanelle or Henri could not express the passionate aspects of their emotions and psyche? Would they feel or act the same way? And conversely, without these acts of passion, Napoleon storming into Russia, Henri killing the cook, would history and life be the same? No, passion, life, and history are interdependent.

There narrative begins at Boulogne, "the spring board of empire" (8). Where Napoleon's troops are preparing to run the British navy's blocked and invades. England writing in retrospect and struggling to make sense of the horror of the past, her soldier narrator describes his compatriots as "a like warm people" who "long to feel" (24), yet are afraid to do so. The unconscious desire for death masquerades as love as the psychic drive which has no regimen object is all too easily redirected from the pursuit of sexual love, children, and community on to nationalism and patria, Napoleon and empire: "he was in love with himself and French joined in. it was a romance, perhaps all romance is

like that; not a contract between equal parties but an explosion of dreams and desires that can find no outlet in everyday life” (13).

In *The Passion* narrated alternately by two characters; Henri, who leave his home to follow his first passion, Napoleon, and Villanelle an androgynous woman who cross-dress and attract the passion of both sexes. She is a bisexual desire for both men and woman as a prominent psychoanalyst Dr. Joseph Merlin view bisexuality as a normal part of development i.e. every human beings no matter either male or female has the ability to become bisexual at sometime in his/her life. Bisexuality in his/her life because the object of sexual orientation does not remain the same throughout the life rather it is a matter of degree. One who identifies or being identified as hetero-oriented can't be same and the same goes with homosexuality. Hence, the existence of bisexuality as a sexual category dismantles the assumptions of heterosexuality which always aims to privilege heterosexuality by declaring it as normal, natural and balanced sexual orientation with this concept it regards other as abnormal. The passion meditation on passion-sexual, spiritual, filial and emotional. The first chapter follows Henri, a simple French soldier who follows Napoleon with unquestioning faith. The second chapter introduces Villanelle, a Venetian woman who literally loses her heart. The third chapter unites these two separate threads and the fourth chapter ties them together. But far from being clichéd or even predictable, Winterson weaves the narrative with so much of the surreal, the questionable and the casually fantastic that the reader ends up feeling caught in a strange sort of tapestry. Her style turns a seemingly simple story into a grotesque and beautiful fairy tale told through a looking glass.

*The Passion* is worth reading for the language and imagery alone, especially love Henri's urinations on the nature of passion - that there is no hate like the hate that comes from passion disappointed, that to be in love is to live one's life in the service of the beloved, that the beloved bears a mirror, and only in that mirror can the lover see himself. None of these ideas are new, but to read them in Henri's vulnerable, earnest voice, to think of them after the book is done and his fate completely known is a lovely, melancholy experience, Winterson address herself to the fear of finding oneself powerless in the torn position between reality and fantasy as the narrator villanelle overcome a momentary pause in an instant of suspended disbelief Villanelle uncovers her mysteriously webbed feet an attribute commonly rumored to allow male boatmen to walk the venation water ways, and she hesitates before trying her own luck on the water of the canal:

Could I walk on the water? Could I? I faltered on the slippery steps leading into the dark. It was November after all. I might die if I fell in. I tried balancing my foot on the surface and it dropped beneath into the cold nothingness. Could a women love a women for more than a night? I stepped out and in the morning they say a beggar was running round the Rialto talking about a young man who had walked across the canal like it was a solid. I'm telling you stories. Trust me. (69)

In this passage, Winterson presses the risks of believing in cultural myth while she also implies that a faltering in such form of belief must lead to "drowning" as well. Desire seems to lead villanelle forward into belief here and Winterson metafictional turn to the

reader likewise suggest that suspending disbelief or trusting the lies in her story will have a powerful effect on the reader. Women are ubiquitous in the text; indeed Villanelle the women Henri love and follow across the European continent. Henri respect for lesbian relationship the way in which they seems to dwarf his own suggests Winterson use of a male narrator. For Henri lesbian relationships exemplify the kind of a passion for which he is. Thus lesbianism in the passion is exemplary and definitive rather than marginal and to be defined.

