



Automaton and Tyche in Postmodern British Novel: A Critical Treatment of Chance in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*

Hoda Nik-nezhad Ferdos,¹ (Corresponding Author)

PhD Candidate of English Literature, Islamic Azad University of Tehran Central Branch,
Tehran, Iran

Jalal Sokhanvar,²

Emeritus Professor of English Language and Literature, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran
Iran.

Article ID

CLCS-1805-1002

Article Info

Received Date: 27 October 2018

Reviewed Date: 1 January 2019

Accepted Date: 3 February 2019

Suggested Citation

Nik-nezhad, H. and Sokhanvar, J. "Automaton and Tyche in Postmodern British Novel: A
Critical Treatment of Chance in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*." *Contemporary Literary
and Cultural Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2019, pp. 63-80.

¹ hoda_niknejadferdos@yahoo.com

² nakhoslaj@gmail.com



Abstract

The present paper aims address the Lacanian concepts of the tyche (tuche) and the automaton in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* (1987), and to explore the way the whole novel is based on moments of chance, peril, and jeopardy which are traceable in the transformation of automaton into tyche. Illuminating the track of automaton into tyche, the study endeavors to compare reading women's writing style to experiencing tyche while going through other styles could be comparable to an automaton. A historiographic metafiction, *The Passion* is divided into four seemingly unrelated sections connected by the elements of chance and calamity. Via experiencing traumatic happenings, the characters face the incursion of the Real into the Symbolic Order (Tyche), considered beyond the determinations of the Symbolic. Observing the mass slaughter and deplorable death of his comrades, Henri is unable to return to the Symbolic and is obliged to remain in the asylum as a mentally disordered person. On the contrary, Villanelle manages to free herself from the post-traumatic stress and commences a new life.

Keywords

Automaton, Chance, The Real, The Symbolic, Trauma, Tyche

1. Introduction

Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize; an achievement which allowed her to support herself as a full-time writer. Her various techniques in interpreting and rewriting history have always been an issue of academic debates. Covering multiple themes including the play and construction of history, gender and sexuality, love and war in *The Passion* has been regarded magnificent. Kirkus Review (2016) expresses the novel as enthralling and



demonstrates its substantial supremacy by comparing the novel to the works of Robertson Davies. It asserts that the novel is “an exhilarating tale of lust, love and magical transformations of the heart during ten years of the Napoleonic Wars.” Jenny Rosenstrach in *The New York Times* admires Jeannette Winterson’s new-fangled writing style and mentions that, “her worldview is generous and optimistic, stemming at least in part from the chief survival skill she learned early on — using her imagination” (2016).

The Guardian portrayed Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion* as “a fantasy, a vivid dream... inventive and brilliant” (2008) and *Sunday Times* described it as “moving and funny as it is skillful and reflects the author’s formidable appetite for life” (2006). Also, *Vanity Fair* illustrated Winterson “a master of her material, a writer in whom great talent deeply abides” (2008). *The Wheeler Center* praises Winterson’s non-conformist style of writing and mentions that, “Jeanette Winterson is a writer who embraces risk. ‘There is no discovery without risk, and what you risk reveals what you value,’ she has said. Winterson’s commitment to experimentation – and her willingness to challenge her readers and herself – have remained constants in an extraordinary career of more than 30 years” (2016). Possessing an innovative narrative style and feminine writing, *The Passion* lime lights the play of history and the notion of the game in life. Hence, the concepts of automaton and tyche as various types of chance play vital roles in the novel. Sonya Andermahr admires Winterson’s multi-layer narration and articulates that, “while Winterson rejects the label of ‘political’ writer, her work is suffused with a sense of political injustice and protest” (2009, 16).

The present paper first provides the literature review on *The Passion*; then, the section on methodology and theoretical framework will be presented. The core section of the study will include “Automaton: The Alienation of Meaning Somewhere between Fear and Sex” and “Tyche: The Missed Encounter with X.” Finally, the findings of the research will be provided in the concluding section.

2. Literature Review

There have been several articles and books dissecting Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion*; however, their concentration is on various aspects of the novel rather than employing the Lacanian concepts of tyche and automaton in the novel. Ellen Berry in



“Women’s Experimental Writing: Negative Aesthetics and Feminist Critique” argues that Jeanette Winterson “deploys a deliberate strategy of ‘literary negation’ in her ‘negative aesthetic texts’ and challenges the ‘normative structures of perception and representation’ by presenting ‘extreme content’ by means of formally radical techniques” (2018, 5).

