

DOĐUŐ UNIVERSITY
Institute of Social Sciences
MA in English Literature

**Deconstruction of Conventional Gender and Identity Through Rewriting in Jeanette
Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry***

MA THESIS

Simge Özgören

201189018

Advisor:

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Oya BERK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who trusted and supported me in the process of writing this thesis.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Yrd. Doç. Dr. Oya BERK for her invaluable assistance, continued support and guidance throughout this study. My completion of this thesis could not have been accomplished without the learning opportunities she has provided me with in the process of writing. I would also like to extend my special thanks to Associate Professor Mine Özyurt Kılıç for her encouragement and contribution.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks to my husband, İrfan Özgören. His incessant encouragement and understanding during this process is much appreciated and duly noted.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the gender issues in rewriting in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*. Rewriting is the act of reexamining, rewording, reconceptualizing the classics with a certain perspective in contemporary world. In literary history, there are a lot of examples for rewriting and the writers all have different purposes in their acts. Political, postcolonial and feminist rewritings are the most popular techniques to be employed by writers. Among these, feminist rewriting with its gender and identity concerns can be taken as the most popular since it deals with both the physicality and the psychology of the self. In general, the inferior position of women in a patriarchal society is criticized in feminist theory. In order to achieve such criticism, rewriters like Winterson use the classics to give a different perspective and place to the women in society. In building up this argument, the concept of rewriting will be explained in detail in the light of the theories of Saussure, Kristeva and Bakhtin. After giving the theoretical background of rewriting, this thesis will specifically focus upon the gender issues in rewriting under the guidance of the feminist theory. Along with the theoretical discussion, Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* which is the rewritten version of the popular German fairy tale *the Twelve Dancing Princesses* will be examined in depth.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, yeniden yazmada cinsiyet konularını Jeanette Winterson'ın *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti* adlı kitabında incelemektir. Yeniden yazma belli bir perspektifle, çağdaş dünyada önceden yazılmış olan klasikleri yeniden gözden geçirme, yeniden kelimelendirme ve yeniden kavramlandırma işlemidir. Edebi tarihte yeniden yazmanın birçok örneği vardır ve her bir yazarın aslında kendine has farklı bir amacı bulunmaktadır. Politik, sömürgeci ya da feminist yeniden yazmalar yazarların en çok kullandıkları tekniklerdir. Bu kavramlar arasında en çok ses getiren, sahip olduğu cinsiyet ve kimlik sorunsallarıyla ve kişi üzerinde yaptığı hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik sorgulamasıyla feminist yeniden yazmadır. Feminist teori genel olarak kadının ataerkil toplumdaki aşağı pozisyonunu eleştirir. Bu tarz bir eleştiriye ulaşmak için, Winterson gibi yazarlar kadına toplumda farklı bir perspektif verebilmek adına klasikleri kullanırlar. Bu tartışmayı oluştururken, Saussure, Kristeva and Bakhtin gibi teorisyenlerin ışığında yeniden yazma kavrmı detaylı olarak incelenecektir. Teorik geçmiş verildikten sonra, bu tez özel olarak feminist teori açısından cinsiyet sorunu üzerinde duracaktır. Bu perspektifi sağlarken de Jeanette Winterson'ın daha önce Grimm Kardeşler tarafından yazılmış olan *On iki Dans Eden Prenses* masalından yola çıkarak yeniden yazdığı *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti* adlı kitabı ele alınacaktır.

INTRODUCTION

The Act of Rewriting in the Contemporary Novel

Literary history witnessed a big and dark change at the turn of 20th century because of the turmoil created by wars and power battles. What was once realistic or romantic started to become inadequate since everything around people was destructive, darkening and chaotic. The destruction and despair caused by these catastrophic events gave their way even to the contemporary literature and specifically to the contemporary novels. In other words, an increasingly complex contemporary world led to increasingly complex contemporary novels. In order to depict such complexity, different perceptions were needed. Therefore, a lot of different ideologies emerged for the sake of demonstrating the complexity of the mind in contemporary novels.

Novels have always invoked views of the world, ideologies and theories. Contemporary Novel, similarly, seeks to define how writers embody, exemplify, modify or reject the combination of the contemporary theories such as realism, post-colonialism, feminism and postmodernism. Realism is the oldest of the major ideologies; however, it ceases to describe the contemporary mind, which leads to the fact that contemporary fiction as a theory to come to existence. Writers who want to contemplate upon the colonial, feminist ideas have started to use fiction as an element to criticize the ongoing problems. Some writers like George Orwell use those fictional elements well enough to both criticize the politics of his time and foresee the similar problems of the future. There are also some other writers like Jeanette Winterson, Jean Rhys who use the rewriting technique to use the classics and adapt all those classics to the era they live in. Since they believe in the constant change through time, they feel the need to make the necessary changes in the novels from the past to draw attention to the contemporary problems. Of all the contemporary techniques, rewriting proves itself as the strongest and the most effective strategy since it deals with the unseen or overlooked sides of the already-analyzed novels. The adapted versions of the previous novels bring about a new perspective to the readers' minds.

“Rewriting may be considered as old as the literary system itself” says Didier Coste and it is not difficult to agree with him since one can look at literary history and ask himself “Is not all writing a “rewriting?” (Coste, 8). Classics, contemporaries, poems or stories... Do fictional works not repeat the previous ones for different purposes? The aim of literature is actually to ask questions, to criticize, to teach lessons or “to represent” in general. One can suggest that writing is actually the synthesis of thoughts and communication and it can be taken as secondary even in the beginning. Thus, Coste suggests that “Everything being pre-written, by destiny, life narrative, inner speech, conversations, or even language properties and generic constraints, all writing would be at best an after writ, and all writers would be mere scribes” (Coste, 9). Within this framework, it can be said that writing actually depends on the act of repetition itself. By imitating life and repeating the actions, writers are actually rewriting what constitutes real life experience. From this perspective, writing can be defined as an act of rewriting. However, this critical way of looking into the act of writing is not sufficient to explain the reasons for rewriting in literature. Rewriting is rewording, renaming, recycling, reprocessing and reforming what was previously written and said. There are numerous ideological or thematic reasons for such imitations of aesthetic creation. Coste puts forward that there are two kinds of rewriting based on their functions: the first one is rewriting “as repetition and recycling” (Coste, 12). This kind of rewriting has a transmissive, traditional, conservative and stabilizing function. It builds up a canon and confirms it while providing commentary and academic criticism at the same time. For these reasons, it can be called *underwriting*. Coste’s second kind of rewriting concerns “recontextualisation and defamiliarisation” (Coste, 13). It has the function of reshaping, distortion, deconstruction and mutation. This kind of rewriting is iconoclastic and subversive more than adaptive and accommodating, it is on the side of defacement and revolution; therefore, it can be called *overwriting*. This paper will solely focus on the second kind of rewriting, *overwriting*, through a comprehensive analysis and discussion of Jeanette Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry*, which can be regarded as a significant example of rewriting for subversive and deconstructive purposes.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

I. WHAT IS REWRITING?

The issue of how writers are influenced from the writers of the past has been a subject of debate in literary criticism since classical poetics and the doctrine of imitation met their demise. The word itself coined from the Latin word *influere* “denoted energy that flows from higher, more powerful agencies such as the stars, gods, muses, and saints into the spirituality of mortals and changes their behavior or ways of expressing themselves” (Juvan, 3). Thereby, writers have always had the temptation to imitate old classics to attract the readers. In this rewriting process, the original text is called *hypotext* while the rewritten version is called *hypertext*. In other words, *hypertext* is any text derived from a previous one through *transformation* or *imitation*. This relationship between the old texts and the new ones which are to be created was put into question by Harold Bloom in the following lines:

“If Romantic poets such as Blake, Wordsworth, Keats or P. B. Shelley believed so passionately in the idea of imagination, an idea which ascribes uniqueness of vision to those possessed by or with it, why do they all constantly return, by direct and indirect means, to Milton as a figure of poetic authority” (Bloom, 219)?

This influence as an external energy entering the author’s mind inspires him or her and creates a dimension which shows this connection clearly. Bringing the decenter or silent character into action or creating a brand new character in relation with the others clearly shows the rewriting quality between literary works of art since shaping a text with the help of other text is another way of seeing this influence as well as the need to bring new vision. A.S. Byatt defines rewriting as “a text is all the words that are in it, and not only those words, but the other words that precede it, haunt it, and are echoed in it” (Byatt, 46). In the light of this idea, showing the echoes or haunted words in the experiments of rewriting in terms of ideologies like feminism, postmodernism, colonialism, etc. is the key point in order to define that influence in the act of rewriting.

In his *Rewriting/Reprising: Plural Intertextualities*, Georges Letissier maintains that art depends on art by saying “artistic creation as an autonomous pursuit is only concerned with

itself and draws its material from its own practice” (Letissier, 2). Considering this statement, one can suggest that artistic act detaches itself from the contemporary culture of social or civil commitments. Terry Eagleton supports the same idea by the following words: “It is postmodernism which seeks to relieve the arts of this oppressive burden of anxiety, urging them to forget all such portentous dreams of depth, and thus liberating them into a fairly trifling sort of freedom” (Eagleton, 16). Such notions suggest that art fails its artistic and aesthetic purposes and this makes it difficult to create something new. Therefore, writers are stuck in the critiques of the past since they contemplate over the past to create something new. In other words, literary world comes to a point where art imitates art producing its own criticism.

The word ‘rewriting’ brings about diversity in the re-creative process since it displaces the risk of any meaningless and impoverished replication of the original text. Critics link the obsession of contemporary writers’ focus on rewriting to the example of *imitatio auctorum*. The imitation and the emulation of classics have always been taken as an act of training. However, aside from the didactic function of rewriting, act of storytelling is also an act of rewriting since they both have the very same essence in them. Moreover, Letissier proposes that “the prefix ‘para’ bears a semantic ambivalence that is crucial to any reflection on ‘rewriting’ as it conflates both nearness and opposition- a pair of binaries that survives in the current dichotomy between ‘adaptation’ and ‘appropriation’” (Letissier, 4). What one can understand from such statement is that in rewriting, there exists the dilemma of having the tendency to be both close to and far from the original text.

In contemporary literature, rewriting proves itself as an underlying issue. Quoting, borrowing, revising, reprising have become common practices. In its appliance, the question of originality has been discussed by critics, of course. In terms of originality, the questions raised by T.S Eliot have stated the beginning of a changing era in terms of the individual essence of the writer. He insisted upon the importance of mutual existence of past and present in the creative act instead of leaving out the voice of past in present writings. Eliot placed great value on the integration of dead ancestors’ immortality into the present writing for a successful and meaningful aesthetic value. By putting forwards such notions, Eliot actually initiated a ‘trans-historical’ approach for the concept of rewriting. According to him and the preceding critics

with similar ideology, meaning results from the confrontation between texts, the new being an essence asserted upon the past creations. Harold Bloom affirms that:

“Authentic, high literature relies upon troping, a turning away not only from the literal but from prior tropes. Like criticism, which is either part of literature or nothing at all, great writing is always at work strongly or weakly misreading previous writing. Any stance that anyone takes up towards a metaphorical work will itself be metaphorical” (Bloom, 19).

From Bloom’s statement it can be inferred that unintentional or deliberate misinterpretations of previous writings may turn out to be creative. He suggests that even the failure to grasp literal meaning may prove itself as liberating giving more space for creative process. Therefore, one can see that literary history is full of examples of rewritings since the ‘rewrite’ somehow precedes the actual fact in its hypotext.

