ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES: SEX, GENDER AND IDENTITY IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE PASSION* AND *FRANKISSSTEIN: A LOVE STORY*

Master's Thesis

Fadime Cansu PALAMUTÇU ÖZEN

Ankara-2022

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Thesis Advisor

Asst. Prof. Dr. Kuğu TEKİN

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Old Wine in New Bottles: Sex, Gender and Identity in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* and *Frankissstein: A Love Story*” and prepared by Cansu PALAMUTÇU ÖZEN meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of English Language and Literature following the successful defence conducted on 09 /06 / 2022.

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I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences;

- within the framework of academic and ethical rules;
- presented the information, documents, evaluations, and results in a way that meets the rules of scientific ethics and morality,
- I have referenced each work from which I have benefited while preparing my thesis, and that
- I hereby present a unique study.

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……/……./2022

Fadime Cansu PALAMUTÇU ÖZEN

ÖZ

PALAMUTÇU ÖZEN, Fadime Cansu. Yeni Şişelerde Yıllanmış Şarap: Jeanette Winterson'ın *Tutku* ve *Frankissstein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi* Romanlarında Biyolojik Cinsiyet, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kimlik, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2022.

Bu tezin amacı, Jeanette Winterson'ın seçilen romanlarda yarattığı zaman çizelgesi ve karakterler aracılığıyla biyolojik cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet ve kimlik kavramlarının nasıl evrildiğini göstermektir: İkinci romanı *Tutku* ve son yapıtlarından biri olan *Frankissstein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi*. Her iki romanda da Winterson, metinlerarasılık, parodi ve zamansal çarpıtma gibi çeşitli postmodern unsurları kullanır; böylece kurmaca yazınındaki geleneksel teknikleri altüst eder. Winterson, *Tutku* romanında, Henri ve Villanelle adlı iki adet hikaye anlatıcısı yaratır, atfedilen cinsiyet rollerini değiştirir ve biyolojik cinsiyet ile toplumsal cinsiyet arasındaki sınırları bulanıklaştırır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, toplumsal olarak kadınlardan ve erkeklerden beklenenlerin nasıl farklılaştığına odaklanmakta ve bu inşa edilmiş rollerin performatif doğasının altını çizmektedir. *Frankissstein: Bir Aşk Hikayesi*'nde iki anlatıcının yanı sıra iki farklı zaman dilimi de vardır. İlk hikaye, annesi feminist hareketin öncülerinden Mary Wollstonecraft olan Mary Shelley tarafından anlatılır. İkinci anlatıcı, varlığı, cinsiyet rolleri ve değişken kimlikler hakkında çok daha geniş bir perspektif sunan trans doktor Ry Shelley'dir. Dolayısıyla bu tez, ilgili teorilerin ve argümanların ışığında, biyolojik cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet ve kimlik kavramlarının analizini Winterson'ın karakterleri aracılığıyla sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Onların deneyimleri, "yıllanmış bir şarabı yeni şişelere koymanın" hiçbir anlamı olmadığının altını çizer çünkü ikili sistemlerin her zaman "Öteki" bir tarafı olmuştur. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma, bilindik eski ikili sistemler için üretilen yeni etiketlere rağmen, hetero-ataerkil sistemin kökünün aynı kaldığını da göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion, Frankissstein,* Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Performativite

ABSTRACT

PALAMUTÇU ÖZEN, Fadime Cansu. Old Wine in New Bottles: Sex, Gender and Identity in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* and *Frankissstein: A Love Story*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2022.

The purpose of this thesis is to show how the concepts of sex, gender and identity have evolved through the characters and the timeline Jeanette Winterson creates in the selected novels: Her second novel, *The Passion* and one of the later works, *Frankissstein: A Love Story*. In both novels, Winterson employs a variety of postmodern elements such as intertextuality, parody and temporal distortion; thereby subverting the traditional techniques in fiction writing. In *The Passion*, Winterson creates two narrative voices, Henri and Villanelle, switches the attributed gender roles and blurs the borders between sex and gender. Thus, this thesis focuses on how the social expectations from women and men differ and underlines the performative nature of these constructed roles. In *Frankissstein: A Love Story*, there are not only two narrators yet two separate time periods as well. The first story is narrated by Mary Shelley whose mother is one of the leading figures of feminist movement, Mary Wollstonecraft. The second narrator is Ry Shelley, a trans doctor whose existence offers a much broader perspective about gender roles and fluid identities. Therefore, in the light of related theories and arguments, this thesis aims to present the analysis of the concepts of sex, gender and identity through Winterson's characters. Their experiences highlight the fact that there is no point in "putting old wine into new bottles"- there have been always "the Other" sides of the binaries. Hence, this study also demonstrates that the root of hetero-patriarchal system stays the same despite new labels produced for the same old binaries.

Keywords: Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*, *Frankissstein*, Gender, Performativity

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The process of deciding the subject of this thesis was both the hardest and simplest decision for me. The hardest because I have always wanted to choose something fruitful for me and readers despite the prejudice against literature. The simplest because I think I always knew that I would choose my dear Jeanette Winterson and let her beautiful characters to take over my thesis. Thus, the novels I chose to focus on offered me different worlds and encouraged me to learn and write the story of them finding their identities. Not only fictional characters but also real people have encouraged and assisted me a lot in this fruitful yet difficult journey of writing and learning. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Kuğu Tekin. Her choice of novels for her course syllabi broadened my horizon. I owe a large debt of gratitude to her, both for her invaluable feedback for my earlier presentations and for draft chapters of my thesis. I am sincerely thankful to her for believing in me and encouraging me to do my best. I would also like to thank my thesis defense committee members: Asst. Prof. Dr. Gökşen Aras and Asst. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Selmin Söylemez for their insights and constructive comments. It would have been impossible to complete this thesis without the contribution and intellectual input provided by my dearest instructors Prof. Dr. Aytül Özüm who introduced Winterson to me during my bachelor's degree in Hacettepe University and Asst. Prof. Dr. Sibel İzmir whose comprehensive lectures and feedback have always motivated me.

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My cocostar, my fluffy everything, the best cat, Juliet. This thesis is dedicated to you and Okan, too.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The main concern of this thesis is to show the significance of the connection between the concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality by drawing on the historical and social background of feminist waves and queer movements. Since mapping the complex connection between these concepts requires to explain their link to postmodernism, I focus on the work of one of the most prolific authors of the postmodern feminist genre, Jeanette Winterson. Although she does not want to be categorised as "a lesbian postmodern writer," it is inevitable not to trace her postmodern clues in her work which are blended with gender issues between the lines. Hence, I aim to analyse and compare two of her twenty-four novels which deal with these aforementioned concepts directly or indirectly in the framework of postmodernism: *The Passion* (1987) and *Frankissstein: A Love Story* (2019).

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter will present theoretical background shedding light on the significant dates and events. This theoretical part is composed of three sections entitled "A Brief History of Feminist Waves," "Gender Issues" and "Discovering Queer Ways of Being." The reason for dividing the conceptual framework into subsections is that when presented concurrently, practices in real life and the theories make much more sense for readers and it becomes easier to grasp the academic scholarship and apply it to the works that are analysed in the thesis. In "A Brief History of Feminist Waves," the history of the First and Second Wave of Feminisms will be summarised by touching upon the prominent names and their deeds and/or works such as Simone de Beauvoir and her famous work *The Second Sex*. In addition, how feminism has evolved as an uphill struggle against patriarchy and gender inequality will also be discussed along with the positions and analyses of different feminist movements such as liberal and radical feminism. In "Gender Issues," as its title suggests, the concepts of sex and gender will be defined and explored within a broader framework with the aim of prompting readers to question what they really represent. Theories and arguments of main feminist thinkers regarding these concepts will be discussed, most prominently that of Judith Butler, the author of *Gender Trouble*. The last subsection, "Discovering Queer Ways of Being," will probe into the word 'queer' and reveal how it ends up being an umbrella term for people who feel outside the strict gender roles and categories enforced by

societies. In an attempt to contextualize 'queer' ways of being, I will first introduce the basic hetero-patriarchal assumptions about sex and gender roles based on dualistic worldview. Furthermore, I will present how queer theory problematises these assumptions and subverts them in its unique transgressive ways: embracing all the identities and performances and celebrating gender fluidity.

The second chapter of this thesis introduces Jeanette Winterson as an author and her work. In this part of the thesis, Winterson's life and works will be presented together with some interesting details from her life that are relevant to understand and situate her work. In addition, her style and how she combines art and life will be discussed.

The third chapter looks at Winterson's 1987 novel The Passion in detail. It is composed of four subsections. The first section, "*The Passion* as a Postmodern Work," contextualizes the novel within the feminist postmodernist literature. It starts with the summary of the novel and later demonstrates the postmodern elements employed such as fantasy, rewriting, parody and magical realism. In the summary, introductory explanations about the places and characters will be covered for readers to integrate the analysis of the characters into the story itself. Thus, the link between postmodernism and the subject of the novel will be underscored. The following three sections analyse the main the characters of the novel, first separately and then together: "Henri," "Villanelle", and lastly, "Henri & Villanelle." In "Henri," the male narrator Henri will be analysed in terms of gender roles and how Winterson subverts the traditional gender roles imposed by patriarchy will be illustrated with the distinct dialogues and scenes from the novel. The examination of other male characters such as Napoleon Bonaparte and Henri's father will be also included so as to strengthen the argument. In this analysis, I will benefit mainly from the theories and arguments asserted by Simone de Beauvoir, bell hooks and Judith Butler. In "Villanelle," I focus on the female narrator, Villanelle and provide an evaluation of how her physical attributes and sexual orientation dismantle the patriarchal and heterosexist binaries in a postmodern manner. I analyse her transgressive and "deviating" nature by using the same concepts and theories that I employ to understand Henri, such as gender performativity, and show how Wintersons's depiction of Villanelle similarly subverts fixed norms about sex, gender, and identity. Last, the fourth section of the chapter "Henri & Villanelle" presents a comparison of these two narrators and their unique

characters through their relationship. I will also explain how they, as individuals, develop psychologically and sexually throughout the story in the framework of the aforementioned arguments.

The fourth chapter focuses on the second novel *Frankissstein: A Love Story.* The first section of the chapter, entitled "*Frankissstein: A Love Story* as a Postmodern Work" concentrates on the summary of the work with introductory explanations about the characters and themes. It also expands on the postmodern elements in the novel such as playfulness, intertextuality, and temporal distortion to forge an intertwined analysis of postmodernism and the subjects of the narrative. In the next section, titled after the narrator of the first story, "Mary Shelley," I will analyse her character with a reference mainly to her mother, one of the most prominent figures of feminist movement back in the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft. Furthermore, I will include the analysis of other characters such as Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron who play a significant role in the development of the character and the story in terms of their attitudes toward condition of women and men in the society. The last section of this chapter, entitled "Ry Shelley," will provide an analysis of the trans narrator of *Frankissstein: A Love Story* by shedding light on the fluid nature of sexual identities through queer theory. I will also discuss some dialogues relevant to the issues of fluid identities and the critique of heteronormativity at the corporeal and psychological levels.

In the concluding chapter, the characters will be briefly introduced and compared in the framework of sex, gender, and identity. The focal points of the analysis of the novels will be covered. At the end, the findings of this study will be highlighted and the contribution of the thesis to the field will be underscored.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 A Brief History of Feminist Waves

I was always more interested in challenging patriarchy
than my brother was
because it was the system that was always leaving me
out of things that I wanted to be part of.
bell hooks - *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*

First Wave Feminism as the organized activity hinged mainly on many different and independent activities of the eighteenth-century feminists. They did not call themselves feminists yet and working-class women were not among their interests.

> The major achievements of the first wave feminists were: the opening of higher education to women, the reform of secondary education for girls; and the enactment of the Married Women's Property Act, 1870. They remained active until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, which put a stop to suffrage campaigns. First-wave feminist activism failed to secure the vote. (Jenainati and Groves 13)

Modern feminism is known to start with *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* written by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792. "Far from portraying women as superior to men, Wollstonecraft wanted to raise their overall moral and intellectual stature to make them into more rational citizens" (Gamble 15). She is regarded as one of the pioneers of liberal feminism which simply aimed for equality between two sexes at a governmental level. Despite accepting that most middle-class women would get married and stay at home, Wollstonecraft thought that the education of girls should prepare them for their own independence, not for the happiness of future husbands (16). In fact, Wollstonecraft has a point here because in the 1850s, the decade of activism, there were limited job opportunities for women and their education was also limited – not enough for every kind of work, even bad for teaching. In other words, as Alison Stone points out, Wollstonecraft's point of view anticipates the distinction between sex and gender because, despite accepting the helpless situation of women, she reasons that it is caused by not female biology but the social condition and behavioural codes they are born into – "it is a matter of gender not sex" (11).

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor were other important figures of this age of activism and in 1851, the year of their marriage, Taylor published *Enfranchisement of*

Women opposing the idea that "all women should be treated as potential mothers and [she] argued for an expansion of employment opportunities" (Gamble 17-18). Also, *The Subjection of Women* written by Mill in 1869 "established a correlation between the degree of civilization of a people and the social position of its women" (Jenainati and Groves 22).

> In the course of the 19th century, the vote gradually became central to feminist demands. It was seen as important both symbolically (as a recognition of women's rights to full citizenship) and practically (as a necessary way of furthering reforms and making practical changes in women's lives). But winning the vote proved a complicated struggle, and one that lasted for decades. (Walters 79)

By the 1890s, as the number of men who were enfranchised was increasing, a sense of inequality and injustice among women was increasing, too. "They pointed out that men who were poor and barely literate had been given the vote, while well-educated women, who paid rates and taxes, were still excluded from full citizenship" (74). Then, in 1903, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was established by Emmeline Pankhurst from the Pankhurst family and this union started to hold meetings and organized protest marches to the House of Commons that became sometimes violent. "The WSPU is certainly the best-known, and was perhaps the most effective, group fighting for the vote, but there were many others – the Women's Freedom League, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, the Actresses' Franchise League – who may have been less high-profile, but did make progress" (77). 'Suffragette' as a term was coined by Daily Mail in 1906 and at last in 1918, women over 30 gained the right to vote and then in 1928, they finally had full voting rights.

Second Wave Feminism emerged in Western countries in the 1960s and spread to other countries. The term “Second Wave” was coined by Martha Weinman Lear who wrote an article called "The Second Feminist Wave" for the New York Times in 1968, posing a question as a subtitle: "What do these women want?" In order to grasp what “these women” of Second Wave Feminism wanted at the time, it is useful to understand the perspective presented in Simone De Beauvoir’s masterpiece, *The Second Sex* (1949), which is considered one of the founder texts of modern feminism, anticipating the coming of Second Wave Feminism. Published right after the enfranchisement of French women, *The Second Sex* paved the way for a new way of thinking about women’s position in society and became a landmark for the feminist movements.

In *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir starts with a question "what is a woman?" although she is well-aware of the fact that "enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism" (13). She highlights the significance of this basic question because, although women constitute half of humanity, men still behave as if they are the world itself. Therefore, Beauvoir asserts, if a woman is to describe herself, the very first thing to utter is that "she is a woman" and the argument should then depend on this truth (15). On the other hand, men have never needed such an introducing statement since

> the terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity. (15).

On the other hand, according to De Beauvoir, one of the reasons why women cannot unite is that women are given no space to create their own worlds. They are programmed to go along with the male members of their circle rather than building solidarity with other women. In a world where even the workers of a company unite and share the same dream, De Beauvoir says, women do not have the urge of organizing to be "One," not "Other." The basic motive behind this inequality is, she argues, that men already "constructed" the world on behalf of and for themselves, placing themselves at the centre and leaving women no place but being the Other. In her book, there are many examples to shed light on the historical background of this unfair positioning of women, such as Plato's giving his thanks to God that he was born free and not a woman (21). Beauvoir also discusses the effective role of myths on societies, reminding of powerful male Gods invented by men and worshipped by women. In other words, women continue to "dream through the dreams of men" (162). Therefore, having questioned the background or root of this "constructed" world by and for men, women are expected to accept a position for themselves as an extension of men, and hence, Beauvoir comes to her celebrated conclusion that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine" (273). With this statement, Beauvoir lays the foundation for discussions and theories on the fact that "gender differences are set in hierarchical

opposition, where the masculine principle is always the favoured 'norm' and the feminine one becomes positioned as 'Other'" (Pilcher and Whelehan 56-57). In other words, from Beauvoir's perspective, it is the fault of patriarchal society to deprive women of a "Subject" status.

Second Wave Feminists built their analysis of patriarchy on that of De Beauvoir. Like her, they also maintained that "man 'remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he invents, he shapes the future'; woman, on the other hand, is always and archetypally Other. She is seen by and for men, always the object and never the subject" (Walters 98). Second Wave Feminists started to see themselves from a broader and different perspective and realised that their so-called personal issues were framed as such by the patriarchal dynamics. To put it another way, they started to see the social and political components behind the formation of the "personal." This reading of the Second Wave feminists formed the basis of the most ground-breaking slogan and political contribution of the movement: "the personal is political." This approach also set the difference of the Second Wave from the First Wave. Second Wave feminists did not only demand social opportunities like their First Wave counterparts, but they also wanted to deconstruct male dominance in the private sphere, as De Beauvoir's influential analysis has revealed that women's second-class status originated not only being at home but in every domain of social life.

According to Maggie Humm, there are two different ways of thinking in Second Wave criticism: Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) share the same approach, which is pragmatic and experiential whereas criticism in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) can be regarded as politicised. While Friedan and Greer choose to focus on how women react to patriarchy, the latter group bases their arguments on patriarchy as the sole source of the subjugation of women (35). One of these influential works, *Sexual Politics*, based on Millett's doctoral thesis, emerged from within the radical feminist movement. It aims to subvert patriarchal oppression by using specific literary works by some male writers: D.H.Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet. Having analysed these literary works, Millett concludes that literature seems to be controlled by men and this male domination is regarded as the norm. Moreover, she argues that sexuality is constructed in the social sphere and under the influence of this male dominance; it is not a "natural"

phenomenon. She also criticizes Freud for his identification of sexual differences with activity (=masculine) and passivity (=feminine). Millet suggests that "masculine" and "feminine" are elaborate behavioural social constructs for each sex, and thus they are obviously cultural categories and subject to endless cross-cultural variation (190-191). As such, it can be concluded that Millett achieves more than analysis of literary works like an ordinary literature student. Instead, she highlights the motives behind how sexuality is constructed and becomes politicised. Thus, *Sexual Politics* turns out to be one of the fundamental cornerstones of Second Wave Feminist movement.

