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**TRANSGRESSIVE LOVE IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S**  
***SEXING THE CHERRY AND ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT***

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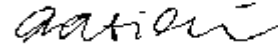
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## YEMİN METNİ

Yaşar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü'ne Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “Transgressive Love in Jeanette Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*” adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin bibliyografyada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, atıf yaparken bu kaynaklardan yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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İmza

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Master Thesis**

## **TRANSGRESSIVE LOVE IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *SEXING THE CHERRY AND ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT***

**Nida FİDANBOY**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of transgressive love within Jeanette Winterson's postmodern feminist novels *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). This exploration demonstrates the uses of postmodern narrative styles of fantastic and parodic rewriting as tools to subvert, deconstruct patriarchal representation of the theme of love. In the first chapter, a detailed discussion concerning the concept of transgressive love, postmodern feminism in literature, fantastic and parodic rewriting, is given. Analysis in the body chapters prove with evidences the recognition of love outside of conventional norms in the novels to be studied through deconstruction and subversion of gender roles. Moreover, through the fantastic characters and deconstructed fairy tales which are fantastic, Winterson transgresses the boundaries of love by refusing fixed social norms and social representation of gender roles in marriages. In conclusion, by presenting a postmodern world of mercurial gender identity in these novels, Winterson tries to exceed limits of conventional love constructed within patriarchal discourse.

**Key Words:** Winterson, Transgressive Love, Postmodern Feminism, Fantastic, Parodic Rewriting.

## KISA ÖZET

### Yüksek Lisans Tezi

## JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN *VIŞNENİN CİNSİYETİ* VE *TEK MEYVE PORTAKAL DEĞİLDİR* ADLI ROMANLARINDA SINIRLAR ÖTESİ AŞK

Nida FİDANBOY

Bu tezin amacı Jeanette Winterson'ın *Vişne'nin Cinsiyeti* (1989) ve *Tek Meyve Portakal Değildir* (1985) adlı postmodern feminist romanlarında sınırlar ötesi aşk kavramını incelemektir. Bu inceleme, postmodern anlatım stillerinden fantastik ve parodik yeniden yazımın aşk temasının ataerkil anlatımını çarpıtmada ve bunu yapısal olarak çözümlemeye araç olarak kullanıldığını göstermektedir. İlk bölümde sınırlar ötesi aşk kavramına, edebiyatta postmodern feminizme, fantastik yazın ve parodik yeniden yazıma ilişkin detaylı bilgi verilmiştir. Gelişme bölümündeki incelemeler romanlardaki cinsiyet rollerinin çarpıtılması ve yapı bozumsal çözümlenmesi yoluyla aşkın geleneksel normların dışında tanımlanmasını ispatlamaktadır. Ayrıca *Vişnenin Cinsiyeti* ve *Tek Meyve Portakal Değildir* adlı romanlardaki karakterler ve yeniden yazılmış fantastik peri masalları yoluyla, Winterson evliliklerde cinsiyet rollerinin yanlış temsil edilmesine ve belirlenmiş sosyal normlara karşı koyarak aşkın sınırlarını aşmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Winterson bu romanlarda değişken cinsiyet kimliği olan postmodern bir dünya sunarak, ataerkil yazında kurgulanmış geleneksel aşkın sınırlarını aşmaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Winterson, Sınırlar Ötesi Aşk, Postmodern Feminizm, Fantastik, Parodik Yenidenyazım.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study analyses two novels of Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), by looking at the postmodern narrative styles and fantastic elements employed in each novel to do with concepts of transgressive love. With her postmodern writing style, Jeanette Winterson has been in the centre of critical attention in the world literature scene because she subverts the patriarchal representations of women with her use of fantastic elements. As well as the subversion of gender roles, her fiction includes the subversion of traditional conventions, norms and narrative techniques in literature. Through a mixture of fantasy and reality, she creates a postmodern world of mercurial gender identity.

The very definition of what love refers to is one of the central issues to be clarified when interpreting Winterson's novels. Thus, the first concept that will be examined in detail in this study will be transgressive love, which gives the freedom to love beyond barriers of domineering heteronormative discourses. In Winterson's fictional universe, there is an emphasis on postmodern love which can be free from such gender and sexual barriers. Winterson's understanding of love does not display male or female stereotypes. Instead, as it is seen in the interview "Winterson: Trust me. I'm Telling You Stories" (1990), for Winterson, love cannot be made into an object with clear boundaries:

I mean, for me a love story is a love story. I don't care what the genders are if it's powerful enough. And I don't think that love should be a gender-bound operation. It's probably one of the few things in life that rises above all those kinds of oppositions-black and white, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual. When people fall in love they experience the same kind of tremors, fears, a rush of blood to the head, [...a]nd fiction recognizes this. (Winterson in Marvel 165)

As she herself remarks, the recognition of Winterson's expression of love outside of conventional clichés is possible through her transgressive use of fantasy. Her novels correspond to Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the fantastic "that permits us to cross certain frontiers that are inaccessible" (Todorov 158). Winterson's writing style is similarly defined by Rosemary Jackson as an example of fantastic literature with a subversive effect. Thus, both Todorov's and Jackson's criticisms will help to analyse



Winterson's use of postmodern literary techniques, notably fantastic to challenge traditional categories of a unified and heterosexual subjectivity. Additionally, she uses parodic rewriting to transgress boundaries of love. Thus, through creating fantastic elements, settings and characters, she contests patriarchal assumptions about love, marriage and gender.

A theoretical framework for a study of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Sexing the Cherry* is provided in the first chapter of this study. Before the introduction of postmodern feminism and its literature, the function of love as a form of transgression will be investigated. To supplement the conceptual framework, postmodern narrative techniques used by Winterson in the texts will be studied. For an understanding of the transgressive function of Winterson's works, one of the most crucial terms to this study, 'fantastic', will be defined with a reference to the theories of Tzvetan Todorov and Rosemary Jackson. Through the end of the chapter, an intertextual style, parodic rewriting will be examined in terms of subversion and deconstruction of love.

In the second and third chapters of the study, the main body of the argument that is Winterson's postmodernist feminist writing style in *Sexing the Cherry* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* will be completed with an exploration of the function of the fantastic and parodic revisions and the theme of transgressive love that form the general framework of the novels. The fantastic strategies used to transgress love will be analysed in terms of Todorov's fantastic hesitancy and Jackson's fantastic subversion. After that, Winterson's deconstructed fairy tales will be studied.

Lastly, a conclusion which can be seen as an attempt to understand Winterson's blend of the real and the fantastic to deconstruct conventional notions of gender, sexuality and language will be provided. Thus, the main argument of this thesis will be to show Winterson's fantastic subversion, hesitation and deconstruction of the traditional understanding of love through the use of postmodern methods: fantastic and parodic rewriting, with specific references to Todorovian and Jacksonian fantastic as well as to Margaret Rose, Linda Hutcheon and Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of the function of parodic rewriting.

## CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR TRANSGRESSION

### 1.1. Transgressive Love

Because love can be seen as one of Winterson's biggest thematic concerns, this study explores the presentation of this theme in her novels *Sexing the Cherry* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. The word 'transgress' means to exceed limits or boundaries. In her book *The Literature of Love* (2009), Mary Ward defines transgressive love as "a love which strays beyond accepted moral or social boundaries" (44). On one level, this meaning fits well with Winterson's understanding of love that deals much more with rejection of any limits or boundaries associated with traditional notions of sexuality and gender. On another, Winterson's notion of transgression problematizes the stereotypes of romantic love. To illustrate, in *Written on the Body* (2013), she lays out some of the main arguments against the articulation of romantic love and obviously pursues debates about these repressive notions when she writes about her ex-love:

You said, 'I love you.' Why is it that the most unoriginal thing we can say to one another is still the thing we long to hear? 'I love you' is always a quotation. You did not say it first and neither did I, yet when you say it and when I say it we speak like savages who have found three words and worship them. I did worship them but now I am alone on a rock hewn out of my own body. (Winterson 9)

Winterson maintains that "It's the clichés that cause the trouble" (10). I think her narrative refuses a conventional representation of love constructed in patriarchal discourse.

Up to now, I have mentioned Winterson's perception of love; yet the theme has been used for many different purposes by Winterson. One of these purposes, perhaps one of the most popular, is the effect of love as transcendent. When considering the arguments of critics such as Julie Ellam and Laura Doan, I admit that Winterson's description of love as transcendent is obvious in both novels. Namely, Winterson removes love from limitations of class, religion, colour, race and culture in these works. However, I prefer to rely upon Winterson's "transgressive" aspect of

love because transcendence of love allows for hierarchal thinking. This offers the perspective that such effect of love contradicts with deconstructions of binary oppositions and postmodern philosophy. In her essay “Jeanette Winterson’s Family Values” (2006), Ellam clarifies this paradox by stating that:

The desire to find fixed certainty has not evaporated despite the certainties of postmodernism and poststructuralism which have argued against absolute truth, and this is where we can position Winterson. She is a writer of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and is aware of the influences of postmodernism. She is also infatuated with the hope certain truth offers. (81)

As quoted above, Winterson is both for and against “absolute truth” in her writing of love. In her book, *Love in Jeanette Winterson’s Novels* (2010), Ellam makes a similar line of argument regarding Winterson’s paradoxical position:

Winterson’s faith in love is a contradiction of the postmodern techniques that she employs [...] Winterson’s claim that love is transcendent is a departure from appreciating the liberating aspects of love when it is understood as a construct. Winterson is [...] influenced by postmodern and poststructuralist thought and embraces the lack of fixity that these terms allow for, but love, for Winterson is also simultaneously separated from such reasoning and is considered to be a timeless value that is worth searching for. (86)

This faith in love, therefore, illuminates Winterson’s contradictory position as a means to love without boundaries by exploding binaries. Furthermore, for both narrators of the novels, for Jordan and Jeanette, love “is considered to be a timeless value that is worth searching for” (Ellam 86). Even if their love is an illusion, or a construct, they continue their search. In addition, both characters understand binaries as artificial in their searching of love. For these reasons, I presume transgression of love can be regarded as compatible with the analysis of the texts instead of transcendence. In other words, transcendence has a more metaphysical and spiritual, or beyond body meaning, whereas transgressive preserves the body and the carnal. Because this thesis particularly focuses on Winterson’s postmodern stance, I find transgressive power of love more applicable to Winterson’s narrative techniques in

the novels to be studied. Ellam indicates that “By depending on an idealised norm as a framework for novels [...] there will always be a conservative strand that disavows embracing the ethical potential of deconstruction”; therefore, rather than “depending on an idealised norm”, I prefer to embrace “the ethical potential of deconstruction” in the analysis of two novels (83).

To sum up, this study is obviously concerned with Winterson’s writing strategies while analysing the representations of transgressive love. By using postmodern and deconstructive methods such as fantasy and parody, Winterson sheds light on the transgressive power of the theme, which will be analysed in this thesis, and its ability to subvert patriarchal love and language.

## **1.2. Postmodern Feminist Literature**

World wars, successive technological revolutions, and the start of an information age and women’s movements are some of the major developments of the early half of the twentieth century. It was not surprising that these political, technological and cultural changes have had a big impact on literature. Thus, a phenomenon called postmodern discourse emerged in philosophy, art and literature. Moreover, it brought about new techniques, methods and strategies of writing. One of these methods is deconstruction, coined by Jacques Derrida. The method challenges clear cut divisions between opposites within texts since such dichotomies bring rash generalizations with them and so preclude the variability of meanings. As Elam states in her book *Feminism and Deconstruction* (2006), “deconstruction, by subjecting to analysis the binary opposition between language and matter, thought and bodies, interrupts the unquestioned gendering of thought and of existence” (59). Thus, in their questioning of the representations of gendered bodies, feminism and deconstruction share the same ideas.