According to the historical researches, the most thorough investigation to be made in terms of transtextuality between the hypotext and the other texts is made by Gerard Genette in his major work *Palimpsest: Literature in the Second Degree*¹. In postmodern and contemporary perspective, all texts are palimpsestuous since “any text is hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that imitates and transforms” (Genette, 9). With reference to Genette’s palimpsestuous ideas in his work, in order to come to grips with the concept of rewriting, there are some terms to be analyzed in depth. *Paratextuality* is an essential term for any rewriting study which gives the essence of the connection between two texts. For the singularity of the text, *architext* is put forward. The *architextuality* of the text corresponds to a set of general or transcendent categories such as types of discourse, modes of enunciation and literary genres from which come forth each singular text. The next important term is *transtextuality*. Genette explains *transtextuality* as “textual transcendence of the text” by saying “it is all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (Genette, 2). Transtextuality has five different types based on abstraction, implication and comprehensiveness. The first term to be recognized is *intertextuality* which is term to be first proposed by Julia Kristeva. *Intertextuality* defines the relationship between two texts or among several texts or more specifically the actual presence of one text within another. Intertextuality will be analyzed in more depth in the second part of the chapter with its focus on the act of rewriting. The second term to be put forward is *paratext* which less explicitly

¹ The terms written in Italics are taken from Gerard Genette’s *Palimpsest: Literature in the Second Degree*

and more distantly binds the texts. *Paratext* deals with the totality of the texts by focusing on the parts such as title, subtitle, notices, forewords, marginal, illustrations, book covers or any other kinds of secondary signals. The most notable example of paratext is definitely James Joyce's *Ulysses* which embarks noticeable similarity to *Odyssey* in terms of chapter titles: "Sirens", "Nausicaa", "Penelope", etc. In this respect, the foretexts of the various outlines and projects can be considered as a typical paratext. The third term to be proposed is metatextuality which is the relationship labeled as commentary. It binds a given text to another without necessarily citing it or even naming it. In literary history, one can see that Hegel's *The Phenomenology of the Mind* silently reminds readers of Denis Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau*. The fourth type is *architextuality* which deals with relationship which is silent and is articulated only by a paratextual mention in the title or the subtitle. It rejects any kind of classification and therefore the novel is not identified as a novel or a poem is not classified as a poem once it is in an architextual involvement since genre is only an aspect of the architext. The last type is to be analyzed *hypertextuality* which deals with the relationship between the *hypotext* and the *hypertext* which is grafted on the earlier text. Hypertextuality deals with act of deriving a text from another preexistent text. Genette proposes that there are different ways of such derivation. He says that:

"The derivation can be of a descriptive or intellectual kind, where a metatext speaks about a second text. However, it may also be of another kind such as hypertext not speaking of hypotext at all but being able to exist without hypotext, from which it originates through *transformation*, and which it consequently evokes more or less perceptibly without necessarily speaking of it or citing it" (Genette, 5).

Considering this statement, one can suggest that hypertext may also be considered as a literary work. For example, in literary history, *The Aeneid* and *Ulysses* are two differently positioned hypertexts of the same hypotext: the *Odyssey*. As one can understand from the listing of transtextuality and from the examples of rewritings in literary history, rewriting has always been a common practice; and the way writers use hypotexts to create new versions, hypertexts, is more of a contextual process since the practices of writers differ from one another in terms of their perspectives even if they refer to the same hypotexts.

Rewriting, then, raises the question of faithfulness to the hypotext. From pastiche to parody or from travesty to caricature, different ranges of shifts are possible when it comes to rewriting

the hypotexts. There are even critics like Adrian Poole who mention the possible difficulty in analyzing the difference between the texts by enlisting the concepts such as “borrowing, stealing, appropriating, inheriting, assimilating; being influenced, inspired, dependent, indebted, haunted, possessed; homage, mimicry, travesty, echo, allusion, and intertextuality” (Poole, 24). Even though there are such concepts that make transtextuality difficult, literary history is full of rewritings to adapt the literature to the changing concepts of the contemporary. After describing the concept of rewriting with its different types, the next section will focus on the origins of rewriting tracing its roots to ‘intertextuality’ with its linguistic and cultural aspects.

II. ORIGINS OF REWRITING

This part of the thesis deals with the origins of rewriting, specifically focusing on the concept of intertextuality in the light of the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva.

The order of sign being radically different from that of the referent, the sign itself being split into signifier and signified, the very notion of the meaning as something fixed and stable, even though it sometimes had to be deciphered, was lost and replaced by that of the sliding and shifting. Meaning could no longer be viewed as a finished product. It was now caught in a process of production. The subject of enunciation was to be distinguished from the subject of utterance, and all the imaginary representations of a solid identifiable self, or ego, in control of language and capable of expressing himself, were denounced and replaced by the notion of a subject intermittently produced his parole literally spoken by language.

Saussure suggests that linguistic sign is non-referential. He says “signs are arbitrary, differential and the meanings we produce are relational”(Saussure, 8). Signs possess meaning because of their combinatory and associative relation to other signs. No sign has a meaning of its own; therefore, signs exist within a system and produce meaning through their similarity and difference from other signs, which is suggested as the origin of *intertextuality*. Saussure believes that vision of language exist in a more generalized and abstract system. If traditional notions present readers with a vision of human speaker originating the meaning contained in his words, then, Saussure’s linguistics replace readers with recognition that all acts of communication stem from choices made within a system which pre-exists any speaker.

On the other hand, Mikhael Bakhtin proposes that “words exist within specific social sites and moments of utterance and reception” (Bakhtin, 108). Thereby, texts generate their meanings out of their relation to literary or cultural systems rather than out of any direct representation of the physical world. Thus, literary work is no longer viewed as the container of the meaning but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce. *Intertextuality* was first used with reference to what Bakhtin calls dialogic aspect of language which foregrounds

class, ideological and other conflicts, divisions, and other hierarchies within society. He lays emphasis upon the otherness of language, on its internal stratification, on what he calls 'polyphony' or 'heteroglossia' (112), which mean the coexistence and interplay of several types of discourse reflecting the social or class dialects and different generations and age groups in society. Characteristically, to him the novel is only truly dialogic literary genre, poetry being single-voiced and essentially monologic. However, the essential definition of *intertextuality* is that it is an operation of the reader's mind displacement of critical interest away from the author.

One can suggest after this literary analysis that authors of literary works do not just select words from a language system; they select plots, aspects of characters, images from literary tradition. If one imagines literary tradition as itself a synchronic system, then the literary author becomes a figure working within at least two systems: the first one being the language in general and the other one being literary system in particular. In other words, text is not a line of words releasing a single theological meaning, but a dimensional space in which a variety of writings blend and clash creating meaning far from the original. According to Umberto Eco, the fact that works are created by authors is not true. He proposes that "works are created by works, texts are created by texts, and all together they speak to each other independently of the intentions of their authors" (Eco, 398). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that no text exists on its own. It is always connected other texts.

Similarly Roland Barthes puts forward that a text isn't a line of words releasing a single theological meaning but a multi-dimensional space in which "a variety of writings, none of which are original, blend and clash" (Barthes, 157). It is possible to infer from this statement that the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture.

Saussurean Linguistics views language as a synchronic system but what is missing here is that language exists in specific social situations and thus is bound up with specific social evaluations. To abstract an account of literary language is to forget that language is criticized by individuals in specific contexts. Saussure argues that only the language in its abstract sense, "the norms and conventions presumed to structure a language at any moment of time

can become the object in literature” (Saussure, 27). However, Bakhtin and his companions capture the human centered aspect of language. According to those critics, meaning is unique to the extent that it belongs to the linguistic interaction of the individuals. Thus, language embodies and reflects constantly changing social values and positions.

While explaining the concept of meaning, one can presume that no utterance exists alone, yet it emerges from a complex history of previous works and addresses itself to a social context. All utterances are dialogic, their meaning and logic are dependent upon what has previously been said. All utterances are responses to previous utterances and are addressed to specific addressers. With this notion of double-voiced discourse, one can suggest that there is direct connection between the hypertext and hypo text in rewriting since they both are in direct dialogue with differing purposes. The more recent text uses the previous stories to give a changing perspective; however, one has to understand that their meaning and their logic, in general, depend upon the previously written text since it connects both discourses within its interpretation.

The Bounded Text by Julia Kristeva is concerned with establishing the manner in which a text is constructed out of an already existent discourse. Authors do not create their texts from their original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts. In a way, “a text is a permutation of other texts”, an act of *intertextuality* in the space of a given text in which several utterances taken from other texts “intersect and neutralize each other” (Kristeva, 274). In this sense, the text is not an individual, isolated object, but rather a compilation of cultural textuality. Whilst Bakhtin centers an actual human subject employing language in specific social situations, Kristeva’s way of expressing these points seems to evade human subjects in favor of the more abstract terms: text and textuality. They share an insistence that texts cannot be separated from larger cultural and social textuality out of which they are constructed. All texts contain the previous ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse. If texts are made up of bits and pieces of the social text, then the ongoing ideological struggles and tensions which characterize language and discourse in society will reverberate in the text itself. Therefore, one can suggest that text is a practice and it reflects productivity. Its intertextual status represents its structuring of words and utterances that existed before and will go on after the moment of utterance.

Intertextuality concerns not only a text's emergence from the social texts but also its continued existence within society and history. Texts have no unity or unified meaning since they are thoroughly connected to ongoing cultural and social processes. For example, if a novelist uses the words 'natural, artificial, sad, justice', they cannot help but incorporate them into their society's conflict over the meanings of these words. Therefore, one can understand that Kristeva's semiotic approach seeks to study the text as a textual arrangement of elements which possesses double meaning: a meaning in the text itself and a meaning in what she calls "the historical and social text" (Kristeva, 236). Thus, meaning is always a tone and the same time inside and outside the text. In view of the above, it is possible to infer that any text is the absorption and transformation of the other.

Kristeva employs Bakhtin's emphasis on the double-meaning or dialogic quality of words and utterances to attack notions of unity which she associates with authority and unquestionable truth. Aristotle asserts that something cannot at one and at the same time be something (A) and something else (not A). In Kristeva's point and Bakhtin's view of word and utterance, one can find fundamental challenge to Aristotelian logic and its notion of singularity. The dialogic word and utterance is double voiced, heteroclit and possesses two meanings: (A) and (not A) within itself. Thereby, the concept of *intertextuality* is meant to designate a language which is against, beyond and resistant to mono-logic and single meaning.

These critics actually imply that the writer's only task is to mix writings with one another. Thus, the act of rewriting, and more specifically *intertextuality*, concentrates upon the fact that recent writers use previous writings to create different meanings; however, on their way to their aims, they both make use of the existent stories but do not base all their purposes and techniques on them, which makes it possible for them to create new dimensions. Thus, one can suggest that by rewriting, authors bring new perspectives to the previously written texts. Postmodern critics propose that authors do not have the authority over the meaning of the text since there is no hidden, ultimate, stable meaning to be deciphered. Very much like the postmodern critics, writers who rewrite the old texts also focus on the notion that it is possible to integrate different purposes to the previously written stories or tales. This is the reason why the rewriting examples in literary world prove themselves as conspicuous in terms of

providing readers with new perspectives since they are actually adaptations to the changing world.

III. REWRITING EXAMPLES IN LITERARY HISTORY

Rewriting has been a common practice in literary history and it has been used by many writers in different eras. Readers witness changing purposes in every writer's use of rewriting, of course, since some writers focus on the political aspects while rewriting a classic, whereas some others merely want to change the style on his rewriting. Notwithstanding the purposes of the writers, rewriting has always been a popular study among writers and we, readers, are presented with numerous examples of rewriting throughout history.

Writers have differing aims in their acts of rewriting. Gender issue has been the most popular subject in rewriting examples since most female writers believe that the women's submission to men in this patriarchal ideology should be altered both in real world and in literary world. Writers like Angela Carter, Jean Rhys and Jeanette Winterson target the feminist perspectives in their works since they observe that the gender issue is not addressed in classics. In her *Bloody Chamber*, the rewriting of *Blue Beard* by Charles Perrault, Angela Carter changes the women characters into strong human beings who take their fate into their own hands and show strength in the event of a male attack. Similarly, Jean Rhys questions positions of women within a social order in her *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the rewriting of *Jane Eyre* written by Charlotte Brontë. Rhys discusses the position of women in the patriarchal society which has traditionally placed women within the domain of illness and pathology. She feels the need to rewrite *Jane Eyre* to bring out the unknown, untold, mysterious perspective of the mad woman in the attic. By rewriting the classic, she questions the female submission in male-dominant societies.