Among the influential figures of Second Wave Feminism, Betty Friedan is seen as one of the architects of the American Women's Movement. Her classic work, *The Feminine Mystique*, "exploded the myth of the happy housewife in the affluent, white, American suburbs; 'the problem that has no name,' she wrote, 'burst like a boil through the image of the happy American Mystique'" (Walters 102). Friedan then founded the NOW (National Organization for Women) in 1966 in the USA and became its first president. Despite her influence, however, Friedan also received some criticism from within American feminism. Jenainati and Groves argue, for example, that Friedan failed to recognise the origin of women's oppression and did not take into account women's varied access to education. They maintain that "Friedan, like de Beauvoir, focused solely on the experience of middle-class, heterosexual, white women. Both critics tended to blame women themselves for their subordinate position and failed to acknowledge the need for society to change in order to accommodate women's changing lives" (39). Jenainati and Grove's criticism has in fact become a widespread one directed towards the Second Wave. As it seemed to have concerned only middle-class and white women, Second Wave feminism in the USA became increasingly problematic for women of colour who started to articulate their different experiences as women so as to theorize what comes to be known as Black Feminism. For black women, race and gender were inseparable. They underlined the need for feminism to embrace the diversity of women's experiences; the need to reveal "the 'unwritten history' of slave women who suffered a 'double slavery.'" Ostensibly, "they were women in a patriarchal society (like their white counterparts);" however, as for being black and slave, these women "neither owned their own bodies (and were therefore at the mercy of their master's desires), nor had rights over their own children, who could be sold away from them" (Gamble 149). This idea finds its most emblematic

expression in the title of bell hook's first book published in 1981: *Aint I a Woman*? One of the most distinguished figures of Black Feminism, bell hooks opened the door for the multiplication of feminisms in the American context. Thus, in order to draw the public's attention to her work instead of her personality, she chose to use lower case in her name.

In addition to liberal and black feminism, there were also other movements such as radical feminism and socialist feminism, the latter of which argued that the source of women's oppression was sexual division of labour in the private sphere and women's unpaid labour. While socialist feminists emphasized the overlap between women's oppression and class oppression, radical feminists focused more on the abolition of patriarchal oppression. Unlike liberal feminism, which was based on the idea of reforming the system, radical feminists argued that it is the patriarchal system that should be radically transformed at all levels, including the political, social, and cultural levels, as they were defined by and for men.

1.2 Gender Issues

> Looking at the reasons patriarchy has maintained its power over men and their lives,
> I urge us to reclaim feminism for men,
> showing why feminist thinking and practice are the only way
> we can truly address the crisis of masculinity today.
> bell hooks - *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*

The issue of gender has been on the stage of history for a relatively short time, and it was Second Wave Feminism that initiated its emergence in the academic field. That is why the aforementioned women have a special role in making "women" visible in the disciplines such as arts and social sciences. The inequality between women and men was not regarded even as a (serious) problem before the 1970s; however, the questioning by Second Wave Feminists triggered the process which made "the presence of women" appear in a world where even the word "man" refers to humankind. For instance, in the field of literature, the canon included only Western and male perspective and this sheer hegemony was one of the biggest obstacles for women as it prevented them from being great writers. Despite having empowerment for women and feminist perspective, most of the time, 'women's studies' is a both-sided critique: one tries to change the already established disciplines, another one

presents a specialist critique, separate from other areas. “Within the disciplines, this critique sometimes amounted to ‘adding women in’ rather than recognising that men too are gendered beings” (Pilcher and Whelehan xi). In other words, regarding “men” or male perspective as the sole subject of history not merely makes women off the stage but also prevents men from experiencing the world as “men” themselves. Consequently, the awareness about men as the half of the story, not the whole one paves the way for 'gender studies' alongside women's studies; however, the central point of which is still the feminist perspective.

Patriarchy has always been a problematic issue and it can be considered even the beginning point of feminist movements especially radical feminism. Firstly, the word refers to “a society in which the oldest male is the leader of the family” then “a society controlled by men in which they use their power to their own advantage” (“Patriarchy”). So, not only women and children but also younger men are ruled according to the rules of patriarchy. Nonetheless, since the early twentieth century, the word has been used in women’s studies to refer to the domination of men over women. However, despite presenting the power on women, patriarchy affects men differently, too. That seems to be the reason how men’s studies became a distinct area in the academic field. In terms of gender studies, patriarchy has a significant role in questioning and reasoning the motives of male hegemony and theorising new concepts and ideas in the field. However, unfortunately, most of the societies in the world base their system on binary oppositions, accordingly hierarchical dichotomies referring to male and female sides of the objects or concepts such as body and mind, outside and inside, and dark and light. Hence, all the positive sides in pairs are attributed to masculinity whereas negative and especially weaker ones are left to femininity. It can be commented that this gender hierarchy limits itself to only the two sexes: men and women. But later, race and class were added to these hierarchies when Europe started to have colonies in far lands and as Wiesner-Hanks argues, white women became the representation of purity whereas nonwhite (mostly black) ones were associated with negative female characteristics such as disobedience. Likewise, nonwhite men shared the same inequality, even more, since white men had the top position in this hierarchy constructed by gender, race, and class. It is so disturbing to see that while the top (white men) and the bottom (nonwhite women) were certain, who constituted the middle was vague. “Were hierarchies of race easier to overcome than those based on gender, i.e.,

was it easier for a woman to be 'manly' or for a nonwhite man? If social class could outweigh gender as a determinant of social role for a woman like Queen Elizabeth, could gender outweigh race for a man like Shakespeare's Othello?" (Wiesner-Hanks 90).

According to Stone, feminist philosophy was born in order to address some problematic issues and concepts which were not taken into consideration by other disciplines of philosophy so far. The most fundamental ones are sex, gender, sexuality, sexual difference, and essentialism. The distinction between sex (being male or female biologically) and gender (the behavioural expectations of society attributed to men and women) is known to be the central point to the discussions in feminism. Then, sexuality is also a related concept about which feminists claim that a woman, for instance, does not have to behave in a feminine manner or a man can be attracted to another man (Stone 2). In fact, these concepts are intertwined and explained through each other. Gender was not a new concept but the word itself did not carry this meaning until the late 1960s – it had only grammatical connotation in some languages such as French. Even Simone de Beauvoir implied the role of the society in constructing masculinity and femininity without using the word 'gender' when she uttered her famous sentence: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." Now having a specific name, gender as an old long-lasting issue in feminism became more visible thanks to Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1971) and Ann Oakley's *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972). They challenged biological determinism which means that biological sex is the determining factor shaping the position and responsibilities in society.

In addition to biological determinism, essentialist notion is one of the concepts which has been challenged in feminism. Biological determinism maintains that as women and men are different by birth, gender is accordingly determined biologically. This dichotomous point of view rejects everyone and everything except women as representations of femininity and men as that of masculinity. By the same token, when a specific behaviour is known to be instinctual and connected to gender, then it makes it difficult for people to evaluate these behaviours in any other way. To illustrate, it is believed that aggressive behaviour of a male person stems from the level of testosterones and this situation is regarded as "a role that is also associated, for many of us, with the male "instinct" to be the breadwinner and to protect the home" while "caregiving to infants and young children has been labelled a female instinct" (Tyson

109). However, an American theorist, Judith Butler presents an anti-essentialist approach to the field in her ground-breaking work, *Gender Trouble* (1990). She aims to subvert the distinction between sex and gender and break the limited frame of social expectations imposing the so-called proper behaviours for women and men. In fact, she develops the idea that both sexual and gendered identities are performed and the distinction between these identities becomes blurred. The concept of gender is not introduced as 'real,' it is yet a politically formed border. Sex is, too, seen as a compulsory and legal order, forcing the body to be a cultural figure and to introduce itself as such. Hence, Butler points out that "sex becomes a 'corporeal project,' a sustained performative act." The concept of 'authentic' femininity or masculinity now turns into a concept in which the arrangement of sexuality and/or gender is performative, shaped by "a recycling of gendered signs of sexuality and desire" (Gamble 50). In addition, she asks if it is possible to create a common category and/or identity to represent "all women" in feminist approach and then, highlighting the problematic nature of even the plural version, she concludes that being a "woman" cannot represent all women

> because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. (Butler 6)

In other words, it might be concluded that there is not one and only universal system established in terms of identity hence, not only one type of oppression of women. This notion was triggered by Michel Foucault's statements about power relations in societies, practiced through "disciplinary power." This kind of power is imposed by institutions on individuals, making them observe and regulate themselves according to the established rules of the related institutions or the society in general – namely, it aims to discipline individuals by transforming them into their own oppressors. As one of the theorists making use of Foucault's ideas in the framework of gender and sex, Butler argues that individuals become gendered owing to regulatory practices that shape society at the behavioural level. That is the core of Butler's performativity: as the result of observing and 'performing' these kinds of practices constantly and unconsciously, members of the society find themselves labelled with the social norms that are already shaped and classified as feminine and masculine. Consequently,

"gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* xxviii).

From Butler's perspective, norms that mould gender may change in terms of class and race. To illustrate, the period of colonization created different conventions and expectations for white and black men. White men were at the top of the hierarchy in Western societies and accordingly they were supposed to take "the powerful colonizer and owner" status whereas there were the roles of "the colonized and slave" left to black ones. In addition, Butler points out that the change also occurs in terms of time and the process of becoming is "open to intervention and resignification... Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 44-45). On the other hand, the thing that never changes is the strict binary opposition of femininity and masculinity including their attributions. To wit, even though the norms of how to be feminine or masculine keep changing, the demand of society from individuals to conform to their assigned sexes never changes. In this 'heterosexual matrix,' women are expected to behave in a feminine manner; there is no other choice in such essentialist view. Likewise, men are expected to be male and act according to the "male" ways. In her controversial essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," Adrienne Rich focuses on this condition by stating that lesbianism is not considered to be the equivalent to heterosexuality as a choice, since, unfortunately, the latter is normalized and established as the norm while the former is defined as a practice against the norm(al) in patriarchal systems. That is the reason why one is unquestioningly believed to be heterosexual until they 'come out' and confirm their homosexuality (Pilcher and Whelehan 86). As understood clearly from its title, her article highlights that women are unconsciously forced to see heterosexual relations as the natural way of their existence. To challenge these 'normative ways' of categorizing people, Rich introduces the concept of 'lesbian continuum' for all women, not only ones having sexual relations, to gather and resist patriarchal structure together. Moreover, a French feminist writer and theorist, Monique Wittig similarly argues in "The Straight Mind," that the idea of heterosexuality is rooted in society so deeply that people cannot even imagine being or feeling something other than "straight." Therefore, Wittig reasons

that if being a woman is meaningful only in this heterosexual context, lesbians cannot be called women.

1.3 Discovering Queer ways of Being

> In any discussion of art and the artist, heterosexuality is backgrounded, whilst homosexuality is foregrounded.
>
> …
>
> I am a writer who happens to love women.
> I am not a lesbian who happens to write.
> Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects*

'Queer' as a word, holding different meanings in different periods, started its contextual journey with the meaning 'strange' and then (disapprovingly) 'gay man;' however, it turned out to be an umbrella term for people who do not position themselves in the heterosexual system. The word became a challenge itself, against the heterosexist and patriarchal set of minds which have some "assumptions" about sex and sexuality. There are three basic assumptions embedded in patriarchal culture; one of which is that "identities are fixed and essential." However, as identity is something not stable during a lifetime, people can experience it differently in different periods. Another assumption is that "sexuality and gender are binary," leaving no room for the people who place themselves "somewhere between exclusively gay/lesbian and exclusively straight." The last one is that "normal and abnormal sex can usefully be distinguished" which paves the way for questioning "normal." Consequently, queer theory aims to "critique 'the regimes of normativity' and 'power relations' that such distinctions are based on" (Barker and Scheele 35-37).

Rejecting the notion of single and universal truths, in the 1980s, post-structuralism became an area on which the roots of queer theory are dependent. Even though they did not always define themselves as post-structuralists, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault are the leading theorists who "see knowledge as always partial and contextual" (Barker and Scheele 64). "Just as Derrida considered how we think about the world as constructed, Foucault understood how we think of the Self as constructed, no less a cultural artifact than a vase, a chair, or a building" (35). Therefore, rather than blindly believing in grand narratives, they choose to

examine ‘power relations,’ and deconstruct texts to uncover the binary oppositions in which one side is always privileged. In terms of queer theory, post-structuralism offers new ways to define identities that are not stable and fixed. In other words, it cannot be said that there is only one fixed truth about one’s identity in their whole life; instead, the identity can change through relations with people and places.

Post-structuralism highlights the significant role of language in shaping our life experiences – meanings are not inherent but produced by words and their relations to other ones. Hence, they can be changed and recreated through the process of different actions and activities in life. Namely, the central view of post-structuralism is that it is the language that creates social reality, changing from cultures and time to another (Pilcher and Whelehan 113). Two of the most distinguished figures, making use of post-structuralism, are Foucault and Butler. Having examined it historically, Foucault, in his work *The History of Sexuality* (1976-84) put forward the idea that sexuality was produced by specific forms of knowledge. As queer theory is more about sex and sexuality, his points of view were crucial starting points. Butler made a significant contribution to the field with her seminal work *Gender Trouble*. Opposing the generalizations and assumptions concerning only both sides - men and women, Butler focused on the performative nature of gender whereas the focus of Foucault was sexuality; however, both of their notions can be usefully applied to and complement each other. Foucault points out that rather than existing naturally, sexual behaviours are constructed and controlled by outer ideological organizations such as religion and science. Moreover, he examines power relations drawn upon the female body and argues that “identified wholly with its reproductive functions, the female subject was thus confined to the private, domestic sphere” (Gamble 203). Despite not being defined explicitly as “feminist,” his work provides new perspectives to feminism about how patriarchy shapes and limits women’s lives. Butler is one of the theorists who made use of his ideas and built her theory which focuses more on gender. Hence, similarly, she puts forward the idea that gender can be defined as something people do, like “performance,” not something they have innately. This type of questioning as well as classification of people according to their so-called gender or ‘performance,’ and binaries such as male/female and gay/straight, leaving no space in between, opened the way for queer discussions.

Queer, as mentioned above as a word, intrinsically, is supposed to be against all the limited identities produced by a dualistic set of minds and it provides endless positions for ones who feel different from the assigned identities – beyond heteronormativity and biological determinism.

> `Queer' has been deployed as an affirmative and performative term which resists becoming a fixed category and thus gives voice to those elided or marginalised by `gay' and `lesbian' studies: bisexuals, transexuals, sado masochists, for example. It is thus the very identificatory slipperiness in the term which maintains its political potential. (Wolfreys et al. 82)

Moreover, it is significant to remember that thanks to its blessing a multiplicity of sexual identities, queer theory has many common points with lesbian and black feminisms. Therefore, it has become a critical theory that aims at deconstructing the binary gendered labels and offers to reconsider the meanings already assigned to people. Despite being already used many times, "queer" is recognized as a "theory" after Italian feminist and film theorist Teresa de Lauretis coined it in her conference at the University of California in 1990. She describes being queer as embracing multiplicity and rejecting heterosexuality as the norm. In addition, in her book, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (1997), Annamarie Jagose points out that "the rapid development and consolidation of lesbian and gay studies in universities in the 1990s is paralleled by an increasing deployment of the term 'queer'. As queer is unaligned with any specific identity category, it has the potential to be annexed profitably to any number of discussions" (2). According to Jagose, homosexuality was a representation suppressed by heterosexist power formations which promote "gender-asymmetry, sexual reproduction and the patriarchal nuclear family" (36). Therefore, since queer theory grew from the same soil with gay and lesbian studies, the main focus of it is the critique of heterosexuality along with the related concepts – heterosexism and heteronormativity, assuming that everyone is heterosexual unless they prove otherwise.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, regarded as one of the founders of queer theory, starts her well-known work *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) by arguing that "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1). Also, she underlines the need to separate sexuality from gender issues so that heteronormativity cannot be an obstacle for people who define themselves outside its borders. In other

words, queer theory is expected to discard categories such as straight and gay and subvert assumed identities and norms. Thus, for Sedgwick, ‘queer’ is "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (*Tendencies* 7). It can be concluded that the fluid nature of being and feeling ‘queer’ blesses sexual diversity and plurality and offers a freer world for everyone since queer theory, like every one of us, does not have a fixed identity.

CHAPTER 2: JEANETTE WINTERSON – LIFE, WORKS AND STYLE

The straight world is wilful in its
pursuit of queers and it seems to me that to continually ask someone
about their homosexuality, when the reason to talk is a book, a
picture, a play, is harassment by the back door.
Jeanette Winterson – *Art Objects*

Art coaxes out of us emotions we normally do not feel.
...
Seeking neither to please nor
to displease, art works to enlarge emotional possibility.
...
The rebellion of art is a daily rebellion against the state of
living death routinely called real life.
Art Objects

Jeanette Winterson was born in 1959, Manchester to become one of the inspiring voices of British fiction in the future. She was adopted by the evangelical Winterson family who was poorly educated and had no books but Bible and some religious writings in their house. However, the Bible only by itself provided what she still makes use of today: "its language, its story-telling, its certainties, its sense that the world is at once knowable and fully mysterious." Sadly, she and her family could not manage to grow a mutual connection and Winterson thinks they "were confused by one another and usually disappointed in one another" ("Author"). Then, she fell in love with a girl, contrary to societal expectations from "a girl," and she ended up living in a car, alone together with her books. She managed to survive thanks to Accrington Further Education College and, she worked in an ice-cream van, a funeral parlour, and even in a mental institution. The next stage of her life continued in St Catherine's College, Oxford, and in 1981, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English. After graduation, Winterson moved to London and started to work at the Roundhouse Theatre and arts complex and then at Pandora Press where her first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* was published in 1985 (Makinen 1). It is a semi-autobiographical novel and readers could find traces of her earlier experiences as an adopted girl and then as a lesbian. Moreover, in this novel, earlier stages of

Winterson's life and realistic elements intertwine "with fairy tales and romance narratives that parallel the main plot. Those parallel fables suggest that 'coming out' is magical, endowing gay and lesbian subjects with liberty to soar above real life's constraints" (Caserio 220). Consequently, her first work became so successful that it earned her the Whitbread First Novel Award. "In 1990, *Oranges* was made into a TV drama, winning two BAFTA awards (for Best TV Drama Series and for Best Actress) and the Prix d'argent for Best Script in 1991" (Onega 5). Then, again in 1985, a comical work, *Boating for Beginners* came to the stage and like the first novel, it can be regarded as a rewriting of Biblical stories blended with intertextuality, now putting the story of Noah and the Blood in the centre. Her passion for writing has given readers many novels one of which is *The Passion* published in 1987, telling the adventures of two narrators – a Venetian girl with the webbed feet and Bonaparte's chicken chef-soldier, killing no one. Just like Winterson herself, *The Passion* is not an ordinary story yet an interesting combination of history and fiction with postmodernist touches such as magical realism and gender issues. This kind of blending can be seen as a characteristic of Winterson's technique in which the reader's hold on normative social reality is shaken up by the appeal to a higher kind of psychological 'truth'" (Head 100). It won the John Llewellyn Rhys literary prize and as a full-time writer, Winterson penned *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) winning the E. M. Forster Award. Along with *the Passion*, it is set in a historical atmosphere, the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries respectively. Both works have two narrators holding similar characteristics in terms of physical features and gender issues. In 1992, *Written on the Body* was born with an ungendered narrator, presenting a challenge to the conventional expectations of readers: the fluidity of gender and identity. "The gender mystery rises and falls in such a way that what starts out as a riddle to be solved has by the end come to seem irrelevant" (Reed 82). Having similar themes, it was followed by the books discovering relationships, gender, and sexuality in an experimental form: *Art and Lies* (1994), *Gut Symmetries* (1997) and *The PowerBook* (2000).