Seetha Lakshmi in “The Myth of Normative Gender” asserts, “Jeanette Winterson is one of the daring voices among postmodern queer writers whose works celebrate gender fluidity and queer existence. Winterson abundantly alludes to myths and fairytales as vehicles to express the notion that gender also is constructed like a story or history and it is thus not fixed” (2018, 489). She continues that Winterson’s characters strive to surpass the predetermined gender roles imposed on them by hetero-normative society. *The Passion*, then, could be regarded a mere play on history, gender and passion for storytelling and words.

Winterson’s repetition of words and phrases portrays the inability in verbalizing passion and instead of employing silence; Winterson has adroitly utilized the excess in passion, mental ability, gender and sexuality through which the reader encounters bisexual love, madness and cross-dressing. Winterson does not terminate this process and she indicates that there is a beyond of passion, madness which could never be spoken of. This could be exactly considered as what Lacan contended in the residue of trauma which could not be represented through language and words. There has always been an excess of something beyond the trauma which could be manifested as X or the Real for Lacan.

The novel has been set in the historical context of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, it could be considered as an outstanding instance of the kind of fiction that Elizabeth Wesseling calls postmodernist historical novels. Also, being intensely self-reflexive, the novel falls under Linda Hutcheon’s category of historiographic metafiction. Jean Wyatt in “Reading Trauma Narratives: The Contemporary Novel and the Psychology of Oppression” argues that “Jeanette Winterson can bring readers to see the connections between individual trauma and broader cultural pathologies, especially those caused by the power relations inherent to class, gender, sexuality, and race” (2018, 216). She delineates that Winterson’s



novels express the way trauma could be altered from an individual experience to a vaster chronic psychological wound.

Brutus Green's article, "In Between Sex and the Sacred: The Articulation of an Erotic Theology in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*," concentrates on Winterson's manipulation of biblical stories, tropes, and language. He elucidates that:

In viewing Winterson as a theologian, the possibility is raised of disseminating a more unorthodox, creative approach to hermeneutics, which encourages both a recognition of the paternalistic, heterosexual and patriarchal rhetoric within Scripture and traditional interpretation, and the supplanting of it with a polyphony of voices, which reach beyond the boundaries of the original texts. (2015, 195)

He explains that by inverting conventional classes of the sacred and the profane, Winterson expresses a challenge to contemporary theology in its practice of reading. Green demonstrates that Winterson's narrative benefits from new theological hermeneutic reclaiming an affirming spirituality of the body and desire.

Mine Ozyurt Kilic in "Gender-Bending Fantasies in Women's Writing: Fantastic in Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffman*, *Nights at the Circus*, and Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* and *The PowerBook*" illustrates that "how the fantastic is deployed subversively by these two contemporary women writers" by utilizing Tzvetan Todorov's concept of hesitation between the marvelous and the uncanny (2010, 228). Juxtaposing Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson, Kilic displays the surreal winged Fevvers in Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and the web-footed Villanelle in Winterson's *The Passion*. She clarifies the way Todorov's 'road to the marvelous' is typified by Patrick's astoundingly voyeuristic vision in *The Passion*.

Carla A. Arnell in "Earthly Men and Other Worldly Women: Gender Types and Religious Types in Jeanette Winterson's "Atlantic Crossing" and Other Short Fiction" delineates the issue that "Atlantic Crossing" replays the antinomy and contradiction between the two main characters in *The Passion* and re-narrates the story through the chance meeting and inevitable clash between them. She asserts that although "the gender types that emerge in "Atlantic Crossing" replay gender patterns from *The Passion*, they link this short story with others in Winterson's short story collection"



(2005, 163). She concludes that Winterson juxtaposes the religious and the spiritual to differentiate her characters, their gender, and disposition in her novels.

Alexander Beaumont in “Exile and Freedom in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion: Venice, the British Inner Cities, and the Cultural Politics of Disenfranchisement*” spotlights the significance of place and time in Winterson’s novels and expresses the following:

there is reason for considering the novel a unique and compelling contribution not just to a long-standing tradition of ‘Venetian’ narratives, nor even to a historically particular resurgence of it, but also to an entire realm of cultural discourse that has had an acute impact on the political experience of the Thatcher and post-Thatcher periods, as well as their attendant literatures. (2014, 270)

Comparing and contrasting Winterson’s *The Passion*, Beaumont utters that although the novel has been located in the Napoleon war time, it demonstrates more universal and political notions. In his view, Winterson’s unique style of writing has a revolutionary effect on narration in literature.