There are some others contexts like history or colonialism in which the literary works of the past are rewritten. The intertextual relationship between Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1719 and J.M.Coetze's *Foe* published in 1986 is a case in point. Coetzee rewrites *Robinson Crusoe* in his *Foe* both to give a new historical perspective to his readers and to criticize colonial ideology. Intertextuality in *Foe* enables Coetzee to rewrite history in a new context by establishing a connection between 18th and 20th centuries. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the male authorial voice is displaced by a woman narrator in *Foe*. As a rewriting and reinterpretation, *Foe* does not only criticize Defoe and *Robinson Crusoe* but it also subverts

the ideological norms which regard the white, the colonizer and the male superior to the black, the colonized and the female. In this sense, it is possible to suggest that *Foe* stands as a significant example for a rewriting in a historical and colonial context.

All in all, literary history has witnessed quite a lot of rewriting examples for numerous purposes. Some writers focus on the politics while some others concentrate upon the postmodern style as they are applying their techniques on their writings. This thesis will specifically focus upon the gender issues in rewriting in the light of the feminist theory. While questioning the inferiority of women in the patriarchal ideology, there will be a close reading on Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* with reference to the popular German fairy tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by Brothers Grimm as the novel is a rewriting of the tale.

CHAPTER II

JEANETTE WINTERSON

I. JEANETTE WINTERSON: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HER LIFE AND HER WORK

Jeanette Winterson is a well-known British writer who was born in Manchester on 27 August 1959. She was adopted and raised by working-class parents in Accrington, Lancashire. Her mother was devoted to religion and she went to a Pentecostal church since her dream was for Jeanette to become a missionary. Her early meeting with Bible and biblical language had a positive and creative impact upon her and gave her an insight for writing. She even points out that her preaching the gospel and writing sermons “were”, in fact, “her first exercise for writing precise prose” (Cooper, 1986). She took a Saturday job at the public library, which gave her the opportunity to meet books and escape her negative real-life experiences. According to Andermahr, thanks to books, she created “her own version of a room of one’s own” (Andermahr, 34).

Winterson went through a lot on her way to success. She was a misfit for her mother and religious community not because of the path she took with books but also her sexual interest for women. She left home and with many ups and downs; she was able to graduate from St Catherine’s College and started writing her first novel in 1983. In the following years, she became an editor and she published her first novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Her first masterpiece is still her “most popular” and her “most written-on” novel. (Makinen, 1). This novel was followed by *Boating for Beginners* which is very similar to her first novel in the sense that it also includes an intertextual rewriting of Bible. Then in 1987, she became a full-time writer and she wrote *The Passion* with which she won John Llewellyn Rhys literary prize. She then wrote *Sexing the Cherry* in 1989. According to Merja Makinen, in Winterson’s both novels, *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry*, the stories “take place within a historical setting, the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively, to question the nature of history and the relation of fact to fiction” (Makinen, 1). She continues her analysis by asserting that “both sport dual narrators, a ‘feminine’ male narrator alongside a woman narrator singled out by her fantastic her grotesque features (Vilanelle has webbed feet, the Dog Woman is a giant), to deconstruct the concepts of gender identity and the fluidity of

sexual desire” (Makinen, 2). By 1990s, she had become a well-known writer and by 2008 she had written 18 novels and she had even started her own company. In Winterson’s latest masterpieces, the readers witness her involvement with global and environmental devastation. She says that she is “concerned about the planet” (Gustar, 58) and she feels the burden to touch upon the problems in her writings.

Even though Winterson’s career was nothing but a success story, she also had some shortcomings about her personal life. She was rather open about her sexual interests and she didn’t even hesitate to give honest answers to the questions about her sexuality. However, handling media and public opinions was not easy for her since her preference in sex was unorthodox for her time. She was pretty open about her “lesbianism” and she bravely put forward in an interview:

“It is very fashionable at the moment to say that everything is genetic, but it’s a choice that I made quite consciously. I don’t have any problems going to bed with men, don’t dislike it, and don’t dislike them. I could choose, and with women I was able to get on with my life and do my work, and I am not sure that I would have been able to do that if I’d been heterosexual. I feel like I didn’t make a problem for myself, I made a solution” (Brooks, 2000).

She made a choice and she supported it to the end against all the people, which necessitates a great courage for the time. She did the same thing in her novels and she constructed characters that fight against similar conventions.

Jeanette Winterson is an important figure in contemporary British literature. She constitutes a significant profile in cultural aspects as well. When analyzed deeply, her biography suggests that her style of literary fiction has always been considered good and she is, in a regular basis, given chances to give speeches about art and culture on TV and in universities. Sonya Andermahr believes that Winterson aims at two contradicting aspects in her writings (Andermahr, 35). Although Winterson’s work highly concentrates upon postmodern stylistics, she also includes the notions of love, art and imagination in her writings. Andermahr goes one step forward and also asserts that “Winterson pushes towards a more specific treatment of lesbian and feminist concerns” in her contemporary work (Andermahr, 14).

II. WINTERSON'S PLACE IN LITERARY WORLD

Winterson began her career in the mid-1980s along with many other British writers. It is quite clear that in the timeline they started their career, there was some sort of exceptional social and political disturbance. There were big riots over racism and social exclusion all over the big cities and people were excruciated by unemployment due to the decline of manufacturing and heavy industry. Other than business, international politics were also going through some critical distress because of the outbreak of wars. Despite the fact that people in public went through such upheavals in 1980s, British literature did not reflect these problems. Instead of dealing with issues brought up by public, British literature was more interested in contemporary topics. To put it in another way, there was no “social realism” in the novels of the time. As a result, contemporary writers were severely criticized. In Elaine Showalter's words, the contemporary writers “wrote with small vision” (Showalter, 315). Showalter continues to support her viewpoint by saying that “in the highly political years leading up to the millennium, Winterson's work still seemed preoccupied with romantic triangles and the journeys of the mind rather than treating social themes” (Showalter, 318). On the other hand, another critic, Andermahr, suggests that Winterson's novels are

“suffused with a sense of political injustice and protest. It is combative, impassioned, speaking up on behalf of history's silent majorities and minorities –women, gay people and the working class- on a range of subjects including capitalism, patriarchy, and war” (Andermahr, 16).

In this sense, one can suggest that what Winterson does more than just mirroring historical events in her work because her writing, with its creativity, provides the readers with more than just a mere memory of her time. Like her many other fellow writers, she applied some postmodern techniques to deal with contemporary problems from a certain distance. Her infatuation with writing history was mostly connected with her interest with identity and selfhood and because she believed in the limitations of realistic aesthetics, she based her settings in a fictional frame. As Ginette Carpenter puts it, Winterson “abandoned realism for an exploration of language in a series of invented past and fantasy worlds” (Carpenter, 72).

When it comes to talking about Winterson's style and her place in literary history, there arise many differing opinions on whether she belongs to modernism or postmodernism. Despite the fact that Winterson calls herself a modernist, many academics place her in postmodernist

context. There are even people like Susana Onega who call her “an international experimentalist” (Onega, 2) due to the fact that there are apparent connections between her work and T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf’s. Unlike academics and critics and very much like other writers, she was not interested in formal limitations and boundaries. That is the reason why she calls herself a modernist. In Andermahr’s words, “not only is she an experimenter with fictional forms, but she views art as an ultimate value since art is capable of challenging our sense of ourselves and remarking the language” (Andermahr, 17). Even though she was stylistically pulled towards postmodernism since she was devoted to postmodernist aesthetics of fragmentation, metafiction, intertextuality, parody, hybridity, fluidity, instability of the self and the ultimate unknowability of things, she was also critical about the perspectives of capitalism and popular culture in postmodern value. In contrast to modernism, postmodernism is known for its interest in media; hence, its lack of artistic value. Winterson suggests that if a person is enslaved to media and advertising, he is also enslaved to materialistic ideas, which is something she avoids in her writings. She says:

“The nature of a work of art is to be not a part, nor yet a copy of the real world, but a world in itself, independent, complete, autonomous; and to possess it fully you must enter that world, conform to its laws, and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims, and particular conditions which belong to you in the other world of reality” (AL, epigraph).

As one can clearly understand from her words that she is fully interested in literary tradition but she also surrounds herself with innovative notions to reflect a perspective of her own. Therefore, Winterson’s writing in a fantasy world can be taken as her reaction against the suppression of social, political, historical reality.

As stated in her biography, Winterson was a lesbian and she believed in feminist ideas, which is quite clear in her works. Her sexual preference was quite clear from even the beginning of her career. However, she didn’t like to be called as lesbian writer as she rejected all kind of labels. She would prefer to be called a woman who loves women rather than a lesbian who writes. The way people labeled her had a restricting impact upon her writing and she rejected the idea of being categorized.

In analyzing Winterson's way of portraying lesbian lives in her writings, one can clearly say that she does not just reflect lesbian lives by mirroring their life style; instead, she takes one condition of their existence and she uses it in a literary context by extracting some sexual meaning out of it. She proposes that a novel can both provide the readers with historical criticism and analyze the association between sex and gender at the same time. Her fantasy frame in her works helps to depict lesbian subjects who are free from any social constrains of gender issues.

Winterson focuses on human desire while writing where she just bespeaks about gendered meanings and she constantly questions those meanings. Her work has the tendency to be interpreted as feminist writing and she voluntarily calls her writing as her body, building some feminine meanings upon her practices. Very much like Cixous, she says "you can't talk about a female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes... Women's imagination is inexhaustible" (Winterson, 246). According to Winterson, there is a connection between women's bodies and texts and it is possible for text to act as a kind of a body. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter III.

It is important to note that during 1980s, novels accomplished more than just defying patriarchal myths and stereotypes about women- that is, Winterson and her companions deconstructed the myths about constraining women in a feminist discourse. That is the reason why many critics call her a "demythologizer". Her anti-romantic mood presents an ideological preference, a rejection of conventional "female" context, a refrain from patriarchal discourse.

III. MAJOR THEMES IN WINTERSON'S WRITING

Winterson's novels achieved huge popularity and great success. As analyzed in previous parts, she has an extra-ordinary voice which gives the very essence of life and this, possibly, is the key for her accomplishment. After focusing on her career development and her place in literary world, it might be a good idea to focus on rewriting and reprisal in Winterson's fiction.

The constant theme to be perceived in her works is *love*. Susana Onega implies that "love represents the central vision around which all her fictions develop" (Onega, 8). That can be taken as the reason why readers come across constant themes such as longing, unrequited desires, the dangers of falling in love with another person or with the person from the same sex, sexual passion and breaking up. Her novels may be love poems in the disguise of novels as her continual celebration is all about love. According to Winterson, "love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never ends" (Andermahr, 26). As one can understand from this quotation, she puts the concept of love above all other things. In her works, she tries to define and show love in such a way that is different from any kind of conventional romance. According to the critic Peter Childs, "to love differently emerges as a goal achieved by telling stories differently, of re-imagining and re-mapping life" (Childs, 261). This may be the reason why she focuses on retelling the myths from the past—that is, she just seeks to achieve an all-embracing expression that covers all lovers from different genders and sexual tendencies.

Winterson generally confronts desire against the impositions and medium of domestic life. In terms of sexuality and romance, one can infer from her writings that she is not quite in favor of domestic life. She even states that "love belongs to itself and marriage is the flimsiest weapon against desire" (Winterson, 77). Andermahr compares Winterson to 12th century troubadours as they both contemplate over courtly love and Winterson believes that domesticity is destructive to romantic passion and only free love can be experienced fully as its name suggests. Readers may infer from this that Winterson puts the concept of love and marriage in two opposing parties in both her mind and in her writings.

Another recurring theme in her novels is the connection between writing and lovemaking. She sees the text as a body to be read by the lovers. In her novels, there is a constant concentration upon how body and desire actually constitutes the basic complex reading process itself. The critic Ginette Carpenter discusses that “ using the body and the enactment of bodily desires as a metaphor for the act of reading means that reading becomes, alongside love and art, something that can transform and change lives” (Carpenter, 79). Similarly, in Winterson’s novels, we see that the act of reading actually becomes more than a mere reading but an act with greater purposes. According to Winterson, it is the desire itself that triggers the narrative in her writing.