> Art and Lies and Gut Symmetries have shifted the intertextuality to a different scientific discourse, the new physics, looking at the relativity and simultaneity of matter, post-Einstein. The PowerBook engages with the technology of computers and the telling of stories in cyberspace, in a virtual reality. (Makinen 2)

In 1995, her collection of essays was published under the title *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, in which Winterson blends art criticism with the declaration

of how she lives and experiences art. It can be a bedside book for Winterson fans as she touches upon many issues by using the pronouns "I" and "we" which is of importance in terms of the honest relationship between her readers and the author herself. She does not hesitate to be explicit about her thoughts and feelings:

> In any discussion of art and the artist, heterosexuality is backgrounded, whilst homosexuality is foregrounded. What you fuck is much more important than how you write. This may be because reading takes more effort than sex. It may be because the word 'sex' is more exciting than the word 'book'. Or is it? Surely that depends on what kind of sex and what kind of book? I can only assume that straight sex is so dull that even a book makes better reportage. No-one asks Iris Murdoch about her sex life. Every interviewer I meet asks me about mine and what they do not ask they invent. I am a writer who happens to love women. I am not a lesbian who happens to write. (Winterson 84-85)

It is clear in *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* that Winterson has the passion for art, especially the world of words beyond the traditional category of identities and fixed labels: "The passion that I feel for language is not a passion I could feel for anything or for anyone else" (133). That seems to be the reason why Winterson asks readers to ignore her when they dive into her words because, according to her, "a writer's work is not a chart of their sex, sexuality, sanity and physical health. We are not looking to enlist them in the navy we are simply trying to get on with the words" (80). On the other hand, having some knowledge about the background of her life and writing process seems to play a crucial role in looking from her window because she points out on her website that "the books are the best of me. The books are where you will find me" ("Author").

After monitoring the theatre version of *The Powerbook* in Paris, Winterson wrote *Lighthousekeeping* in 2004, which was followed by Tanglewreck (2006) whose main character is an orphaned child, like that of *Lighthousekeeping*. Her next work was a novella called *Weight* (2007), telling the story of Atlas with his never-ending burden on his shoulder and his visitor Heracles in a mythological and philosophical atmosphere. In the same year, a combination of postmodernist love story and science fiction, *The Stone Gods* was published. It is another book which proves that Winterson has always been keen to blend postmodernist features such as metafiction and intertextuality with history and the theme of love. The year of 2009 was such a prolific one for Winterson that she penned three books: *The Battle of the Sun, Midsummer Nights and The Lion, The Unicorn and Me.* One of her famous works *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011) presents the backstage of the story told in

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit. It can be seen as "that story's the silent twin. It is full of hurt and humour and a fierce love of life. It is about the pursuit of happiness, about lessons in love, the search for a mother and a journey into madness and out again" ("Why Be Happy?"). Then, after this memoir, *The Daylight Gate* (2012) and *The Gap of Time* (2015) were published.

In her works, it is crystal clear that Winterson likes making use of similar themes such as love and relationships in different forms; however, in 2016, unexpectedly a new theme appeared on her pages and *Christmas Days - 12 Stories and 12 Feasts for 12 Days* was born as a Christmas treat for her readers. It was followed by another interesting work, presenting a different perspective from the previous one: *Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere* (2018). In this book, "whilst recognising how far women have come in the hundred years since getting the vote, Jeanette Winterson also insists that we must all do much more if we are to achieve true gender equality" ("Courage Calls"). As an author and lesbian, despite rejecting the labels such as lesbian and postmodernist writer, even her choice for the characters in her novel *Frankissstein: A Love Story* (2019) hints at her keen interest in combining different time periods, universes, and people who do not feel alike in terms of gender and sexuality. The story of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley is replayed and combined with a contemporary world which is in stark contrast to the year Shelley wrote her classic in Geneva, Switzerland, 1816. Presented by the voice of a transgender doctor, Ry Shelley, the contemporary world involves sex robots and artificial intelligence, and this time, the story takes place in Brexit-era Britain. Thus, it can be commented that by switching between past and present in terms of time and narrators, *Frankissstein: A Love Story* aims at touching upon the queer issues and possibilities relating to the future and even beyond: transhumanism, artificial intelligence, and transsexuality. Finally, and not surprisingly, her last book, *Hansel and Greta: A Fairy Tale Revolution* (2020) is again a retelling of a well-known tale, Hansel and Gretel and was published by Vintage Children's Classics.

Winterson does not use culture to strengthen the dominant 'rule' of heterosexuality in her works, and accordingly, representation is not based on the archetypes which celebrate heterosexuality as the main model nor on the dualistic perspective of seeing femininity in relation to masculinity (Moore 107). By the same token, her characters as the representations of the fluidity of gender are formed to shake

this rooted mindset that produces heterosexism and heteronormativity. Therefore, labels such as “postmodern” or “lesbian writer” are not the only things Winterson rejects, she also rejects the clichés about gender and sexuality as well as traditional or established norms of society which leave no space for the ones in the margins. In consequence, so as to discover Winterson’s world which exhibits an atmosphere outside the traditional notions, one should read not only the lines but also between the lines because a book cannot be evaluated by its topic on the surface just like a picture, that is why one needs to experience the deepest of the piece. “The riskiness of art, the reason why it affects us, is not the riskiness of its subject matter, it is the risk of creating a new way of seeing, a new way of thinking. It does this by overturning the habits and conventions of previous generation” (Winterson, *Art Objects* 47).

CHAPTER 3: *THE PASSION*

3.1 *The Passion* as a Postmodern Work

"There are a few facts we can rely on – dates, places, people,
but the rest is interpretation and imagination.
I like that freedom.
I liked the idea of setting an intensely personal story
against a brutal impersonal background."
Jeanette Winterson

'I don't care about *facts*, Domino,
I care about how I feel.
How I feel will change,
I want to remember that.'
Winterson, *The Passion*

Postmodernism, as suggested by Winterson's words above, has a distinguished perception of history compared to the nineteenth-century fiction which objectively provides historical facts. In contrast, the postmodern perspective prefers to reject the stability in the use of time and has "an attitude of suspicion towards the grand narratives of history" (Wolfreys et al. 146). As Wesseling puts forward, it can be regarded as the reason why "a great number of postmodernist novelists have turned to the collective past as a source of inspiration" (1). Accordingly, this increasing interest in history as a subject matter paves the way for historical fiction and as the name suggests, postmodern writers use historical subjects as a playground in their works. In her novel, *The Passion*, Winterson chooses the Napoleonic era so as to play with historical facts in her own way. She finds the past not static and enjoys the freedom to interpret the undiscovered corners of history. Thus, due to the deliberate purpose of manipulating and rewriting the past by deconstructing the roles of historical figures of power, *The Passion* can be regarded as an example of historiographic metafiction. As Hutcheon states, it places itself in historical discourse without giving up its autonomy as fiction ("Historiographic Metafiction" 3). Therefore, *The Passion* might be seen as a chance of revisiting the Napoleonic era not only between the lines of history books but also in the experiences of the ordinary but unusual characters of Winterson.

Winterson, in *The Passion*, tells the adventures of two narrators – Villanelle, a Venetian girl with webbed feet, and Henri, Bonaparte's chicken chef-soldier. Winterson also uses two settings, France and Venice, and accordingly two points of view about the same historical period. Aróstegui points out that one of the narrators, Henri, by writing his experiences as a soldier in Napoleon's army, proves that history is an open area to manipulation as well as a challenge to patriarchy. Henri's unusual discourse paves the way for the destruction of the established values of patriarchy and provides the required space for the second narrator-protagonist Villanelle as a character (17). Therefore, *The Passion* as a postmodern text highlights the plurality in the nature of all narratives and underlines the fact that reality might be constantly rewritten since it is only a linguistic construct (11). Similarly, gender roles are also social constructs, and the main characters in the novel, both female and male narrators, display characteristics beyond the limits shaped by patriarchy. In this way, Antosa writes, the differences in terms of gender are blurred and disappeared due to all the historical, physical and emotional journeys the protagonists experience that this situation triggered the process of dissolving of binary oppositions (160). In consequence, Winterson creates these characters in terms of not only narration but also the concepts of masculinity and femininity as she aims to subvert the conventional roles in society attributed to women and men.

There are four parts in the novel: The Emperor, The Queen of Spades, The Zero Winter and The Rock. In the first story, set in Boulogne, France, contrary to the title, the subject is not Bonaparte but one of the common people, Henri who works in Napoleon's kitchen dealing with the chickens. In this case, Winterson makes use of parody – one of the literary devices of postmodernism. Since it "is the paradoxical postmodern way of coming to terms with the past" (Huncheon, "Historiographic Metafiction" 14), Bonaparte still exists in the novel due to "his" period; however, not as a result of the passion of his followers but because of "a passion for chicken that he kept his chefs working around the clock" (Winterson, *The Passion* 3). Contrary to the common belief that only the powerful historical figures should be the main characters; Winterson proves the opposite by having him fade from the scene gradually because "postmodern parody is a kind of contesting revision or rereading of the past that both confirms and subverts the power of the representations of history" (Huncheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* 95).

The first narrator is one of his followers, Henri himself and readers are invited to his own story which represents the lives of people who are taught to love and die for Bonaparte without questioning. Not only his own experiences but the conquest of Bonaparte is also given to readers via Henri's diary that is also another characteristic of the novel underscoring the subjectivity of history in Winterson's works: "I don't care about the facts, Domino, I care about how I feel. How I feel will change, I want to remember that" (Winterson, *The Passion* 29). In addition, the picture she draws presents how Henri's opinions are shaped gradually through his adventure. For example, at first, when Henri is asked what an enemy is, he responds that an enemy is "someone who's not on your side" (8). However, later in the book, after watching the cruelty of the army led by Bonaparte, Henri realises the fact that all the people he sees as enemies are ordinary just like him and then he accepts, "I invented Bonaparte as much as he invented himself" (158). Instead of focusing on the universal "truths," and the deeds of powerful figures in history, Winterson alters the hierarchical structure in her novel and gives the voice to the backstage figures such as the soldiers in the war, two of whom become Henri's friends: Patrick and Domino. Patrick has an unusual vision in one of his eyes that enables him to spot long distances clearly. Also, he is a former priest like Henri who has been educated to be a soldier but turns out to be Bonaparte's personal cook.

The second story, The Queen of Spades, set in Venice, "the city of mazes" after the Napoleonic influences, is narrated by the other central character, Villanelle (Winterson, *The Passion* 49). She is the daughter of a Venetian boatman and has webbed feet that is very unlikely for the women. Here, Winterson makes use of magical realism which "is what happens when highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something 'too strange to believe'" (Strecher 267). According to the tradition in the story, not for men but women, it is shocking to have webbed feet. Such magical realist elements are mostly attributed to Villanelle as she can walk on the water thanks to her feet and her heart is stolen literally. She works in a casino, dressed like a boy, "raking dice and spreading cards and lifting wallets" (Winterson, *The Passion* 54). This is exactly what Villanelle does when she meets the responsible for the stolen heart – her future female lover. However, unfortunately, when Villanelle happens to see her lover with her husband, she feels disheartened and then realises a need to change her route in life. On the other hand, by following her adventures, readers

discover the unknown streets of Venice in which "the short cuts are where the cats go, through the impossible gaps, round corners that seem to take you the opposite way" (49**).** As it seems clear from her stolen heart and the cross-dressing as well as the "manly" activities she does, Villanelle can be seen as the representation of how Winterson disrupts the fixed roles of gender and identity.

The third story, The Zero Winter represents the winter of 1812 in Russia where the two narrators meet and share the same story together and it provides readers two different perspectives of the same period. As can be well-understood from the title of this chapter, the conditions are very harsh in Russian winter and hope has started to fade away among the soldiers in Bonaparte's army. Henri has witnessed such horrifying and merciless things that he starts to question what he has believed: "Could so many straightforward ordinary lives suddenly become men to kill and women to rape?" (Winterson, *The Passion* 79) Then, the only thing he dreams of becomes going back home. In the meantime, unlike her position in the casino where she gambles away her heart, Villanelle becomes the prostitute for the high-ranking members of Napoleon's army and meets Henri who has been planning to escape at that time. Finally, Henri and Patrick decide to escape from Moscow to Venice with the company of Villanelle. As for Villanelle, due to her disappointment in love, she decides to marry a fat gambler who makes big promises; however, she ends up escaping and being tracked by him. Thus, Bonaparte's military becomes the common point where the main characters find each other at last. Then, Villanelle takes Henri to her city, Venice, "the city of uncertainty, where routes and faces look alike and are not" and their adventure begins: Henri recaptures Villanelle's heart from her ex-lover and hence, their relationship evolves into a more intimate one (58). On the other hand, it is understood that Villanelle's husband is the same person with the previous military cook whose job has been stolen by Henri unintendedly. Therefore, with the aim of protecting himself and the woman for whom he has "the passion," Henri kills the cook and takes his heart and then he ends up getting a prison sentence in a madhouse on a rock island. Having inherited her husband's money, Villanelle gives her promise to save him no matter it costs. In the last story, The Rock, Henri tells the details of what happens after taking the heart of Villanelle's husband's and through his words and descriptions, readers are invited to the atmosphere of San Servelo, the madhouse for the rich in the past. Then, unfortunately, after being convicted as insane, Henri becomes really insane in the

prison asylum itself: “What am I interested in? Passion. Obsession. I have known both and I know the dividing line is as thin and cruel as a Venetian knife” (153).

Consequently, Winterson, as well as the plural nature of her narration, uses another postmodern technique called parody so as to shake the established norms in the society and the so-called unquestionable “objective” facts in history. By giving a voice to the silenced parts of the different societies, Henri, an emotional soldier from France, and Villanelle, a bisexual gambler from Venice, Winterson not only reconstructs an important historical period but also deconstructs the fixed codes of society in terms of gender. As a result, Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion*, as a distinguished example of historiographic metafiction, contains many elements attributed to postmodernism such as fantasy, rewriting, parody and magical realism. Thus, in her novel, Winterson perfectly shows her passion for not only writing a story but also rewriting history.

3.2 Henri

Now I would do most anything
To get you back by my side
But I just keep on laughing
Hiding the tears in my eyes
'Cause boys don't cry
Boys don't cry
The Cure – “Boys Don’t Cry”

Winterson’s second novel, *The Passion* is renowned as a challenge to traditional roles attributed to men and women, hence masculinity and femininity. Through its characters, it attempts to shake heterosexist norms produced by patriarchy and create a picture that promotes a broader perception of gender roles. Because people in patriarchal societies generally tend to see bodies and behaviours in a “straight” way, Winterson provides such characters, not conforming to gender stereotypes in order to issue a challenge to normative expectations of patriarchy. In other words, the novel serves to deconstruct binary oppositions which always privilege the male side as a result of the belief in biological essentialism that women are born inferior to men. To defy such notions supporting heteronormativity and strengthening traditional gender roles, Winterson creates two narrators one of whom is Henri who might be described

as an exceptional soldier for the ones who see military service as the utmost level of a man's manly life.

Patriarchy is a political and social system in which men are born privileged and superior to women in every aspect of life and it is such a long story that no one could realise that the inferior position of women is constructed culturally, not biologically. According to the dualistic and heteronormative perspective of patriarchal societies, men are born masculine that means having naturally superior attributes such as being more logical and intelligent whereas women should be feminine which already means being domestic and fragile. However, this cultural programming produced by the patriarchal mindset does not merely confine women to a subordinate position, but also expects men to conform to this social constructionism. According to bell hooks,

> Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation. Yet most men do not use the word 'patriarchy' in everyday life. Most men never think about patriarchy—what it means, how it is created and sustained... Men who have heard and know the word usually associate it with women's liberation, with feminism, and therefore dismiss it as irrelevant to their own experiences. (38)

As hooks contends above, men generally are not well-aware of the fact that traditional gender roles are as destroying for them as for women. For instance, patriarchy prescribes the roles such as being economically and physically powerful and rational for men, and they like the idea of being associated with the "superior" side of binary oppositions. Yet, on the other hand, again as a result of the same 'superior' roles, they have no right to fail at anything and must keep the assigned role, otherwise, they "become" less "manly." Since Jeanette Winterson is one of the key figures who employ such issues in fiction to deconstruct this dominant patriarchal dualism, *The Passion* is, in its narrowest sense, a true representation of blurring the borders between traditional gender roles and highlighting their performative nature.

The Passion consists of four parts narrated by two characters: Henri, a French villager boy and Villanelle, a Venetian bisexual woman and Winterson creates a marked contrast between their expected masculine and feminine roles. In the time of the Napoleonic Wars, Henri is seemingly a good nominee for Bonaparte's army; however, it turns out that the patriarchal expectations from an army member such as being brave and strong are not in line with Henri's characteristics. Let alone being a soldier, Henri, as a man, displays feminine features while Villanelle has masculine traits. At the very beginning of the first story "The Emperor," it is given that Henri

becomes “a neck wringer” of chickens in the kitchen, not even “a cleaver man” as he does not have strong hands, meaning that he cannot have his dream job - being a drummer, either: “The recruiting officer gave me a walnut and asked if I could crack it between finger and thumb. I could not and he laughed and said a drummer must have strong hands” (Winterson, *The Passion* 5). Winterson, here, using the atmosphere of “the kitchen in the army,” underscores the two different worlds associated with men and women, and the kitchen is known to be the domestic sphere that belongs to women. Even after he is promoted to the position of Napoleon’s cook, Henri keeps staying in the same private/domestic sphere – the kitchen. Henri’s positions as a neck wringer and then a cook in the army – so-called feminine qualities in a male domain – cement the notion that binary oppositions assigned to genders are not essential, but mere products of heteronormativity and patriarchy because “genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 174). Thus, in Henri’s case, Henri seems not to conform to “correct” roles for males prescribed by patriarchy; however, in fact, he simply chooses not to perform them but his own identity because, in Butler’s words, “the inner truth of gender is a fabrication” and “a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies” (174).