Henri wish for love is what takes him for his passion for the emperor he has never met is the reason he first leave home. "Where ever love is, I wanted to be, I will find it as surely as the land-locked salmon finds the sea" (44). Although conceived in leeches term of romantic obsession this image of movement and fluidity acquires new layers of meaning as we follow it through the novel. For what Henri experience is not the loss of self conventionally associated with romantic love, but a multiplication of selves a proliferation of possible histories and identities: "perhaps our live spreads out around us like a fan and we can only know one life but by mistake seems others" (144). In this context historiography metafiction while teasing us with the existence of the past or real also suggest that there is no direct access to that real which would be unmediated by the structure of our various discourse about it. The debate over the existence and nature or reference in fiction has taken a number of forms ranging from denial or truth value to the granting of special status to the form of history and identities. Henri passion for Villanelle offers a vertiginous bridge between these potential histories; "if I give in to the passion, my real life the most solid, the best known, will disappear and I will feed on shadows again like those sad sprits whom Orpheus fled" (146). Passion is located variously in

novel “between fear and sex, between God and the devil” (147). The very imprecision of those locations constructs the virtually lesbian space in which characters and reader move through various subject position and narrative points of view as possible libidinal identifications with in novel.

The nexus between passion and religion, between sex and Christ is but one example of the wide variety of attitudes and preferences presented in the novel. Villanelle does cross-dress and both men and women are attracted to her even though it is not clear to them what her sex is; in fact ambiguity seems to add to her appeal. The most erotic love making related is between villanelle and Henri do engage in heterosexual love she prefers to think of him as a brother, thus finding more comfort in an incestuous relationship. Although Henri’s love for villanelle quickly yields to her rejection of a more intense relationship. At no time does one sense any true passion between villanelle and her husband as in the text Henri tells us:

Where was her husband this evening? He had left her. Not for another women. He didn’t notice other women. He had left her quite recently to go on a voyage to find the Holy Grail. He believed his map to be definitive. He believed the treasure to be absolute. ‘Will he come back?’ ‘He may, he may not.’ (144).

Out of love for villanelle, Henri has murdered her husband and cut his heart. Collapsed in shock he refuge to defend himself in the legal battle nor will he permit villanelle to see him in his prison once it is clear that she will never consent to be his wife. Her refusal of social convention, coupled with his realization other more tempered affection exceeds his

own tightly drawn response to social norms and need for returned affection. Henri falls in to obsession when villanelle refuses to conform to his control. His obsession with her ironically includes his refusal to see her or read her letters, a repressive resistance to any disruptive reality in his fantastic world. Commenting on his repeated rebuffs of her attempts to visits him in the mad house at San Servelo, villanelle reflects that “I row out every day now and he waves, but from my letters that are returned I know I have lost him. Perhaps he has lost himself” (150). Whether one finds one self through fantasy or loses one self in madhouse becomes the closing question of the passion. Madhouse seems less defined as the alternative world to reality rather it seems to be the desire to with draw from interaction with others. Now Henri plays with memory of others that he keeps inside himself. To complicated matters further Henri defines his love for Villanelle in distinct opposition to fantasy:

I am still in love with her. Not a day breaks but that I think of her, and when the dogwood turns red in winter I stretch out my hands and imagine her hair. I am in love with her; not a fantasy or a myth or a creature of my own making her. A person who is not me. I invented Bonaparte as much as he invented himself. My passion for her, even though she could never return it, showed me the difference between inventing a lover and falling in love. The one is about you, the other about someone else (157-58).

This encounter with the other heightens the necessity that fantasy will run up against reality often on that reading will breaks against its immediate context, suggesting that Winterson is suspicious of full isolation with in the fantastic world. If fantasy is for



Winterson a necessary part of the process of stepping out over the water a form of agency persisted on belief- it also requires an encounter with the real a point of interaction between the real and the imaginary such that signification fiction and art are not cut off from the context they address.