Winterson’s work demonstrates the powerful aspects of her storytelling. She says that she actually writes fiction in order to continue her story writing experience. She even asserts that “storytelling is a way of establishing connections, imaginative connections for ourselves, a way of joining up disparate material and making sense of the world” (Winterson, 4). However, there are some critics maintain that Winterson actually uses storytelling to defy realism. She underlines the importance of storytelling as if she truthfully believes in its aesthetic principles. Therefore, critics like Susana Onega suggest that she has a postmodernist approach to storytelling, which implies that she is interested in both telling stories and deconstructing them at the same time.

In Wintersons writings, another recurring theme is rewriting, in other words ‘intertextuality’. She rewrites rewriting fairy tales, legends and myths. Hence, Winterson says “my work is full of Cover Versions. I like to take stories we think we know and record them differently. In the re-telling comes a new emphasis or bias, and the new arrangements of the key elements demands that fresh material be injected into the existing text” (Winterson, *Weight*, 18). In her novels, readers see how she re-words the conventions of the myths with her talented mind. In a way, she uses language to reflect the past but not by repeating it but by modifying it. Andermahr suggests that there are reoccurring sentences in her novels that support this claim. She proposes that sentences such as “Trust me, I am telling you stories”, “we are empty space and points of light”, “to avoid discovery, I stay on the run”, “I want to tell the story again” appear in her novels continuously (Andermahr, 124). After reading her novels it can be inferred that her work is greatly intertextual since different books and different stories are

bound in communication with each other. Similar ideas reoccur in the texts that mirror the past but written in a present fashion. The critic Jennifer Gustar maintains that

When Winterson writes that she wants to tell the story again, to which story does she refer? The story of *the Twelve Dancing Princesses* apparently, but is she also revisiting the story of *Written on the Body* which she cites and which is also itself a retelling of romance narratives lamenting the narrator's collusion in the same story ever time? This reiteration and self-reference suggest that perhaps Winterson is always cunningly engaged in her own literary critique" (Gustar, 58).

In a sense, Winterson actually constitutes a bridge between past writers and present readers, between past notions and present beliefs. Critics like Carpenter propose that Winterson's own reading and re-writing the past works actually makes it difficult to understand the differentiation between the author, reader and the text. The author is actually the reader, the reader is the writer who writes the present work, the text bears differing importance, and such connection is in continual motion. These connections among different entities make Winterson's work highly intellectual and intertextual.

Seen from another perspective, Winterson re-writes the stories from the past to escape the historical truth in them. She always rejects the idea of telling everything in fixated objectivity; instead, she suggests that ideas should be rendered with subjective understanding, which creates the real aesthetic value in writing. In *Sexing the Cherry*, she asks "Science is story, history is a story. What am I? Atoms... Empty space and points of light" (Winterson, 116). According to Winterson, the only boundaries are against our imagination. As a person who believes in the simultaneity of lives, she, of course, questions identity. Accordingly, she uses fairy tales and myths to convey her belief that nothing is fixed including her writing. Language is not fixed; on the contrary it is in continual change; human beings are in constant reform; why not her text? In a way, she justifies her re-writing by contemplating over life itself.

Winterson's engagement with myth is no coincidence. She brings anti-realistic events into existence in her writing to question the burdens of reality. Similarly, she creates characters who escape the same burdens and conventions of life itself. There is a continual escape from

the imprisonment of reality. The escape also acts as an exploration of freedom. Her characters in her novels repeatedly try to escape the limitations and free themselves from any kind of compulsion. In her novels, there are numerous references to fantastic journeys, e.g. in *Written*, there is a description of Louis as “winged horse Pegasus” (Winterson, *Written*, 132), in *The Powerbook*, the narrator says “our happiness will be like the flight of birds” (Winterson, *The Powerbook*, 204), and she asks in *Weight* “how many of us ever get free of our orbit?” (Winterson, *Weight*, 99). As one can understand from the quotations above, there is a continual wish to escape from the real world to fantasy in Winterson’s novels. But Winterson also depicts characters who believe in the futility of such an escape for the better. In her novels, for every character like Fortunata in *Sexing the Cherry*, there is also a character like Jordan who is under the influence of the idea that “it is hard for anyone to change anything” (Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*, p. 99). She deliberately creates two differing worlds by creating two differing character types. Andermahr suggests that “all Winterson’s work revolves around this central tension between responsibility and freedom, weight and weightlessness, commitment and restless desire” (Andermahr, 30). By presenting these two contrasting ideas, Winterson does not merely create fiction without any realistic basis but she actually makes a good critique of the reality by comparing it to a fictional story with a view to showing the shortcomings of real life experience.

The analysis of Winterson’s style and recurrent themes clearly reveal that she has a unique way of handling the truths of life. She portrays present life by projecting the readers to past experiences of myths and tales, which creates a crucial question in the readers’ minds as to what constitutes reality and identity in this world. After focusing on Winterson as a rewriter of the tales and myths, the next chapter will deal with how she applies these narrative techniques and strategies in one of her acclaimed novels *Sexing the Cherry*.

CHAPTER III

SEXING THE CHERRY

I. BACKGROUND AND PLOT SUMMARY

Jeanette Winterson is one of the most significant figures in British fiction during the 1980s. As it was pointed out before, the value of Winterson's writing lies in the fact that she has a capability of shocking her readers by constructing marvelous worlds where the usual belief systems are questioned and deconstructed. In a way, she blends bitter satire with magic and she recreates old myths. Such combination of reality and magic, past and present is perfectly apparent in her novel *Sexing the Cherry*. As Giulia Suciú suggests, "The novel, *Sexing the Cherry*, flirts with fantasy, matches fairy tales and labyrinthine cities against recognizable historical backgrounds, swims through what has been variously called magic realism and historical metafiction" (Suciú, 2). Therefore, it is quite reasonable to put forward that *Sexing the Cherry* is a novel that connects magical aspects of time and time travel into a questionably realistic story of a mother and her adopted son also contemplating the concept of love throughout the novel.

Sexing the Cherry is set in the seventeenth century and it is a novel that investigates the relationship between a mother and a son, questioning the concept of time broadly at the same time. It is the story of an orphan, Jordan, who is found on the river Thames, and his so-called mother, the Dog Woman, a giant with a monstrous appearance, both of whom appear as a narrator alternatively throughout the novel. It might be a good idea to give the general outlook of the novel briefly before the analyzing it thoroughly.

The Dog Woman finds a baby on the river bank and takes him home with her. She raises the orphan boy and names him Jordan. During his childhood, he is attracted to boats and he spends a lot of time with them. One day, while he is spending some time with his boats at the age of ten, he meets Tradescant, who comes to have a lot of influence over Jordan. After the start of the Civil War, Tradescant interrupts the Dog Woman's conversation with her neighbor by demanding to hire Jordan as his assistant in gardening at Wimbledon. After some discussions over the subject, Jordan and the Dog Woman move to Wimbledon.

During Jordan's adulthood, he gets charmed by a dancer he sets eye on at a dinner party and he starts searching for her. His search for the dancer brings him to the town in which Zillah's Tower stands. In this town, there is also a village whose people are rebuilding their home on a daily basis. After wandering among such different stories, he ends up visiting twelve dancing princesses who tell him their stories.

Jordan, Tradescant and the Dog Woman come back to London to attend the king's trial and they show their sorrow upon his execution. Tradescant makes up his mind to go back to sea, and Jordan goes with him. With Jordan gone, the Dog Woman seeks retaliation against the Puritans for King Charles' execution. She even uses a brothel with a lot of prostitutes to kill Preacher Scroggs and Neighbor Firebrace in quite a painful scene. Jordan reaches Barbados where he eventually finds Fortunata, the mysterious dancer, and he gets to spend a month with her before his return to England with a pineapple. The Dog Woman enthusiastically waits for her son's return and she cannot even close her eyes upon him on the first night of his return because of her excitement.

Fascinated by ships since his childhood, Jordan makes up his mind to join the army and soon he is called "Nicolas Jordan". Jordan and the Dog Woman travel to London and during their journey, he brings out Fortunata as a subject to his mother. Upon their discussion about Jordan's trip to India, they decide to bring the pineapple to King Charles the Second. The Dog Woman thinks that the Plague is God's punishment on England for their execution of their king. Then readers see that a woman suggests to Jordan that they will burn the factory. Likewise, it is soon learned that the fire is destroying London, but Jordan and the Dog Woman escape the fire in his ship. During all these catastrophic experiences, Winterson finishes her novel by giving Jordan the attitude that he should look positive towards the future with great hopes although he knows that he can never return to his home.

Through Jordan and Tradescant's journey, Winterson explores the theme of time and time's impact upon love. She makes use of her plot to demonstrate that love is timeless and actions

are 'repeated' over and over again. Upon reading *Sexing the Cherry*, readers are invited to a journey with Jordan- through time, through love, through fantasy, and through fairy-tales.

II. REWRITING OF CONVENTIONAL WOMEN IN TERMS OF FEMINISM

A. FEMINISM

Literary history points out that feminist criticism became a dominant force in Western literary studies in the late 1970s, when feminist theory was more broadly conceived and started to be applied to linguistic and literary matters. Since the early 1980s, feminist literary criticism has developed and diversified in numerous ways and is now characterized by a universal perspective.

Feminist criticism derived much of its inspiration from Simone de Beauvoir's seminal book *The Second Sex*, which was published in 1949. Beauvoir argued that associating men with humanity more generally, which is practiced by almost every culture, confines women to an inferior position in society. Later feminist critics from the 1970s agreed with Beauvoir's critique but focused largely upon linguistic aspects of writings as a tool of male domination. They claimed that there existed a conventional male literary history which resulted in novels which represented the male point of view. More than perspective, those conventional novels also cemented sexual stereotyping in people's minds. Therefore, they suggested ways to develop a feminine language and writing in the literary world. For this purpose, women writers were to be revived and reintegrated into society for the sake of equality among the different sexes.

For these purposes, feminist critics of the 1970s and 1980s came together and started analyzing the literary texts closely. During their research they constituted two different focus groups. One of the groups was called "feminist critique" and they concentrated largely upon the contextualization of the texts in terms of feminine perspective. They explored how women characters are portrayed by revealing the patriarchal ideology existent in the classics. They tried to show approaches and conventions that supported male dominance both in society and in literary world. On the other hand, the other group was called "gynocritics" since they mostly focused upon the female writers' perception of reality. They examined where women writers placed themselves throughout the years. In the end, whether in one group or the other, they all agreed on the fact that women were subjected to social inferiorization regardless of their race, class, and culture and this was the universal feminist consensus of all approaches of all nations.

Today's critics refer to a more comprehensive perspective in terms of women's place in society. They do not focus on women as a relatively imposing category; in contrast, they see women as members of different societies with different concerns. Feminists have pointed out that women are not defined merely by their womanhood because other attributes such as religion, class, and sexual orientation are also important. Feminist studies, in general, concentrate upon the problems of sex, sexuality, gender, and language in a male dominant society and they question women's equality to men in a patriarchal world.

According to feminists, for women to gain independence over from dominance and language, they need to discover their own sexuality and identity. Femininity is an important subject to be looked at, since in the patriarchal society, males are the possessor of the narration. For example, the narration of tales is always practiced through male a male voice. The stories of the princesses in *The Twelve Princesses* being told by a third person male narrator is an example of how men have the power to narrate and shape women's destinies through their dominance over the use of language. Hence, as a form of resistance, female critics such as Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva mentioned *écriture féminine*. For Cixous and other practitioners of *écriture féminine*, "the very structures of Western language exclude women and can function only through the silencing of women and the repression of feminine sexual drives" (Rabine, 23). In this manner, the invention of a new language with a feminine syntax is needed to transform the structures built by patriarchy, so incorporating the bodily signifiers of feminine drives such as sexuality into the texture of writing is the most necessary form of resistance. Irigaray and Cixous go on to emphasize that women, historically limited to being sexual objects for men with their titles of 'virgins or prostitutes, wives or mothers', have been prevented from expressing their sexuality in itself or for themselves. If they can achieve this, and if they can speak about it in the new languages it calls for, "they will establish a point of view, a site of difference from which phallo-gocentric concepts and controls can be seen through and taken apart, not only in theory, but also in practice" (Rosalind, 251). Therefore, women need to discover their sexuality. They need to see themselves not just as mothers or wives but also as a sexual being. Refusing the roles of maternity can give women freedom – the thing they need in order to write their own experience. Luce Irigaray puts forward that "woman has sex organs just about everywhere...feminine language is more diffusive than its 'masculine counterpart'. That is undoubtedly the reason... her language...goes off in all directions and... he is unable to discern

the coherence” (Irigaray, 43). Since women’s *jouissance* carries the notion of self and identity, the existence of women writers who are aware of their own sexuality, power and language is the solution to the oppression of women both in society and language. Freedom from all the expectations is what women need in order to gain their own voice of freedom.