Feminist readings of fairy tales and well-known stories enable both men and women to realise how patriarchy imposes gender stereotyping on people even in the so-called innocent texts. To illustrate, in the story of Cinderella, there are a young submissive girl who must endure familial abuse at home, and Prince Charming for whom she waits to be saved. Therefore, the only destination in life for young girls seems to be married with a powerful man, likewise, the burden on Prince Charming requires men to fulfil the role of saviours, responsible for “happiness ever after.” It is such an overtly damaging role for males that they “must be unflagging superproviders without emotional needs” (Tyson 88-89). In *The Passion*, repetition of the sentence “I’m telling you stories” hints at the fairy-tale nature of the story of Henri and Villanelle as well as the hidden patriarchal demands on them. On the contrary to the prescriptive behavioural codes, Henri is a “lukewarm” person just like his French community and misses her mother soon after enrolling in Napoleon’s army: “I was homesick from the start I missed my mother. I missed the hill where the sun slants across the valley. I missed all the everyday things I had hated” (Winterson, *The*

Passion 6). In addition, people around him in the army make fun of him: “I take off my socks once a week to cut my toe-nails and the others call me a dandy” (4-5). This kind of characteristic is completely opposite to the roles attributed to the central male character of a story from a gendered view. To wit, Henri’s character holds feminine qualities: “The difficulties of leaving his home and his village attest to his strong attachment to such environments that are traditionally considered to pertain to the ‘female’ space” (Antosa 167). Henri is not the only character who has a “lukewarm” heart but also his father, Claude is presented as an emotional and timid character that is clearly observed in his proposal to her mother:

> One night, late, as she slept, she heard a tapping at the door and turning up her lamp saw Claude in the doorway. He had shaved, he was wearing his nightshirt and he smelled of carbolic soap.
>
> ‘Will you marry me, Georgette?’
>
> She shook her head and he went away, returning now and again as time continued, always standing by the door, clean shaven and smelling of soap.
>
> She said yes.
>
> …
>
> After that whenever he wanted her, he tapped at the door in just the same way and waited until she said yes.
>
> Then I was born. (Winterson, *The Passion* 11)

As evidently seen from their story, Henri’s mother has more dominance in their relationship. In addition, similar to Henri, Claude has sentimental reactions to the life changes as Henri “left, Mother didn't cry. It was Claude who cried” (12). Although her mother, Georgette is dominant and strict in her relationships with her husband and son, Henri is fond of her as well as Claude: “Bible words again, but I am thinking of my father who shaded his eyes on those sunburnt evenings and learned to take his time with my mother. I am thinking of my mother with her noisy heart and of all the women waiting in the fields for the men who drowned yesterday and all the mothers' sons who have taken their place” (27). Due to their feminine traits, both men seem to receive adverse reactions from the women and other men throughout the novel as a punishment for not conforming to the rule book of patriarchy. According to Butler, the reason is that because gender is a performance described “as a strategy of survival” in the obligatory structures, there are overtly “punitive consequences.” Distinctly identified genders constitute significant parts of what “humanizes” people in the modern world;

in fact, those who become unsuccessful at doing "their gender right" are punished (*Gender Trouble* 178).

As for Henri's first passion, Napoleon Bonaparte, is an entirely different male character who "believed he was the centre of the world and for a long time there was nothing to change him from this belief. … He was in love with himself and France joined in. It was a romance" (Winterson, *The Passion* 13). He embodies masculine characteristics contrary to Henri and his community: "We're lukewarm people for all our feast days and hard work. Not much touches us, but we long to be touched. We lie awake at night willing the darkness to part and show us a vision" (7). Hence, it might be inferred that Henri and his people are likened to a "passive" female body waiting for 'the passion' from a "superior" man. The passion here is the power to stimulate French people to support and join the war. His dominance is also present in the comparison of two places: France and Italy, specifically Venice, as Villanelle affirms, "Since Bonaparte captured our city of mazes in 1797, we've more or less abandoned ourselves to pleasure. What else is there to do when you've lived a proud and free life and suddenly you're not proud and free any more? We became an enchanted island for the mad, the rich, the bored, the perverted" (52). Bonaparte as the superior male, representing passionate France, aims to conquer the female part of the world, Venice because, in Beauvoir's words, "dreaming of himself as donor, liberator, redeemer, man still desires the subjection of woman" and "to conquer is still more fascinating than to give gifts or to release." Then she rhetorically asks, "What would Prince Charming have for occupation if he had not to awaken the Sleeping Beauty?" (Beauvoir 199). Yet, in this romance, as readers follow via Henri's diary, such a seemingly powerful and dominant figure and the passion for him fade away gradually: "Even the French were beginning to get tired. Even the women without ambition wanted something more than to produce boys to be killed and girls to grow up to produce more boys. We were getting weary" (Winterson, *The Passion* 104). Having experienced the cruelty of war, the concept of the enemy has started to change for Henri, and he questions how "so many straightforward ordinary lives suddenly" could "become men to kill and women to rape" (79).

Since writing a diary is a private activity that includes pouring all the feelings at heart as well as daily activities in life, Henri still stays in the private domain as the writer of a diary, enabling readers to monitor how his passion changes its route. As for

the motive beyond keeping a diary in the time of war, he explains to Domino: “So that I wouldn't forget. So that in later life when I was prone to sit by the fire and look back I'd have something clear and sure to set against my memory tricks” (Winterson, *The Passion* 28). However, Domino undermines his perspective that shakes the objectivity of history, stating that

> A young man brought up by a priest and a pious mother. A young man who can't pick up a musket to shoot a rabbit. What makes you think you can see anything clearly? What gives you the right to make a notebook and shake it at me in thirty years, if we're still alive, and say you've got the truth?
>
> I don’t care about facts, Domino, I care about how I feel. How I feel will change, I want to remember that. (28)

As noticed from his response, Henri is aware of the fact that official history records only the powerful and mostly male figures, highlighting their achievements yet disregarding all the ordinary people in the background. By the same token, “Napoleon personifies the masculine linear force of history-making, rationality and war, where the feminine, woman’s history, becomes charted out of sight, considered to have no place on patriarchy’s official map of world events” (Stowers qtd. in Makinen 60). For this reason, Henri decides to form his own history, having the desire to be the hero of his own story. “In a sense, it is Henry’s anti-hegemonic perspective that allows him to perceive Napoleon’s failure and, with it, the demise of the patriarchal system it symbolises, that is equated with a fruitless and sterile order” (Antosa 167). In consequence, just like the first narrator in her historiographic metafiction, Winterson chooses to parody and rewrite the Napoleonic era to undermine historical ‘facts’ imposed by patriarchy.

As required by the patriarchal framework, men are supposed to be manly in both public and private spheres, meaning that they are the ones who are dominant, experienced and active in their sexuality. Namely, there is “hegemonic masculinity” at the peak of “the gender hierarchy” and “an ideal of masculinity” requires “authority, physical toughness and strength” and undoubtedly, being heterosexual (Pilcher and Whelehan 88). However, since Henri has a real fondness for his mother, probably the only woman in his life so far, it is not surprising for readers to discover his inexperience in sexual intercourse when they pay a visit to a brothel with people from the army: “'I've just joined up,' I told her, hoping she'd realise that I didn't know what to do. She pinched my cheek. 'That's what they all say, they think it must be cheaper first time.

Hard work I call it, like teaching billiards without a cue'" (Winterson, *The Passion* 14). Henri is not used to such places, and he compares what he has learnt from the priest about the image of women with the atmosphere in the brothel: "When the women came in they were older than I had imagined, not at all like the pictures in the priest's book of sinful things. Not snake-like, Eve-like with breasts like apples, but round and resigned, hair thrown into hasty bundles or draped around their shoulders" (14). Henri is so astonished by what he observes that he could not ask for even a cup of water while his companions "shoved the wine down their throats straight from the jars" (14). Then he tells 'his' woman that he has a headache and goes outside which is a behaviour associated mostly with women. The brothel scene is the first yet not the last one in Henri's adventures in terms of sexuality. In the chapter "Zero Winter," in which they try to reach Venice by using the route starting from Poland, Henri, Villanelle and Patrick need a place to spend the night. On the way, they come across a village and with the hope of staying under a warm roof, they pretend as if they are from Poland on Villanelle's advice. Since she adds that Henri and she are a married couple, they end up having the same bed to sleep. It is another scene in which Henri still does not have enough knowledge of the bodily pleasures:

> At night I lay awake next to Villanelle and listened to her breathing. She slept curled up with her back towards me and never made any sign that she wanted to be touched. I touched her when I was sure she was asleep. Ran my hand up her spine and wondered if all women felt so soft and so firm. One night she turned over suddenly and told me to make love to her.
>
> 'I don't know how.'
>
> 'Then I'll make love to you.'
>
> When I think of that night, here in this place where I will always be, my hands tremble and my muscles ache. I lose all sense of day or night, I lose all sense of my work, writing this story, trying to convey to you what really happened. (Winterson, *The Passion* 102-103)

It is inferred from both situations that Henri does not have "male conformity to rigid sexist role patterns" (hooks 44). Instead, opposed to hegemonic masculinity and gender order, Henri and Villanelle reverse their assigned masculinity and femininity and blur the boundaries between these roles. Thus, it might be beneficial to remember the concept of "compulsory heterosexuality" created by Adrienne Rich since it discusses the hegemony of gender that requires bodies to correspond to each other and form a coherent unit in order to maintain an immutable gender (being female means feminine, masculinity means male) "that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined

through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 194). Accordingly, Winterson ignores the myths which simply degrade women and men to a binary opposition and focuses on the passion between two human beings "because there is neither an "essence" that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all" (178).

3.3 Villanelle

Woman is shut up in a kitchen or in a boudoir, and
astonishment is expressed that her horizon is limited.
Her wings are clipped, and it is found deplorable that she cannot fly.
Let but the future be opened to her,
and she will no longer be compelled to linger in the present.
Simone De Beauvoir – *The Second Sex*

Gender is a kind of persistent impersonation
that passes as the real.
Judith Butler – *Gender Trouble*

> A girl.
>
> It was an easy birth and the midwife held me upside down by the ankles until I bawled. But it was when they spread me out to dry that my mother fainted and the midwife felt forced to open another bottle of wine.
>
> My feet were webbed.
>
> There never was a girl whose feet were webbed in the entire history of the boatmen. (Winterson, *The Passion* 51)

This is the beginning of Villanelle's story, the other narrator of *The Passion,* created with magical realist touches to shake essentialist notions and traditional gender roles in a postmodernist manner. This is the story of how she was exceptionally born into a man's world where "to be feminine is to appear weak, futile, docile" (Beauvoir 334). Since patriarchal societies expect to have a "straight" body and soul, Winterson enacts a challenge to this heteronormativity by granting Villanelle "webbed feet," a characteristic special only to men, and making her lose her heart to a woman. Having a body with masculine parts and a soul with "masculine feelings," Villanelle embodies

everything outside heteronormative and patriarchal values and she becomes the representation of the subverted traditional gender roles. Pertaining to female perspective and feminism, not only her body and soul, but also her city is of great importance as in Venice "there are women of every kind and not all of them are women" (Winterson, *The Passion* 58). Thus, from the very first pages of the second chapter "The Queen of Spades," Winterson hints at the "deviating" nature of her female narrator along with her environment, and how Villanelle uses it to grow into a symbol of combatting the established norms of patriarchy and heterosexism.

Through the portrayal of Villanelle, Jeanette Winterson forces the limits of female body and its relation to the unwritten rules of patriarchy. According to patriarchal norms, the ideal form of female body must embody femininity while male one is expected to be masculine. Moreover, in this binary, "woman has always been man's dependant, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality" (Beauvoir 18). Hence, by creating Villanelle and Henri, Winterson not merely defies the heteronormative and patriarchal concepts of women and men in history, but also provides an unconventional point of view questioning the notions of masculinity and femininity in the framework of feminism by using postmodern elements. According to Paulina Palmer, because *The Passion* redefines "a romance narrative" as the genre, it employs the elements connected to the postmodern to challenge what 'romance' evokes, thereby redefining it from a lesbian perspective. Among these postmodern elements, "an emphasis on storytelling and intertextual references, the recasting of the love stories of the past in the light of present day lesbian concerns, and the introduction of episodes of fantasy and magic realism to create a gay aesthetic of role-play and artifice" might be counted. Moreover, whereas "referring to the subject's multiple identities and desires and the performative dimension of gender," Winterson aims to discover the lesbian love at a sexual-political level by making use of these postmodern features (191). Furthermore, the supernatural traits attributed to Villanelle enable her to disrupt the traditional positioning of both feminine and masculine subjects in the hetero-patriarchal structure. "In Winterson's writing, the body is both field of play and active agent; the bodily self and the other venture on circular journeys through time and space, in search of diverse pleasures and desires" (Hamzah-Osbourne 30). Therefore, despite seeming as if a curse at first glance, the possession of webbed feet turns into such a grant for Villanelle that she exerts the

power of its existence to discover her passion beyond the limits of the patriarchal order in her whole life.

The physical appearance and/or the body of Villanelle is the first domain Winterson plays her cards to deconstruct heteronormative and patriarchal notion of sex, gender and sexuality. First of all, in terms of bodily features, Villanelle has webbed feet belonging to "the boatmen whose trade is hereditary" and having these feet enables the owner to "walk on water" (Winterson, *The Passion* 49). This magical realist touch to her body furnishes a much deeper interpretation than just a postmodern element used in a story: she is able to enter the public sphere where women are mostly not welcomed. Unlike the stereotypical women in patriarchal ideology, Villanelle has the right to traverse the boundaries between public and private spheres and this makes herself a break from the conventional gender concepts created by male-oriented structures:

> When I was eighteen I started to work the Casino. There aren't many jobs for a girl. I didn't want to go into the bakery and grow old with red hands and forearms like thighs. I couldn't be a dancer, for obvious reasons, and what I would have most liked to have done, worked the boats, was closed to me on account of my sex.
>
> I did take a boat out sometimes, rowing alone for hours up and down the canals and out into the lagoon. I learned the secret ways of boatmen, by watching and by instinct. (53)

This part which displays what Villanelle desires and does for a living as well as the secret activities is of great significance because, as a result of sharing the same physical features with the Venetian boatmen, she cannot have the jobs suitable for girls (a dancer) and also does not prefer having another one (a baker). Instead, she desires to "perform" the masculine side within her and to discover the male territory of Venice. Hence, adopting a different role 'by watching and by instinct' hints at the theory of gender performativity by Judith Butler. She claims that the concept of gender is not something people "are" and not something they "have" either. "Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized" (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 42). To wit, gender as a concept teems with stability and limitations supported by heteronormative ideology and this situation requires the approval of heterosexuality as the norm. Yet, by the same token, this well-established binary opposition of genders might be subverted by reconstructing the

assigned roles and producing unconventional performances. In *The Passion*, Villanelle is the representation of how these socially constructed roles could be shaken through the different performances such as cross-dressing: "I went to work in the Casino, raking dice and spreading cards and lifting wallets where I could... I dressed as a boy because that's what the visitors liked to see. It was part of the game, trying to decide which sex was hidden behind tight breeches and extravagant face-paste..." (Winterson 54). Cross-dressing is simply described as having the clothes of opposite sex in an imitative manner and drag queens, transsexuals, and butch lesbians can be counted as the examples of cross-dressers no matter their aim is. Butler sees drag as "an example that is meant to establish that 'reality' is not fixed as we generally assume it to be. The purpose of the example is to expose the tenuousness of gender 'reality' in order to counter the violence performed by gender norms" (*Gender Trouble* xxiii). The tenuous nature of the connection between sex and gender becomes evident in the flow of Villanelle's ideas while working at the casino:

> I catch him staring at my crotch and now and again I wear a codpiece to taunt him.
>
> My breasts are small, so there's no cleavage to give me away, and I'm tall for a girl, especially a Venetian.
>
> I wonder what he'd say to my feet.
>
> … he promises to return and taking the Jack with him for luck moves over to the gaming table … They're always taking the cards. I wonder whether to get out another pack or just cheat the next customer. I think that will depend on who the next customer might be. (Winterson, *The Passion* 56)

It might be assumed that by using the destabilizing aspect of magical realism, Winterson creates a human being with animal parts and a masculine woman, thereby distorting the position of women ordered by patriarchy. Through a fantastic atmosphere as well as "fluid gender performances, free-floating sexuality and the deconstructed body," she blurs the distinction between the binaries to give voice to the muted ones such as women in patriarchy (Hamzah-Osbourne 30). Hence, Villanelle enjoys the freedom of being beyond binaries in every aspect – being a masculine woman in Venice, as she calls, "the city of mazes. You may set off from the same place to the same place every day and never go by the same route. If you do so, it will be by mistake" (Winterson, *The Passion* 49). The fluidity of Villanelle's identity undoubtedly fits to Venice

> where webbed feet are a kind of cultural fantasy, a phallic signifier of secret power. Villanelle's amphibious, sexually ambiguous body and the paradoxical, amphibious body of Venice both refuse the neat binary oppositions of true and false, good and evil, masculine and feminine, and against such paradoxical grounds, Winterson begins to trace disruptive, transformative possibility. (Seaboyer 25)

In such a non-binary atmosphere of Venice and accordingly the casino, Villanelle uses cross-dressing as a weapon to prove herself as a free individual rather than a submissive and dependant traditional female figure: "I can go home, throw aside these clothes and move on. I can move out if I like" (Winterson, *The Passion* 68). Her cross-dressing attests to her own control over which gender she chooses to perform on that day as she sometimes has "double shifts at the Casino, dressing as a woman in the afternoon and a young man in the evenings" (62). On the other hand, when the time of festivals comes, she adds the moustache for not only her entertainment but as well her protection since "there are too many dark alleys and too many drunken hands on festival nights" (55). Still, she seems to be aware of the performative nature of gender and the fact that "there is no preexisting identity by which an act or attribute might be measured; there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 180). The dominance of this 'regulatory fiction' on the identities of people causes Villanelle to question controlling institutions in society such as religion: "If I went to confession, what would I confess? That I cross dress? So did Our Lord, so do the priests. That I steal? So did Our Lord, so do the priests" (Winterson, *The Passion* 72). Consequently, cross-dressing plays a deconstructive role in struggling against the "normalised" and fixed identities and proves the imitative nature of genders and the existence of "other" ones outside the heterosexual binaries. Thus, as for Villanelle, cross-dressing represents how she remoulds the assigned gender role(s) by herself.