For Winterson, this possibility has its greatest potential- if not its only prospect of possibility in a lesbian economy; for in a space inhabited only by the other the lack on which the symbolic and its binary framework depend disappear. Already owned by everyone it ceases to exist. Villanelle cross-dresses, and it is while she is dressed as a boy that she falls in love with a woman. Like Henri, she experiences passion for the first time. Her lover however is content to remain married and in her grief Villanelle strikes a bargain with rich, boorish Frenchman who had made his fortune by supplying meat of questionable provenance to Napoleon's armies. Her conditions are that they leave Venice to travel the world, and his that she continues to dress as a boy for his sexual pleasure "Just the three of us, me and my codpiece" (96). They become lovers and Henri will be the father of Villanelle's daughter. Villanelle loves him dearly and their relationship is sexual, but she reminds him. "You are my brother" (177) only Henri's love qualifies as passion. For Villanelle the labyrinth is the maternal body as the source of endless pleasure, but it sets Henri teeth on edge for him it is the place of abjection where meaning collapses and he is lost physically and metaphorically. He asks for map, but Villanelle can not give him one, since Venice is a living shifting him (113).

Perhaps Winterson's novel will be the last we read as new forms of representation emerge under the pressure of the postmodern condition in which the

physical world, decaying economically and environmentally, seems increasingly inadequate as a modern of exchange like the fantasies of the net and the zincs Winterson's characters offer as hitherto unrepresented experience of the body as disparately gendered, inconsistently sexualized capable of acts and emotion that never make it to the realm of the physical.

It is in Venice that this protean quality of subjectivity is most explicitly felt for Villanelle. Her native city is a meeting place a neutral place populated by venetians with Siamese doubled souls (57). These are images of emptiness on the one hand and multiplicity on the other. But such connotation are not opposite in this novel, they represent the contracting and expanding space of subjectivity at once nothing and everything, nowhere and some. Where, "present and absent for Villanelle finally, Venice is the city of disguise what you are one day will not constrain you on the tent. You may explore yourself freely and if you have wit on wealth, no one will stand in your way" (150).

After Henri's imprisonment in the asylum of San Servelo at the end of the novel Villanelle retreats from this space. I don't dress up any more. No borrowed uniforms only occasionally do I feel the touch of that other life, the one in the shadow where I do not choose to live" (150). The novel's ironic and diminished ending is characterized by such a retreat on the part of both characters. Henri's retreat into madness, like Villanelle's refusal to dress up, constitutes the kind of refusal to live in the present that Henri had noticed and condemned in Napoleon. What remains at the end of the passion as Henri narrates his hallucinations from San Servelo, are two things romantic love "I review my

future and my past in the light of this feeling," (159), and writing itself the final line which has been repeated throughout the novel, "I am telling you stories" (55). Trust me. Both are technologies that continue to produce the subject in however fragmented and illusory a form such illusion remains effective even when we lose our innocence about them. It is perhaps in the degraded form of madness that we can trust those most.

Winterson re-evaluates female desire, something distinct from male desire, a part of a 'separate sexual economy'. An interesting perspective on lesbian sexuality is a comparison of *The Passion* with another lesbian text, *The Color Purple*. Sara Mills, in a critical analysis of Alice Walker's book, highlights the strong female characters in the text and remarks that the author gives: "very negative portrayals of heterosexual love and very positive portrayals of lesbian love, both sexual and non-sexual" (13). Villanelle is a very strong character. She dominates Henri, the text's principal male character, both sexually and non-sexually. She is highly independent, contrasting markedly with the traditional literary image of women as weak and dependent on males. Villanelle scares Henri, "I will always be afraid of her body because of the power it has" (123). She conveys an image of great physical strength as she rows away from her husband. Henri is struck by the image of muscles and sweat. Villanelle also displays an aptitude in those fields more commonly associated with men: "Villanelle was skillful with the compass and map" (101).

As with *The Color Purple*, there is a great difference between the representation of heterosexual and homosexual sexual activity. The cook treats the whores with no respect. When Villanelle has sex with soldiers it is described as "fucking" (87), rather

than making love. She does so not for pleasure but because she has to. The man from whom she steals a uniform is a typical example of the dominating, aggressive, heterosexual male who is too often considered acceptable; "We went to his room and he was a man liked his women face down, arms outstretched like the crucified Christ" (70). These representations of heterosexual activity are most effective when they are juxtaposed with the lesbian relationship of Villanelle and her lover. Perhaps the most striking example is the passage in which Villanelle first visits her lover's house. As with the fairy-story parody, this section again challenges dominant literary conventions (from Cinderella to Mills and Boon) of a perfect heterosexual love that always finds its way. Opposing this mythical notion of love being smooth-running, Winterson argues more realistically that; "whatever you have set store by, your dress, your dinner, your poetry, will go wrong "(66).