Gender is another significant point to be mentioned while talking about feminists. The question of gender is raised by Judith Butler in respect to women’s and men’s exposition to social environments. She supports the idea that their social discourse shapes their choice of sexual identity. Butler draws a clear line between biological sex and culturally structured gender. This is the reason why one can suggest that gender is not a stable category like biological sex that people are born with. Gender is continually affected by changes in society and culture. Therefore, it can be deduced that biological sex is more like a human activity, whereas gender issues are deduced with the social context that men and women identify themselves with. Butler’s concentration is that sex is connected with human body of men and women while gender is associated with cultural construction. The real question in the feminist point of view is why biological sex should determine what people desire. Isn’t it possible to go after instincts rather than just conforming to social rules? More simply, Judith Butler argues that female gender doesn’t necessarily mean female body just like male gender does not directly mean male body. In contrast, feminists argue that gender is about performance based upon the social expectations of the gender itself. Kristeva puts forward that gender is also about “gestures, act, speech and clothing” (Kristeva, 176). From such feminist statements, it is crucial to assert that a woman’s femininity is not restricted to her female body; rather, it is structured upon the role she wants to express with her instinctual needs and perspectives. Therefore, it is suggested that feminists believe in the idea that social performances of masculinity and femininity can be different from the accepted norms.

Taking into consideration the historical development of feminism, one can suggest that there is a direct connection between such feminist points of view and the women characters in *Sexing the Cherry*. In *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson pushes boundaries of the female body and its connection to the social norms of a patriarchal society. Winterson creates independent characters like the Dog Woman to criticize male dominance in society in terms of physicality and language to break with the expected social role of women. Winterson does not only

practice a rewriting of a conventional woman concept, but she also creates a feminist atmosphere where she questions femininity and masculinity by her creation of the Dog Woman. After analyzing feminists and their perspectives in depth, now it might be good idea to make direct connections between feminist criticism and Winterson's portrayal of the Dog Woman.

B. WINTERSON'S RE-WRITING OF WOMEN

Sexing the Cherry is a novel but in the form of a fairy tale since it has dancing princesses, a giant woman, magic and towns of dying love, which makes the novel an adult fairy tale according to many critics such as Sonya Andermahr, Susana Onega, Ginette Carpenter and so on. By giving the reader a mixture of oppositions, Winterson actually goes against conventions of life and conventions of writing at the same time. She defies space and time as well as the medium of heterosexual love, and she cuts loose of any kind of gender expectation. By writing *Sexing the Cherry*, by creating such cross-sexual characters and bizarre love affairs, Winterson tries to challenge conventions in order to pass beyond gender barriers.

Patriarchy pre-supposes the natural superiority of male over female and upholds women's subordination to man in all domains of life. In patriarchal ideology, all the power and authority within the family and the society remain entirely in the hands of men. Thus, because of patriarchy, women lack their legal rights and patriarchal values reject their freedom. The term 'women's subordination' refers to the inferior position of women to men. The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination, experience of limited self esteem and self-confidence, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence can be commented as the common points for the subordination of women. Patriarchy is a system where women are taken as subordinate in a number of ways such as son preference, discrimination against girls in food distribution, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom for girls, male control over women and girls, lack of inheritance for women, male control over women's bodies and sexuality, no control over fertility or reproductive rights. Therefore, one can assume that the norms and practices that define women as inferior to men are apparent everywhere in our families, social relations, religious, laws, schools, textbooks, media, factories, offices. However, Jeanette Winterson breaks with such conventions coming from patriarchal ideology by creating opposing characters in her novel.

The first convention Winterson breaks is her portrayal of "woman" in the novel. Her way of creating a woman character has nothing to do with the stereotypical woman concept in people's minds. Hester Eisenstain suggests that " the behaviour that was thought to be appropriate for the stereotypical woman was passive or weak, non-aggressive and dependant;

thus, resulted in her being understood as essentially incapable of a strong, independent and autonomous existence” (Eisenstein, 59). Unlike such expectations for women to be submissive, Winterson creates the Dog Woman to destroy this highly accepted formula of woman concept in minds. She defies all such generalizations and questions the belief that there should exist the concept of appropriate behaviour for women in society. The Dog Woman in the novel is quite a break from such conventions as she has characteristics that are totally contradictory to any woman stereotypes and any kind of gender expectations. Upon looking at her description of herself, one can clearly understand her being a misfit in the society she lives in:

“How hideous am I? My nose is flat, my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are a poor show, being black and broken. I had smallpox when I was a girl and the caves in my face are home enough for fleas. But I have fine blue eyes that see in the dark” (Winterson, 18).

To sum up, Winterson challenges the accepted norms of womanhood by creating the Dog Woman. She surprises her readers with this character as her readers are most probably belong to the group who believe in the fact that woman should have convenient looks and behaviour. Winterson continues to show the absurdity of the situation by writing extraordinary lines for the Dog Woman to talk about her odd existence in the society. She says “I hate to wash, for it exposes the skin to contamination” (Winterson 32). She doesn’t even put bath habits into conventional perspectives. In another example, she thinks her son is proud of her because she could hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once unlike other children’s mothers. To be more specific about the Dog Woman’s extraordinary looks, Winterson writes she sweats “enough liquid to fill a bucket” (Winterson, 19) and she is “strong enough to hold a man from the ground at arm’s length by using only one hand” (Winterson, 24).

Her huge traits are actually proofs for her not being in the normal category for women. Throughout the novel, readers witness her female body in relation to her hugeness. Although she belongs to female community, all her body parts are too over-sized to be feminine. Winterson draws a quite clear line between being female and being feminine. Nobody can object to her being a woman; however, it is plausible to suggest that she has no femininity; e.g. she has breasts like any other woman but she uses them to choke men. The conviction that the very purpose of women’s breasts is to please men and to nurse babies is rejected in *Sexing the Cherry* via the use of breasts as weapons against men to make them look weaker.

From these examples, one can understand that she doesn't fit into the category of 'convenient woman' and Winterson draws her readers' attention to the fact that she just creates a woman like the Dog Woman to hold up to ridicule and satirize the stereotyping of women.

The Dog Woman is a misfit not only because of her physical appearance but also because of her odd and extreme behaviour. Winterson creates the Dog Woman as brutal, violent and capable of savage behaviour in terms of character. In the brothel scene with Puritans, she shows how extremely violent she can be and she does some reasoning towards her barbaric action. She shows her inhumanness and anti-womanhood with these lines:

“Then you can pay for it now,” said I, stepping down and swinging at him with my axe. I missed on purpose, but it gave them a chance to see how sharp the thing was, as it sliced the bed in half. . . Scroggs reached up to ring the bell, but I chopped the cord and one of his thumbs as he did so. . . Firebrace tried to escape through the window, but I soon had his leg off and left him hopping in circles and begging for mercy. . . Then, without more ado, because I am not a torturer, I took his head off in one clean blow and kicked him off the block.” (Winterson, 22)

After reading these cold-blooded lines, readers are left alone with shattered gender expectation that they may have when reading the novel. Winterson's portrayal of female characters is definitely the opposite of what is expected in a woman. Despite the fact that a stereotypical woman is slim, curvy and passive, the Dog Woman is huge and monstrous and active. She doesn't solve her problems through communication; instead, she solves them with brutality. She is completely ignorant of her disturbing appearance. She knows, of course, what other people think of her; nonetheless, she does not feel the urge to act upon it and to do something to please others. She is a free woman and she does not have the slightest tendency to submit herself to a man. In contrast to a stereotyped woman who gives birth to her children, the Dog Woman finds Jordan, her son, on the riverbank. By presenting such experience, Winterson shatters the very essence of the womanhood since the Dog Woman lacks the most important woman trait in the world since she adopts her son but gives birth to him in a natural and 'appropriate' way.

Unlike any other woman typology, Winterson's depiction of the Dog Woman is something new for everyone. The Dog Woman doesn't represent the weak, emotional, subordinate, submissive part of the society since she is not the inferior anymore. She takes everything in her own hands and she chooses to be the strong part. She even explains her being overweight and huge by saying:

“I wasn’t fat because I was greedy; I hardly ate at all. I was fat because I wanted to be bigger than all the things that were bigger than me, all the things that had power over me. It was a battle I intended to win “(Winterson, 33).

It can be implied from her words that she wants to be in control of things around her instead of just existing passively among the crowd of men. Winterson, actually, created a woman for inspiration for others. The Dog Woman is self-sufficient, brave, confident, and capable of having her own opinions and making herself be heard. As Suciú suggests “there is nothing to pity the Dog Woman” due to the fact that “her being gigantic helps her to get heard, to be taken seriously, and be it only for fear. Her being not concerned about being dirty proves her confidence and her living on her own by the river shows her independence“ (Suciú, 5). With every action of hers, one can understand how she is well aware of all the things she lacks and how she ignores them willingly. She has powerful points of views and she knows how to defend them against people when necessary. The only authority she accepts in her life is her own voice after God and the King. She is loyal to her king and she hates Puritans for not understanding the words of God correctly and beheading their King and she shows her ingratitude towards Puritans in the brothel scene, which again proves her taking the responsibility into her own hands in case of a conflict.

According to some critics, the Dog Woman’s name is another example for breaking up with conventions. The way she talks about her naming process is quite odd since she does not even care that her name connects her to animals. She says “I had a name but I have forgotten it. They call me Dog-Woman and it will do” (Winterson, 12). Moi suggests that the naming process is actually “a desire to regulate and organize reality” (Moi, 160), and because the Dog Woman has no intention of concentrating on being organized in real life, she does not quite feel the urge to fight with people’s naming her. In another point of view, one can easily say that the a simple surname tells a lot about a woman, as it gives out the fact that whether the woman is married or waiting to be married. However, the Dog Woman does not need a man to justify her existence by giving her his surname. The Dog Woman is not married, but she has other traits that describe her perfectly. She is a woman and she works with dogs; hence, calling her “the Dog Woman” makes perfect sense because the name actually defines her. Unlike any other woman in society, she is self-sufficient and she doesn’t need a man to prove her existence. In this sense, one can imply that the Dog Woman is actually aware of her being a woman but she does not feel the urge to start any commitments just because of her gender.

By simply contradicting the expected patterns of patriarchal society for womanhood, she just escapes those boundaries and lives by her own rules.

It is an undeniable fact that the Dog Woman is someone who lacks the womanly traits of being emotional. However, it is still apparent from certain examples that she is also a woman who is in need of love. Her motherly love is quite a good example for such an argument. She says “Safe, sound and protected. That’s how I wanted Jordan to be. When he left me I was pound and broken-hearted...”(Winterson, 81). She wants her son to be safe, so she guards him with all her strength. She continues describing her affection towards him by saying:

“When he fell asleep I crept across to cover him up with my blankets and I looked at the length of him, his thin wrists and nose like a sharp slope. I stoke his hair and I realized his face was scarred. No one would hurt him now” (Winterson, 108).

These lines make it clear for readers that the Dog Woman shows woman traits when it comes to her mother instincts.