In patriarchal societies, not merely behavioural gender roles but also the positions of women and men at societal level are pre-set. As for a young girl, she is expected to stay in private sphere and "repress her spontaneity and replace it with the studied grace and charm taught her by her elders. Any self-assertion will diminish her femininity and her attractiveness." On the other hand, the journey of a young man in life is rather easier because "his vocation as human being and as male" do not oppose each other; instead, they are interwoven, regarded as one. "Through self-assertion in

independence and liberty, he acquires his social value and concurrently his prestige as male. But for the young woman, on the contrary, there is a contradiction between her status as a real human being and her vocation as a female" (Beauvoir 334). However, Winterson's characters exchange the roles and accordingly the places to which they are supposed to belong; Henri stays in the kitchen dealing with the chicken whereas Villanelle, the free spirit of Venice, goes beyond the physical and moral limits set by society. Villanelle is such a courageous female character that she does not avoid taking risks in order to be independent and, free from the social constraints of patriarchy. In such a system where "representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men;" not conforming to gender stereotypes, Villanelle steals the role of the breadwinner of family from men (162). Contrary to patriarchal expectations, her stepfather, a man who is supposed to be the only breadwinner, does not oppose how and what she subverts; instead, he normalises Villanelle's position and physical appearance as she recounts,

> I was off-duty and it was almost dawn. Usually, I go straight home and meet my stepfather on his way to the bakery. He slaps me about the shoulder and makes some joke about how much money I'm making. … He's never thought it odd that his daughter cross-dresses for a living and sells second-hand purses on the side. But then, he's never thought it odd that his daughter was born with webbed feet.
>
> 'There are stranger things,' he said.
>
> And I suppose there are. (Winterson, *The Passion* 61)

As observed from his unorthodox reaction, Villanelle's stepfather is not portrayed as a dominant patriarchal male character; instead, his character stands for the challenge against the gendered roles. So, it might be put forward that in Winterson's world, "culture doesn't have to and doesn't always operate to assure the successful 'rule' of heterosexuality; representation does not depend on the centrality of 'the heterosexual paradigm,' nor on the inevitable 'duality' of femininity in relation to masculinity" (Moore 107). Another representation from Winterson's world is Henri's mother. Just like Villanelle, Georgette wants to hold the control of the game and has a resistance to marriage: "it is better to burn than to marry" (Winterson, *The Passion* 9). Desiring to be a nun and believing "in the power of Virgin Mary," she escaped from her parents who are about to arrange a marriage for her. The emphasis on Virgin Mary, instead of God or Jesus Christ might be explained by the influence of myths on the collective consciousness. As Beauvoir underscores, "woman is at once Eve and the Virgin Mary.

She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip, and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress; she is man's prey, his downfall, she is everything that he is not and that he longs for" (Beauvoir 162). From this mythical point of view, it does not seem as a coincidence for Georgette to choose Virgin Mary as her idol. As to the story, following her escape, Georgette meets Claude, "a slow-witted but kindly man," and begins to stay with him (Winterson, *The Passion* 10). After being under the same roof for a while, Claude waits persistently for her to say "yes." Even though she ends up marrying Henri's father, Georgette does not give up being herself and she wants to be the one who has the last word relating to the marriage. Therefore, both female characters display this common characteristic: they follow their own paths instead of doing what is imposed on them under the name of "femininity."

The casino where Villanelle works dressed up a boy is not only an area with people and identities in disguise, but the first place she meets the Queen of Spades as well in the chapter with the same title: "Only for a second she touched me and then she was gone and I was left with my heart smashing at my chest … I am pragmatic about love and have taken my pleasure with both men and women, but I have never needed a guard for my heart" (Winterson, *The Passion* 59-60). The bisexual nature of Villanelle gives her freedom to use her sexuality as a playground beyond gender definitions constrained by hetero-patriarchal context: "You play, you win. You play, you lose. You play" (66). In this sense, being a cross-dresser enables her to discover what exists between being male and female. Accordingly, "crossdressing is the means through which Villanelle explores the subtle line between sex-construction and the performativity of gender" (Antosa 74). Thanks to Villanelle's story, readers are able to follow her own questioning in terms of the relationship between love, passion and sexuality. As an illustration, despite describing her cross-dressing first as a game at work, Villanelle does not know what to do when she is invited to dinner by the Queen of Spades: "She thought I was a young man. I was not. Should I go to see her as myself and joke about the mistake and leave gracefully? My heart shrivelled at this thought. To lose her again so soon. And what was myself? Was this breeches and boots self any less real than my garters?" (Winterson, *The Passion* 65-66). Moreover, she keeps contemplating indecisively whether a woman could love a woman for more than a night (69). It might be inferred that Villanelle's self-inquiry into her inner and outer

identities is “a consistent willingness to explore multiple and fragmented fictions of identity, that is, to engage in endless speculation" (Doan qtd in French 237). This constant need to experience the plurality of identity forges new ways to perform for Villanelle especially after meeting the Queen of Spades and she goes to her house, wearing “a fancy dress,” which is actually “an officer's uniform” stolen from a soldier just after their sexual intercourse due to Villanelle’s losing the game at the casino (Winterson, *The Passion* 69-70). Cross-dressing, here, transforms into something different for Villanelle since she tries to conform to the social expectations unconsciously thereby conforming to ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (“She thought I was a young man”) whereas it is crystal clear that it is a pure ‘lesbian passion’ for herself. The motive behind Villanelle’s behaviour might be explained through Butler’s claim that “acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality” (*Gender Trouble* 173). In other words, despite her in-between nature, even Villanelle tries to sustain the heterosexual programming so as to live her lesbian desire to the fullest at least within her: “It was a woman I loved and you will admit that is not the usual thing. I knew her for only five months. We had nine nights together and I never saw her again. You will admit that is not the usual thing” (Winterson, *The Passion* 94). However, to Villanelle’s great surprise, the Queen of Spades reveals that she is already aware of her female body and hence Villanelle ends up staying in her lover's place on that night. Unfortunately, another surprising fact about the Queen of Spades is her marriage with a man dealing with ancient books, with whom she spends Christmas. Therefore, the existence of this “legal” marriage makes the “illegal” nature of these two women’s relationship more obvious and this situation forces them to maintain their relationship “under conditions of secrecy, masquerade and lack of social recognition – all the features, in fact, which today we encompass in the term ‘the closet’” (Palmer 192). Thus, in Christmas time, the Queen of Spades is ‘legally’ far away with her husband and Villanelle is alone in Venice, having plenty of time to ruminate about her passionate affair, while “flirt[ing] with waiters and gamblers,”

> Is this freedom delicious because rare? Is any respite from love welcome because temporary? If she were gone for ever these days of mine would not be lit up. Is it because she will return that I take pleasure in being alone?
>
> Hopeless heart that thrives on paradox; that longs for the beloved and is secretly relieved when the beloved is not there. That gnaws away at the night-time hours

> desperate for a sign and appears at breakfast so self-composed. (Winterson, *The Passion* 73)

Even if these two lovers have their affair in secrecy, Villanelle's reflections on love and passion assert that Winterson still does not "treat lesbianism as marginal, as an inherently more problematic or unstable construction of identity than heterosexuality, masculinity or any other category." Instead of "attempting to correct homophobic misrepresentations of or assumptions about lesbian relationships," she concentrates only on "love and passion" alone, free from labels such as heterosexual or homosexual; "conflict in this fictional world is always romantic conflict" (Moore 113). As for Villanelle, when she secretly watches her lover with her husband at the end of the chapter, "The Queen of Spades," this romantic conflict between her and her passion deepens: "We gamble. Some do it at the gaming table, some do not. You play, you win, you play you lose. You play" (Winterson, *The Passion* 73). Later, it is revealed that having used her passion as a playground, Villanelle ends up losing her heart physically this time; and it is not so difficult to guess who keeps the lost heart.

3.4 Henri & Villanelle

Sequester my heart.
Wherever love is, I want to be, I will follow it as surely as
the land-locked salmon finds the sea.
...
I lay awake till the seagulls began to cry.
It was New Year's Day, 1805, and I was twenty.
Henri, "The Emperor"

In between love and despair. In between fear and sex, passion is.
My oars lie flat on the water. It is New Year's Day, 1805.
Villanelle, "The Queen of Spades"

I'm telling you stories. Trust me.
Henri & Villanelle

While the first and second chapters are narrated by Henri and Villanelle respectively, "The Zero Winter" is the one in which stories and voices of both narrators are merged and where passion transforms yet never ends. The third chapter starts with

Henri, recounting how they escape, leaving his passion, Napoleon behind and it continues with Villanelle, narrating her life story, including her passion, The Queen of Spades. In fact, as the last sentences of the first two chapters are the same ("It is New Year's Day, 1805"), Winterson gives a glimpse of the union of Villanelle and Henri, and the birth of new passion in the next chapters, both "The Zero Winter" and "The Rock." Therefore, it might be more effective to analyse the elements of gender and identity as well as the passion in the very same part.

The third chapter, firstly narrated by Henri, begins with the cruel atmosphere of the war from which Henri has been suffering for eight years: "Future. Crossed out. That's what war does.I don't want to worship him any more. I want to make my own mistakes. I want to die in my own time" (Winterson, *The Passion* 86). Because the powerful masculine figure, Napoleon Bonaparte is crumbling gradually in Henri's eyes, Henri decides to escape from this atrocity. On the other hand, the same atrocity of the war makes Henri and Villanelle run into each other as she is one of Bonaparte's *vivandières* whom Henri tells of in the first chapter:

> Napoleon himself ordered *vivandières* to be sent to special camps... Their food was often worse than ours, they had us as many hours of the day as we could stand and the pay was poor. The *vivandières* were runaways, strays, younger daughters of too-large families, servant girls who'd got tired of giving it away to drunken masters, and fat old dames who couldn't ply their trade anywhere else. (38)

Here, Henri's recounting of the miserable condition of these women not only provides information about Villanelle's adventures after the Queen of Spades, but also underlines Winterson's challenge to dominant representations of genders. In such a harsh environment, soldiers typically ignore even the faces of such women, let alone their horrible state; however, Henri observes them in pity: "One woman I met crawling home after an officer's party said she'd lost count at thirty-nine. Christ lost consciousness at thirty-nine" (38). Namely, it might be inferred that by being sensitive, he adopts a feminine attitude towards even the women everyone disregards. As for Villanelle, being one of these women in such a poor state, it is a wise decision to join Henri and Patrick in their escape plan and this decision becomes the beginning of how Henri's passion transforms into falling in love with Villanelle at first sight.

When Villanelle narrates her story, she does not merely provide the details of her lesbian love story, but reveals that she is already married to a meat man "whose hands [creep] over her body like crabs" as well, hence readers learn about her marriage

in “Zero Winter” at the same time with Henri and Patrick (Winterson, *The Passion* 98). Considering their relationship, the only thing in common is cross-dressing that her husband sometimes demands it from her, and she uses “codpiece” to seem like a boy for the man she detests (96). From a heteronormative point of view, the expectation of the husband poses a challenge to the traditional representation, thereby shaking the strict rules relating to gender and sexuality. The reason behind this fluidity might be that “human bodies, indeed all animate bodies, stretch and extend the notion of physicality that dominates the physical sciences, for animate bodies are objects necessarily different from other objects; they are materialities that are uncontainable in physicalist terms alone” (Grosz xi). Thus, by integrating cross-dressing into a so-called heterosexual marriage, Winterson forces the limits of the female body and its link to the norms of patriarchal society. As for their marriage, the mutual desire for Villanelle’s cross-dressing does not help the marriage survive because she has already had no heart – “it [is] beating in another place” (Winterson, *The Passion* 98). Finally, after two-year-long travelling with no heart, and accordingly no feelings, she steals all his money and deserts him. On one hand, this situation proves her liberated nature, but, on the other hand, it indicates that marrying a man does not bring her happiness compared to her lesbian love affair.

> Her love for the “Queen of Spades” further asserts her independence and agency in the choice of lover and fate, irrespective of how subversive or unorthodox such choices may be. As such, she too often reverses the traditional gender stereotype, displaying qualities generally typecast as more ‘masculine.’ (Hutchison 362-3)

Hence, it might be inferred that ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ does not provide equal happiness for both parties in this marriage because, as the term suggests, “heterosexuality is neither a freely chosen sexual preference nor an innate orientation but a system, or institution, that oppresses women” (Watkins 149). Since heterosexuality goes hand in hand with patriarchy or vice versa, they do not oppress only women but also less powerful and masculine men like Henri. To illustrate, when Villanelle is found by her husband after three years, he sells her to the army for revenge - “to join the Generals for their pleasure” that is “quite an honour;” however, although Villanelle does not have plenty of time to take her heart, only her baggage, she is “grateful to them for that; this is no place for a heart" (Winterson, *The Passion* 99). Although the image of the lost heart is already associated with love, in this instance relating to the army, it might be argued that Bonaparte’s “empire wants heartless

bodies because it needs them as objects" just like the empire of patriarchy that wants people without gender-fluid souls because it needs them as binaries (Fahy 102). To put it another way, "you can only give up your passion, only then can you begin to survive" (Winterson, *The Passion* 82).

When they arrive in Venice in May 1813, only two of them remain - Patrick has already died on the way. From now on, this journey has become Henri and Villanelle's adventure; especially for Henri, it is an interesting yet sad experience: "I watched Villanelle's face; the face of someone coming home, seeing nothing but the homecoming. Her eyes flickered from the domes to cats, embracing what she saw and passing a silent message that she was back. I envied her that I was still an exile" (Winterson, *The Passion* 110). Then it is decided that Henri is going to stay with Villanelle's family until the conditions are safe and sound for him to go back to France. However, in return for providing accommodation, Villanelle's demand from Henri is to take her heart back from her lover. Henri is not convinced that she does not really possess a heart until he listens to her chest:

> I could hear nothing.
>
> 'Villanelle, you'd be dead if you had no heart.'
>
> 'Those soldiers you lived with, do you think they had hearts? Do you think my fat husband has a heart somewhere in his lard?'
>
> ...
>
> 'You want me to go inside that house and search for your heart?' (116)

On that night, they go to the house of the Queen of Spades; while Villanelle is waiting outside, Henri goes inside, discovering the giant house and when he enters the eighth room "smelling of musk and incense," he has no fear anymore since it is decidedly "a woman's room." He thinks of Villanelle and how she feels "with this sweet-smelling, seductive woman" (120). Therefore, it might be asserted that his respect for Villanelle's passion for the Queen of Spades hints at the possibility of possessing a lesbian perspective adopted by a male narrator. "Thus lesbianism in *The Passion* is exemplary and definitive, rather than marginal and to-be-defined" (Makinen 58). Moreover, the fact that Henri finds the heart hidden in a jar in "a vast walk-in closet" suggests Winterson's "punning on the secretive nature of the two women's love affair while also signalling to the reader the word's modern meaning" – the closet (Palmer 194). Then, another postmodern scene including fantasy occurs and she swallows her

heart to place it inside. The repossession of her heart might be regarded as the retrieval of her power and control over her relationships, basically, her life. In addition, although men are expected to be dominant figures in patriarchal societies, the saviour of Villanelle turns out to be Henri, the male narrator through whose character Winterson problematises and redefines masculinity.

Henri's liberating Villanelle's heart, which, "both at a literal and figurative level, is the metaphor that connects and eventually joins together Henry's and Villanelle's life stories," encourages him to propose (Antosa 166). Unfortunately, she does not accept and explain her reason:

> 'I can't give you my heart.'
>
> 'I don't have to have it.'
>
> 'Perhaps not, but I need to give it. You're my brother.'
>
> ...
>
> I began to think of leaving for France and though the thought of not seeing her each day froze my heart more cleanly than any zero winter. (Winterson, *The Passion* 122)

When Henri contemplates his passion for Villanelle and living without her, how Winterson interrogates the traditional sex roles and reconstructs their socially constructed nature is observed:

> When I dream of a future in her arms no dark days appear, not even a head cold, and though I know it's nonsense I really believe we would always be happy and that our children would change the world.
>
> I sound like those soldiers who dream of home...
>
> No. She'd vanish for days at a time and I'd weep. She'd forget we had any children and leave me to take care of them. She'd gamble our house away at the Casino, and if I took her to live in France she'd grow to hate me.
>
> ...
>
> She'd never be faithful. (123)

In a patriarchal society where women are supposed to be "angels in the house," they are responsible for the private sphere, tackling all the problems relating to children and daily chores because, according to the male-oriented state of mind, "humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being" (Beauvoir 15). Moreover, "almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage" (18). On the contrary,

Winterson's female character does not merely rewrite the rules of hetero-patriarchal ideology but also, thanks to her fluid gender, paves the way for the plurality of identities. Since Henri is already aware of her nature, he does not demand socially constructed feminine roles from her. In fact, he seems sure that he "will always be afraid of her body because of the power it has" (Winterson, *The Passion* 123). Villanelle's refusal to marry might be interpreted as her rejection of patriarchal system because she is well-aware of the fact that there is no need for a man in her world; she grows up without a biological father but an unconventional one.

When Villanelle takes Henri to the casino, which is the very first time for him, they come across Villanelle's husband and he turns out to be the cook whose job is taken over by Henri while in the army. Then the cook explains the relationship between Henri and him: "Thanks to him and his little tricks I was drummed out of Boulogne and sent to Paris to mind the Stores. I've never been one to mind anything that didn't have something in it for me. Aren't you pleased, Henri, to meet an old friend and see him so prosperous?'" (Winterson, *The Passion* 127). Then he orders Villanelle to come with him, trying to convince of the job in the army again. What occurs next is obviously opposite to the feminine nature of Henri; however, probably out of his passion, he kills the cook and takes the heart out: "You said he had no heart, Villanelle, let's see" (128). Having found Villanelle's heart in the jar and watching her swallow, Henri is already shaken by this magical realist experience. Thus, now, after carving the cook's heart and seeing him dead in a real sense unlike Villanelle's case, this combination of the fantastic and real experiences respectively becomes too heavy for Henri to bear, and he desperately gives the control to Villanelle again. Then, to Henri's great surprise, she takes them home by using her webbed feet, walking on the water.