Anemona Alb in “Gastronomy and Power in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion*” investigates the role of memory and the perceived history versus the ‘real’ one. Elaborating on the notions of gastronomy and power, she declares that,

The paraphernalia of power – the power of military conquest on the one hand (see Napoleon’s weapons) and the power to create hedonism by cooking (see the chef’s kitchen utensils and spices) are used masterfully in the novel in a quietly choreographed battle of paradigms. There is a time for conquest, for imperial expansion, there is also a time for indulging in hedonism. (2012, 112)

Clarifying the conceptualization of the invented history and the real one, Alb explains the double remoteness from the real history by narrating it. She emphasizes on the point that due to the postcolonial ambiance of the novel, micro-historical narratives are of immense significance. In other words, Alb states that Winterson has narrated her story rather than the history in her novel *The Passion*.



3. Methodology: Objectives and the Approach

Considering the Lacanian categorization of chance into automaton and tyche, the exploration of these items paves the way for recognizing the seemingly unrelated four sections of Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*. Elaborating types of chance and exploring the notion of uncertainty, the present research provides a better understanding of the unbelievable and queer occurrences such as the transformation of the city overnight or the self-reflexivity in the narration. The objectives of this study include bringing instances of *The Passion* to the state of practice which examines the way chance, in the sense of pure contingency, solely presents itself in the Real. Then, by the juxtaposition of the examples of automaton and tyche in the novel, the impossibility of the existence of pure chance in the Symbolic would be displayed. Hence, the goal of the present research could be categorized as an exploratory study that identifies new problems in the area of literary criticism.

The method which is going to be employed first provides a close reading of the novel, then, the representation of automaton and tyche will be explored. Moreover, it shall be scrutinized that how encountering a traumatic event is aligned with tyche by the incursion of the Real into the Symbolic. On the contrary, automaton would be represented as the structure of the Symbolic which determines the subjects. Finally, attention is mostly paid to the ways in which the characters unconsciously go through the process of insanity through traumatic events and the way the two main characters react variously based on experiencing automaton or tyche.

The present research provides well-matched instances which embrace Lacanian concepts of tyche and automaton in terms of their applicability. The research method of the existing study is thus qualitative and categorized as theoretical study. Likewise, the current survey will be literature-based in that, in the academic library research, the conclusions are built on the analysis of the data referring to a particular area.



4. Theoretical Framework: Critical Concepts

4.1. Automaton

Jacques Lacan, in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, mentions that, “accident/chance in terms of the Aristotelian division of chance into a chance for subjects or tyche (tuche) and a chance for objects or automaton. Subjective chance is the encounter with the Real, discussed in terms of the dream, hallucination or trauma” (Lacan 59). [Lacan](#) employed [Aristotle](#)’s term automaton to describe the ‘engine’ of [repetition](#). Automaton is usually rendered as ‘spontaneity’ in English translations of [Aristotle](#)’s *Physics*.

In his *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan asserts that “automaton is not truly arbitrary: only the real is truly arbitrary, since the real is beyond the automaton” (Lacan 59). According to *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian psychoanalysis*

Lacan uses Aristotle’s distinction between two kinds of chance to illustrate this distinction between the real and the symbolic. In the second book of the *Physics*, where the concept of causality is discussed, Aristotle explores the role of chance and fortune in causality. He distinguishes between two types of chance: automaton, which refers to chance events in the world at large, and tyche, which designates chance insofar as it affects agents who are capable of moral action. (Evans 1996)

Lacan reformulates automaton as the network of signifiers which belongs to the Symbolic Order. The term hence comes to allocate those phenomena which appear to be chance, however, are the persistence of the signifier in determining the subject. Automaton is not truly arbitrary, and since the real is beyond the automaton, it could be considered arbitrary. Slavoj Žižek in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* asserts that “tyche and automaton differ in that automaton is a more general term that includes tyche as a special class. Automaton is reserved for accidental occurrences in nature” (233). It could be mentioned that automaton applies to animate and inanimate objects while tyche is merely related to subjects and acts with consciousness and purpose.