Other than her motherhood, the Dog Woman also contemplates upon the love for the other sex because she feels the need to be loved in her life. Like any other women, love has some value in her life but without being able to fulfil the need for being loved. She knows that she is expected to compromise in the name of conformity, but she cannot go after her instinctual needs as she admits to herself that her physicality is big hinder for love. She says “I am too huge for love. No one, male or female, has ever dared to approach me. They are afraid to scale mountains” (Winterson, 32). As understood from these lines, she knows her physicality causes people to stay away from her and she is well aware of this fact. She even makes a step towards conforming to those expectations. Readers may see this in these lines:

“I hate to wash, but knowing it to be a symptom of love I was not surprised to find myself creeping towards the pump in the dead of the night like a ghoul to a tomb. I had determined to cleanse all my clothes, my underclothes and myself...In this new state I presented myself to my loved one”(Winterson, 32).

It can be concluded from the quotation above that the Dog Woman is actually willing to accept love into her life. She even conforms to these rules of cleanliness. However, her attempts to be accepted to the society prove themselves futile. She only brings terror and fear to the people around her. At the end of such ineffectual trials, she describes love as “cruelty which takes us to the gates of Paradise only to remind us they are closed for ever” (Winterson,

34). She prefers to be away from it rather than getting disappointed with vain hopes. Winterson brings out the fact that it is the society that decides who is acceptable and who is not, who is appropriate to be loved and again who is not. In this case, it is quite clear that the Dog Woman does not fit the profile of a woman who is worth of love as she doesn't possess the stereotypical qualities of womanhood.

It is a well-known fact that education is also what is expected of a woman in terms of acceptance in the society. Winterson's portrayal of the Dog Woman and her way of communication with limited language skills is, of course, another criticism towards the traditional expectancies of a woman in terms of education. The Dog Woman's language is broken and full of mistakes. Her half sentences and choice of simple words proves the intellectual deficiency in her. She, herself, admits it by saying "I have only a little learning" (Winterson, 21). Other than language, the Dog Woman is also a challenge for womanhood as she has high opinions about manly contexts such as politics. She says:

"As far as I know,... the King had been forced to call a Parliament to grant him money for his war against the kilted beasts and their savage ways...The King, turning to his own people, found himself with a Parliament full of Puritans who wouldn't grant him money until he had granted them reform" (Winterson, 21)

Her politic opinions are just other examples for her unconventional mind. Winterson creates a perfect piece by presenting her readers with a rewrite of traditional woman.

Winterson is successful writer creating a fiction where she questions the conventional minds and traditional impositions upon women. Her female characters are strong, independent, self-sufficient and free women who has different perspective than others and who are the proofs that there should be no stereotyping for women. More specifically, by creating a character like the Dog Woman she challenges those conventional values structured on our belief system in the society. By reading Winterson's challenging, deconstructive, unconventional novel, readers are exposed to a fiction where women's place in society is questioned.

C. RE-WRITING OF THE TWELVE PRINCESSES

Sexing the Cherry by Winterson is a deconstructive novel from different standpoints. So far we have examined Jeanette Winterson's rewriting of the traditional perception of women in a conventional society. The following section of this thesis will deal with her rewriting of the tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.

The Twelve Dancing Princesses is the 113rd fairy tale in the Grimm collection *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. According to its German original, an alternative title may be *The Worn-out Dancing Shoes*. The fairy tale relates the story of a king and his twelve daughters. Despite the fact that the father locks their room carefully, the princesses escape from their bedroom every night and they return the next morning with their worn-out shoes. Numerous suitors try to discover the secret, but, unfortunately, they always fail and lose their lives as punishment from the king himself. One day, a passing by soldier emerges in the story and with the help of magic and a mysterious old woman, he manages to go after the princesses to an underground castle where they meet and dance with twelve princes. In return for his success, the king allows the soldier to marry one of his daughters and because of his age, he takes the oldest.

Fairy tales possess certain characteristics. Most critics even suggest that they conserve and establish patriarchal philosophy. When analyzed in depth, it is possible to suggest that *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* possesses these essential characteristics of fairy tales. While reading the tales, it is quite easy to recognize the patriarchal ideology held within its characters, its plot and in its rather predictable ending since it is no different from any other previously written fairy tales.

At the very start of the tale, readers come across conventional character choices that can be found in every other fairy tale. The writer presents his readers with a king who is above all others in his empire; he is even superior to his daughters. There are twelve beautiful princesses who spend their time in the castle preparing to be good wives to their future husbands. The king locks his daughters to their bedroom in the evening like prisoners, which clearly signifies a patriarchal act. Most tales have similar stories of locking young women into

their rooms, thus, possibly the king in this tale also wants to forbid his daughters from contacting other men before their marriages. Losing their virginity before marriage would cause catastrophic results for the princess; therefore, the king needs to take the control into his own hands to marry them to 'appropriate' suitors. Upon finding out the princesses' worn-out shoes as a sign of their liberation from their imprisonment, the king loses his temper since his status as an unquestionable patriarch of the society is shattered with his daughters' unacceptable behavior.

The princesses' mysterious escape from the castle is another subject to deal with. They run away from the castle and meet their twelve princes until their shoes are no longer subjects of use. By running away, the princesses, actually, try to free themselves from the restrictions applied to women in a patriarchal society. They create a different world for themselves away from any kind of suppression or limitations. They wear their best dresses and get ready for their potential grooms, who they choose by themselves, in front of their mirrors. Their unapproved escape from the castle to meet their princes before getting married violates the patriarchal values. In other words, it can be taken as an attempt for liberation, which the King sees as a problem to be solved.

The king, of course, does not allow such an outrageous act and he needs to find a way to take the control of his daughters into his own hands. The old soldier discloses the secret of the princesses and "When they saw that they had been exposed and that denying would not help, they had to confess everything" (Grims, 5). The girls confess and make their commitments back at the royal court and accordingly to their father. At the end of the tale, the oldest princess marries the soldier as promised by the king. Readers have no information as to what happens to other eleven princesses; however, it is not difficult to guess that a similar fate awaits them under patriarchal values. In the tale, readers experience a small sense of freedom from their previously established status in the society. However, on the whole, the tales reflect the conventionally constructed roles of women in the society. From the feminist point of view, one can easily suggest that *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* is a socially conventional tale which reinforces the inferior role of women in the society since those who do not obey

the rules are forced to marry the winners of a competition set up by their king fathers without their consent and lose their hope for freedom.

Other than the plot itself, the narration in fairy tales is another important issue. In fairy tales, the narration always belongs to the 3rd person that is mostly presumed as the male gaze. This gives the men the presupposed power to have control over events and women. However, the way Winterson presents her version of tales is quite different since she gives her princesses the voice they need to take their fate into their own hands. The princesses in Winterson's version tell their own stories one by one taking the power they lack in the original tales. Therefore, one can suggest that Winterson breaks with conventional fairy tale plots while also altering the choice of narration in her *Sexing the Cherry*.

Moving on to analyzing *Sexing the Cherry* with reference to the *Twelve Dancing Princesses*, it is possible to suggest that the reconstruction of the tales offer a feminist point of view in the novel. Thus, Winterson entitles the princesses to choose their own fates and change their fore destined heterosexual endings. Winterson brings special attention to the princesses' personal developments after their marriages in her novel. By rewriting the tale, Winterson actually points out a possibility of an escape from the burdens of patriarchal values for women since her own portrayal of princesses is radically different from the stereotypical women concept in the tale, and more importantly, in the society. She criticizes the lack of confidence in women as opposed to the controlling men power. In this process, she questions the use of violence, heterosexuality and she even turns herself to the concepts of homosexuality and lesbianism.

“As it says we lived happily ever after. We did, but not with our husbands” (*Winterson, 93*). In Jeanette Winterson's novel *Sexing the Cherry*, the chapter about the Twelve Dancing Princesses starts with this surprising acknowledgement. The main character in the novel, Jordon, is determined to discover the mysterious world of women, thus, he tries to resolve the mysterious story of every princess. On his way to success, Jordan is faced with their different destinies. In contrast to any other conventional fairy tales, these princesses have the control of

their own lives against their royal husbands; accordingly, they free themselves from patriarchal values and limitations.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, the chapter about the princesses is composed of eleven stories narrated by eleven of the princesses who talk about what happens to them after getting married. The first princess to speak starts telling the story by presenting her own version of the story. She has feminist agenda behind her retelling of the story; hence, she makes some slight changes in the ongoing. In the novel, each princess is forced to marry a man for a reason and, again, each princess gets rid of her husband somehow. The first princess kills her husband since the husband tries to prevent her from her hobby of collecting religious items. “She had not minded her husband much more than any wife does until he had tried to stop her hobby” (Winterson, 44). Winterson puts a rather satirical criticism towards the fact that women are restrained from their hobbies for the sake of their womanly duties. In another princess’s story, the husband has an affair with another woman and he objects to leaving his house “just because he is in love with another woman” (Winterson, 51). This is an example for men’s using women as objects of their love games. Instead of showing them respect, men just play with women’s feelings and want women accept it. One of the princesses in the story has homosexual tendencies and she leads a lesbian life style. She says “I never wanted anyone but her” (Winterson, 48). She even likens her love affair with another woman to twins since they wake up in the morning together and sleep together, watching each other every night. She questions the heterosexual love affairs where women are treated as inferiors to men. Moreover, the youngest princess escapes her own wedding which is a dream event for any conventional kind of women but her. They say “we haven’t seen her for years and years, not since that day when we were dressed in red with our black hair unbraided” (Winterson, 54) referring to her wedding day. From these instances, one can infer that women are no longer associated with futile dreams of romantic love affairs. In this novel, what can be taken as romantic, conventional, traditional is replaced with obscene, absurd and preposterous. Women no longer seek satisfaction from men; instead, they go after other women to fulfill their need to be accepted, valued and respected. In Winterson’s novel, readers are presented with stories where women do not play their traditional roles in men’s world; on the contrary, they create a womanist world where they do not have to sacrifice their needs for the sake of satisfying their men but listen to their own selves and go after their own instincts.

The stories of all the princesses make a revolutionary use of rewriting of some other fairy tales. Whilst rewriting different tales, Winterson joyfully rejoins the tight traditional aspects of fairy tales with different dimensions while also applying satire in her writing. Walezak proposes that “the satirical impulse in the text accounts for its moments of great violence with the intent of punishing. Among the common punitive metaphors used by satire are those that proceed by degradation: degradation of human beings into animals, of virility into femininity, of the figurative into the literal meaning, to give but a few examples” (Walezak, 67). Jeanette Winterson also applies such transformation of human beings into animals in her rewriting the tale. With her grotesque style, she transforms the prince into a frog, unlike the tale *The Frog Prince* where the frog transforms into a prince with the kiss of his princess. Winterson’s version of the story is told by the shocked princess with these lines: “My own husband? Oh well, the first time I kissed him he turned into a frog. There he is, just by your foot. His name is Anton” (Winterson, 47). Readers are shocked by the metamorphosis of the husband and more importantly, the princess uses her husband’s name as if it were a pet’s name. The magical fantasies of the tales are subjected to satirical writing of Winterson. The ninth princess is also portrayed as a human being with animal traits who is to be tamed and controlled. The princess calls herself “falcon” as she says “I was his falcon. I hung on his arm and fed at his hand” (Winterson, 50). Her physicality with her sharp nose and madness in her eyes is also described as a falcon. She proves her madness and cruelty with the following lines: “At night, in June I think, I flew off his wrist and tore his liver from his body, and bit my chain in pieces and left him on the bed with his eyes open”(Winterson, 51). In this instance, readers are again presented with a transformation of reasonable human being into a brutal animal. In the fifth princess’s story, Winterson does not show an animal transformation; bur rather, she makes use of a transvestite discourse with the rewriting of the original tale of *Rapunzel*. In Winterson’s version, the prince’s masculinity is questioned as it says: “One day the prince, who had always liked to borrow his mother’s frocks, dressed up as Rapunzel’s lover and dragged himself into the tower” (Winterson, 46). The story of the fourth princess is to be mentioned as a case of another violent attack upon husbands. Adulterous husband of the fourth princess brings his own life to an end since he does not stay loyal to his wife. He intentionally makes his wife suffer because her husband is with other women. He uses mentally damaged girls to perform those acts and he crosses the lines of religion since he corrupts virgin bodies for his purpose. The princess explains her impact by saying:

“I soon discovered that the women he preferred were the inmates of a lunatic asylum. With them he arranged mock marriages in deserted barns. They wore a shroud as their wedding dress and carried a bunch of carrots as a bouquet. He had them straight after on a pig-through altar. Most were virgins. He like to come home smelling of their blood” (Winterson, 45).