> With the collision of the real and the fantastic in this scene comes a collapse of Henri's power to reason in a linear fashion. Locked in the tower at San Servelo, he is cut off from the flow of linear time, so that his childhood memories, particularly those which pre-date his joining the army, begin to merge schizophrenically with his experience of the present. (French 239).

Consequently, the transition from his masculine passion for Bonaparte in a patriarchal world (the army) to Villanelle's fluid world (Venice), the female atmosphere resisting the male control, shatters Henri's sensitive world as he, sadly, could not be loved in the same way in both relationships. In the last chapter, Villanelle explains this in a very clear way:

> He loves me, I know that, and I love him, but in a brotherly incestuous way. I wonder if things would be different for him if I could return his passion. No one ever has and his heart is too wide for his skinny chest... Henri is a gentle man and I wonder if it was killing that fat cook that hurt his mind? (Winterson, *The Passion* 146-147)

The last chapter, "The Rock," is narrated by both Henri and Villanelle, hence it provides two different perspectives for readers to follow what occurs inside and outside San Servelo. Henri spends his days dreaming and rewriting his experiences and through his diary, his madness is clearly observed. Before he decides to stop seeing her, Henri learns that Villanelle is expecting a baby as they make love despite their different feelings during the intercourse. This unexpected situation encourages Henri to get married; however, he ends up being rejected once again. On the other hand, despite the existence of her own child, Villanelle chooses her freedom once more. As, in the past, she never had a biological father, a patriarchal one who limits the borders of her identity, Villanelle seems to think that there is no need for her baby to have a father:

> I took his hands and tried to explain that I wouldn't marry again and that he couldn't live in Venice and I wouldn't live in France.
>
> 'What about the child? How will I know about the child?'
>
> 'I'll bring the child when it's safe and you'll come here again when it's safe. I'll have Piero poisoned, I don't know, we'll find a way. You have to go home.' (Winterson, *The Passion* 148)

However, having been rejected once again, Henri turns down Villanelle's efforts to rescue him and does not leave the prison, assuming it his home. "He seems particularly [affected] by Villanelle's resistance to the traditional romance plot, according to which he should be cast in the active, questing role of the hero and she in the role of passive victim" (French 239). However, Winterson's female character is so opposite to the gender norms and patriarchal values that she can find the power inside to refuse all the men in her life at the end and decides to establish her own identity.

When Henri admits his guilt and is sent to San Servelo, Villanelle is "in possession of a considerable fortune" as the cook's "lawful undisputed wife," so she buys a house just across the one belonging to the Queen of Spades (Winterson, *The Passion* 137). Having observed her from all the windows constantly, Villanelle eventually sees the ex-owner of her heart and it is decided to meet again as "neighbours." When Villanelle faces the Queen of Spades after more than eight years, she does not "feel like an heiress

who [has] walked from Moscow and seen her husband murdered," rather, she is more like "a Casino girl in a borrowed uniform" (143). The motive behind this sensation is that "Villanelle's affairs with men result from necessity, rather than from desire, and in this she mirrors Henri's own mother and the camp prostitutes. The only real passion that we witness is the nine-day lesbian affair with the Queen of Spades" (Makinen 70). On the other hand, as a result of this nine-day period, "the text reinforces the 'outsider' nature of lesbianism within the oppressive sexual politics of compulsory heterosexualism" (70). As the owner of this concept, Adrienne Rich summarises the background of the 'outsider' nature of lesbianism:

> Women have married because it was necessary, in order to survive economically, in order to have children who would not suffer economic deprivation or social ostracism, in order to remain respectable, in order to do what was expected of women because coming out of "abnormal" childhoods they wanted to feel "normal," and because heterosexual romance has been represented as the great female adventure, duty, and fulfillment. We may faithfully or ambivalently have obeyed the institution, but our feelings - and our sensuality - have not been tamed or contained within it. (654)

In order to tame her feelings and resist the passion, Villanelle rejects the idea of seeing the Queen of Spades again and does not spend the night in her place unlike the past: "If I give in to this passion, my real life, the most solid, the best known, will disappear and I will feed on shadows again like those sad spirits whom Orpheus fled" (Winterson, *The Passion* 146). It is understood that she turns down not only the existence of the men in her life but also that of the women despite the passion because Villanelle longs to be herself and on her own – free from destructive nature of passion and love. At the end of the story, she proves to be powerful enough to form her identity: "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 shadows where I do not choose to live" (150).

CHAPTER 4: *FRANKISSSTEIN: A LOVE STORY*

4.1 *Frankissstein: A Love Story* as a Postmodern Work

The world is at the start of something new.
We are the shaping spirits of our destiny.
Mary Shelley, Frankissstein

The earth is not flat and neither is reality. Reality is continuous, multiple, simultaneous, complex, abundant and partly invisible.
Winterson, *Art Objects*

Story: a series of connected events, real or imagined. Imagined or real.
Imagined
And
Real
Frankissstein

Having been shortlisted and longlisted for several book awards, *Frankissstein: A Love Story (2019)* is one of Winterson's latest works, narrated by two main characters, similar to those of *The Passion.* Since the title itself reminds of Mary Shelley's distinguished work *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818),* it is not unexpected to find Shelley as one of the narrators. In other words, *Frankissstein*, as a postmodern work, alternates between two different worlds belonging to the modern day and the past. In this novel, Winterson employs universal themes such as humanity and love by using postmodern elements such as playfulness, intertextuality, and temporal distortion. The events and characters from different centuries render the present and the past more connected to the future; providing a broader picture for readers to realise the bond among these three concepts of time. Therefore, Winterson's *Frankissstein* offers more than a simple reanimation of a work written in the past; instead, it presents a playful combination, discovering what has occurred, and predicting what will occur beyond humanity and love with the help of postmodern techniques.

There are two time periods in *Frankissstein: A Love Story* and the first is presented by Mary Shelley who is a real figure from the nineteenth century, "the proud

daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. 1792" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 13). Winterson's choice of the daughter of one of the pioneers of First Wave Feminism hints at the possibility to read the work from a feminist perspective aiming at deconstructing patriarchal norms. As for the environment, set in Lake Geneva, the very first scene of the novel hosts one of the notable events in literary history in which Frankenstein is born:

> In the summer of 1816 the poets Shelley and Byron, Byron's physician, Polidori, Mary Shelley and her stepsister, Claire Clairmont, by then Byron's mistress, rented two properties on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Byron enjoyed the grand Villa Diodati, while the Shelleys took a smaller, more charming house, a little lower down the slope. (11)

Despite seeming like a simple summer holiday plan, it turns out to be a literary legend for these gifted people. Due to the dampest weather ever, they have to stay under the same roof for a long time and when wine becomes not enough to make the condition less boring, they decide to write supernatural stories. In this process of writing, readers witness not only the birth of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley but as well that of John Polidori's *The Vampyre* and "The Mask of Anarchy" by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Through the stories of how these notable works are created, Winterson presents the atmosphere of the century and reveals the condition of women and men, basically humanity along with love among human beings regardless of their sex and gender. These themes also exist in the second story which is in parallel with the former one in terms of the characters and they are formed in a playful manner: the narrative of the second time period belongs to a trans doctor in the modern era, called Ry Shelley despite being born as Mary Shelley. As Ry refuses to be "one thing" or "one gender," it is politically correct to call Ry 'they' instead of he or she (67). Here again, it might be inferred that Winterson's preference for a trans individual as the second narrator underlines the importance of gender questioning and stating or not stating one's own identity by themselves irrespective of heterosexist and patriarchal codes. Unfortunately, bodies, female ones in particular, have become the target of a male-orientated system. Thus, the choice of this issue in a novel might be regarded as inspiring for people who are brave enough to break gendered barriers and ask themselves in Shakespeare's words: "What is your substance, whereof are you made / That millions of strange shadows on you tend?" (27). In other words, the existence of such narrators has the potential to be a muse for those who identify themselves as

'queer' and those interested in transhumanism. Moreover, there are other characters mirroring the ones in the nineteenth-century story: There is Lord Byron who claims that "the life-spark is male" and sees women as inferior; then in the contemporary story, he comes to be Ron Lord, the vulgar but humorous inventor of a variety of all-purpose lifelike sexbots for lonely men (16). Having divorced and living with his mother, Ron Lord focuses on his sexbot project out of which he is planning to make a fortune. John Polidori transforms into a female reporter in Vanity Fair and becomes Polly D.; Claire Clairmont remains simply as Claire yet becomes a religious woman who later falls in love with Ron Lord. More significantly, the famous Dr. Frankenstein belonging to Mary Shelley's story is transformed into Professor Victor Stein who "has a big following on Facebook and Twitter" and whose "TED talk has netted six million views" (55). Described as a "high-functioning madman" by Ry, he has a keen interest in Artificial Intelligence, the future of humanity, and human consciousness particularly when bodies are off the table (83). Through this character specifically, Winterson raises questions about "The Future of Humans in a Post-Human World" which is also the name of the lecture given by Victor Stein (57). On the other hand, mirroring each other, Victor Frankenstein and Professor Victor Stein are the embodiment of the extreme scientific ideology for the sake of living forever with a distorted body or no body at all. As Mary Shelley from the nineteenth century reveals: "I will call my hero (is he a hero?) Victor – for he seeks victory over life and over death. He will strive to penetrate the recesses of Nature" (52). His modern version also has a similar mission with a slight difference: instead of creating someone out of dead body parts, Professor Stein tries to return them to life by using electricity; and through cryogenics, he aims to live forever, liberating the mind from the physical body. This is how Ry Shelley meets Victor Stein; Doctor Ry supplies body parts for the experimentation which attempts to free human beings from the boundaries of their biology. Eventually, Ry Shelley, as a trans doctor "who [chooses] to intervene in [their] own evolution," attracts Stein's attention sexually and philosophically because, from his point of view, Ry is the "harbinger of the future" (110).

There are not only echoing characters in *Frankissstein* yet as well many historical figures such as Ada Lovelace and Alan Turing. Shifting from the Romantic period to the present day, Winterson blends time periods and characters as well as the works belonging to different centuries such as lyrics of a song by The Eagles and lines

of a sonnet by Shakespeare. It might be put forward that intertextuality, a feature of postmodernism, is so evident in this work since "it veers from the Gothic to the satirical and seamlessly interweaves social commentary on everything from gender to the cultural hegemony to our obsessions with social media and future tech" (Lotz). Through this postmodern element, while inviting readers to dig into transhumanism and immortality, Winterson integrates many quotations into her work, underlining the immortality of literature, too. "She allows these words to build upon one another, and often implants them without introduction or citation, her book becoming both the stitched-together body of multiple literary works and an all-encompassing consciousness of literary culture" (Sheppard). As an illustration, two particular lines from Shakespeare's Sonnet 53 are frequently used in both stories: "What is your substance, whereof are you made / That millions of strange shadows on you tend?" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 10). The reason why the same lines appear in both stories belonging to the Romantic and contemporary periods might be Winterson's urge to show the endless human desire for immortality and to always discover the existence and beyond it. In addition, by including a myriad of extracts and passages by people from different periods and classes, Winterson deconstructs what is considered 'single truth' because "among the many things that postmodern intertextuality challenges are both closure and single, centralized meaning. Its willed and wilful provisionality rests largely upon its acceptance of the inevitable textual infiltration of prior discursive practices" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 127). Thus, while employing universal themes, *Frankissstein* offers different perspectives belonging to the past and future to discover such themes existing in the present and/or vice versa.

Blending different eras has a significant role not only in terms of intertextuality but of temporal distortion as well. The novel shifts between the early years of the nineteenth century in which Mary Shelley, the mother of *Frankenstein* narrates the story and the twenty-first-century world where "evolutionary time is speeding up" and "survival of the fittest" turns into "survival of the smartest" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 110). Narrated by a trans doctor, Ry Shelley who is the creator of the evolution of their own body, the contemporary world furnishes readers with possible future scenarios regarding humanity and Artificial Intelligence which "is biased towards best possible outcomes" and in Victor Stein's scenario, "the human race is not a best possible outcome" (57). Whereas Mary Shelley touches upon the condition of women and men

as sharp binaries and their unequal positions in the eighteenth-century society, Victor Stein conceives of a world, made possible by AI, free from "binaries like male and female, black and white, rich and poor" and "a division between head and heart" (60). In actuality, it is a dream of many people to have such a world disregarding the fixed codes which reduce genders to the limits of bodies: "We have always known that we are not limited to the shape we inhabit" (85). Despite being queer, the bodies of Frankenstein's monster and Ry Shelley prove to be inspiring for the challenge against the normal (!) bodies in the context of binaries. In other words, regarding "the body as a discontinuous, nontotalizable series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations" allows readers "to reconceive bodies outside the binary oppositions imposed on the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object and interior/exterior oppositions" (Grosz 164). Hence, alternating between these worlds and periods and meshing figures, quotations, and lyrics from the past with those of the present, Winterson creates "a way to inject fresh questions about humanity's future into the old veins of *Frankenstein*" (Charles). In order to raise such fresh questions about the long-established notions in the minds of readers, Winterson leaves the chapters untitled and begins each one with contrasting sentences regarding 'reality' such as "Reality is now" and "Reality is not now" (*Frankisssstein* 106, 140). No matter which period the characters belong to, she chooses to problematise the concept of reality at the very beginning of the chapters and dig deeper into its nature and beyond. Namely, temporal fluidity in *Frankisssstein* enables historical figures and fictional characters to exist in the same atmosphere, hence time takes a 'flat' form instead of having a linear line and this enables readers to watch how the unshakeable forms of reality can be shaken through Winterson's narrative.

In *Frankisssstein*, Winterson fuses universal themes such as humanity and love and the issues concerning existence beyond bodies and biology in a way that underscores its postmodern nature. "Just like Victor's creation, *Frankisssstein: A Love Story* is a patchwork of voice and style – part historical fiction, part sexy romp, and part dissertation on artificial intelligence, the singularity, and gender fluidity" (Mond). From the Gothic environment set in Switzerland to the mysterious underground lab in Manchester, readers are invited to compare both worlds and characters in the framework of the aforementioned themes. Moreover, the subtitle "a love story" hints

at the possibility to explore this postmodern combination of two different worlds presented in temporal disorder through the existence of love. To wit, Winterson aims not only to play with the perception of reality yet also offer points of view to reconsider gender, sexuality, and identity.

4.2 Mary Shelley

i stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking
what can i do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see farther
Rupi Kaur, “legacy”

I am Mary. My mother’s namesake, my father’s keepsake.
I am aware that by not naming the thing that haunts my mind
I am repudiating him.
But how would we name a new life form?
Mary Shelley, *Frankissstein*

Winterson’s preference for Mary Shelley as the first narrator reminds readers of her mother Mary Wollstonecraft who is regarded as the mother of feminism when feminism as a movement does not even exist. She is famous for not only *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) but also for her life story and in fact, both are vitally connected to each other. Thus, despite passing away after giving birth to Mary Shelley, Wollstonecraft has a great impact on Mary Shelley and how she builds her perspective of life and forms her ideas about the rigid codes of society relating to the position of men and women. For this reason, it might be commented that through Mary Shelley, the narrator of *Frankissstein,* Winterson helps readers refresh their memories of Wollstonecraft’s ideas which unconsciously triggered a feminist movement and then continues with those of Shelley. Therefore, the background to *Frankissstein*’s first narrator attempts to draw a link not only between Frankenstein’s monster and Dr.

Stein's project yet between how the attitude towards women and the 'other(ed)' parts of society is transformed from the Romantic period to the contemporary era as well.

From the very first page, readers find themselves in a gothic atmosphere of Lake Geneva depicted by young Mary Shelley and through this opening scene, readers are given the opportunity to conceive of how one of the most famous literary games in history occurs. During this writing process, conversations among these literal and, at the same time, fictional characters, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, John Polidori, Mary Shelley, and her stepsister, Claire Clairmont are of great significance as well as the internal questioning of Mary Shelley herself because "it is the language of our thoughts that tortures us more than any excess or deprivation of nature" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 9). This might be seen as the reason why young Mary contends that "we are the shaping spirits of our destiny" (9). Despite having no memory including her mother alive, Mary Shelley is suffused with her mother's passionate feminist spirit and has a strong desire to find a way to convey Wollstonecraft's ideas: "Would that I might do something myself, I said, to be worthy of her memory. Why is it that we wish to leave some mark behind? said Byron. Is it only vanity? No, I said, it is hope. Hope that one day there will be a human society that is just" (13). In dreaming of a world "that is just," according to Wollstonecraft, the very first step for human beings to take is to make the two sexes equal. Though "other proto-feminist treatises" existed in her time, Mary Wollstonecraft' *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was considered to be the first to point "an outspoken rallying cry to middle-class women, especially mothers, as major influences on society. Her emphasis was on the need to make women rational" (Gamble 15). Hence, it is quite possible to perceive her existence between the lines of ardent discussions among characters notably Mary Shelley and Lord Byron. Since Wollstonecraft poses questions that are still valid, Shelley, following her mother's path, takes a firm stand on her feminist values and endeavours to find answers to a seemingly simple yet crucial question: "Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him the gift of reason?" (Wollstonecraft 23). Even only from this one-line questioning, it might be inferred that Wollstonecraft's main aim is to highlight the importance of equality and education in terms of the condition of women and men. In her words, "till women are more rationally educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks" because "woman was not created merely to gratify the appetite of man, or to be the upper servant, who

provides his meals and takes care of his linen" (66). In the novel, readers can sense this point of view through vehement dialogues of Wollstonecraft's daughter and Lord Byron who thinks that "the life-spark is male" – "not the soil, not the bedding, not the container; the life-spark" even though Mary Shelley reminds that men are made from women (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 16). Thus, the fact that Lord Byron is the embodiment of patriarchal attitudes becomes evident when his own daughter is the subject of the conversation:

> I have a daughter of my own, said Byron. She is docile and passive.
>
> Ada is but six months old! And you have not seen her at all since shortly after she was born! What child, male or female, does more than sleep and suck when it is born? That is not their sex; it is their biology!
>
> Ah, said Byron, I thought she would be a glorious boy. If I must sire girls, then I trust she will marry well.
>
> Is there not more to life than marriage? I asked.
>
> For a woman? said Byron. Not at all. For a man, love is of his life, a thing apart. For a woman, it is her whole existence.
>
> My mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, would not agree with you, I said.
>
> *And yet she tried to kill herself for love*, said Byron. (13)

Simone de Beauvoir includes Lord Byron's quotation above about the place and meaning of love for women and men in "The Woman in Love," a chapter of her seminal work *The Second Sex* in which she explains why "the word love has by no means the same sense for both sexes." Beauvoir points out that even though there is a possibility for men "to be passionate lovers at certain times in their lives," they do not give up their superior position "even on their knees before a mistress;" since "at the very heart of their lives they remain sovereign subjects," the loved woman is regarded as "only one value among others" (608). In other words, the fact that women and everything related constitute only a part of men's lives causes men to feel superior enough to own and control what is labelled "inferior" and/or "other." Winterson chooses Byron's life again as an example of patriarchal values and male-oriented laws in society: "What right has he to take a child from its mother? Every right. It is the law. The child is the property of the father. His lordship upholds the law when it suits him. So do they all. Revolutionaries and radicals until it touches on property – and that includes women and children" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 199). Furthermore, Byron's hetero-patriarchal viewpoint about male and female babies and Mary Shelley's

reaction in the previous dialogue above indirectly corroborate what Beauvoir argues in the chapter called "The Data of Biology." Whereas her claims do not concern the earlier stages of womanhood, like female babies in the above quotation, she accepts the biological fact that "the body being the instrument of our grasp upon the world, the world is bound to seem a very different thing when apprehended in one manner or another." However, she still denies that such biological facts "fail to explain why woman is the Other; they do not condemn her to remain in this subordinate role for ever" because "they are insufficient for setting up a hierarchy of the sexes" (Beauvoir 60).