4.2. Tyche

Tyche (tuche) a goddess who governed the fortune, prosperity, and destiny of a city was considered the daughter of [Aphrodite](#) and [Zeus](#) or [Hermes](#) in Classical Greek mythology. Hence, tyche refers to the moments of chance or misfortune on which the unknown cause element is of an interrogation. Kathleen Daly in *Greek and Roman Mythology* asserts for Greek citizen and Romans, Tyche or Fortuna was considered to provide luck. “Her influence was so great that each person had his or her own Tyche. Over times people believed she had power over the fates of entire cities and each city has its own Tyche. A wheel symbolized her ever changing nature and a balance showed her power to weigh good and bad events in a person’s life” (2009, 144).

The Real in Lacanian perspective, is interwoven with the notion of tyche, which here-conceives as ‘the encounter with the Real’. Tyche thus refers to the storming of the real into the Symbolic Order. Contrasting the automaton, which is the constitution of the Symbolic and establishes the subject, tyche is entirely arbitrary and beyond the determinations of the Symbolic order. Lacan in his *The Seminar Book XI* elucidates that tyche

is a knock on the door that interrupts a dream, and on a more painful level it is trauma. The traumatic event is the encounter with the Real. Encountering with the Real is always a failed one, as one is unable to fully experience it; there merely remains the consequence of it which is later recognizable. Tyche represents itself as beyond automaton; the subject is fundamentally undetermined, and that is why it has a possibility of choice, beyond the determination of the automaton. (1977, 59)

Lisa Moore in “Teledildonics: Virtual Lesbians in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson” mentions that, Winterson’s interwoven concept of body/identity has manifested itself in her novels such as *The Passion* and “those rigid identity categories we’re so busy deconstructing serve the practical purpose of organizing what might otherwise be an unbearably chaotic and overwhelming, rather than liberating and expansive, psychic register of the material world” (2013). Sean Homer in *Jacque Lacan* (2005) mentions that “the Real is beyond the Symbolic, the Imaginary or appearance and images and is associated with the concept of trauma” (2005, 83). Consequently, tyche could be



defined as a missed encounter since facing the Real is permanently doomed to be a failure. Lacan ascertains that the structure of tyche in the analysis of traumatic events and their repetitions afterward. As the compulsory repetition of the trauma is a masked one containing invention and change, tyche represents itself against automaton which could be identified in the sphere of the identical.

5. Investigating The Passion: A Lacanian Reading

5.1. Automaton: The Alienation of Meaning between Fear and Sex

The Present section aims to critically investigate Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* regarding Lacanian concepts of automaton and tyche. It endeavors to provide those instances in which automaton as the network of signifiers plays the role of chance in the novel. Due to this form of chance in the Symbolic, the play of signifiers is obvious in the characters' action and the succession of the events. Thus, Winterson portrays automaton as the most significant part of our life, love, subjectivity, religion, and destiny.

The first prominent manifestation of chance in *The Passion* is in The Emperor section where war has been observed as an object of chance. The cook mentions

I sometimes wonder why none of us tried to stop him. I think we wanted him to do it, to do it for us. To tear down our long-houred lives and let us start again. Clean and simple with open hands. It wouldn't be like that, no more than it could have been like that when Bonaparte set fire to half of Europe. But what other chances had we? (Winterson7)

The consequences of war for people and cities have been related to the mere play of chance when a person can decide for people's life. The narrator addresses the reader in a self-reflexive manner and asks "What would you do if you were an Emperor? Would soldiers become numbers? Would battles become diagrams? Would intellectuals become a threat?" (13). Napoleon Bonaparte's gaining power is ironically illustrated in the novel. In other words, the future of the world and people has been demonstrated on mere chance, the time Napoleon Bonaparte came to power.



Bonaparte, the Corsican. Born in 1769, a Leo.

Short, pale, moody, with an eye to the future and a singular ability to concentrate. In 1789 revolution opened a closed world and for a time the meanest street boy had more on his side than any aristocrat. For a young Lieutenant skilled in artillery, the chances were kind, and in a few years, General Bonaparte was turning Italy into the fields of France. (12)

The narcissism of Napoleon Bonaparte and the idol worshipping of the common people have been illuminated as the role of chance in creating the future of millions of people. “‘What is luck?’ he said, ‘but the ability to exploit accidents?’ He believed he was the center 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” (13). The characters’ dependence on the chance for their future is apparent, as well. The narrator in the first section of the novel mentions that

We are 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 wiling the darkness to part and show us a vision. Our children frighten us in their intimacy, but we make sure they grow up like us. Lukewarm like us. On a night like this, hands and faces hog we can believe that tomorrow will show us angels in jars and that the well-known woods will suddenly reveal another path (7).