What is expected of a marriage for the purpose of reproduction is missing in the fourth princess's marriage. The wedding dress becomes a shroud; the bouquet turns into carrots. Winterson makes absurd and bizarre connections against the understanding that a conventional marriage is a sacred institution. In this example, the princess does not kill her husband; however, he is also found dead in the snow. In Winterson's novel, there is no survival for the husbands. One of them is choked with bandages, one dies of terrible disease and another's skull is smashed. In a way, Winterson punishes all of the husbands for their corrupted minds in her satirical criticism.

In addition to the bizarre experiences of the princesses, the missing Fortunata is an important character who deserves a very comprehensive analysis as she gives answers to more critical questions. Winterson endows Fortunata with some poetic meanings. In the rewriting of the tale, her body is portrayed as something that has artistic impact upon people who set eyes on her. Unlike the Dog Woman with a phallic and deformed body, Fortunata is depicted as a charming woman with perfect balance and as someone who attracts the attention of the onlookers. Fortunata's name also suggests curiosity since her name is reminiscent of unknown. Along with her interest-arousing dancing and balanced body, she is associated with mystery since her name draws its meaning from the unknown fortune rather than the destined future. The connection between her body and the figure of eight is made clear as Winterson tries to ensure the infinity in Fortunata's existence. She describes Fortunata as “a young woman, darting in a figure of eight” (Winterson, 54), a number which suggests infinity. In Fortunata's portrayal, it is possible to lean towards the idea that women possess some power upon others although they mostly construct the suppressed part of the society. By depicting a character like Fortunata, Winterson suggests that it should be in woman's choice to decide which role they want to play.

The rewritten version of the tale containing details about the princesses' after-married life manifests some technical differences from the original. The tale, for example, like any other tales, is narrated by a third person, whereas, in the novel, the stories are told by the princesses themselves, which highlights the hidden agenda of providing the females with a voice of their own. The way princesses present themselves from first person narrator is, actually, a criticism towards the men-dominated social structure since their own voice narrating their own experiences gives them strength to defy these norms in favor of their own development as individuals. In the tale, the princesses escape to an underground castle where they meet the princes; however, in the novel, "Every night, we flew to a silver city where no one ate or drank. The occupation of the people was to dance" (Winterson, 43). Flying to a secret place might refer to the fact that they need the strong urge to escape the socially constructed limitations upon them. They escape those burdens by flying out of their windows for full night of dancing. In the novel, they don't even necessarily meet princes and they explain their night with these words: "We joined in the dancing and the merriment until dawn" (Winterson, 43) In Winterson's version, pleasure and attainment are not directly connected with male presence. The tale reflects a story where the dreams of the princesses are torn apart by an old passing-by soldiers. Such proposal for ending is another proof upon how a male dominance is existent over women and women's dreams. Men even have the power to destroy the secrecy of dreams in women's lives. In the novel "the youngest prince, a cunning fellow" reveals the princesses' secrets, so Winterson does not plot her story upon magical help by a strange woman as it happens in the tale since the prince in the novel reveals the story by using his own mind. The examples above clearly indicate that every detail in Winterson's criticism is used to show how women are subjected to male dominance and how they cannot possess their own minds and voices to fight against patriarchal ideology that puts rather harsh restrictions upon women.

According to Emilie Walezak, Winterson designs a "sequel" to the story (65). The reason behind this rationale is that she not only uses the tale to construct her own mind of thinking but also creates a sequel where her readers see happens after the happily-ever-after fairy tale. Winterson shows a revolutionary performance as she decodes the conventions of fairy tales. The princesses tell their stories in a gentle manner; however, it is quite easy to notice the violent inner voice in their actions since they kill their husbands rather unremorsefully. It is

almost impossible to deny the satire in Winterson's tone as her plot proves itself as circumstantially farcical. Walezak proposes that "the use of satirical devices serves a feminist attack of the phallogocentric values conveyed by the fairy tales" (Walezak, 65). Thus, one can assume that Winterson, as matter of fact, questions the phallic focus along with the morality on the fairy tales. This is the reason why we can suggest that in *Sexing the Cherry*, there is both concentration upon political conventions and artistic value. Walezak asserts that "the missing princess, Fortunata, is a truly poetic creation out of the rewriting of Grimms' tale. She is a representation of the manner and aim of Winterson's art and her figure sums up the intention of the whole novel" (Walezak, 66). Considering this statement, it may be said that rewriting of the tale is not just a part in a chapter in a novel; it is rather a novel itself as it depicts Fortunata with an intention of touching upon much greater problems of women.

Winterson uses different styles while rewriting the tale. The tale looks as if it is secretly buried into the novel; however, by rewriting the original, Winterson actually changes the properties of the tale since she alloys the tale with novelistic traits. First of all, she infuses the princesses into the novel as if they were real characters. At the end of the first chapter, readers see the change in the twelve princesses' existence in these lines: "He asked me if I knew the story of the Twelve Princesses. I said I had heard it, and he told me they were still living just down the road, though of course they were quite a bit older now. Why didn't I go and see them?" (Winterson, 41). Thus, it is quite apparent that the physical existence of the princesses is made clear by the writer. They are not mere fantasy figures in a tale; but rather, they live in reality where one can go and see them with actual eyes. Walezak especially concentrates on the adverb "just" since it signifies the fact that the princesses live a conversationally, touchably close-by. Such extraordinary characteristics, of course, add up an ironic tone in the novel. Walezak proposes that "the setting-up of an ironical tone proceeds by emptying the marvelous of its wonder quality to replace it with triteness as will be made clear in the sequel of the demonstration" (Walezak, 66). This might be the reason why Winterson's novel brings out the unexpected stories of the princesses by using the expected tale and it surprises its readers with its lack of triteness.

In conclusion, Winterson brings out very different perspectives to give women the power they need and deserve in *Sexing the Cherry*. Winterson's princesses are the ones who have the power to punish men with infidelity, gluttony, destructive power over women. These princesses shock the readers with unusual closure of fairy tales since they show that conventional marriage can be oppressive and true love can be achieved in homosexual relationships as well as in heterosexual ones. Winterson's version of princesses rejects the confinement to heterosexual affairs as well as the conventional role of submissive women since they take risks in order to win their freedom. This is the reason why it is possible to propose that the twelve princesses in *Sexing the Cherry* symbolize freedom because they represent free spirits and free identities. Winterson is rather bold and successful with her innovative rewriting since she doesn't refrain from applying various techniques with her sarcastic tone in order to achieve her purpose of putting forward a rewarding criticism related with the place of women in society.

III. MASCULINITY UNDER QUESTION IN *SEXING THE CHERRY*

According to Judith Butler:

“if gender is a drag, and if it is an imitation that produces the ideal it attempts to approximate, then gender is performance that produces the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core; it produces on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait, the illusion of an inner depth, necessity or essence that is somehow magically, casually expressed” (Butler, 134).

From Butler’s statement above, it can be understood that sex, gender and sexuality are not necessarily linked since they are actually produced through “discourse” and “performance”. With this notion in mind, Winterson’s novels show similar perspective regarding sexuality and gender with their compelling plots and aesthetic values. Most critics agree on the fact that her novels possess certain criticism while depicting men since she refrains from producing stereotyping masculinity while creating her male characters; instead, her novels present her readers with complex and distinctive male identities. *Sexing the Cherry* is her most valued novels where masculinity and male dominance in the society are questioned and challenged.

A patriarchal society does not merely make a woman subordinate but it also limits the role of men. Men are expected to behave in certain ways and fit into some certain roles. Patriarchal ideology forces men to be strong and unemotional. They are expected to be interested in manly endeavors as well as being brutal and violent. Although men play their role as the bread-winner in the family and in the patriarchal world, the expected behaviors are no longer valid in a rapidly changing world. Accordingly, their biological sex does not always respond to what they really go through in terms of their sexual preferences. Through creating characters that do not fit into their ascribed roles in the patriarchal ideology, Winterson gives a quite vivid portrayal of the experience of men in understanding their own sexuality and identity

Winterson characterizes men as elements of complex life experiences that have a tendency to declare conventional superiority and have suppressing effect upon women when it comes to the context of love and passion. Winterson takes on the role of condemning male dominance by creating her version of male characters to show the complexity behind their existence. In her indirect tone, she highlights the sense of fantasy and romance, which brings out characters like Jordan to deconstruct the masculinity codes for the sake of letting imagination and freedom free from restraints rather than favoring conventional values. Winterson’s male

characters are abnormal, depraved, ambivalent, anti-heroic and even enigmatic. Since Winterson believes that “gender is a way in which social practice is ordered” (Connell, 71), she tries to unmask the hidden secrets behind conventional male figures by bringing contradictory men into existence in her novels.

In her novel *Sexing the Cherry*, all the male characters are just parodies on the account of the fact that they are weak, fragile, small and feminine. Preacher Scroggs and Neighbour Firebrace lose their lives in the hands of monster Dog Woman who kills them without any mercy by spreading terror with her brutality. All the princes are killed by their wives and they cannot stop the women from punishing them. Therefore, it can be inferred that Jeanette Winterson questions conventional gender roles not only through puzzling female characters like the strong, monster-like Dog Woman or the brutal, free princesses but also through all the male characters in the novel.

Jordan, who grows up to spend his life at sea on a restless chase for love and meaning, creates the biggest dilemma with his gentle and romantic perspectives and behavior. He takes his adopted mother to watch the sun rising over the water, he constantly talks about love and he has a fear of closed space. Such notions are never to be found in a conventional man; nevertheless, Jordan openly shows what his instincts tell him to do. Through Winterson, his masculinity is clearly questioned because of his anti-stereotypical characteristics.

Throughout the novel, Winterson’s portrayal of Jordan’s masculinity remains complex and compelling. Bente Gade suggests that Jordan concentrates upon his incomplete dreams and imagination and this is due to “Jordan’s ambition to record his secret inner life which opens the novel and unleashes the question of identity and adequate ways of representing it” (Gade, 27). Despite the fact that he tells stories, Jordan tries to expand them while desiring the unworldly as though he was separated. He says that “To escape from the weight of the world, I leave my body where it is, in conversation or at dinner, and walk through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road” (Winterson, 28). While searching for the woman he admires, he does not hesitate to dress like a woman just like many others. He even mentions the anxiety to be free from the limitations and burdens from gender in their attempt

to dress like the opposite sex. During his life as a woman, Jordan discovers a secret language among women and he even witnesses the idea that there certain rules and roles constructed upon men. In the novel, readers are presented with twelve of them and the main focus is on the fact that men are controlling, insensitive and easy to deceive. However, the world's belief upon men is in contrast with Jordan's imaginary world and Winterson's version of retelling the worldview. By juxtaposing such contradictory characters like Jordan with feminine sensibility, Winterson questions the universally accepted truths of manhood.

The act of blurring the genders continues by Jordan's travels with Tradescant and their discovery of the strange fruit during their journeys. Even though a lot of critics concentrate upon the importance of tropical fruit in the text in terms of historical context, here, a more important and alluring commentary of the fruits is the act of identifying the characters with counter sexes. The reversal of sexual roles is quite clear. Winterson gives the banana to the Dog Woman associating her with phallic connotations; in contrast, she presents the pineapple, which is regarded as a feminine fruit, to Jordan whose masculinity is in question because of his feminized nature. Many of Jordan's journeys are mental adventures which guide him to examine the limitations of time, space, body, and sex in quest of love. He says "every journey conceals another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made, but the ones I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place or time" (Winterson, 68). Jordan wants to escape from the boundaries of the surrounding places to the fantasy worlds where he can joyfully push his mind's limits to wander freely to experience female bonding. Women interaction provides Jordan with understanding and questioning his own masculinity at the same time. According to Susana Onega, "Jordan's quest is a self-quest for individualization that necessarily entails the separation of the concepts of gender and sexuality and the acceptance of the feminine facet in man. Therefore, Jordan is an incomplete young man with bisexual drives" (Onega, 308). As one can understand from these examples, Jordan goes through a journey from masculinity to femininity and Winterson never slows her pace in terms of drawing her own perception of gender and playing with gender lines in readers' minds.