As a feminist writer who problematizes the traditional categorisation of fixed gender roles, Winterson’s writing of love avoids the logic of such oppositions between male and female, homosexual and heterosexual. She, therefore, uses deconstruction effectively to deal with the issue of transgressive love which does not embrace such oppositions. Jane Flax’s definition of the postmodern discourse in her

book *Thinking Fragments* (1990) can be related to Winterson's writing style that deconstructs the notion of reality. For Flax, anything related to the past has a new form; according to her hypothesis and ideology postmodern and feminist "discourses are all deconstructive in that they seek to distance us from and make us sceptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and the language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary Western culture" (29). As Flax suggests, there is no restriction in deconstructive postmodern writing. In other words, there are no limits or discriminations in Winterson's literature and through deconstruction, the dismantling of the binary oppositions works for postmodern discourse. Because of her deconstructive writing, it is difficult to define anything as true or false, real or unreal, the self and the other. As Derrida writes in *Positions* (1982), such certain definitions create "a violent hierarchy" (41). In this respect, one is constantly oppressed by the other side of the binary. Yet Winterson's fictional representations challenge this hierarchy. For example, in *Sexing the Cherry*, there is an imaginative city in which words are seen as waste. These words are deprived of stable meanings so they can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, readers are sceptical about the reality of the city; on the other hand, they question the reality of the meanings of the words. Interestingly, the words create a cloud that hinders solar rays, so the city should be cleaned out of filthy words by flying cleaners. Likewise, Winterson's language tends to clean itself out of reality. Thus, her use of postmodern discourses "that [is] often taken for granted" (Flax 29) does not provide a clear distinction between the real and the imaginary because it disturbs all such binaries.

In her book entitled *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), Hutcheon emphasizes the deconstructive and subversive features of postmodern discourse:

It is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said. The effect is to highlight or "highlight," and to subvert or "subvert," and the mode is therefore a "knowing" and an ironic-or even "ironic" one [...] the post-modern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as natural [...] are in fact cultural; made by us, not given to us". (1-2)

For Hutcheon, it is possible to put “inverted commas around what [are] being said” (1) through the use of postmodern techniques such as fantasy and parody. With the emergence of postmodern feminist literature, the use of such techniques in order to de-naturalize the natural became popular to subvert several perceptions such as gender and sex.

With the popularization of postmodernism in literature, feminist writers started to question and challenge patriarchal representations of women in literature and use postmodern narrative techniques to fight against the traditional rules and values established by patriarchal discourse. Their challenge also helped the emergence of postmodern narrative styles to transgress boundaries of love. Notably, postmodern feminist critics such as Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, Laura Doan and Donna Haraway suggest that postmodern transgression enables feminist writing to question and challenge patriarchal representations of women in literature. Although these academics use different strategies to do such interrogation, in the end, their ideologies are in close relationship with each other since, for them, the main aim of postmodern transgression is the same: to change the notion of reality through the subversive strategies of postmodern writing.

Luce Irigaray’s theory is a good example of the relation between feminism and postmodernism. She claims that both philosophies challenge the monolithic language of men in writing because traditional works had a male-dominated language in which facts were created for the benefit of men. Women’s place in narratives was created by the external world in which they were conditioned into accepting lack and dependence. Their place in *Sexing the Cherry* is similar: “men take pleasure and women give it” (121). Women’s place in love relationships is the same in patriarchal society. When a man is the lover, he takes the role of a brave, strong and active man whereas a woman lover takes the role of a weak, submissive and passive person. However, Irigaray claims that women’s writing can be used to react to this acceptance. Her critique challenges phallogocentric tendencies in language:

[Phallogocentric symbols] offer a theory of subject-hood, a discursive construction that involves a narrative of how the subject [...] is offering images of what the subject looks like, of what identity is, using only the

male body as the ideal, as the standard register against which human agency and subjectivity are measured. (Todd 121)

Irigaray objects to the idealization of the male body. Instead, she offers the use of the female body as standard because, on the contrary to the presence of the phallus as the singular sexual organ, female sexuality has plurality. The female body and women's writing have similar qualities such as fluidity and softness. Like language, the female body is mutable and soft, and female sexuality is plural and multiple. Therefore, it is possible to see the reflections of these plurality and multiplicity in the postmodern feminist writing of Winterson. One of her narrators in *Sexing the Cherry* is the Dog-woman who is introduced with a figure of a banana which is a phallic symbol. On the one hand, she has a male identity with her huge, strong body and with her masculine manners. On the other hand, she has the qualities of a stereotyped female who is caring, protective and affectionate to her child. In accordance with Irigaray's philosophy, by constructing a character that is not definitely gendered, Winterson rejects a singular, fixed subjectivity of gender and uses female sexuality to create fantastic, multiple individuals.

Like Irigaray, Helene Cixous' poststructuralist feminist criticism seeks to develop a new style of writing that reflects female multiplicity. She claims that the female body is in a state of belonging within patriarchal discourse. Either written by men or women, current texts are constructed with a predominance of men. By pointing to the dominance of male language that cannot provide an existence of female voice in writing, in Warhol's book *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (1997), which is a collection of feminist writers essays, in "The Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous comes up with a term l'écriture feminine, or female writing. To resist the afore-mentioned power of male language, she makes a distinction between male and female writing. Arising from a predominance of socially constructed gender roles, male writing is generally considered much more appropriate to hierarchal structures. In other words, male language uses generalizations and categorizations. However, female writing does not rely on strict rules and guidelines for construction. It can deconstruct the meanings and values that male writing attaches to gender and sex. By looking in particular at the description of her own writing in "Coming to Writing" (1991), it makes sense to state that Cixous is closer to the effect of female writing:

Writing is good: it's what never ends. This simplest, most secure other circulates inside me. Like blood: there's no lack of it. It can become impoverished. But you manufacture it and replenish it. In me is the word of blood, which will not cease before my end. (4)

Cixous thus emphasizes the power of female writing. Women have plenty of words to say and write. On the contrary to male writing, which robs language of its vitality, female writing makes use of language well because female language is fluid "like blood" (Cixous 4) and open-ended.

Julia Kristeva is another philosopher who directs her critique at literary productions that place women within a restrictive patriarchal system. For Kristeva, women's "semiotic style is likely to involve repetitive, spasmodic separations from the dominating discourse, which, more often, they are forced to imitate" (Warhol & Price 371). Thus, her concept of the semiotic discourse, analogous to l'écriture feminine, evokes one of the most significant concerns of postmodern women writers: the symbolic language of the patriarchal discourse that includes gendered inequalities. In this respect, her argument, derived from reading Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis, is that the child is presented with this symbolic language in the pre-Oedipal period. Therefore, it is the postmodern writers' concern to change the hierarchies of symbols in language in the construction of sexual subjectivity.

An appropriate and applicable reading of Judith Butler's arguments in *Bodies That Matter* (2011) can also provide a basis for a better understanding of Winterson's novels. One important set of concerns Butler raises is the dominant ideologies of heterosexist norms in patriarchal discourse, where "the boundaries of the body are the lived experience of differentiation, where that differentiation is never neutral to the question of gender difference or the heterosexual matrix" (65). However, for Butler, neither bodies nor the language has a distinct set of boundaries. Hence, she believes in the signifying power of language in the postmodern project of deconstruction. She strongly opposes the construction of characters with normative sexualities and gender identities "because there is neither an "essence" that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without these acts, there would be no gender at all" (Butler 140). In order to change such ideals "to which gender aspires to", language can disrupt traditional images of



women's bodies. This is what Winterson does in *Sexing the Cherry*; creating individuals with non-normative sexualities and gender identities through language as in the example of the Dog-woman. It is apparent that Winterson uses images of unusual bodies to transgress the boundaries of concrete definitions of the heterosexual discourse.

Laura Doan's discussions in her essay "Jeanette Winterson's Sexing the Postmodern" (1994) can also shed some light on Winterson's subversive techniques. In her essay, Doan asserts that Winterson's texts break the shackles, rules and codes of gender through her fictional representation. As Doan writes, both in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson attempts to benefit from a provocative, different postmodernist-feminist fiction to resist conventional sexed hierarchies:

Fiction, for Winterson, is the site to interrogate, subvert, and tamper with gender, identity and sexuality; her fiction is a serious invitation to readers to imagine the emancipation of 'normal' and 'natural' from the exclusive and totalizing domain of patriarchal and heterosexual authority. (Doan 154)

Undoubtedly, Donna Haraway's approach to the issues of gender and sexuality is also important to understand postmodern feminism in literature. What makes the aim behind her feminist criticism different from the thinkers mentioned above is her emphasis on maternity and reproduction as well as gender. In her most famous essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (2006), she creates a fictional world. In this world, the living things called cyborgs are a mixture of human, animal and machine that have no gender identity. Maternity is separated from femininity. These fictional beings without gender may change the role of women as passive producers and can challenge categories of gender and class because "gender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy" (Haraway 14). Thus, Haraway chooses to present these metaphoric beings in order to create an ideal being free from patriarchal boundaries. Through subversion of maternity and reproduction, she offers women to define themselves as significant human beings in their own right. She insists that women must see themselves as autonomous beings outside the socially prescribed gender. Thus, there is a clear relation between Haraway's theory and Winterson's fiction in that both advocate the idea that humanity is not male.

Additionally, they both seek to destroy traditional gender roles and values through fiction. To exemplify, Jeanette is an adopted child and Jordan is a foundling. Their mothers do not give birth, yet they love their children madly. They are strong, dominant, brave and better than men at continuing their lives. Thus, Winterson's these maternal figures subvert the association of maternity and reproduction with females.

In sum, "it is not difficult to see how feminist theory keys into the deconstructive projects of postmodernism – with its challenges to the authority of traditional discourses of power at every level from the concept of a stable coherent selfhood to established discourses" (Kottiswari 9) of patriarchal love. Hence, read through the lens of postmodern feminism, the writings of the above-mentioned theorists attempt to challenge the traditional boundaries of love. Therefore, they invite the use of fantasy and parodic rewriting so that women writers can change the traditional linearity of narratives and construct a language closer to the female body's quality of fluidity. Deconstructive methods, which will be discussed in the next section, provide this fluidity with various styles and representations in female writing. As one of the critical readers of Winterson's texts, I would claim that Winterson's fiction is closely related to these new feminist methods since she uses parody and fantasy to transgress boundaries of love in her novels. Therefore, it will be appropriate to proceed with an examination of the postmodern techniques Winterson uses to subvert gender norms and patriarchal institutions.

### **1.3. Postmodern Subversive Techniques**

#### **1.3.1. *The Fantastic***

Although there have been different descriptions of the fantastic, it would be better to start this section with Tzvetan Todorov's definition since he is the first to regard the phenomenon as a literary genre. In his famous book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975), the French linguist Todorov claims that the fantastic is not a sub-genre but a genre. To prove this claim, he analyses the fantastic structurally. Although his theory appears to have a structuralist gesture, which diverges from the above-mentioned thinkers' poststructuralist ideas, at the same time, some of his analysis can be related to Winterson's deconstructive use of

language. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi discuss Derrida's definition of deconstruction in *Derrida and Différance* (1985). I think this definition supports Todorov's claim. In this work, the argument is against the idea that deconstruction is only concerned with the meanings of texts. The method is also concerned with the structure of texts:

To deconstruct was [...] a structuralist gesture or in any case a gesture that assumed a certain need for the structuralist problematic. But it was also an antistructuralist gesture, and its fortune rests in part on this ambiguity. Structures were to be undone, decomposed, disedimented. This is why [...] the motif of deconstruction has been associated with "post-structuralism." But the undoing, decomposing and disedimenting of structures, in a certain sense more historical than the structuralist movement it called into question, was not a negative operation. (Wood & Bernasconi 2-3)

Therefore, I think Todorov's detailed and paradoxical structural analysis anticipates what Wood and Bernasconi refer to "the undoing, decomposing and disedimenting of structures" (3). This paradox can display Todorov's deconstructive trait in the concept of 'hesitancy.' Thus, reading Todorov's fantastic hesitancy as akin to post-structuralism, I find it applicable to the analysis of transgressive love in Winterson's two novels.