It could be stated that not only their lifestyle but also their selfhood and subjectivity have been constructed by chance as the cook utters the way he had made himself known to others by his narratives based on the moments of chance. When he is portraying his family and relatives, he mentions that the people of the village knew him through the stories he had made up himself. He emphasizes the point that the stories, their atmosphere and his image in them depended on his mood which demonstrates the strong role of chance in them.

She told me about my grandparents as, and their house and their piano, and a shadow crossed her eyes when she thought I would never see them, but I liked my anonymity. Everyone else in the village had strings of relations to pick fights with and know about. I made up stories about mine. They were whatever I wanted them to be depending on my mood. (11)

One’s subjectivation or identity has been demonstrated as a narration which could be fictitious and unreliable. The element of chance in ‘depending on my mood’



manifests the play of signifiers in producing seemingly solid facts, yet they are represented as merely constructed on accidents.

Even the notion of religion has been undergone an ironic analysis by Winterson in *The Passion*. When the cook, as a child, asks a priest the reason why he has chosen this profession, the priest implies the probability of God's non-existence and hence the existence of life by chance. "I asked him why he was a priest, and he said if you have to work for anybody an absentee boss is best" (12). The next sentences uttered by the narrator provide the context that the priest does not believe in Christian Doctrine. "We fished together and he pointed out the girls he wanted and asked me to do it for him. I never did. I came to women late like my father" (12) and "Religion is somewhere between fear and sex" (74).

Another instance representing the significance of chance is when the narrator, in his childhood innocence, asserts that the priest possessed a 'hollow' Bible with a pack of cards inside. The cards which are the symbol of game, chance, and leisure are embedded in the Bible, which is considered the heart of Christianity; "I never told my mother that the priest had a hollow Bible with a pack of cards inside" (12). Winterson does not bring the manifestation of chance in religion to a standstill and illustrates that the whole community's belief on the priest was built on chance, as well. The narrator mentions that the priest sometimes took the hollow Bible to their "service by mistake and then the reading was always from the first chapter of Genesis. The villagers thought he loved the creation story. He was a good man but lukewarm. I would have preferred a burning Jesus; perhaps then I might have found the ecstasy I need to believe" (12). By stating 'the creation story' Winterson once more represents the issue of chance in the creation and being.

The most apparent instances of chance have been represented in the second part of the novel, *The Queen of spades*, where the element of chance demonstrates itself in the unpredictable, changeable map of the city in which one might end up anywhere. "This is the city of uncertainty" (58); "but for us who travel along the blood vessels, who come to the cities of the interior by chance, there is no preparation" (68); "I come from the city of chances where everything is possible" (90) and "in this enchanted city all things seem possible. Time stops. Hearts beat. The laws of the real world are suspended" (76).



Villanelle's disguise as a boy which brings about the opportunity for her to be the object of desire by the married woman is another case of mere playing of the signifiers or automaton. "You are a Venetian, but you wear your name as a disguise. Beware the dice and the games of chance" (54). The repetition of "boot of chance and a man who comes to play Chance" (55) in gambling by emphasizing on the name of the game, 'Chance,' proves the vital role of chance in every aspect of life. "What will you risk? Your watch? Your house? Your mistress? I like to smell urgency on them. Even the calmest, the richest, have that smell. It's somewhere between fear and sex. Passion I suppose" (55). The game of Chance alters from providing automaton into representing tyche, the time the traumatic event of gambling on one's life appears in the narrative. The repetition of "You play, you win. You play, you lose. You play" (43) manifests the permanent dependence of people on chance in life.

It could be concluded that in the first half of the novel, Winterson has directed attention to automaton of the events in which the chance for the object is obvious. She expresses the way life, religion, subjectivity, and even narration are based on chance. The act of reading could be considered as an automaton of reading the text in which the reader encounters the network of signifiers.