The character of Lord Byron functions as a representation of both sexist patriarchal individual and father, resisting the empowerment of women. Thus, another important female character whom Winterson integrates into her fiction in the framework of the position of women at both societal and technological levels turns out to be Byron's own daughter, Augusta Ada Byron (later Lovelace). She is not an ordinary character both in the novel and in real life since she later becomes the first computer programmer in the so-called field of men – mathematics and technology. However, because Ada Lovelace is a "woman," Byron never prefers to see her from the day she was born: "I wish he had loved me. He loved so many people, did he not? Women and men. Why could he not love his own child?" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 222). Still, despite having remarkable poems, "being remarkable is no guarantee of human feeling" (222). The playful and ironic side of this integration is that despite having a father who has a male-oriented world view, Ada Lovelace proves that her intellectually "inferior female mind" could perfectly achieve what her father would label as a male job. Although what she succeeds in attempts to turn male hegemony in society upside down, to shake gender categories and the jobs and duties attached to them unfortunately needs more women to involve in such a resistance; otherwise it might not be possible to get out of this notion of social constructionism "for what [men] have said so far, for the most part, stems from the opposition activity/ passivity, from the power relation between a fantasized obligatory virility meant to invade, to colonize, and the consequential phantasm of woman as a 'dark continent' to penetrate and to 'pacify'" (Cixous 877). Therefore, in order to transgress patriarchal boundaries confining women and deconstruct traditional portraits of binaries, Winterson weaves the narrative from many female sources; Mary Wollstonecraft exists through her

daughter Mary Shelley as well as her distinguished work, and then Ada Lovelace appears on the stage. Moreover, Ada Lovelace's existence in the story is quite effective for readers because it has a link to the second story of the novel which takes place in the contemporary age of technology and machines. Thus, it might be inferred that the choice of characters has an interwoven aim that how to interpret their roles depends on which story is being read.

The part narrated by Mary Shelley tells of the writing process of her masterpiece, *Frankenstein,* providing the details of different settings and related figures; however, Winterson exhibits more than a description of the atmosphere of this "writing session," she takes readers to the backyard of the Romantic era through Mary Shelley's lenses. In this way, it becomes much more straightforward to comprehend what the characters experience in terms of both the story and real life while readers also gain knowledge about the branches of art and literature such as mythology. The motive behind employing mythological stories might be explained that the position of woman as "the second sex" and the status of man as "superior" date back to old times and when blended, related stories make more sense together as they yield associations in the minds of readers. In *Art Objects*, Winterson points out: "A writer uninterested in her lineage is a writer who has no lineage. The slow gestations and transformations of language are my proper study and there can be no limit on that study. I cannot do new work without known work" (136). Hence, writing a story by rewriting and integrating other ones into hers is Winterson's typical postmodern style to show how she disrupts the conventions and/or shows whether human beings change or not. Making use of the past transforms into something universal and timeless in her hands and as an illustration, in order to depict the different worldviews of the characters, she draws on the story of "Pandora and her bloody box," "another woman who wouldn't do as she was told" just like "Eve" who "[ate] the apple from the forbidden tree" in "the Garden of Eden" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 96).

> I wish TO KNOW why all that ails mankind must be the fault of womankind?
>
> Women are weak, said Byron.
>
> Or perhaps men need to believe it is so, I said.
>
> …

> Perhaps, I said, it is women who bring knowledge into the world quite as much as men do. Eve ate the apple. Pandora opened the box. Had they not done so humankind is what? Automata. Bovine. Contented pig.
>
> Show me that pig! said Claire. I shall marry that pig! Why must life be suffering?
>
> …
>
> Just like a woman … said Byron (re suffering). We are purified by suffering.
>
> (So speaks the Emperor of Indulgence.)
>
> Purified by suffering? said Claire. Then any woman who has borne children and lost them is purified indeed.
>
> An animal in the field has suffered likewise, said Byron. Suffering is not of the body but of the soul. (96-97)

As observed in the dialogue above, whereas Byron belittles women and their deeds, Mary and Claire resist the subjugation of women and criticise male dominance even in mythological stories. In other words, not only does Winterson use intertextuality to question rigid codes of patriarchy yet also her characters make use of mythological and historical figures and artworks to do the same within their world. To illustrate, in the part about the creation process of Frankenstein's monster, there is Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawing "The Vitruvian Man" which displays "man the measure of all things, beautiful, proportioned, rational in his beauty" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 136). It might be deduced that the perfect body of a human being is supposed to be male whereas the female body is "reduced to the role of modifications or variations of the (implicitly white, male, youthful, heterosexual, middle-class) human body" because "a corporeal 'universal' has in fact functioned as a veiled representation and projection of a masculine which takes itself as the unquestioned norm" (Grosz 188).

Mary Shelley's narrative opens in 1816 which is 'the Year Without a Summer' causing many problems throughout the country and Percy Bysshe Shelley composes "The Masque of Anarchy," a political poem about one of the bloodiest results of these problems - Peterloo Massacre in 1819. At that time, The Shelley family is in Italy; they move to Rome as they cannot find a reason to live in their homeland, England, in Mary's words, a country of "small-minded, smug, self-righteous, unjust" people, "a country that hates the stranger, whether that stranger be a foreigner or an atheist, or a poet, or a thinker, or a radical, or a woman. For women are strange to men" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 173). Yet, unfortunately, after she loses another child in Rome, Mary

becomes pregnant again and this repeated situation drives her mad: "My husband endeavoured to hold me, to stop me shouting at the painting on the wall. The painting of my child takes no fever. I am twenty-two years old. I have lost three children. Shelley too, you will say, Shelley too, has lost three children. Yet he does not break. I am broken" (174). Namely, although Mary is deeply shaken by the death of her children and loses appetite for life, Percy Bysshe Shelley does not seem to be affected as such by the very same situation regarding both the mother and the father. However, apparently, he is stirred enough by Peterloo Massacre to write a poem about it. It is crystal clear in the novel that his character provides a marked contrast to that of Byron within the framework of the status of men and women, and Percy Bysshe Shelley believes in "free love" and "free life;" however, these are only "free for him" because women in his life – Mary and his first wife Harriet "have paid the price" (200). It might be stated that although he mostly does not appreciate sexist attitudes towards women similar to those of Byron, he unconsciously uses the privilege attributed to men in every aspect of life:

> The world punishes men and women differently. There is scandal wherever Byron and Shelley go, but they remain men. They are not dubbed hyenas in petticoats for living as they please. They are not called un-men when they love where they will. They are not left unprotected and penniless when a woman of theirs walks away without a thought. (What woman does walk away without a thought? Not even the bitterest nor the most vilely abused.) (199)

This part of Mary Shelley's internal thought might be interpreted as a cry against gender inequality which is also the theme dominating the whole novel. As this part of the novel is set in the nineteenth century, the age of First Wave Feminism, anything Mary Shelley criticises reminds readers of what women of that time have experienced and how they strive to combat gender inequality and the roles attributed to gendered identities. Not only Beauvoir but also Wollstonecraft years ago admits that "bodily strength seems to give man a natural superiority over woman," however, it should be the only field in which inequality might be the subject. Therefore, she asserts that "the knowledge of the two sexes should be the same in nature, if not in degree, and that women, considered not only as moral, but rational creatures, ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the same means as men, instead of being educated like a fanciful kind of half being" (65). Assuming women to be inferior as a result of physical differences springs from the idea of essentialism in which sex and gender roles go hand in hand with each other –women are expected to display feminine

characteristics. As observed in the examples and quotation above and the novel itself, this type of notion, socially and culturally produced by male hegemony, has been protested by many women, one of whom is Hélène Cixous, an important figure in French Feminism that follows "de Beauvoir's analysis of woman's construction as the 'Other' by seeking to explore the ways in which language and culture construct sexual difference" (Gamble 34). Cixous, in her prominent essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976), calls women to combat this male monopoly first by using their power to write: "Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth" (880). She makes use of the mythological story of Medusa who has always been described as an ugly woman, full of outrage, having snakes on her head instead of hair. The aim of illustrating this Greek myth might be to underline the existence of patriarchal man who pictures woman as an ugly creature with a menacing look who has the capability of doing horrible things. Such a patriarchal man takes shape in Lord Byron's character in the novel, who pins the blame on women for anything disruptive to his patriarchal mind and soul, as told in the stories of Pandora and Eve. Hence, Cixous calls on women to write in a way celebrating what has been repressed about them such as womanhood so as to "kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing" (880). As if they heard Cixous, both mother and daughter write down their perspectives about the world, home to men and women. Mary Wollstonecraft becomes the role model of Mary Shelley who interrogates her position in a patriarchal system in which biological determinism is dominant:

> My mother … what would my mother say if I could bring her back from the dead? A woman's heart. What is it? A woman's mind. What is it? Are we made differently at the core? Or is difference nothing but custom and power? And if men and women were equal in every way in the world, what would women do about the dead babies? Would I feel less pain if I wore breeches and went riding and shut my study door to work and smoked and drank and whored? (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 200)

Through the end of Mary Shelley's story, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron die respectively and after Byron's funeral, Mary happens to learn the existence of his daughter in 1824. The information coming to her too late awakens her memories of the days spent together in the house near Lake Geneva, in which Byron and Polidori insist on listing the reasons "why the male principle is more active than the female principle" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 219). Recalling such a noteworthy part of her life and assessing what they have discussed together, Mary Shelley leaves her readers with an equally significant statement to unveil the invisible chains around women:

> being refused an education, being legally the property of a male relative, whether father, husband or brother, having no rights to vote, and no money of her own once married, and being barred from every profession except governess or nurse, and refused every employment except mother, wife or skivvy, and wearing a costume that makes walking or riding impossible, might limit the active principle of a female. (219)

4.3 Ry Shelley

I really like you, I'm attracted to you
The way you move, the things you do
I'll probably burn in hell for saying this
But I'm really in heaven whenever we kiss
But oh no, you won't change me
You can try for an eternity
I wouldn't sacrifice anything at all
Depeche Mode – "Stories of Old"

To what extent is "identity" a normative ideal
rather than a descriptive feature of experience?
Judith Butler - *Gender Trouble*

My body is a cage
That keeps me from dancing with the one I love
But my mind holds the key
Set my spirit free
Arcade Fire – "My Body is a Cage"

The narrator of the second story set in the modern period is Doctor Ry Shelley who feels "liminal, cusping, in between, emerging, undecided, transitional, experimental, a start-up (or is it an upstart?) in [their] own life" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 27). The reason behind this complicated state of mind is that Ry Shelley is a transgender man who "didn't feel comfortable as a woman" back then (63). Although Ry is well-aware of the fact that being trans "means a lifetime of hormones" and several operations which cause life-span shorter, what they "have done calms [their] mind and agitates [their] chemistry" (215). In a much broader sense, transgender might be defined as "the movement across a socially imposed boundary away from an unchosen starting place, rather than any particular destination or mode of transition"

(Stryker 11). Having given the narrator voice to such a trans character who is able to (re)define their body and feelings, Winterson offers the opportunity to read the stories and bodies at the same time beyond the dualistic sex roles and regardless of hetero-patriarchal lenses.

Postmodernism refuses to embrace fixed norms and single truths and accordingly, Winterson, as a writer of the postmodern age, "demonstrates again and again how we are taught socially to read bodies in ways that privilege only certain ones as normal, acceptable, and reducible to two binary labels, "female" or "male" (Reed 82). How one benefits from postmodernism not only in fiction but in real life is well-explained by Riki Anne Wilchins, a prominent transgender activist; they describe postmodernism as "a lifesaver, commonsense and practical" whereas everyone labels it "impossibly abstract" (9). According to their experience, the motive behind this situation is the flexible and subjective nature of postmodernism that allows Wilchins and such *different* people to tackle "the hostility toward difference, the deadly comedy of binary gender, the cascading assertions about [the] body, and the impossibility of identity," thereby assisting them in navigating their world (9). As to Winterson's world in *Frankissstein,* the part narrated by Ry Shelley takes place in contemporary time and raises questions about apparently two parallel concepts, the transformation of human bodies (Ry Shelley) and the transhumanism in which Victor Stein has a sheer interest: "Are our bodies separable from our minds?" or "can gender be transcended?" (Reed 222). Ry draws this correspondence between transhumanism and being transgender by explaining their own situation: "I am part of a small group of transgender medical professionals. Some of us are transhuman enthusiasts too. That isn't surprising; we feel or have felt that we're in the wrong body. We can understand the feeling that any-body is the wrong body" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 100). The roots of the feeling of being in the *wrong* body have their origins in gender assignment in hetero-patriarchal cultures and binary-based gender roles although gender identity is supposed to be "a form of self-definition: something into which we can withdraw, from which we can glean a degree of privacy from time to time, and with which we can, to a limited degree, manipulate desire" (Bornstein *40*). Thus, when the binaries of sex, gender, and sexual identities have started to be discussed more openly, the performative and fluid nature of genders has also started to 'come out,' hence the sexual identities. In other words, having fed on deconstructive attitude of post-structuralism, queer theory is born

with the aim of disrupting all the binaries, including homosexual/heterosexual – it embraces and celebrates the fluidity and being free from any categorisation.

Ry Shelley is one of many who desire to have the power of choosing their own identities "in a world that insists we be one or the other—a world that doesn't bother to tell us exactly what one or the other is" (Bornstein 8). Since Winterson creates Ry's narrative as the microcosm of such a world, there are other characters within it, such as Victor Stein and Ron Lord, whose attitudes and reactions prove that Ry's transformation process and adaptation to heteronormative society and vice versa have always been and will be hard. In addition, their dialogues allow readers to dive deeper into what Ry has been experiencing when surrounded by people who stick to binaries. For instance, even Doctor Stein, the acclaimed professor who is into the new forms of human life, becomes scared of the possibility of stepping into the homosexual side of the hetero/ homo binary, let alone fluidity and plurality. In other words, he returns to the default settings of heteronormativity when he first sees Ry's body:

> I thought you were a man, he said.
>
> I am. Anatomically I am also a woman.
>
> Is that how you feel about yourself?
>
> Yes. Doubleness is nearer to the truth for me.
>
> …
>
> Do you want to touch me?
>
> I'm not gay, he said.
>
> I know it's confusing. (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 88)

As seen in the dialogue, not only Ry's state is confusing, yet Stein gets confused as well; however, when they turn into a passionate couple out of this confusion, Stein mostly manages to go beyond the boundaries in terms of sex and sexuality thanks to his interest in different forms: "Weren't we just saying that in the future we will be able to choose our bodies? And to change them? Think of yourself as future-early" (88). While discussing the evolution of human beings and "the survival of the smartest," Stein articulates his admiration for Ry's own evolution: "And you, Ry, gorgeous boy/girl, whatever you are, you had a sex change. You chose to intervene in your own evolution. You accelerated your portfolio of possibilities. That attracts me. How could it not? You are both exotic and real. The here and now, and a harbinger of

the future" (110). Namely, his desire might be regarded as not only physical but intellectual as well and this situation creates an in-between state for Ry who keeps questioning their place in Victor's world: "Am I always a sub-par human joke to you, Victor?" (107). Another conversation between them proves Ry's doubts about Stein's hidden heterosexism; when Ry asks, "just for a game," what body he would choose if there was a chance, he underlines that he likes "being in a male body" with wings, "the one modification [he] would make," imagining to have the power of being an angel. There is nothing weird so far; however, when it comes to the colour of the wings, he replies that they are by no means "gold," highlighting the fact that he is not gay:

> I am not gay, he said, any more than you are.
>
> I don't think of myself as part of the binary, I said.
>
> You're not. He shook his head.
>
> No, I'm not. But you are. Wings or no wings, angel or human, you don't want to be gay, do you, Victor?
>
> ... He says, It's not about what I want – like buying a new car. It's about who I am – identity. We make love, and you don't feel like a man to me when we make love.
>
> How would you know? You haven't made love to a man … have you?
>
> …
>
> He says, You look like a boy who's a girl who's a girl who's a boy.
>
> Maybe I do (I know I do), but when we are out together, like it or not, as far as the world is concerned, you are out with a man.
>
> You don't have a penis.
>
> You sound like Ron Lord! (111-112)

This part of their conversation functions as a proof revealing that there is a Ron Lord secretly living inside Victor Stein like most (male) members of a patriarchal society in which "binaries are like the black holes of knowledge: Nothing ever gets out. And nothing new can get in to replace it. That's why a new, non-binary gender is as impossible to imagine as a new primary color" (Wilchins 31-32). Wilchins emphasises that binaries are not only the ways used to perceive the world around us, yet they turn into something about politics and power, creating "hierarchies—male/female, white/black, colonial/native—that produce winners and losers" (32). On the other hand, as their relationship progresses, Stein's discovery of Ry's doubleness transforms

into something more philosophical and he even seems to take pleasure from this dual state: “Now male, now not quite, now quite clearly a woman who will slip inside a boy’s body, who will sleep on their back like a new-made sculpture with the paint not dry... What are you?” (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 207) Still, it is not too easy for “straight”-minded individuals such as Stein to admit that “queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, troublant,” and that is the reason why they keep seeking the ways of positioning queer people into one side of any binary (Sedgwick, *Tendencies* viii). Heteronormativity and binary-based point of view require the society to match the assigned gender roles to individuals, ignoring sexual diversity and orientation beyond the social boundaries: “You don’t have to look after me just because you were once a woman, he said. I am a woman. And I am a man. That’s how it is for me. I am in the body that I prefer. But the past, my past, isn’t subject to surgery. I didn’t do it to distance myself from myself. I did it to get nearer to myself” (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 90). It might be claimed that the emphasis on doubleness attempts to dismantle the female/male gender binary and make room for the third space in which no culturally produced process exists.