To begin with, Todorov explains the fantastic by comparing it to "the uncanny" and "the marvelous." He asserts that if supernatural events can be explained by the laws of reality at the end of the text, for example as hallucinations or dreams, the work becomes uncanny. Providing, on the contrary, the reader is in no doubt about the supernaturalism of the events and there is no reasonable explanation of the supernatural, the reader accepts the situation. Then the text shifts from the fantastic to the marvelous. Starting from these assertions, Todorov maintains that "the possibility of a hesitation between the two creates the fantastic effect:"

Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighboring genre, the uncanny or the marvelous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. (25-26)

Thus, it is possible to characterize the formula of the fantastic: “I nearly reached the point of believing [...] Either total faith or total incredulity would lead us beyond the fantastic: it is hesitation which sustains its life” (31). This hesitancy can be related to poststructuralist ideas which challenge “the laws of nature” (25) as well as binary of truth and fiction.

As a matter of fact, Todorov provides a framework that includes some criteria for a text to be regarded as fantastic:

The fantastic requires the fulfillment of three conditions. First the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader’s role is entrusted to a character and at the same time the hesitation is represented; it becomes one of the themes of the work. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as “poetic” interpretations. (33)

Thus, the fantastic appears when there is a constant suspicion of the reader about whether the supernatural events in a text are real or imaginary. On the condition that this form is changed, the fantastic disappears; the text becomes uncanny or marvelous. Therefore, the first condition that makes a text fantastic is the absolute hesitation the reader has about the question of whether the events are real or imaginary. In other words, it is “the reader’s own ambiguous perception of the events narrated” (Todorov 31) that puts the text into the fantastic genre. Even though it is not compulsory for the fantastic, Todorov’s second condition requires the identification of the reader with at least one of the characters of the text in terms of the above-mentioned hesitation. Finally, for Todorov, the interpretation of a text is important to apprehend the fantastic. A fantastic text should not be read allegorically or poetically because the fantastic is related to reality. In a text, the fantastic cannot exist without reality, and reality cannot exist without the fantastic. In narratives that include supernatural events, the reader knows that he should not read the text with its literal meaning; instead he should read and interpret it allegorically since allegories give moral and political messages. If I can give an example from one of the books I have read, it can be George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (2011), in which animals speak but as a reader, I did not question this supernatural event as I knew that I should

perceive or interpret it allegorically. Yet, in fantastic reading, the reader does not look for an allegorical meaning but for hesitancy. Similarly, Todorov rejects poetic reading as it “constitutes a danger for the fantastic:”

If as we read a text we reject all representation, considering each sentence as a pure semantic combination, the fantastic could not appear: for the fantastic requires [...] a reaction to events as they occur in the world evoked. For this reason, the fantastic can subsist only within fiction. (Todorov 60)

To sum up, neither allegoric nor poetic reading fits the fantastic since the fantastic cannot exist without fiction. Likewise, readers of Winterson’s postmodern and deconstructive texts react “to events as they occur in the world evoked” so that her fantastic can “subsist [...] within fiction” (60).

I propose that Winterson’s postmodern fiction to be studied fits well to Todorov’s conditions; the obligation “to consider the world of characters as a world of living persons” (33), the hesitation experienced by a character and, finally the rejection of allegorical or poetic reading. Thus, in the construction of a fantastic text, defining anything as true or false, real or unreal is hard. This indeterminacy echoes Hutcheon’s questioning the reality of the meanings of words, “postmodernism is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said” (Hutcheon 1). Her interrogation, therefore, complies with the fantastic which encourages the variability of meanings. To illustrate, in *Sexing the Cherry*, the narrator goes to fantastic places such as a city of Words and “a sheer-built tower” (36). As mentioned before, the events in the city of Words are a combination of fact and fantasy. Similarly, upon reading about the story of the narrator of the tower, readers “hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described” (Todorov 33). Jordan goes there by the help of the birds which “carried [him] up into the air and flew [him] over the city and out to sea” (31). Additionally, the story of the girl named Zillah who lives in the tower creates fantastic hesitancy. Zillah is locked in a room without a door at the top of the tower. She is punished by the villagers because she

was caught incestuously with her sister [ so she has] to build her own death tower. To prolong her life she built as high as she could, winding round and round with the stones in an endless stairway. When there were no stones left

she sealed the room and the village, driven mad by her death cries, evacuated to a far-off spot where no one could hear her. (37)

Jordan's flying; the death tower and Zillah's punishment all fantastically create an effect of hesitation in the readers who "consider the world of characters as a world of living persons" (Todorov 33). The second condition is fulfilled when, for example, a character of the novel, namely Jordan, hesitates about the existence of other worlds; "I don't know if other worlds exist in space or time. Perhaps this is the only one and the rest is rich imaginings" (2).

It is important to note here that though Todorov believes in the necessity of "find[ing] consequences of [...] the reader's ambiguous perception on every level" later he maintains that drawing attention to "the rather general features" (Todorov 76) will be enough to understand the structure of the fantastic discourse. Thus, he limits his investigation to three properties; "The first derives from the utterance; the second from the act of uttering, or speech act; the third from the syntactical aspect" (Todorov 76).

Todorov initiates his analysis of the utterance with the different relations between the fantastic and figurative discourse. In order to broaden this analysis, he presents three relations "of the rhetorical figures with the fantastic" (Todorov 79). To begin with, he finds a relation between a supernatural and a rhetorical figure. Hyperbolic images, in particular, are vivid examples of this relation since such exaggeration "leads to the supernatural [which] appears as an extension of a rhetorical figure" (Todorov 77). With her huge body and masculine traits, the Dog-woman is a good example of such an image. She is able to force "an elephant into the sky" (*Sexing the Cherry* 21). She tries to give further evidence about her appearance and says "When I was a child my father swung me up on to his knees to tell me a story and I broke his legs. He never touched me again, except with the point of the whip he used for the dogs" (*Sexing the Cherry* 21). It is, therefore, possible to place this image respectively in the fantastic. Following this, Todorov introduces a second relation. Here, the reader makes out a figurative meaning in a first reading, but later takes the meaning literally. Different from the above-mentioned two diachronic relations, the third one is synchronic and "the relation of the figure and the supernatural [...] is functional" (Todorov 79). Such a relation can be provided by the use of expressions such as "it seemed", "as if" and "as though." At this point, I

would contend that the use of such expressions can create an effect of poststructuralist indeterminacy that plays a major role in the construction of fantastic hesitancy.

Todorov's post-structural description of the fantastic is more obvious in his investigation of the second property, the speech act. The use of the uttering, or the speech act is essential in all genres including the fantastic genre. The term "speech acts" is used "to mean that speech acts, that does something with the words" (Miller 1). This something is in fact their performative act that functions to create hesitation in deconstructive literature. As a structuralist, Todorov highlights the frequent use of the pronoun "I" by the narrator which "permits the reader to identify with the character" in fantastic narratives (84). Notably, the use of verbs like "think", "assume" and "believe" after the pronoun "I" and the use of adverbs such as "possibly", "perhaps", "nearly" are constructive to create uncertainty for the reader. This indeterminate nature of the speech act event, which permits the variability of meanings in texts, has parallels with feminist poststructuralist theory. Buzan, Wæver and Wilde's assertions about the speech act in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998) can, on the one hand, be read in conjunction with post-structural compositions:

A speech act is interesting because it holds the insurrecting potential to break the ordinary, to establish meaning that is not already in the context. It reworks or produces a context by the performative success of the act. (46)

On the other hand, the last statement, namely the "[reworking] or [production of] context by the performative success of the act" already echoes Butler's notion of performativity. In the introduction of *Bodies That Matter*, Butler defines performativity as the "reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates or constraints."<sup>(2)</sup> Thus, language and reiterability have a productive power in the interrogation of many concepts including love in post-structural discourse. Speech acts have this power with their "insurrecting potential" so that they can help to deconstruct the notion of heterosexual love and "break the ordinary" through transgression. Hence, the use of speech acts constantly creates fantastic hesitation. In addition, it causes a disorder to stability and marks moments of ambiguity which are the aspects leading to transgression.

Likewise, Derrida's ideas on speech act theory in his book *Limited Inc* (1977) reinforce the relation of the performativity of speech acts to post-structuralism. Derrida's argument that there is an indeterminate iterability of texts has been important to justifications of Todorov's fantastic hesitancy. Depending upon this view, we should not look for a proper context or speaker of an utterance because "every sign [...] can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable" (Derrida 79). Thus, my use of Butler's and Derrida's theories offers a feminist post-structural approach and is clearly relevant to Todorov's fantastic hesitancy. A good example of Winterson's use of such stylistic devices that create fantastic hesitancy can be seen in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*:

Perhaps it was the snow, or the food, or the impossibility of my life that made me hope to go to bed and wake up with the past intact. I seemed to have run in a great circle, and met myself again on the starting line. (173)

Here, the narrator Jeanette is uncertain about many things; she tries to find an answer to her own questions. This uncertainty is created by the use of the pronoun "I" which allows "the reader to identify with the character" (Todorov 84). Likewise, the use of the words "perhaps" and "seemed" create ambiguity for the reader, which is a condition of the fantastic genre. I think this indeterminate aspect of the fantastic is related to Winterson's deconstruction.

Additionally, Todorov makes a distinction between the discourses of the narrator and the character by stating that "the speech of the characters can be true or false, as in everyday life" (83), yet "the narrator's [...] discourse lies outside the test of truth" (86). Depending on this claim, a second distinction is made between the represented and the non-represented narrator. The represented narrator facilitates identification; on the other hand, the non-presented one is more convenient for the marvelous which does not require disbelief. Therefore, such distinctions arouse fantastic hesitation and create ambiguity in the post-structural discourse.

The third property, the syntactical aspect, derives from the speech act which reminds us of the significant role of the reader. Therefore, in narratives, authors can use elements to heighten the effect of fantastic hesitation in the reader. From the start, for instance, writers give various details and "from the viewpoint of the



fantastic, these details form a perfect gradation” (Todorov 87). Such gradation takes the reader’s attention and makes him more interested.

To summarize, working on the fantastic as a formalist, Todorov’s ideas offer crucial insights into the structure of fantastic literature as a genre. Hence, his analysis lacks a discussion of the social and political functions of literature and deals much more with the structural features of fantastic texts. However, this does not change the fact that some parts of Todorov’s book *The Fantastic* are indispensable to critical readers of Winterson’s fiction because with its focus, in particular, on speech act theory and fantastic hesitancy, the book provides the required framework for a study of transgressive love.

As a critic of Todorov, Rosemary Jackson’s study of the fantastic in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981) also creates a post-structural theoretical framework but with an emphasis on its psycho-analytical aspects. In the opening sections of her book, she examines Todorov’s definition in detail and regards his study apt for a postmodern way of thinking. Thus, she builds on his theory and maintains that the fantastic can be defined as the literature of subversion. Jackson asserts that Todorov’s study includes only a structural basis, yet it needs an extension “from being one limited to the poetics of the fantastic into one aware of the politics of its forms” (Jackson 6).