5.2. Tyche: The Missed Encounter with X

From the end of the second part of the novel, Winterson skillfully alters automaton into tyche to haunt the reader with the trauma of reading her feminine writing. As the Real is associated with the death drive and jouissance, she picks up the liminal notions of passion and death. These two issues could be regarded as elements which have been missed between sex and fear, located at the junctions between the three Lacanian orders to be the transition of automaton into tyche. The contingency of love and its dependence on chance encounters represents 'the tyche of love'; on the contrary, as a person in love can frame the object of love or desire, 'the automaton of love' is obvious, as well. To combine them, it could be mentioned that there exists 'the condition of love.' The limit of symbolization reveals itself at the time of the traumatic event is inexpressible through language and there is always a residue or excess in trauma which Lacan calls it the Real.



The most prominent instance of transformation of automaton into tyche has been illustrated in altering the game of Chance into a game of life and death.

A life. The wager was a life. The winner should take the life of the loser in whatsoever way he chose. However slowly he chose, with what instrument he chose. What was certain was that only one life would be spared...what you risk reveals what you value. These were the terms. A game of three. The first the roulette, where only fate is queen. The second, the cards, where skill has some part. The third, the dominoes, where skill is paramount and the chance is there in disguise...this is the city of disguises (91).

Winterson as a maverick author interweaves the above-mentioned events with the story of Jesus Christ and mentions that “the stranger had won. The two men stood up simultaneously, shook hands. The stranger with a little smile suggested they complete the terms of their wager. None of us spoke up, none of us tried to stop him. Did we want it to happen? Did we hope that one life might substitute for many?” (93) The traumatic event becomes observable while the winner mentions that the loser’s death would include “dismemberment piece by piece beginning with the hands” (94). As encountering the consequence seemed unbearable for them, they comforted themselves that it was a joke. However, they “received a pair of hands, manicured and quite white, mounted on green baize in a glass case. Between the finger and thumb of the left was a roulette ball and between the finger and thumb of the right, a domino. The manager hung the case on the wall, and there it hangs today” (94).

Death as the demonstration of tyche and the ever-present hands as the materialization of tyche are the scenes in which the missed encounter with the Real is obvious. Winterson implies that in the play of automatons in everyday life, there lies the contingency of tyche beneath every moment. Gradually, the process of falling in love appears as the game of chance in which one’s heart is the wager. The time Villanelle, the heroine of the novel, falls in love she portrays it as a game of chance and utters that “It was a game of chance I entered into and my heart was the wager” (94). Progressively, chance dominates the novel as there are “chance seductions” (101) and death appears by chance as Henri asserts that her mother “died by chance” (117).



In *The Passion* when Villanelle is peeking into her beloved house and witnesses how she is at peace with her husband, she abruptly encounters a traumatic moment “he kissed her forehead, and she smiled. I watched them together and saw more in a moment than I could have pondered in another year...it put a knife to my heartThe heart is so easily mocked” (75). In this scene, Villanelle faces tyche, where she feels fear, despair, and shock as well as losing the track of time and place. “I suddenly realized I was two storeys in mid-air...the great clock...struck a quarter to twelve and I hurried to my boat” (76). Encountering with the Real is always a failed one, as one is unable to fully experience it; there merely remain the consequences of it which are later recognizable. Villanelle in the next part of the novel states how she lives without her heart. The split second her heart is gone, was the time she faced the Real. As her traumatic encounter with the Real is uncompleted, she can rationalize on her relationship and choose not to carry on.

Metaphorically, she asks Henri to break in the Queen of Spade’s house to bring her heart back. “Was she mad? We had been talking figuratively. Her heart was in her body like mine. I tried to explain this to her, but she took my hand and put it against her chest. ‘Feel it for yourself.’ I could feel nothing...I put my ear to her body and...I could hear nothing” (116). Persuaded by Villanelle, Henri heads for seeking her heart and fetches it; Villanelle swallows her heart from the jar and “her heart was beating. *Not Possible*. I tell you her heart was beating” (121). It could be mentioned that Villanelle has returned from the missed encounter with the Real and she has managed to face the traumatic event of her life and cope with it.

On the contrary, Henri goes through multiple traumatic events such as observing mass slaughter in the battle fields and deplorable death of his comrades. However, he cannot recover from the traumatic occurrence of slaying the cook as he faces the Real at that moment. “What happened next is not clear to me even though I have had years to think about it” (127). By entering the asylum (the Real,) he experiences hallucinations and communicating with the dead.