Victor Stein is not the only character who gets puzzled by Ry’s doubleness, there are others such as Ron Lord. As the inventor of sex-bots produced for male desire, he might be defined as the representation of heteronormativity in a patriarchal culture in which the heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between “feminine” and “masculine,” where these are understood as expressive attributes of “male” and “female” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 23). Therefore, his reaction to Ry’s control over their own body contains mostly heterosexist and normative discourse, confining sexuality to a simple binary opposition:

> It’s Ry. Just Ry.
>
> Not short for Ryan?
>
> Ry is short for Mary.
>
> …
>
> You’re a woman, then? says Ron.
>
> No, Ron. I am a hybrid. My name is Ry.
>
> You’re a bloke, then? says Ron.

> I'm trans.
>
> Like, transhuman?
>
> Transgender. (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 63)

As a result of adopting such a socially constructed ideology, Ron has difficulty in internalizing the fact that Ry rejects being labelled as a man or woman and chooses to be a "hybrid." As Susan Stryker explains, the reason behind Ron's behaviour is that since most people hardly manage to perceive "the humanity of another person if they cannot recognize that person's gender," people who need to refuse their assigned gender or wish to "live as a member of another gender have encountered significant forms of discrimination and prejudice" (16). As Ron endeavours to locate Ry's identity in one side of a binary frame in his limited world, he keeps questioning them in an attempt to find a clue for his categorisation; having started from physical features, he asks about Ry's hands: "You've got a bloke's hands" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 66). He does not hesitate to pose further questions about their genital organ:

> Listen, Ryan, or Mary, or whatever your name is, I'm not being personal, but have you got a dick?
>
> …
>
> No, I say. My name is Ry and I don't have a dick.
>
> Well then, says Ron, OK, no dick. So you're not a bloke really. So what blokes want – well, it's not about you, is it?
>
> Is manhood dickhood? I ask Ron.
>
> He looks at me like I am the stupidest thing he has ever seen. He says,
>
> Why would you want to be a man if you don't want a dick?
>
> A man is not a dick on legs, is he?
>
> More or less, says Ron.
>
> I didn't feel comfortable as a woman. (64)

Now that Ron has always observed and experienced heteronormative practices in which men's sexual orientation is supposed to be towards women, he cannot help interrogating that of Ry:

> Did you fancy women? You fancied women but you didn't fancy being a lesbian? I get that.
>
> I am attracted to men, I say.

> Ron takes a step back. His hand moves protectively towards his crotch. I want to say, Don't worry, Ron, I don't mean you. (64-65)

As for Ron's sudden and unconscious reaction, when such people who stick to a "straight line" meet someone whose gender category cannot be grasped at the first sight, they become paralysed by the situation and uncomfortable because "compulsory heterosexuality diminishes the very capacity of bodies to reach what is off the straight line" and the first counter with someone in fluidity also leaves them in uncertainty and confusion (Ahmed 91). Thus, Ron resists the idea of a third space beyond the binaries and tries to use Ry's being vegetarian as a sign of their gender:

> I'll take us all out for something to eat. Prof! Ryan? I could murder a steak.
>
> Good job it's already dead, I say.
>
> Ron looks at me more in sorrow than in anger.
>
> Ryan, I am extending the hand, he says.
>
> Thanks, Ron, but I'm vegetarian.
>
> I knew you wasn't a bloke, says Ron. (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 70-71)

The relationship between feminism and vegetarianism has been one of the subjects in the current discussions and in her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat a Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory,* Carol J. Adams asserts that even in language, a vegetable is equated with passivity whereas meat represents the essence of something. She underlines the use of the word, vegetable with a negative and/or offensive connotation such as being in a coma or having severe brain damage (61). In other words, "to vegetate is to lead a passive existence; just as to be feminine is to lead a passive existence. Once vegetables are viewed as women's food, then by association they become viewed as 'feminine,' passive" (60). Thus, it is not a surprising coincidence that Winterson makes her trans narrator vegetarian, and then Ron seizes this opportunity to position Ry's existence in the inferior side of patriarchal binaries.

For people who have non-normative bodies, self-struggle to form the most suitable body does not seem the greatest battle in this war against the hetero-patriarchal binary system, there are more such as external ones. To wit, while the state of non-binary is hard enough mentally and physically, these people are forced to deal with harsh oppressive attitudes such as physical violence, let alone verbal one like that of Ron. To illustrate, in *Queer theory, Gender theory: An Instant Primer,* having been

labelled as “the Jewish kid” in their childhood, Riki Anne Wilchins recounts how some kids had attacked their house as a punishment for belonging to the inferior sides of several binaries. Later, in high school, Wilchins was “struck again by the power of words and their meanings” such as “fairy, slut, sissy, and dyke” which have the unpredictable power to “shame kids, start little avalanches of ridicule, even get them ostracized” (9). Moreover, such words, when uttered, still have destructive power for anyone at any age; and in the novel, a much more unfortunate incident including both words and physical assault occurs when Ry enters the men’s. Having drawn attention to the fact that he is not “a faggot,” a drunk man forces Ry to “piss like man” and to show their penis to him, asking “what is so precious about” it. Even though Ry tries hard to leave, he imitates their sentences in a manner he finds feminine (“you talk like a girl”), and at last, he discovers that Ry does not possess a male genital organ:

> He lunged at my crotch – and found what I don’t have.
>
> WHAT THE FUCK?
>
> Let me go, I said.
>
> You’re in the wrong stall, sonny, eh? What are you? A fuckin’ dyke?
>
> I’m trans.
>
> …
>
> I thought: I’m going to get beaten up or raped. Which is worse?
>
> I didn’t have to make that decision because he pushed me into the stall, slammed the door shut and forced me up against it. He fumbled with his zip and pulled his dick out, wanking himself half-hard.
>
> THIS IS THE REAL DEAL YOU FUCKIN’ DYKE FAGGOT. YOU WANT IT? (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 169)

Despite being trapped in such a horrible situation, Ry manages to use his drunken state against him at last and escapes from him with “the dirty smell of him on [their] fingers” (170). This traumatic experience causes Ry to question their existence and the body they strive to create: “is this the price I have to pay for …? For … For what? To be who I am?” (171). Many trans people like Ry have similar traumatic experiences in heterosexist societies and this coercive power of heteronormativity arises from the fact that “the regulatory norms of ‘sex’ work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual

imperative" (Butler, *Bodies That Matter* 2). Thus, trans and/or non-binary people mostly cannot end up having the space and the body they need to live in; they only *survive* in this binary world in which they are deemed to be outlaws – "most transgressive and therefore least privileged" (Wilchins 26). Namely, it might be pointed out that transgender individuals do not attain the same type of support that "fully accepted members of society automatically expect" and its overt consequence is that "they may be more vulnerable to risky or self-harming behaviors and consequently may wind up having more health problems or trouble with the law—which only compounds their already considerable difficulties" (Stryker 16-17). As to the law issues, having been alert to such verbal and physical assaults, Ry does not opt to report this incident (in toilets); unfortunately, they have already realised that "this isn't the first time" and "it won't be the last" and even worse, Ry does not feel strong enough to "stand the leers and the jeers and fears of the police:" "And I can't stand the assumption that somehow I am the one at fault. And if I am not at fault, then why didn't I put up a fight? And I don't say, try working on the Accident and Emergency unit for a few nights and see where putting up a fight gets you" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 171). It might be inferred from all these harsh experiences that being trans seems to be a whole package one side of which requires compliance with the system that favours the straight, male, white side of the binaries – "nothing we do to the body is without consequences" (214). The fact that being a trans "means a lifetime of hormones" and having a shorter lifespan might clarify what the corporeal consequences signify for trans people (215).

As regards the rather less adverse side of being trans, Ry underscores its paradoxical state: "I felt in the wrong body but for my body it was the right body. What I have done calms my mind and agitates my chemistry. Few people know what it's like to live in this way" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 215). One of these people is Kate Bornstein, an American gender theorist, who tells of how their own process of finding the 'right' identity ends up:

> I love the idea of being without an identity, it gives me a lot of room to play around; but it makes me dizzy, having nowhere to hang my hat. When I get too tired of not having an identity, I take one on: it doesn't really matter what identity I take on, as long as it's recognizable. I can be a writer, a lover, a confidante, a femme, a top, or a woman. (39)

As observed in Bornstein's journey in a path constructed as a two-sided system, "gender can have fluidity, which is quite different from ambiguity... Gender fluidity is

the ability to freely and knowingly become one or many of a limitless number of genders, for any length of time, at any rate of change. Gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender" (51-52). In the novel, how Ry summarises what they have gone through in this binary-based path is much the same: "When I look in the mirror I see someone I recognise, or rather, I see at least two people I recognise. That is why I have chosen not to have lower surgery. I am what I am, but what I am is not one thing, not one gender. I live with doubleness" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 67).

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined two novels by Jeanette Winterson in an attempt to provide an analysis based on the theories regarding sex, gender, and identity. Although *The Passion* and *Frankissstein: A Love Story* were written in different periods of Winterson's career and their settings are quite different, the themes and the main characters have a lot in common and present an "evolution" of the very same concepts through generations and characters. First, both novels have two narrators as well as different settings and periods that enable readers to wander around the pages of Winterson's world. *The Passion* takes place in the Napoleonic era in which Napoleon Bonaparte is not given the leading role; instead, the ordinary people at the backstage of history become the owners of the narrative voice. Such elements prove the postmodern atmosphere of the story in *The Passion* as an example of historiographic metafiction. Winterson plays with facts to shake grand narratives and give voice to the muted ones such as Henri and Villanelle while parodying Bonaparte who is a worldwide known historical figure. Similarly, in *Frankissstein*, Winterson chooses her characters from people who have transgressive nature and resist to comply with the rigid roles of the society in terms of gender and identity. There are two stories that render both interwoven and separate readings possible because, as the title suggests, *Frankissstein* might be regarded as the reanimation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The narrators of these stories are Mary Shelley and Ry Shelley, respectively, and their narratives belong to different time periods, the nineteenth century and contemporary times. Moreover, other characters are presented in a playful manner - mirroring the ones in the first story in terms of not only their names but their characters as well, such as Lord Byron and Ron Lord. In other words, the author is using puns on her characters' names. As to postmodernism, there are also other features such as intertextuality; Winterson offers a variety of references to timeless works from art to literature.

Apart from the similar postmodern features adopted by these two novels, the narrative voices of each work are of great importance for the aim of this study – their experiences underscore how the notions of sex, gender, and identity have evolved but ironically remained unchanged at the same time. Although it seems that there is a stark contrast between the lives of the characters in terms of the time and setting in which they are born (Henri in France and Villanelle in Venice in Napoleonic Era versus Mary

Shelley living in the nineteenth century and Ry Shelley in the twenty-first century), a striking connection is hidden between the lines or rather, books. Thus, the phrase/metaphor used in the title of this study (old wine in new bottles) makes more sense when the characters are compared and analysed in the light of the theories and arguments evolving from the position of women and men in society to the identities and gender roles of individuals. First, in The *Passion*, the narrators are female and male and the traditional assumption about such characters in a novel requires the female one to behave in a feminine manner and the male one to be manly. The sharp roles attributed to the two sexes are shaken by Winterson as she deconstructs such binaries by blurring the boundaries between them and switching the fixed gender roles. To illustrate, while Villanelle is a bisexual crossdresser working in a casino (public/male sphere), Henri, as a soldier, cannot kill anyone and he misses her mother and childhood (private/female sphere) while in the army. The first two stories are narrated by Henri and Villanelle respectively, and in this way, Winterson draws the pictures of their "inferior" worlds separately before their lives merge and their stories become one – the third one. Having invited her readers to the narrators' own worlds in which they have the central role, Winterson demonstrates how the margins could be the centre in postmodernism. Aiming to dismantle the deeply rooted approaches towards sex, gender, and identity inherent in binary-based patriarchal societies, Winterson highlights Villanelle's fluid gender identity and Henri's "feminine" behaviours in their own parts; their characteristics are displayed through their train of thoughts, their reactions to the events, and their relationships with other characters. In addition to those of Henri and Villanelle, the characteristics and positions of their family members and friends assist readers in refashioning normative ideals of patriarchy. For example, contrary to the traditional expectation, Winterson creates Henri's father with "feminine" qualities whereas Villanelle's stepfather does not possess strict patriarchal values confining Villanelle's life. By defying the male-oriented system based on heteronormative principles, all these characters prove that gender is only a performative act and all roles assigned to genders are socially constructed.

In *Frankissstein*, Winterson goes one step further and positions her narrators in different centuries. One of them is the famous daughter of a famous mother: Mary Shelley. The narrator of the second story is a trans character named Ry Shelley living

in the contemporary age; however, both find themselves trapped in a similar world order – heterosexist and patriarchal. On the other hand, while the story of Mary Shelley, set in the nineteenth century, concentrates mainly on the position and duties of women and men in society (women as inferior and men as superior), *Frankissstein* also touches upon the link between identity issues and assigned gender roles thanks to the existence of a trans narrator. Having (almost) the same names creates a connection between the worlds of both narrators at the very beginning of the novel and despite coming from different ages, they hold a similar desire to find their own place in a world which reduces identities to binaries and favours the superior side. Similar to those of *The Passion,* there is a myriad of people fictionalised playfully and their function brings to light what the narrators encounter during the journey of finding their space. For instance, despite belonging to different periods, Lord Byron and Ron Lord denote patriarchy in general; while Byron's belittling women and placing them in "the second" position in every aspect of life hints at sexism, Lord's striving to categorise a trans individual into the fixed "binaries" and his misinterpretation of Ry's gender echo heterosexism. Therefore, it can be argued that notwithstanding the distinct contexts, the roots of patriarchy have prevailed among generations in various forms no matter whether there are updated labels and/or terms produced over time. Speaking of generations, the existence of Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft whose works play a seminal role in the birth of First Wave Feminism reminds readers of her struggle against inequality between men and women. Therefore, it is observed that Wollstonecraft's ideas mould Mary Shelley into a woman who resists the patriarchal system which constantly curbs the lives of women in private and public spheres.

Similarly, the very same ideas, long after even Mary Shelley's period, might be used to pave the way for people who have different identities and performances within the same body to find their own path – to find their place in a world full of patriarchal definitions telling everyone what and how they are supposed to do. One of these people is the narrator of the second story in *Frankissstein*, Ry Shelley, a trans man who does not complete their lower surgery to keep their "double" state. In their narrative, doubleness is emphasised several times through Ry's confession-like statements: "what I am is not one thing, not one gender. I live with doubleness" (Winterson, *Frankissstein* 67). As it is already quite a challenge to combat the inequality and constraints of hetero-patriarchal binaries as a woman and/or

homosexual, being a trans individual requires taking a much more courageous step towards establishing one's identity or sexual orientation in this system. Therefore, Winterson, through the agency of her trans narrator, discusses not only the performative but also the fluid nature of genders and offers a way out to embrace the identities beyond binaries. In other words, it can be concluded that the desire for equality between two sexes and freedom of the inferior (sex) transforms into the desire for equality for all sexes and freedom to all identities outside the dualistic norms.

As regards the characterisation, almost all characters – Henri, Villanelle, Mary, and Ry – exhibit resistance to the socio-cultural system they are born into, directly or indirectly. To illustrate, in *The Passion*, Henri does not realise the fact that he is not "normal" according to the hidden rulebook of patriarchy. He just pursues his passion for a powerful male figure, working in the army as a "neck wringer" – taking up a feminine space in the male sphere (Winterson, *The Passion* 3). Moreover, patriarchal reactions to his characteristics and position render it possible to observe the hierarchy of power: "A young man brought up by a priest and a pious mother. A young man who can't pick up a musket to shoot a rabbit. What makes you think you can see anything clearly?" (28) As to Villanelle, she is portrayed as a rebellious figure from Venice, the "mercurial city" where it is ordinary for everything and everyone to alter and/or transform (49). As a bisexual woman and crossdresser working in a casino who traverses the barriers between public and private spheres, Villanelle proves her transgressive nature, thereby shaking all the conventional gender roles produced by male-oriented structures. Hence, through her male and female narrators, Winterson provides not only a criticism of patriarchy but also of heteronormativity, highlighting gender performativity.

Mary Shelley, the narrator of the first story in *Frankissstein*, still deals with almost the same concepts in the nineteenth century with those of the Napoleonic era in *The Passion*. She strives to fight against the subjugation of women and provides a criticism of male dominance in every field of life such as literature and technology; her character underscores the fact that the roles for women cannot be associated with only the passive and inferior ones, there have been and will always be more. Eventually, the trans narrator from the contemporary age, Ry Shelley embodies in an individual all the criticism Winterson has made through the characters mentioned so far because Ry deconstructs a myriad of concepts formed by heterosexist and

patriarchal structure at once: free from any categorisation at corporeal and emotional levels, let alone any sides of the fixed binaries. Thus, having compared all these characters, from the Napoleonic age to the contemporary one, analysed in this study, the common thread is the struggle for true self trapped in normative ideals; as "inferior" sides, they do not yield to the fixed roles or identities reduced to binaries which hamper individuals to be themselves. Consequently, it will not be wrong to argue that their common enemy, which causes all the turmoil in the characters' lives, does not change at all. Only it transforms over time. However, the crux of the problem has always been the same: the binary-based heterosexist and male-oriented society.

In conclusion, it might be inferred from the characteristics and positions of all the narrators that Winterson draws a postmodern timeline through both novels. The novels compose an interwoven fictional universe for readers to observe a variety of characters concurrently, concerning the concepts of sex, gender, and identity. Hence, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that despite the diversity of periods and settings, the issues discussed in both novels and the existence of the "other(ed)" sides do not seem to change - there have always been inferior and victimised sides of the binaries constructed by patriarchal societies, no matter they are women, homosexual or trans individuals. In other words, there is no point in "putting old wine into new bottles;" what is required is to shake the root of this hetero-patriarchal system which threatens people by exclusion outside boundaries and traps them into binary, fixed identities.

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