In *The Fantastic*, Todorov mentions Sigmund Freud’s notion of the uncanny and accepts that it is somewhat related to his own theory. But he maintains that their notions do not exactly correspond. Finding Freud’s theory insufficient or inappropriate, Todorov does not take a psychoanalytical stance because for him, “psychosis and neurosis are not the explication of the themes of fantastic literature” (Todorov 154). Nevertheless, Jackson disagrees with Todorov and finds Freudian theory applicable. The role of social and political issues in the function of the fantastic remains a neglected area of Todorov’s study. For Jackson, this negligence is a major “shortcoming” (61) because “it is in the unconscious that social structures and ‘norms’ are reproduced and sustained within us, and only by redirecting attention to this area can we begin to perceive the ways in which the relations between society and the individual are fixed” (6). So Jackson does not present “critical material on literary fantasy, [only] from a structuralist position, looking at the narrative qualities of the mode, [but also] from a psychoanalytical perspective, considering these

features as the narrative effects of basic psychic impulses” (8). In relation to Jackson’s assertions above, Winterson chooses to present fantastic characters, places and events to challenge “social structures and ‘norms’” (6) that do not allow us to love beyond the limits of heterosexuality.

Jackson indicates that as a literature of desire, the fantastic is activated by the unconscious discourse. Hence, as well as the structures of the conscious desire, the social context of the unconscious desire is necessary to the function of the fantastic. At this point, Freud’s notes on “the uncanny” in his book *Writings on Art and Literature* (1997) prove crucial to see the association of the fantastic with unconscious desire:

fantastic stories in particular could produce the uncanny in literature, for an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, such as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality. (Freud 221)

Thus, the distinctive power of fantastic literature emerges from its qualities of indefiniteness and suggestiveness which is analogous to “hesitancy.” Such qualities enable fantasy to create a discourse which can “[refuse] to observe unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three-dimensionality and with rigid distinctions between animate and inanimate objects, self and other, life and death” (Jackson 1-2). It is apparent that the purpose of the fantastic for Jackson is to subvert conventional, dominant features of realistic texts and to “transform this world” (18). This is the reason why her criticism marks the fantastic as “the literature of subversion” (13-14). In other words, her philosophy clearly deploys the fantastic as a way of “[telling] an indomitable desire” (9) that allows transgression and subversion.

Jackson explains the subversive function by pointing to the reality status of the fantastic. For her, fantasy is “a literature of unreality” whose “introduction of the ‘unreal’ is set against the category of the ‘real’—a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference” (Jackson 4). It is important to note here that through such interrogation, fantastic literature opens the mind to “the unsaid and unseen of culture; that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made ‘absent’” (Jackson 4). Therefore, it enables Winterson to make use of the concepts of

“invisibility, impossibility, transformation and defiant illusion” to “undermine ‘realistic’ ways of seeing” (Jackson 49).

Under the influence of Todorov’s approach, Jackson elaborates her definition by locating fantasy in a “paraxial area” (Jackson 19). The term paraxis is usually used in optics; however, Jackson uses it to take us further in the discussion of fantasy:

Paraxis is a telling notion in relation to the place, or space, of the fantastic, for it implies an inextricable link to the main body of the ‘real’ which it shades and threatens [...] In the [paraxial region] object and image seem to collide, but in fact neither object nor reconstituted image genuinely reside there: nothing does. This paraxial area could be taken to represent the spectral region of the fantastic, whose imaginary world is neither entirely ‘real’ (object), nor entirely ‘unreal’ (image), but is located somewhere indeterminately between the two. (Jackson 19)

Here, Jackson makes clear that there is a correspondence of a fantastic image with the real object that is transformed. In this way, the text reveals transformation which is particular to the fantastic genre. When this quote is read in conjunction with Winterson’s fiction, it is possible to state that Winterson is good at using this indeterminate location of the ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ in her settings of body, sex, space and time in both novels. To illustrate, in *Sexing the Cherry*, Jordan visits a house without floors and articulates; “It is well known that the ceiling of one room is the floor of another, but the household ignores this ever-downward necessity and continues ever upward, celebrating ceilings but denying floors” (Winterson 15). Through these words, Winterson highlights the downward upward binary and rejects a well-known necessity by providing an uncertain location between object and image. This is a clear evidence of fantastic subversion of binary oppositions.

All in all, it is possible to understand Jackson’s main argument about fantasy both from the beginning and the end of her study. In the introduction, Jackson states that her study gives more space to subversive and transgressive texts because she believes some fantastic texts do not perform such functions and “move away from the unsettling implications which are found at the center of the purely ‘fantastic’ [...] expelling desire” (9). They neither amuse the reader’s imagination with novelty and

strangeness nor carry political and social implications. However, these are crucial features of fantastic texts for Jackson. Similarly, in order to emphasize the certain characteristics of fantasy once more, she finishes her book with a quote from Todorov; “The fantastic permits us to cross certain frontiers that are inaccessible so long as we have no recourse to it” (Jackson 180). This reference clearly signifies Jackson’s connection to Todorov by showing that both scholars encourage a belief in the use of the fantastic as a vehicle to “cross certain frontiers that are inaccessible” (180).

To conclude, by dwelling on the significance of fantasy, both Todorov and Jackson affect the present understanding of the term in literature. Despite the fact that Todorov’s structural analysis appears to be inappropriate for a deconstructive investigation of Winterson’s writing, it can be associated with post-structuralism’s general subversion and dismantling of binaries. In other words, although I find Jackson’s subversive and Freudian approach suitable for an understanding of Winterson’s transgression of love, without Todorov’s fantastic hesitancy, I suppose, the investigation of Winterson’s fiction will be incomplete in terms of poststructuralism and deconstruction. Hence, depending on Todorov’s fantastic hesitancy and Jackson’s fantastic subversion, my reading of Winterson provides a poststructuralist understanding of her texts to be analyzed in this thesis.

### **1.3.2. *Parodic Rewriting***

As I have already indicated, language has been the overall focus of almost all postmodern feminist writers who wanted to bring a philosophical look at the issue of gender. In order to present a new pathway of criticism by using language effectively, they developed new theoretical concepts. In accordance with postmodern point of view, one of these writers, French philosopher Julia Kristeva put forth a new term called intertextuality, which is derived from the Latin word *intertexto*. In fact, the original word means “to intermingle while weaving” (Makaryk 568). However, Kristeva uses it as a method of writing, pointing out that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva

37). Thus, Kristeva's intertextuality suggests that all texts are related. In addition, it provides the author with a transformation of another text or previous texts.

In her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1986), Kristeva states that intertextuality provides an interrogation of conventional notions of the writer's impacts and the text's originality. According to Kristeva, through such questioning, authors can cross borders of any kind, including love. Kristeva's philosophy can be better understood by referring to her own ideas about the intermingling style of her writing in the interview "Crossing the Borders" (2006). When asked a question about her style, she highlights the fact that anything can be included in a mid-twenty first century mix:

I usually call myself an adopted-American Frenchwoman of Bulgarian origin with a European citizenship. That's quite a lot in one go! It is a mosaic. And I think that everybody who lives in our time is or becomes just that. Because we inhabit various countries, we work in various countries, we speak various languages, and we live in various ages. With our parents we live in the twentieth century, with our children we live in the mid-twenty-first century, with suicide bombers and other fundamentalists we live in something akin to the Middle Ages, with the scientists who accomplish cloning we live in the fourth millennium, thus I think mankind have never been so multifaceted.  
(Kristeva in Midttun 169-170)

Undoubtedly, this intermingling is not only seen in everyday life but also in literature. In the world of literature, this can be created by infinite transmission between texts. Besides this, Kristeva's reference to the variability of countries, languages and ages, and the interrelationship of people despite boundaries may put emphasis on one of the certain characteristics of intertextuality, namely, crossing borders of love.

In *The Kristeva Reader* (1986), Kristeva asserts that it is wrong to ignore the relation of texts because they are not discrete sets of constructions. Instead, they provide a polyphony of different voices. Considering this function of intertextuality, Kristeva's conception can be in a close relationship with deconstruction, from which novelists can benefit to produce provocative, postmodern feminist fiction that challenges the conventional understanding of love. On such grounds, intertextual

relations can be used as a tool to construct transgressive love which defies the restrictions of love that relies on the polarization of gender.

The use of intertextuality as a subversive mode is possible through its various conventions, such as irony, plagiarism, parody and pastiche. Although they all have the same purpose; to produce self-aware, confrontational fiction through deconstruction and subversion, I intend to pay special attention to parodic rewriting in the analysis of the novels, as Winterson more often utilizes this style to transgress boundaries of love in the novels to be studied. Parody is usually defined as the imitation of a serious piece of writing in an amusing way. This style suitably belongs in the terrain of postmodern philosophy since it defamiliarizes events in an unexpected way in literature. Defamiliarization means “to change our mode of perception from the automatic and practical to the artistic” (Selden 31). Thus, through parody, it is possible to alter conventional perceptions like love. In the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory* (1993), Irena R. Makaryk’s assertions illuminate how defamiliarization can displace the effects of fixity and “challenge accepted concepts and ideas, by distorting them and showing them from a different perspective” and she adds “In everyday life, we do not see things and their texture, since our perception has become habitual and automatic. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. Art “defamiliarizes” objects by making forms strange and by increasing the difficulty and the length of perception” (528). When we combine these statements with Winterson’s parody, it is possible to claim that both intend to overcome “habitual and automatic” perceptions without relying on the convention of phallogocentric artists. Through this style, Winterson makes forms weird, mocks and destabilizes traditional discourses and forms of writing. Hence, being an important aspect of Winterson’s parodic revision, ‘defamiliarization’ can help to deconstruct and subvert the “habitual and automatic” discourses of love, too.

As a matter of fact, defamiliarization is not the only idea that can be associated with Winterson’s parody which is constructed to trouble the boundaries of love. There are some other critics such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Margaret Rose and Linda Hutcheon who fall into a conception of parody that engage with Winterson’s postmodern writing. To begin with, Bakhtin’s idea of ‘carnivalisation’ in *Rabelais and His World* (1984) helps to identify Winterson’s rewriting strategies closely. In

his description of the carnival, Bakhtin highlights the subversion of all hierarchies and binaries. That is why his idea reinforces the similarity between the carnival and literary representations. Remarkably, in the Renaissance period, carnivals were popular with parodies which provided an opportunity to “escape from the official usual way of life” (Bakhtin 8). Thanks to carnivals, people could change roles. That is to say, high status positions could be replaced by low status positions in the reconstituting process of parody. Bakhtin’s assertions in *Rabelais and His World* (1984) mark down this effect of the carnival, “As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” (Bakhtin 10). Undoubtedly, this subversive force of parody ties in with the way love is transgressed. Hence, parody can be used as a vehicle to liberate love by getting out of real situations. Likewise, in her critical work *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-modern* (1993), Rose outlines some characteristics of parody. One of these is “its comic refunctioning of the work’s performed material” (Rose 92). Thus, through Winterson’s refunctioning parody, in other words, through “new set of functions given to parodied material in the parody” (Rose 52); it is possible to write about transgressive love that is not “squashed between the facts” (Winterson *Sexing the Cherry* 2). Therefore, there is a resemblance between Rose’s explanations and Winterson’s writing style; however, Hutcheon criticizes Rose’s approach towards parody. For Hutcheon, her approach is restrictive in the discussion of postmodern parody since her focus is merely on the comic aspect of this style. In addition to Rose’s attitude, Hutcheon draws a parallel between postmodern philosophy and parodic representation since postmodernism is disposed to “use and abuse, install but also subvert conventions through the use of either irony or parody” (Woods 56). Before postmodernism, there was a reliance on the “elitism, social formal experimentation and tragic sense of alienation” in literature (Selden 177). Yet, with postmodern inflections, it became possible to interrogate such conventional dependence on literature through parodic rewriting, which is a good way to pursue debates around literary representations of love.