His insanity is an emblem of his failed return to the Real. He gradually quits talking, responding to Villanelle’s letters and any verbal communication (the Symbolic) and prefers to remain in the asylum even the time Villanelle endeavors to make his escape. His in-between-ness displays the presence of tyche and the way he lives



between the Symbolic and the Real. His schizophrenic behavior and thought and his stay in asylum represent the Real, yet, his rationalization and narrating events to himself are the instances of remaining in the Symbolic. At the end of the novel, tyche represents itself as beyond automaton; the subject is fundamentally undetermined, and that is why it has a possibility of choice, beyond the determination of the automaton.

6. Conclusion

It could be concluded that Jeannette Winterson in *The Passion* had lime lighted the trace of the events from automaton to tyche and spotlighted the act of reading as the play of signifiers in the network of the context. Moreover, she has manifested that encountering women's writing could be categorized as traumatic for the mind since the established rules of writing are violated. The instances of automaton has been ironically spotlighted in the first and the second chapter of the novel, "The Emperor" and "The Queen of Spades", while the patterns of tyche are more representable in the third and the fourth part of the novel, "The Zero Winter" and "The Rock". Winterson has exhibited that the most significant issues of life, love, subjectivity, religion, and destiny are solely based on the element of chance. The role of tyche in connecting and interconnecting events goes in parallel with the presence of the traumatic events. Passion, death and insanity have been the emblematic presence in the novel to be the models of tyche in everyday life of the characters. Villanelle as the heroine of the novel gets over her unaccomplished lesbian love while Henri is unable to face his trauma of slaying the cook and loses his mind. As encountering with the Real is always a failed and missed one, Henri remains somewhere between the Real and the Symbolic.



References

- Alb, A. "Gastronomy and Power in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*." Vol. I, NO. 19, 2012, pp. 110-119.
- Andermahr, S. *Jeanette Winterson*. London: Palgrave, 2009.
- Arnell, C. "Earthly Men and Other Worldly Women: Gender Types and Religious Types in Jeanette Winterson's "Atlantic Crossing" and Other Short Fiction". *Journal of the Short Story in English* Vol. IX. NO. 45. 2005, pp. 163-177.
- Beaumont, A. "Exile and Freedom in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*: Venice, the British Inner Cities, and the Cultural Politics of Disenfranchisement" *Contemporary Literature*. Vol. II, NO. 55, pp. 2014270-303.
- Berry, E. "Women's Experimental Writing: Negative Aesthetics and Feminist Critique". Contemporary Women's Writing. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Daly, K. *Greek and Roman Mythologies*. New York: Chelsea House, 2009.
- Evans, D. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Green, B. "In Between Sex and the Sacred: The Articulation of an Erotic Theology in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*". *Theology and Sexuality*. Vol. XIII, No. 2, 2015, pp. 195- 210.
- Homer, S. *Jacque Lacan*. Routledge: London, 2005.
- Kilic, M. "Gender-Bending Fantasies in Women's Writing: Fantastic in Angela Carter's *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr. Hoffman*, *Nights at the Circus*, and Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* and *The Power Book*." *Contemporary Women's Writing*. Vol. IV, NO. 3, 2010, pp. 228-259.
- [Lacan, J. *The Seminar. Book XI. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, 1964*](#). Trans. [Sheridan](#), A. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho Analysis, 1977.
- Lakshmi, S. "The Myth of Normative Gender". *Language in India*. Vol. XVIII, NO. 3, 2018, pp. 485- 493.



Moore, L. "Teledildonics: Virtual Lesbians in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson". *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*. Ed. Grosz, E. Taylor and Francis Group, 2013.

["The Passion by Jeanette Winterson."](#) *Kirkus Reviews*. Retrieved 2016-04-05.

Winterson, J. *The Passion*. New York: Grove Press, 1987.

Wyatt, J. "Reading Trauma Narratives: The Contemporary Novel and the Psychology of Oppression". *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. LXIV, NO. 1, 2018, pp. 216-223.

Zizek, S. *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*. Vol 3. Routledge: London, 2002.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/08/07/books/in-short-fiction-030888.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jun/10/jeanettewinterson>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jeanette-winterson-goes-behind-her-memoir-p5h995kndj6>

<https://www.wheelercentre.com/events/jeanette-winterson/2016>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/20/books/review/stories-and-sherry-trifle-a-christmas-gift-from-the-novelist-jeanette-winterson.html>