The arrangements at the table, side by side, challenge the traditional pattern of lovers sitting opposite one another, almost in opposition. Here the emphasis is on equality. The removal of man from this environment is highlighted by the statement given a separate line; "He was away" (67). He is removed from the situation, even his interests are intangible and mythical; the "griffin" and the "Holy Grail" (67). There is a sense of him not being as real as the women; Villanelle's lover describes her husband only as a "man of whom she was fond" (67). The physical part of the lover's relationship provides a marked contrast with the other sexual encounters in the text. When Villanelle later sees the woman kissed by her husband she remarks that "They did not live in the fiery furnace she and I inhabited" (75). It is ironic that Villanelle's lover says "I can't

make love to you” (67). When the scene is far more like love-making than the ‘fucking’ Villanelle is forced to undergo with the soldiers.

The breaking down of Enlightenment unifies is located historically in Winterson’s development of a colonial geography of the body in this novel of imperial conquest comparing the risk of falling in love with those of sea journey, Villanelle reflects:

Travelers at least have a choice. Those who set soil know that things will not be the same as at home. But for us, who travel along the bold vessels, which come to the cities of the intension by chance there is no preparation. We who were fluent find life is a foreign language somewhere between the swamp and the mountains. Somewhere between fear and sex somewhere between god and the Devil passion is and the way there is sudden and the way back is worse (68).

This scenario of spatial and linguistic dislocation maps neatly on the plot of imperial aggression in the novel, which follows Napoleon’s military career through the disastrous siege of Moscow. The mediating and potential geographically Henri recalls. That he, " got lost from the first where Bonaparte foes straight roads follow building is rationalized street sign may change to celebrate a battle but they are always clearly marked. Here if they bother with street signs at all they are happy to reuse the same ones over again. Not even Bonaparte could rationalize Venice" (112).

This is a postmodern hyperspace universe but also fairy tale forest, it evokes both the anti rationalism of magic and the post rationalism of technological proliferation and

penetration. Like a voyage of colonial exploration, the journey to such a land so made possible by both technology and fantasy, winter son collapse the distinction between modern and postmodern journey. Further when she takes colonial travel as a major theme in *Sexing the Cherry*. A discourse of love and physics then allows for a fantasy of language that both reside in the body and exceeds it perhaps the ultimate postmodernist feminist move. It is a fantasy founded on positivity rather than negation on faith and belief and on the conviction that the possible or imagined can be made real through other words.

It is hardly worth mentioning these 'Postmodern' elements for the sake of post modernity itself, Winterson's revolutionary use of language with much insight as Laura Doan who argues, What Butler pioneers theoretically Winterson enacts in her meta fictional writing practices a sexual politics of heterogeneity and a vision of hybridized gender construction outside an either/or proposition at once political and postmodern. The postmodern fiction is distinctive in its intense drive to stage confrontations between realism and historiography or realism and the literary tradition. In *Passion* set out to venture into a past that has been extensively covered by institutional historiography. So, right from the text it would seem that the punning metaphor conveyed by the passion open the way for a personal return to past that might be called in to question. In the *Passion* Winterson two narrator state that "all time is eternally present and so all time is our" (62). Byatt for her part in her own *Passion* of the mind explain that possession she meant to find a narrative shape which would explore the continuities and discontinuities between the form of nineteenth and twentieth century art and thought.

So, paradoxically here are two women writers who immerse themselves unreservedly in history while suggesting that time should not be envisaged as linear as prospective unfolding and teleology. Rather than pointing to any temporal succession, like war and peace or remembrance of things past, both possession and passion express forcefully a notion of intensity belonging to the here and now to quite Winterson they are superconductors; passion, delirium, meditation, even out of body are words we use to describe the heightened condition of superconductivity. So, Winterson revisiting of history is direct experience in writing in which desire and the body is central. Henri in the fourth chapter *The Rock* tells that; "the mystics and the church man talk about throwing off this body and its desires being no longer a slave to the flesh. They don't say that through the flesh we are set free. That our desire for another will lift us out of ourselves more cleanly than anything divine" (154).