Hutcheon, in her book *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), emphasizes that the main aim of parody is not only to entertain but to criticize, deconstruct and subvert. In other words, by rewriting and reproducing another text, the author can create something new out of an intertextual relation. So Hutcheon’s definitions of

parody as “an authorized transgression” (Hutcheon 97) is applicable to the meaning of parody within this study as it relates the creation of new meanings through transgression. On the one hand, parodic rewriting invites the subversion of the traditional by indicating the revolutionary drive of parody. On the other hand, this subversion is authorized by the convention intended to be destroyed. Yet, in the end, the intention of parodic rewriting is the same: to criticize and subvert conventional representations and values. Hence, I may state that Winterson’s parodic rewriting invites subversion of traditional love through transgression. In other words, there is a transgressive function of parody because it “is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history of representations” (Hutcheon 13). So, Winterson’s style of parody can be associated with deconstruction that counters the violence of patriarchal love.

Consequently, parodic rewriting helps to create new meanings that do not depend on a fixed point or origin. As previously argued, some theorists’ approaches also help to explain how this style can be used as a vehicle to signal infinite meanings in post structural literature. Therefore, the parodist can rewrite to defamiliarize and fight against all hierarchies and binaries that are associated with the present understanding of love. In addition, through parodic revision, the parodist can benefit from Rose’s ‘refunctioning’ aspect of parody as well as Hutcheon’s transgression to deconstruct the dominant heteronormative discourses of love. Winterson is one of these postmodern parodists who intertwine fairy tales in a subversive way to challenge the traditional understanding of love. Hence, the power of parodic construction as defamiliarization, refunctioning of texts and transgression will be used to celebrate a breakthrough in postmodern feminist interpretation of love within the context of this study.



## CHAPTER II: SUBVERSION AND DECONSTRUCTION IN *SEXING THE CHERRY*

### 2.1. Narrator Transgresses Boundaries

Because Winterson blends fantasy and reality in *Sexing the Cherry*, we can see how the narrative strategies in this novel both conform to trends in postmodern feminist literature and exploit these same techniques. As Laura Doan writes, Winterson intentionally uses postmodern narrative techniques “in order to challenge and subvert patriarchal and heterosexist discourses” (138). Winterson additionally relies on the representation of transgressive love, which means to love someone across barriers of heteronormativity, as a way to question the patriarchal representation of the gendered identity and body, causing her readers to question if love in this novel is bound to gender norms.

*Sexing the Cherry* tells the story of Jordan, the hero, and his mother, the Dog-Woman. Jordan is adopted, he is found by the Dog-Woman near a river bank in London. He is keen on ships, boats, and the sea during his childhood: “When Jordan was a boy he made paper boats and floated them on the river. From this he learned how the wind affects a sail, but he never learned how love affects the heart” (13), until he met a dancer called Fortunata. After the civil war, the gardener of the king Tradescant employs Jordan as his assistant and takes him to Wimbledon with his mother and her dogs. One day, at a party he meets Fortunata and falls in love with her at once and begins a long search to find the mysterious woman. However, his love is not bound to social norms and values; rather it breaks the ever-lasting clichés about the theme of love as well as male and female stereotypes of loving. During his quest, he goes to fantastic places and transgresses boundaries of time, space and love to find his beloved and lives fantastic events. His experiences and fantasies are used by Winterson as a tool to deconstruct gender norms and heteronormativity by revealing everything in its binary form and present transgressive love as the solution.

From the beginning of the novel, binary oppositions are presented by Winterson to deconstruct gender norms and transgress boundaries. For example, Jordan dreams about a town the inhabitants of which “have reconciled two

discordant desires: to remain in one place and to leave it behind forever” (43). With the invocation of the word ‘desires’ a parallel is drawn between Winterson’s language and Jackson’s unconscious discourse since according to Jackson, we can challenge social norms in the unconscious. Moreover, there is a remaining-leaving binary here. I think this binary signals transgression of borders since the town is movable. If the inhabitants choose to stay in the town, they will never be able to go beyond boundaries. Furthermore, as long as the town stays unmovable, their views will be formed according to stable perceptions. Thus, through deconstruction of this binary, Winterson presents love as something that allows the inhabitants to transgress certain barriers. Winterson’s writing of the earth as “round and flat at the same time” (87) also provides a good example of binary opposition. Thus, for Winterson, “anything that can ‘rise above’ such oppositions is an act of cultural intervention, revealing those as cultural fictions” (Doan 144). However, Winterson’s understanding of love is beyond the scope of cultural constructions as traditionally understood. It is from this perspective that her fictional representations resist binary oppositions through deconstruction.

One of the most remarkable binary oppositions is between the inner and the physical worlds of Jordan, whose name comes from a river. It was given to him by his mother, the Dog-woman. Yet she regrets it now since like his name, Jordan is “not bound to anything, just as the waters aren’t bound to anything” so that he is “obsessed [...] with the thought of discovery” (*Sexing* 3-4). As an adventurer, he lives in the outer world. But at the same time, he is highly aware of the power of the inner world: “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” (11). This escape is into fictional places like the city of Words and the city of Love. Here, Winterson deconstructs the inner-outer binary by placing Jordan in a world of dream and imagination where there are no boundaries of love and gender. This placement allows for Jackson’s fantastic subversion of gender norms.

Additionally, after Jordan leaves the city of Love, he goes to the Bermudas with Tradescant. Being alone and absorbed in thought in his inner world, he begins to question his search for love; “Islands are metaphors for the heart [...] My whole life, like this wild place, has never been visited, and I do not know whether it could

sustain life” (86). He goes there to look for Fortunata, a woman who “may or may not exist” (86). So reminding Todorov’s hesitancy, Jordan’s hesitancy about her existence extends the metaphor for love. He believes leaving England means to run “away from uncertainty and confusion” (86), yet later he says that “running away was a running towards” (87). The fact that he cannot escape such ambiguity is created by the reversal of the away-towards binary. In addition, when Winterson writes about the nature of time, she also undermines binary oppositions of inward-outward lives; “Thinking about time is to acknowledge two contradictory certainties: our outward lives are governed by the seasons and the clock; that our inward lives are governed by [...] an imaginative impulse cutting through the dictates of daily time, leaving us free to ignore boundaries” (*Sexing* 99). Likewise, when we think about Jordan’s love, we see that his inward life is “governed by [...] an imaginative impulse” that permits him to ignore boundaries of love.

The more closely Jordan engages with women, the better he can see the material division of the sexes. He asserts that cross-dressing is not only particular to one sex, both sexes do this in order “to be free of the burdens of their gender” (28) accepting that there is a “burden of gender” in hierarchal society. Especially, when he starts to work on a fish stall, dressed as a woman, he watches women carefully and notices that “women have a private language [...] not dependent on the constructions of men” (29). Jordan’s observation is relevant for understanding Cixous and Irigaray’s theories in relation to Winterson’s attitude which deconstructs a language constructed by men. It is thanks to his transgressive love that Jordan can refuse such construction and see the paradoxical aspects of gender politics. He transgresses his gender boundary for love through cross-dressing. I think his travel into women’s land assists him to see the error of conventional sexed hierarchies in the construction of sexual subjectivity. Thus, through fantastic subversion of gender, Winterson “urges transgression of the limits separating self from other, man from woman” (Jackson 73).

Winterson’s use of grafting, which “is a postmodern tactic designed to cross traditional boundaries” (Leitch 41), is also used to deconstruct and subvert binaries. On the one hand, as a result of grafting, a third kind is produced “without seed or parent” (*Sexing* 84). Likewise, Winterson’s narrators Jordan and Jeanette are adopted children without parents. We tend to think that fruits have gender. For example,

having seeds, a pomegranate is seen like a female. Similarly, a banana is perceived as male owing to its phallic shape. Jordan's production of an ungendered fruit challenges such heterosexual gender politics. On the other hand, the "tender or uncertain" (*Sexing* 84) condition of a plant resembles women's position in hierarchal discourse in which men are seen as "a hardier member of its strain" (*Sexing* 84). Therefore, when a fruit is grafted, it overturns the natural and subverts all notions and values associated with heteronormativity. Winterson uses this subversive power of grafting to transgress boundaries of love, too. To illustrate, Jordan tries to make a union between two fruits and when the Dog-woman learns about this practice, she criticizes it and questions the gender identity of the new fruit by asserting that "such things [have] no gender and [are] a confusion to themselves" (85). So, like loving across gender barriers, grafting, namely, producing a gender-unspecified identity, is seen "as unnatural" (85) in society. "But what is stronger than love?" (21). When Jordan's mother, the Dog-woman, says "Let the world mate of its own accord" (85), it is evident that the feeling of love for another is more important than the gender of the beloved and that there should be no boundaries in mating. As the Dog-woman suggests, it is through the transgressive function of love that these boundaries can be subverted and the nature-culture binary can be deconstructed.

What is more, in *Sexing the Cherry*, binary oppositions are constructed to disrupt traditional images of women's bodies. In other words, a juxtaposition of bodies is used in order to subvert heterosexist norms. This practice is obviously comparable to Butler's theorization on the idealization of gender in *Bodies That Matter*: "Gender norms operate by requiring the embodiment of certain ideals of femininity and masculinity, ones that are always related to the idealization of the heterosexual bond" (231-232). The subversion of such idealization is exemplified when Jordan works on a fish stall. The owner of the stall suggests that she follows a list of rules to deal with men. One of these rules is:

5. Men deem themselves weighty and women light. Therefore, it is simple to tie a stone round their necks and drown them should they become too troublesome. (*Sexing* 30)

Here, there is a juxtaposition of male and female bodies since men are seen as stronger than women with their "weighty" images. But Winterson subverts this fantasy by reversing the situation from an advantage to a disadvantage for men.

Similarly, the depiction of the Dog-woman's and Jordan's bodies are often opposed. Jordan says "When I think of her, or dream about her, she is always huge and I am always tiny. I am sitting on her hand, the way she holds her puppies" (86). In contrast to their gender, the mum is represented as strong with her huge body and the son as weak. However, through questioning "the compulsory character of certain social imperatives" (Butler 231), Winterson's fiction subverts the binary of strong-weak and the Dog-woman knows this; "He was proud of me because no other child had a mother who could hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once" (21). Even though the Dog-woman says "I am too huge for love", Jordan does not care about her appearance and is never "afraid to scale mountains" (32) and love her. As the text develops, the transgressive power of love beyond appearance is more apparent. The Dog-woman says; "For myself, the love I've known has come from my dogs, who care nothing for how I look and, and from Jordan, who says that though I am as wide and muddy as the river that is his namesake, so am I too his kin" (32). In short, the bond that ties them is love which transgresses boundaries of any kind, including physical strength. For Winterson, love is separated from reasoning and transgresses conventional notions. As she says, love "is probably one of the few things in life that rises above all those kinds of oppositions" (165).

In addition to the presentation of transgressive love as the solution to disrupt binaries, Winterson creates fantastic hesitation as a fictional strategy that relies on speech acts to subvert heterosexual discourses of love. Her narrative is constructed around fantastic hesitancy between the real and the imaginary. In the house without floors, for instance, Jordan spends the night in a suspended bed. When he gets up, he realizes that the moon is still in the sky. Surprised by this, Jordan says, "It seemed to me that I was closer to the moon than to the ground" (*Sexing* 16). This indeterminacy which is created by the use of the expression "seemed" urges the reader to consider the reality of the fictional place and events.