In Winterson's novel, even the narration of male perspective is weak in comparison to female narration and Jordan's perspective of telling the story is doomed to fail. Merja Makinen

asserts that “in the battle between the male’s and female’s story, the women win. Fortunata’s story of Orion and Artemis, which Jordan retells to the Dog Woman, encapsulates the battle of the two narratives” (Makinen, 96). In the novel, it is told that Orion claims his traditional prerogative by raping Artemis, and she, in return, refuses her positioning in the story by killing Orion. From this myth, one can understand that Artemis challenges Orion’s patriarchal power and by killing him, she questions the notion that women are only play their passive parts in men’s heroic stories. The story of Artemis and Orion clearly projects Winterson’s purpose of portraying Jordan’s narrative as the weak and passive since his voice in the novel gradually loses its power and until the end, Winterson only positions him as part of the Dog Woman’s narrative which shows that Winterson mocks male dominance in narration since the male narrative of Jordan loses its power in its depiction of reality.

Jordan’s contemplation upon the use of language for burdening purposes is another example for her resistance against the male perspective. Language is a powerful tool to possess the possibility of implications of hidden purposes. Mikhail Bakhtin asserts that “Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intention; it is populated, overpopulated with the intentions of others” (Bakhtin, 294). From Bakhtin’s statement, one can understand that language is quite influential upon one’s perception of reality. In the light of this information, it is possible to infer that Jordan needs to free himself from all the burdens of language with patriarchal notions in it since it plays with his perception of reality. It is quite important for him to discover the feminine language which provides him with new perspectives and gives him the opportunity to retell and reform the patriarchal reality that surrounds him. As one can understand, Winterson also questions the power of language on society in favor of male dominance and she tries to rewrite patriarchal discourses from a feminine perspective with the help of Jordan’s changing identity.

To recapitulate, Winterson’s novel *Sexing the Cherry* reflects an all-embracing vision from the contradictions of passion and its subjective flow among different sexes. It is through such experience that one can understand clearly the conflicted identities of different sexes and their experiences. By being subjected to Winterson’s intense inquisition of masculinity via her multi-faceted character analyses, one can achieve a different level of understanding regarding the concepts of gender and masculinity. Reading *Sexing the Cherry*, we clearly see that, in

Winterson's view, it is not gender which defines people; but rather, the inner experience that one seeks determines the sexuality of people in terms of their gender. In this sense, Jordan enables the reader to come to grips with transgender experiences.

IV. GRAFTING METAPHOR

Grafting metaphor is designated as the central metaphor in *Sexing the Cherry*. In the King's garden, Jordan tries to create a new botanical species. In the garden, he wants to combine characteristics of different species in a single cherry tree. This plantal technique of mixing different characteristics, genders so to speak, in one tree for production is called grafting and Jordan is quite charmed with this technique. He considers whether it is possible to apply such an approach to his own experiences so he plans to bring this technique to England.

Winterson brings up the subject of grafting in her novel with a certain purpose; that is, she uses the metaphor of grafting with reference to the gender issues. The grafting technique makes it possible for one's sex and gender to lose its characteristics proving itself as unstable; hence, sex is regarded to be unstable and changeable. Therefore, the novel suggests that sex, body, identity and reality are not interdependent with social context or norms; but rather, they are portrayed as notions which are fluid and constantly subjected to change.

Winterson's use of the grafting metaphor is associated with Andrew Marvell's poem *The Mower, Against Gardens* with its hidden message. It is important to note that, she does not cite his poem in her novel, but a comparison between the two works clearly suggests a connection in terms of sexuality. Marvell reflects his time when there is religious and political conflict, heroic travel, adventure, discovery and scientific experiment by using the technique of grafting. In Marvell's version, grafting is not favoured since it is taken as a denunciation of God's plans on nature with its unnatural practice of reproduction without sex. Marvell's mower does not want to alter the nature's order by confining natural spaces and by importing new species of plants in unnatural ways. Marvell criticizes the grafting technique in the following lines:

(...)Had he not dealt between the bark and tree,
Forbidden mixtures there to see.
No plant now knew the stock from which it came;
He *grafts upon* the wild the tame:
That th' uncertain and adulterate fruit

Might put the palate in dispute.
His green seraglio has its eunuchs too,
Lest any tyrant him outdo.
And in the *cherry he does nature vex,*
To procreate without a sex. (...)

Although it is rather clear that Marvell uses his poem to criticize the grafting practices, in Winterson's novel, grafting is used to criticize the society. She transforms grafting into a metaphor through which she suggests that heterosexual relationships are not the only means of creating progenies; there are other alternatives such as grafting which are more convenient and fruitful.

Jordan's grafting can be interpreted as an attempt to create a better version of him since he cannot fulfill the characteristics of an ideal heroic man. He is overshadowed by his heroic mother who proves herself stronger than her son. Winterson juxtaposes the heroic ideals with domestic values. She elaborates upon the contradictory notions of femininity and masculinity by putting male female identities into question. *Sexing the Cherry* possesses the quality of positioning men and female characters into unconventional masks since it suggests that life itself is a 'flux, quest and challenge'. Both the metaphor of grafting and anti-feminine depiction of the Dog Woman challenges the traditional concepts of gender identity and performance.

To sum up, Winterson uses the metaphor of grafting for the purpose of questioning conventional gender categories. It is for sure that grafting announces two gendered biological parents or species of a plant, which are combined to create a third species or a new form of a plant. In the novel, this grafting technique is applied to a cherry tree which can be regarded as female but can also be seen as sexless at the same time. Judith Butler's deconstructive view of gender in her *Gender Trouble* asserts that "by rendering the hybrid an excessive creation, one challenges binaries as a valid category" and therefore, she calls for "new options, both in plants and in gender identities and relationships" (Butler, 107). Jordan's choice of a cherry tree experiment points out to a more comprehensive meaning than mere cross-dressing. Laura Doan implies that "grafting becomes an image of procreation beyond that of heterosexuality

and though it cannot be seen as a complete strategy for the overthrow of compulsory heterosexuality, it is an effective way of calling its norms into question and undermining the conceptual basis for heterosexual prescription within cultural practice” (Doan, 92). In the light of these assumptions, it can be suggested that Winterson’s novel employs the act of grafting the cherry for the purpose of imagining a possibility of a world in which there is lesbianism as well as active, dynamic and productive gender multiplicities and sexual preferences. In short, through grafting, *Sexing the Cherry* puts the concept of gender and identity into question, aiming at a more open and liberal acceptance of cultural distinctions, which ultimately produces a feminist rewriting of conventional and traditional order.

Moreover, in *Sexing the Cherry*, the metaphorical use of the grafting technique calls for a third sex whose gender role is blurred in account of the fact that it is not the product of a natural or conventional reproduction. Winterson offers her readers with numerous examples of blurred female and male characters. Unlike the naturally born children, Jordan is found by the river, which suggests that he does not bare the same sexuality as the naturally born babies. He is like a grafted plant without any traits of his genes from his past life or identity. That’s why he questions everything around him and he is most interested invisible realities in the world, unlike the other men in his time. During his journeys and quest for Fortunata, one can see that Jordan’s cross-dressing helps him comprehend female perception and understanding. After such experience he no longer belongs to the restrictive patriarchal world. Like Jordan’s complex positioning, The Dog Woman’s place in women’s world is also distinctive. Her grotesque body parts and her appalling size give her a source power unlike any other conventional women in a society, which makes her somehow distinctive. Her violence and brutality towards Puritans, for example, put her in a position where she disrupts heterosexual and conventional female community ideology. The Dog Woman bites off the penis of a man who asks her to perform fellatio and her excuse for such disturbing scene is that men’s genitals could grow back if an accident happened. Her violent acts are pure and her femininity is put into question. As one can understand from all these examples, Winterson mixes history, reality and fantasy together in order to achieve her aim of proving the insufficiency of biological sex in defining one’s choice of gender as one can also possess an unconventional third sex like a grafted plant.

Everything considered, Winterson uses the grafting technique of fusing two species together for better possibility of a third in order to criticize and put up to ridicule the conventions of gender and identities shaped by social norms. She depicts bizarre and grotesque characters that contradict the conventionally accepted norms of femininity and masculinity to shock readers and guide them into thinking. In a way, she creates better thirds by mixing biological and instinctual selves in both fantastic and historical worlds in her novel.

CONCLUSION

Writers have always been influenced from the writers of the past and they have always had the tendency to imitate old classics. Therefore, in contemporary literature, rewriting shows itself as an essential issue and actions such as quoting, borrowing, revising, reprising have become common practices. In this rewriting process, the original text is called *hypotext* while the rewritten version is called *hypertext* (Genette). In other words, *hypertext* is any text derived from a previous one through *transformation* or *imitation*. There is direct connection between the hypertext and hypotext in rewriting since they both are in direct dialogue with diverging purposes. The more recent text uses the previous stories to give a modifying perspective; nevertheless, one has to comprehend that their meaning and their logic, in general, depend upon the previously written text since it connects both discourses within its interpretation.

Critics like Kristeva, Eco, Bakhtin comment on this rewriting act as something that has started long ago since they also question the meaning in general. They suggest meaning can no longer be viewed as a finished product. Thus, texts create their meanings out of their relation to literary or cultural systems. For this reason, literary work is no longer viewed as the container of the meaning but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations are combined. In other words, it is proposed that works are produced by works, texts are manufactured by texts, and they free themselves from the intentions of their authors. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that no text exists on its own. It is always connected other texts. In other words, authors do not create their texts, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts. At this point, the term intertextuality is put forward by those critics since it deals with the dialogic aspect of language which foregrounds class, ideological and other conflicts, divisions, and other hierarchies within society. Thus, the act of rewriting, and more specifically intertextuality, focuses on the fact that recent writers use previous writings to create different meanings; however, on their way to their aims, they both use the already existent stories but do not base all their purposes and techniques on them, which make it possible for them to create new perspectives and meanings.

The act of rewriting may be carried out to reflect different ideologies such as feminism, post-colonialism, colonialism etc. Although writers have differing aims in their acts of rewriting, gender issue has been the most popular subject in the examples of contemporary rewriting. This is because most female writers believe that the women's inferiority against men in a patriarchal society should be altered both in the real world and literary world. Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* is a good example for deciphering the tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* in terms of feminist theories and gender issues. In *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson deconstructs the female body and its connection to the social norms of a patriarchal society. Through her independent female characters, she criticizes male dominance in the society in terms of physicality and language to break with the expected social role of women. Her female characters are strong, independent, self-sufficient and free women who are not submissive to male domination and therefore who that there should be no stereotyping for women. By creating a character like the Dog Woman she challenges those conventional values structured on our belief system in the society. Moreover, Winterson's version of princesses rejects the confinement to heterosexual love affairs as well as the conventional role of submissive women since the princesses take risks in order to win their freedom. Winterson also questions the masculinity of men in her character, Jordan, because he makes it possible for readers to come to grips with transgender experiences. Moreover, in *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson suggests that it is not gender which defines people; in contrast, the inner experience that one searches for defines the sexuality of people in terms of their gender. She also uses the grafting metaphor to ridicule the conventions of gender and identities constructed by social norms.

Consequently, Winterson's challenging, deconstructive, and unconventional rewriting of Grimm's tales in *Sexing the Cherry* exposes the readers to a fiction where women's position in society is questioned. Winterson presents a mixture of oppositions and disregards conventions of life and conventions of writing at the same time. She questions heterosexual love and she frees herself from all the restraints of gender expectation. In other words, via her cross-sexual characters and bizarre love affairs, Winterson tries to deconstruct conventions in order to pass beyond gender barriers. Hence, *Sexing the Cherry* can be regarded as a significant example of rewriting with the purpose of subverting the traditional notions of gender and identity prevalent in our present society.

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