As Linda Hutcheon argue that postmodern historical narrative value personal or life narrative: journals confession, biographies and self-portraits. *The Passions* do not offer any smoothed out, unified representation of the past but rather different perspectives. History is filtered through private individualized conscience. By introducing two narrative voice that of Henri, the French soldier and then Villanelle, the Venice born vivandiere, Winterson fiction presents a relativistic approach preventing the possibility of any definitive truth. Henri himself signals, metafictionally as it were what differentiates his own version of events from Villanelle's; "she was all primary ... she was not equivocal in her thinking" (109). As a gambler Villanelle is fascinated by the sheer intensity of the present whereas Henri is constantly preoccupied by "what is to come next "(23). Winterson implies that side by side with well known explanation of

mainstream history there is room for revision and thus advocate a centrifugal conception of history allowing different angles to coexist in the postmodern historiography. *The Passion* is a way of relating the past emphasizing emotion, impulses and effects, in short all that historiography as a field of study. The novel is not just fictional text calling up a historical vision of their own but they are deeply committed to questing way of representing the past, where the language of love and sex is defined in many ways as homosexual and heterosexual.

Winterson with such a postmodern inclination however, do the postmodern work of fragmenting and multiplying the subject more efficiently than the novel that seems to engage. Postmodern conventional setting and terms most explicitly suggest that Winterson's fictions enact a challenge to the desexualized status of such postmodern. This research paper of the passion might be Winterson's most-postmodern most-lesbian, most postmodern-lesbian text.



#### IV. Conclusion

*The Passion* is that kind of novel, which is about the nature of romantic and sexual attachments, examines a particularly powerful attempt to imagine a lesbian body without a libratory political agenda. The category of the 'virtual lesbian' understood as a designation for both characters and structure in Winterson's fiction *The Passion*. The two narrators Henri and Villanelle, provide the central parables of passion in their journey through the changing climate of desire, the homily on passion is also represented in exiguity through the parables they tell with in their narrative. A good example is Henri's parables of the invention, which is a direct retelling of the parables of the prodigal son. By implicitly challenging the habitual heterosexual conspicuously un.masks the ways gender and sexuality.

*The Passion* is the representation of lesbian sexuality that breaks the rules; as a point of return. It is the examples that prove the rule and reveals the premises upon which the rules depend. Lesbian experience can be at the center and not the marginal not only of postmodern culture but also of modernity itself. For Winterson the rule doesn't work for anyone even heterosexual men. She offers neither a critique of heterosexual culture nor Slavonic accounts of lesbianism, largely because she refuge to accept that conventional

distinction. But she mobilizes certain convention of lesbian self-representation. She understands them to provide an identity no less fractured than that heterosexuality.

The novel *The Passion's* protagonist is Henri, a young soldier in Napoleon's army, lesbian or bisexual women villanelle. Villanelle, the women Henri loves and follow across the European continent they both are involved in their own romantic search for wife of a wealthy character whose lesbianism is taken for granted. There two separated but interlinked journeys through the bloody wasteland that is Napoleon's Europe and in to the Venetian. Villanelle journey begin in Venice she cross-dress and it is while she is dressed as a boy that she falls in love with a women.

Thus the 'virtual lesbianism' of Winterson's fiction challenge the subject also means the end of desire. The power of romantic love makes her work continue with the genre of lesbian romance. Winterson's fiction makes the kind of contribution in understanding lesbian representation that this tendency to construct 'lesbian' as functioning Utopically is designed as an identity exterior to symbolic regulation. In Winterson's novel we see an even more radical assertion for she represents lesbianism simply as central, rather than opposed to anything. *The Passion* is an intervention that can be read as political but which takes itself i.e. in sexuality lesbianism has its own importance. Winterson's novel *The Passion* installs a particular lesbian narrative space at the center of the novel and their understanding of history, sexuality, and identity.

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