In his journeys, Jordan has new experiences with love and his discourse often pushes for ambiguity. For example, a short time before he leaves London with Tradescant, Jordan meets a seller of necklaces made of chicken bones. After he buys a necklace, the seller and Jordan start a conversation about whether there is a way to escape from the pain of love. But their discussion turns into an interrogation of love by Jordan:

On more than one occasion, I have been ready to abandon my whole life for love. To alter everything that makes sense to me and move into a different world where the only known will be the beloved. Such a sacrifice must be the result of love...or is it that the life itself was already worn out? I had finished with that life, perhaps, and could not admit it [...] or perhaps did not know it, habit being a great binder. I think it is often so that those most in need of change chose to fall in love. (*Sexing* 79)

When Jordan's assertions above are analyzed structurally, we see that Winterson uses speech acts to deconstruct the definite meanings associated with love. In accordance with Todorov's hesitancy, she uses the pronoun "I" and expressions such as "is it that", "perhaps", "I think" and "not if." These words function to displace the effects of fixity. Moreover, at the beginning of his speech, Jordan says people may want to "move into a different world where the only known will be the beloved" as a result of love. Later, he likens love to a habit and then to a wish for change. Thus, Jordan's hesitancy of what real love is challenges the definite perceptions of love. Therefore, as Todorov suggests, "the reader's role is entrusted to a character and at the same time hesitation becomes one of the themes of the work" (Todorov 33). Combined with the theme of love, Jordan's hesitancy also defies the binary of truth and fiction. On the one hand, "A man or woman sunk in dreams" (79) can find love beyond doors, namely beyond boundaries. On the other hand, they may or may not want to possess that secret love across barriers of heterosexuality. Furthermore, it is possible to see a reiteration of speech acts that creates hesitancy not only in the speech above, but also throughout the novel. To illustrate, Jordan often begins his examinations with expressions such as "I think" (79, 86, 113, 114), "I believe" (115) and "I feel" (143). Here, Jordan's language creates uncertainty through which heterosexual love can be transgressed since such stylistic devices help to create indeterminacy of conventional clichés like love. Functional expressions like "seemed" and "as though" are also used frequently in this novel to remind us of the important role of hesitancy while studying transgressive love.

Jordan's fantasies trouble the boundaries of love. He is searching for a woman, for Fortunata, but maybe she is only in his mind: "Either I am remembering her or I am still imagining her" (104). In a fictional world, it is possible to refuse to connect Jordan's love with reality and the contingencies of real life, as love in this

novel is more like a spiritual search. This is actually a way of questioning his self and others and also an escape that can be connected to Jackson's explanation of the reason beyond his search for love. Perhaps this search is Jordan's fulfillment of his desires. For Jackson, this quest is a way of telling "an indomitable desire" (9) that allows transgression and subversion of love so that Winterson can challenge established love policies. Thus, in *Sexing the Cherry*, it is possible to trouble boundaries of love and to write about the theme without the work becoming cliché. Because in clichés, love is associated with dominant heterosexual norms, it cannot step beyond the social, traditional lines which have always limited its definition. However, Winterson overturns this association through transgression of Jordan's fictional love, which is the grand narrative of the novel.

In accordance with postmodernist feminists' denial of fixity and the resistance to heterosexual discourses, Jordan invents a fantastic world, the city of Love. In this city, love is forbidden and there are strict rules, yet in the past, the inhabitants of this city did not follow those rules and died "three times in a row" (80). All the inhabitants die because of the water pollution that comes from the dead bodies thrown into the river. The only survivors are a monk and a whore. They believe that if all forms of love are banned, their city will be rescued. Thus, they forbid love. Jordan says the people of this city are like "the Puritans holding sway in [his] country" (80) because Puritans of seventeenth century London, "the school of heaviness, who would tie down love" (38), approve only heterosexual love and relations, and the division of the sexes. Likewise, in the city of Love "the sexes were segregated and all marriages were arranged" (80) without love. The penalization of love by society echoes Jackson's idea of "the unsaid and unseen" (Jackson 4) because it is within society that certain acts and taboos, which can be associated with unconscious desire, are kept secret. When he arrives at the city of Love, Jordan is informed that "From their earliest moment children were warned of the dire consequences, personal and social, of love" (80). Thus, any form of love, including transgressive love, is one of the banned acts and themes in this city. However, Jordan challenges the ban. He visits the city museum and breaks one of the rules by taking the guitar and playing it. All the citizens gather around him and start dancing and making love. After Jordan leaves the city, the monk and the whore warn the citizens against love and declare that the penalty of love is death. Yet, as the Dog-woman

says, “With everyone in accord, what merriment is there?” (65). Thus, they choose to die for love. I think this is their combat against the censorship and harsh rules that forbid love in the city’s society. The end of this parable, in particular, shows the importance of the power of love beyond boundaries, norms and social taboos. People prefer to die rather than live in a dominant heterosexual world. Hence, Winterson questions taboos and social norms attached to sex, love and marriage through Jordan’s fantasy.

To conclude, in *Sexing the Cherry*, love is constructed to overturn the natural through deconstruction of binary oppositions. Winterson also benefits from fantastic hesitation and subversion, the strategies which are evident in the articulation of post-modern feminist liberation of the unconscious. In order to avoid fixed meanings and a standard understanding of love, she uses fictional strategies, narrative structures and speech acts. In this chapter of my thesis, then, we saw the depiction of love as transgressive and as destroying gendered subjectivity, status, and heterosexist norms.

## **2.2. The Fairy Way of Rewriting**

Parodic rewriting of fairy tales is another postmodern technique Winterson uses in *Sexing the Cherry* to transgress boundaries of love by subverting gender norms and heterosexual discourses of love. Fairy tales are often employed to give moral lessons to readers by putting them in a world of fiction. They are also told to promote certain norms to teach dominant, precise manners of behavior and expectations. Additionally, traditional and heterosexist presentations of love are seen in these tales. Thus, the society is taught that love can only be constructed in patriarchal discourse and that it is “a gender-bound operation” (Winterson in Marvel 165). From this conventional perspective, love should display binary oppositions of male and female, heterosexual and homosexual, “but by going beyond realism Winterson allows for a different method to depict the negative facet of love in adult heterosexual relationships” (Ellam 83). In her revision of the fairy tale “The Twelve Dancing Princesses”, Winterson deconstructs love out of such patriarchal and heterosexual discourses subverting the binaries associated with the theme of love.

Starting her reconstruction from the name of the fairy tale, Winterson changes it from “The Twelve Dancing Princesses” to “The Story of the Twelve Dancing



Princesses.” The original tale was written by the Brothers Grimm. In the original story, the twelve princesses escape from their rooms every night and go to a magical city to dance till the morning. Becoming suspicious that his daughters are exhausted and their shoes are torn in the mornings, the king sets out to discover their strange secret. He promises any man who solves the mystery that he can marry one of the princesses. Several princes fail until one cunning prince finds out the truth. He tells their secret to the king and chooses to marry the eldest princess. Yet, Winterson reproduces and deconstructs it in a new version in which each princess tells her own story. In Winterson’s blending of different stories, one of her main concerns is love above heterosexual norms. In each tale, her feminist retelling defies the restrictions of love that relies on the polarization of gender, leading to an overthrow of the traditional male-female binary and its subsequent heterosexual expectations. In addition, Winterson’s endings of fairy tales are like a beginning of the subversion of gender divisions and heterosexual love.

Unlike in the traditional fairy tale, the princesses in Winterson’s retold-tale live unhappily with their husbands. Each one has a different story. The eighth princess kills her husband with poison and the ninth, chained by her husband, kills him violently by tearing his liver from his body. Likewise, the eleventh princess kills her husband. After looking for Fortunata for a long time, Jordan meets the eldest princess and listens to the stories one by one. The first story is told by the eldest princess. Interestingly, she begins with the expression “You know” (48) as if to show the predictable plot of a fairy tale in which the heroine is saved by a prince, holds his hand and they live happily ever after, a heterosexual ending. Yet, the princess maintains “We did, but not with our husbands” (48). Winterson intertwines this tale with Hans Christian Andersen’s story of “The Little Mermaid” (1994). The princess falls in love with a mermaid: “I fell in love with her at once, and after a few months of illicit meetings, my husband complaining all the time that I stank of fish, I ran away and began housekeeping with her in perfect salty bliss” (48). Leaving her husband, she decides to spend the rest of her life with a woman. This ending defamiliarizes events in an unexpected way and alters the perception of conventional love. In addition, by constructing a fictional world in which the princess fulfills her desires, Winterson crosses borders of love. In Andersen’s story, the mermaid is after immortality. She has to find a prince to marry. Her wish-fulfillment depends on a

man. She loses her voice and her mermaid body for him. Different from the sad ending of the original story, Winterson's parody of "The Little Mermaid" allows the princess a happy ending, celebrating her lesbian love. Hence, love in this postmodern version of the tale overcomes habitual perceptions of heteronormativity. Through the princess' love, Winterson mocks and challenges accepted norms and values without relying on the convention of phallogocentric artists.

The second princess "had not minded her husband much more than any wife" (49). She kills him after he burns one of her favourite items from her religious collection. Just like the item, which is a mummified body of a saint, she mummifies her husband until he dies. Likewise, the third princess kills her husband because he falls in love with a boy. In this tale, the husband represents beauty: "His eyes were brown marshes, his lashes were like willow trees. His eyebrows shot together made a dam between his forehead and his face. His cheeks were steep and sheer, his mouth was a volcano" (50). Winterson, therefore, mocks traditional discourses of fairy tales in which heroines have lips as red as blood, skin as white as snow. In one sense, geographical imagery is used to show the authoritative representation of men in tales. The husband's "brown marshes" symbolize stagnancy. The "willow tree" symbolizes challenge, boldness, strength, stability. His mouth is likened to a "volcano." It can be interpreted as a kind of power symbol since volcanoes comprise the power of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Each of these has its own strength; Earth with its steadiness, Water with its resistance, Fire with its devastating potential. Although the husband represents all forms of power, Winterson's parody alters his traditional depiction from the strong to the weak because despite his strong depiction, a woman mummifies him, which shows his weakness. Furthermore, she uses the power of language to destabilize and subvert gendered oppositions. To illustrate, the word 'beauty' is often used to describe women; however, in this tale, it describes a man, ridiculing the depiction of gender in several fairy tales. Moreover, the fact that her husband prefers a man instead of the princess shows the overwhelming power of romantic love that conquers gender expectations. Through this postmodern parody's comic refunctioning and subversive power, Winterson transgresses boundaries of gender in her construction of love.

Through homosexual love, the fifth princess's story breaks down traditional gender oppositions. In addition, it transgresses boundaries of conventional

representations of love in fairy tales. The intertext includes Brother Grimm's "Rapunzel" (2013) and "The Frog Prince" (1974). In the original tale, Rapunzel is depicted as a naïve, beautiful and gentle princess. When she is born, her parents have to give her to an old witch in return for the plant that Rapunzel's father steals from the witch's garden. Held captive by the witch in a tower in the middle of the forest, the princess cannot leave the place since it has no doors or stairs. One day a prince wanders around the tower, hears Rapunzel singing, and falls in love with her at once. After the witch learns about their love, she pushes the prince down the tower. Falling on the thorns, he becomes blind and the witch leaves him to his death, but he does not die. After wandering for a long time in the woods, he meets Rapunzel again. Her tears heal his eyes and they live happily ever after. However, in Winterson's postmodern transformation, Rapunzel's family forces her to marry the prince next door. Falling in love with an old woman, namely with the fifth princess, Rapunzel decides to leave her family and starts to live with her beloved in a tower with no entrance and "on a level with the sky" (52). I think lesbian love is celebrated in this feminist rewriting. This parody subverts traditional norms of love by choosing an old woman as the love interest and so transgresses boundaries of gender in love relationships.

Unlike in traditional fairy tales, the princess does not represent weakness, lack or dependence and the prince not strength, authority and power. By deconstructing the binary opposition of femininity and masculinity in this revision, Winterson builds a new understanding of love which is transgressive. Furthermore, Winterson's description of the prince in the same tale troubles stereotypical male identity: "One day the prince, who has always liked to borrow his mother's frocks, dressed up as Rapunzel's lover and dragged himself into the tower" (52). This reminds Jordan's cross-dressing which functions to do away with conventions and restraints of gender. In addition, we see a comic refunctioning of the depiction of princes in fairy tales because readers see an ironic contradiction between this prince with feminine manners and an archetypical masculine prince in traditional narrations. Similarly, Winterson subverts gender norms by focusing on the culturally constructed notion of the binary oppositions between male and female. Besides this, the tale ends with another intertext, "The Frog Prince." The fifth princess maintains that her husband turned into a frog the first time she kissed him. As it is seen, there

are two transformations in this tale. The princess turns into a witch, and the prince into a frog. Thus, the husband reveals his true identity as opposed to his gender role so that Winterson can fight against the fixed definition of masculinity associated with stereotypical values of gender and love formed in society.

To sum up, Winterson intertwines the fifth princess's tale with everyday language in a subversive way and challenges the anticipated endings: "After that they lived happily ever after, of course" (52). This is also a comic remark since the expression "of course" mocks traditional endings in fairy tales. What is more, in this reproduction, there is transgression and censorship of certain social structures such as marriage, love and heterosexuality. Marriage without love is questioned, heterosexual love is undermined and patriarchal love is subverted. Although lesbian lovers are engaged in a conflict with society, their love outside of marriage is naturalized. They resist gender roles assigned to them by the society.

All stories include subversion of patriarchal marriage since marriage is an obligation approved by the church. In the stories, the dancing princesses challenge such a patriarchal institution and do not associate happiness with heterosexual marriage. They reject a heterosexual subjectivity and demand love transgressing boundaries of dominant discourses. None of the princesses stays with their husbands. The seventh princess's husband, for example, is a woman. They have a happy marriage. Her story mirrors the importance of love over marriage. The theme of love is reinforced by physical love and sex in this tale. For this reason, transgressive is a better term to describe love than transcendent. Notably, the forms of writing present a challenge to traditional representations of love in fairy tales since the language used is very ardent: "I wanted to run my finger from the cleft in her chin down the slope of her breasts and across the level plains of her stomach to where I knew she would be wet" (54). These remarks for a female transgress limits of stereotypical love because in canonical female writing of the nineteenth century, females do not express love graphically or sexually, but instead should have chaste, pure love.

In addition, a princess's revealing her sexual desires in a fairy tale is not appropriate for normative heterosexual discourses. Thus, her passionate and erotic speech challenges the dominant features of the articulation of sexuality by men. Through women's sexual fantasies, Winterson also challenges phallogocentric tendencies in language because unlike monolithic texts which do not permit

variation, this tale is produced with its variable meanings. In addition, the story, resting “on disorder [...] that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems” (Jackson 4), is a struggle against the limits of sexuality. In traditional works, women are conditioned into accepting lack and dependence. Often, there is a stereotypical couple; their sexuality is defined as natural in patriarchal society. But the afore-mentioned princess’s lover is a woman. The tale does not create heterosexual love for the benefit of men; rather, it naturalizes homosexuality since the presence of love is more important than the gender of the beloved. Likewise, some princesses fall in love with women, some husbands fall in love with men, and some princesses abandon their husbands. Being in a state of un-belonging within a heterosexual union, the princesses decide to share a home together without their husbands. Homosexual love is never a central issue of these tales; instead it is shown as a natural way of life. Furthermore, it deconstructs the meanings and values that society attaches to gender and sex.

The seventh princess maintains: “For eighteen years we lived alone in a windy castle and saw no one but each other. Then someone found us and then it was too late. The man I married was a woman. They came to burn her. I killed her with a single blow to the head before they reached the gates” (54). Here, the princess supports “the culturally repudiated status of homosexuality as a form of love” (Butler 206). In accordance with the ideals of the restrictive patriarchal system, one should only live sex with the opposite sex and it requires a distinct set of boundaries. The emphasis on sexual desire is also provocative to conventional sexed hierarchies. Yet, the couple transgresses all those boundaries of the body, sex and love through rule-breaking gender codes. Their love rises above those kinds of cultural hierarchies and restrictions.

The tenth princess’s story functions to interrogate the concepts of love and marriage, too. She gets married after the king’s, namely her father’s order. But she does not love her husband. She likens her home to a cell: “I am in a cell waiting to be called for execution” (58). She feels cheated, and offended by her husband: “Day by day I felt myself disappearing. For my husband, I was no longer a reality; I was one of the things around him” (58). The princess feels like a prisoner; having an inferior status in her marriage. She has two choices: either to stay, be unhappy and humiliated or to leave, be unhappy and dignified. She chooses the latter and leaves

him for the latter may not give as much happiness as the former. Her departure is a way of challenging patriarchal portrayals of women in fairy tales. Thus, through this revision, Winterson produces a brilliant example of postmodernist transgression that is relevant to her understanding of love outside of patriarchal marriage. Likewise, Jordan and Fortunata's love story functions to trouble boundaries of patriarchal love. It is intermingled with the princesses' story, a tale within a tale. Listening to only eleven stories, Jordan asks for the last princess, Fortunata, and is informed that she has never lived with them because she runs away from her wedding. I think Fortunata is a symbolic character, a symbol of independence. She frees herself not only from her husband but also from the violence of patriarchal love. The name Fortunata signals the word fortunate, which means lucky, happy, fruitful, rich and blessed. This name carries some messages related to her liberation from oppression. She represents power but not in a traditional sense. Her fortune, happiness, wealth and holiness do not depend on patriarchal love. She can be happy without a husband. Even after Jordan finds her and says that he loves her, she chooses to go on her own way and live alone. She does not want to be bound to male company.

Consequently, it is through Jordan's imagination that the princesses contest patriarchal assumptions about their sexuality and gender. Winterson's parodic rewriting of the dancing princesses, thus, helps to subvert and deconstruct conventional norms of gender, heterosexual love and marriage. It also crosses borders of love despite gender boundaries. Hence, Winterson uses this technique as a tool to construct transgressive love, which is not bound to partnership with the opposite sex. Her altered tales approach love "by celebrating ceilings and denying floors" (15), in other words, by denying binary oppositions.

**CHAPTER III:**  
**SUBVERSION OF PATRIARCHAL LOVE IN *ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT***

**3.1. Subversion of Biblical Stories**

No one can legislate love; it cannot be given orders or cajoled into service. Love belongs to itself, deaf to pleading and unmoved by violence. Love is not something you can negotiate. Love is the one thing stronger than desire and the only proper reason to resist temptation. (Winterson, *Written on the Body* 77-78)

Love beyond boundaries has been the overall focus of many of Winterson's novels. Thus, it is not surprising that one of Winterson's thematic concerns is love in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Many critics see the transcendent aspect of love in this novel. To illustrate, in *Love in Winterson's Novels*, Ellam writes that "the meaning of love [in *Oranges*] is dependent on its ability to transcend sexual barriers and gender. It should be limitless" (13). In addition to the effect of love as transcendent, in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson uses fantasy which "is not to do with inventing another non-human world [...] It has to do with inverting elements of this world, re-combining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new', absolutely 'other' and different" (Jackson 8). Therefore, I believe that love in this novel also has a transgressive aspect, "inverting elements of this world" by exceeding limits of gender, marriage and laws of human society. In her writing of transgressive love, combining fantasy and reality, Winterson produces "something strange, unfamiliar" in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Additionally, she deconstructs and subverts traditional understanding of the theme of love with her use of postmodern discourse that argues against the absolute truth of love. Her style, thus, does not permit hierarchal thinking as in transcendental love.

In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, we see Jeanette's growing from a little child to a young woman and her search for love through fantasies, dreams and real life experiences. Her mother is the Missionary Secretary and so adopts her mostly for religious reasons. Because her mother does not send her to school until the government forces her, Jeanette begins her education by reading the Bible and studying the lives of the saints. Thus, her strictly religious education depends on the heterosexual bias of the Bible and on dominant social norms of gender. Her school life becomes a disaster as a result of her evangelist obsessions. As she grows, she meets Melanie, who works at a fish stall. They start a love relationship, going against all norms of heterosexuality as supported by the church and the traditional society. Their rebellion is displayed within the general framework of the novel that relies on the subversive criticism of the Bible. Each chapter is entitled with the names of books in the Old Testament. The first chapter "Genesis," for example, subverts the concept of creation in the Bible and the adopted child Jeanette's metaphoric creation by her evangelist mother. Biblical culture promotes binary thinking and perceiving things in a dualistic way such as white-black, male-female, and heterosexual-homosexual. Yet, although in this chapter Jeanette's mother teaches her either to love or hate something rather than to have emotional ambivalence, Jeanette challenges the Bible's dualistic thinking and subverts the sexist and gender-bound readings of the Bible through her lesbian love.

*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* tells the story of Jeanette and her lesbian love. The love objects in this novel are Jeanette's mother, God, and Melanie. Her love for her mother and God cannot escape the dualism of master-slave and good-evil. However, this chapter of my thesis does not focus on dualism but on the binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality and its deconstruction. To begin with, Jeanette is taught to perceive everything in its binary form before school life. After school, she learns not to define things as black and white because she remarks that "at school there was confusion" (41). Although she is forced into following the church's rules and seeking the same sex for love to be an ideal woman, she breaks out of those rules and falls in love with a woman, defying hierarchy, disrupting binaries associated with gender. So Jeanette's lesbian love transgresses sexual barriers and gender norms associated with the concept of traditional love.



The second chapter “Exodus” which means departure, is specifically about Jeanette’s school life. This chapter hints at Jeanette’s departure from home. School represents the outside world in which there are not boundaries and definite notions and in which Jeanette begins to see the errors of the church’s and her mother’s conventional thinking of love. Before school, under the influence of her mother’s instructions, Jeanette used to give certain definitions for everything: “I discovered that everything in the natural world was a symbol of the Great Struggle between good and evil” (16). Therefore, Jeanette is made to criticize uncertainty as unnatural. For this reason, she has to “make [herself] as ordinary as possible” (39). Moreover, when Jeanette loses her hearing at seven, all the church members, her mother’s friends and the pastor claim that it is because of her holiness. However, later Miss Jewsbury, a friend of her mother, who has not been to the church for a long time, notices that Jeanette cannot hear. She immediately takes her to hospital. While in hospital, Jeanette begins to question the reactionary teachings of the church: “Since I was born I had assumed that the world ran on very simple lines, like a larger version of our church. Now I was finding that the church was sometimes confused. This was a problem. But not one I chose to deal with for many years more” (26-27). On the one hand, Jeanette realizes that the world is far more complex and that the church may be mistaken. On the other hand, thinking that the church’s confusion is a problem, Jeanette rejects living on a simple heterosexual line and subverts the reactionary educations of the church through her lesbian love. Her rejection breaks single, reductive truths of heteronormativity and introduces multiple, contradictory truths of postmodern love.

As Jeanette grows, she begins to question heterosexual love. The first time Jeanette mentions marriage is when she meets an old gypsy woman who says to her: “You’ll never marry, not you, and you’ll never be still” (7). Jeanette is conflicted but she does not worry because she thinks about two happy women in her town. One day, Jeanette wants to go to the seaside with them. However, her mother rejects it firmly due to the implication that they are lesbians. Later, Jeanette hears her mother say to Mrs. White that those women “dealt with unnatural passions” (7). Additionally, during the washday, women talk about the same couple and say that they are “different” (7). In a sense, Jeanette is not old enough to understand why their relationship is seen as unnatural and they are seen as different. But I think such

suggestions hint that Jeanette is also subconsciously warned against homosexual relationships. Here, lesbian love is made an object of exclusion, and in Jackson's book, Foucault's critical material reminds such an effect of transgression: "Any transgression in life becomes a social crime, condemned and punished...imprisoned in a moral world [for offending...] society" (Jackson 173). Likewise, owing to her rejection of conventional love, Jeanette is punished, imprisoned in her room, dismissed from home and the church. Despite these bad experiences, she goes on to live her love outside of oppressive social forms. Thus, by breaking social conventions, Jeanette's love fulfils a transgressive function.

In addition, she observes married couples around her and looks at the traditional roles, images of husbands and wives. One day Jeanette, her mother and Mrs. Finch are on the way home from the church, Jeanette thinks about Mr. Finch: "I lagged behind, thinking about Pastor Finch and how horrible he was. His teeth stuck out, and his voice was squeaky" (13). There occurs a horrible image of husbands like Mr Finch in Jeanette's inner world. This image disturbs traditional images of men's bodies that are associated with strong muscles, wide shoulders. Following this, Jeanette states that not getting married "might not be such a bad thing after all" (13). Hence, Jeanette's feelings for marriage and love start to grow outside of conventional clichés from the early moments of her childhood.

The chapter "Numbers," about the Biblical story of wandering Jews finding and settling in the Promised Land, signals Jeanette's wanderings into the nature of postmodern love that breaks the limits of heterosexual discourse. "Numbers" begins with Jeanette's interrogation of marriage without love. This questioning lasts till the end of the chapter through some stories Jeanette hears or reads. For a while, Jeanette hears people from her family speak about an ideal husband for her:

Everyone always said you found the right man.

My mother said it, which was confusing

My auntie said it, which was even more confusing. (72)

Being influenced by her family's statements, Jeanette has a dream in which she gets married. Her husband is sometimes "blind, sometimes a pig, sometimes [her] mother, sometimes the man from the post office, and once, just a suit of clothes with nothing inside" (71). From Jackson's psychoanalytical perspective, this dream subverts

conventional images of husbands because it violates the generally and established norms of men's etiquette. It also draws connections between marriage and unhappiness as well as disappointment. Therefore, Jackson's psychoanalytic interpretations read Jeanette's dream of accommodating a pessimistic point of view towards marriage and heterosexual love. Afterwards, Jeanette observes that women usually define their husbands not as men but as beasts. She asks questions to her mother and her auntie about their marriages. Not being satisfied with their comments, Jeanette keeps trying to understand why a woman chooses to marry a beast. Tired of questioning, she comes to a decision; because women cannot marry women, they marry beasts: "There were a lot of women, and most of them got married. If they couldn't marry each other, and I didn't think they could [...] some of them would inevitably have to marry beasts" (73). So Jeanette understands that dominant hierarchal systems do not permit homosexual love. Yet, Jeanette breaks the demands of those systems by transgressing limits of her gender.

In the next chapter "Joshua," there are several different stories that criticize the church. In the biblical version of the chapter, Israelites combat to conquer the city of Jericho, a city surrounded by strong walls. They fight for seven days. Yet the victory comes not with the army forces but with the priests' blowing trumpets. Similarly, Jeanette combats against the church. Even after the pastor, for whom love has strict rules, guidelines and solid boundaries, states that a woman cannot love another woman "with a love reserved for man and wife" (105), Jeanette rejects not only surrender in her own battle but also the restrictions of her gender. In this chapter, she has a dream in which she goes to the city of Lost Chances. The events in her dream echo the trials of the Judgement Day. After her affair with Melanie is made public, Jeanette is judged and found wanting so that she should live in the city of Lost Chances. Here, her homosexual love is seen by the church as "the Fundamental Mistake" (111) she has made. However, Jeanette lives out her love above the established gender norms. Her fantasy's subversive power lies in her resistance to the wrong judgement of the church:

"Do you deny you love this woman with a love reserved for man and wife?"

"No, yes, I mean of course I love her" (*Oranges* 105)

Obviously, Jeanette tries to find a language for her unconscious desire. Winterson's fantastic narrative does this by "placing [Jeanette] in a social context" (Jackson 62). Additionally, Jeanette believes in the power of her pure love for Melanie: "To the pure all things are pure" she yells at the pastor and adds "It is you [who are unnatural] not us" (Winterson 105). Here, Jeanette's resistance to the walls of conventional sexed hierarchies displays a resemblance to the battle of Jericho: "Walls protect and walls limit. It is in the nature of walls that they should fall. That walls should fall is the consequence of blowing your own trumpet" (*Oranges* 112). Like in the story of "Joshua" Jeanette blows her own trumpet, causing the collapse of the walls of the church. She subverts the tainted representation of homosexual love by showing the church that as long as one's feelings for the same sex are without boundaries, there is nothing wrong and unnatural about them. For the church, anything associated with heterosexuality is natural. Yet, as a transgressive protagonist, Jeanette violates this moral, natural law through her lesbian love.

As can be understood from its title, the following chapter "Judges" includes the judgement of Jeanette's homosexual love. Initially, Jeanette describes her mother's judgements:

She didn't believe in Determinism and Neglect, she believed that you made "people and yourself what you wanted. Anyone could be saved and anyone could fall to the Devil, it was their choice." While some of our church forgave me on the admittedly dubious grounds that I couldn't help it [...] my mother saw it as a wilful act on my part to sell my soul. (*Oranges* 131)

Her mother thus accuses Jeanette of cooperating with Satan and claims that by loving someone from the same sex, she sells her soul. In addition to her spiritual treachery, her mother maintains that Jeanette has "taken on a man's world in other ways; she had flouted God's law and tried to do it sexually" (133-134). However, what Jeanette and Melanie share is more than sexual entanglement: "She stroked my head for a long time, and then we hugged and it felt like drowning. Then I couldn't stop. There was something crawling in my belly. I had an octopus inside me" (89). Being unable to understand Jeanette's desire for love that breaks free from gender boundaries, her mother insists that Jeanette must choose a male partner, as the acceptable love bond is the one with the opposite sex. Nonetheless, Jeanette's love affairs with the same sex turn over her mother's position from being natural to unnatural. Winterson

absolutely emphasizes this unnaturalness by displaying that Jeanette's mother's marriage is like a ritual of habits; when her mother is awake, her father is asleep, and the mum is always active whereas the father is passive. There is no passion or romanticism in their relationship. The couple does what is usually expected of them in their society. However, Jeanette exceeds what is usually expected of her in her town. She escapes from gender categories, leaves home, the church and her family instead of living her life in boundaries.

Jeanette's judgement goes on with Pastor Spratt who claims that Jeanette "was the victim of a great evil. That [she] was afflicted and oppressed, that [she] had deceived the flock. (*Oranges* 131). As the representative of the church, the pastor judges Jeanette's homosexual love as false and abnormal. He connects Jeanette's love with affliction, oppression and deception. Thinking "more carefully about [her] own instincts" (*Oranges* 128), Jeanette comments: "It all seemed to hinge around the fact that I loved the wrong sort of people [...] Romantic love for another woman was a sin" (127). I think the word "instincts" is used to draw explicit attention to Jeanette's unconscious drives that break the laws of human society. This utterance produces a subversive effect on the church's above-mentioned criticism of love because Jeanette's attitude is far from gender norms and values. Thus, it is possible to state that through her lesbian love, Jeanette realizes a desire for transgression. Furthermore, she gives an example from her memories. One day a man comes to their church with his boyfriend. Her mother's comment is, 'Should have been a woman that one' (127). Such a fundamentalist approach to love arouses negative feelings towards heteronormativity. Similarly, her mother defines lesbian love as 'Aping men' (127), and she is disgusted. Following this, Jeanette says, "Now if I was aping men she'd have every reason to be disgusted" (127). This mocking statement goes on with Jeanette's thoughts about men: "As far as I am concerned, men were something you had around the place" (127). When we interpret her statements above from a postmodern feminist perspective, it is possible to articulate that her account of men undermines the hegemonic status of the male identity. Reversing the judgement position, the third judge in the chapter becomes Jeanette. She judges her mother's way of thinking: "I knew my mother hoped I would blame myself, but I didn't. I knew now where the blame lay. If there's such a thing as spiritual adultery, my mother was a whore" (134). This time Jeanette accuses her of selling her soul.

Despite all these judgements, Jeanette goes on to her own way and leaves home. She believes that “It was not a judgement day, but another morning” (*Oranges* 135).

Jeanette’s critique of love and marriage in the last chapter “Ruth” is another good example of postmodern transgression of love beyond traditional forms of the theme that relies upon the laws of human society:

I want someone who is fierce and will love me until death and know that love is as strong as death, and be on my side for ever and ever. I want someone who will destroy and be destroyed by me. There are many forms of love and affection, some people can spend their whole lives together without knowing each other’s names [...] Romantic love has been diluted into paperback form and has sold thousands and millions of copies [...] I would cross seas and suffer sunstroke and give away all I have, but not for a man, because they want to be the destroyer and never the destroyed. That is why they are unfit for romantic love. (*Oranges* 170)

On the one hand, her critique hints at the biblical story in which a foreigner called Ruth abandons her people and religion in order to be on her widowed mother-in-law Naomi’s “side for ever and ever” (Dyas, Hughes & Travis 79). Her loyalty to Naomi is analogous to Jeanette’s loyalty to another female. On the other hand, her critique focuses on the power of love above marriage. One consequence of this focus is that it supports ungendered tendencies in love, especially challenging the idealization of heterosexual love. By saying that love “has many forms”, Jeanette makes explicit a rejection of a unified and heterosexual subjectivity in love relationships. In addition, Jeanette prefers a female lover to a male as she believes men are only destroyers of love. But, after writing that men are not fit for love, keeping her postmodern stance, Winterson writes that there are exceptions. Thus, her writing of love transgresses gender norms. In short, Winterson’s protagonist subverts a public sense of love through dissolving normative boundaries.

In addition to deconstruction and subversion of gender roles in the construction of transgressive love in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson presents realistic fiction that involves the violation of absolute truth through speech acts. Particularly, in her interrogations of love, Jeanette’s expressions such as “I thought” (7, 13, 77, 128, 162), “I think” (102, 123), “I believe” (95) and “perhaps”

(42, 95, 135, 143, 176) lead to confusion and ambiguity which remind Todorov's hesitancy. As Todorov writes, through fantasy, "an ambiguous perception [can be] shared by the reader and one of the characters" (46). In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Jeanette is the character whose "ambiguous perception" of love permits ultimate questions about heterosexuality. To illustrate, while questioning her feelings for Melanie, Jeanette says "I wasn't quite certain what was happening" (99-100). With its quality of certainty, only heterosexual love is acceptable in patriarchal society. Nevertheless, here Jeanette's hesitancy is used as a tool to invert the definite concept of love. Furthermore, like Jordan, Jeanette usually lives in the imaginative world where there are no boundaries. After being punished by the pastor for her lesbian love, she leaves home. Some years later when she visits her mother, she is still suspicious of the events in her life:

I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever been anywhere [...] There's a chance that I'm not here at all, that all the parts of me, running along all the choices I did and didn't make, for a moment brush against each other. That I am still an evangelist in the North, as well as the person who ran away. Perhaps for a while these two selves have become confused. (169)

She uses the pronoun "I" and expressions such as "perhaps", "if I" which function to create Todorov's hesitancy. These ideas are in her inner world, namely in her fictional world. Thus, these statements create fantastic hesitancy that is central to poststructuralism which argues against absolute truth of love.

To conclude, in the construction of transgressive love in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson not only reverses the binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality but also subverts Jeanette's "inability to realise the limitations of [her] sex" (*Oranges* 134). Certainly, one of these limitations is not having the right to love someone from the same sex. In short, as well as transcending barriers, Jeanette's experience of love with the same sex results in a lot of boundary-breaking of marriage, gender and sex in this novel.

### 3.2. Transgressing Social Norms of Love

In addition to parodic rewriting of biblical stories, Winterson retells different texts in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* to transgress social boundaries of love. Different from the fairy tales in *Sexing the Cherry*, which focus upon the subversion of gender norms, the tales in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* are told to show how homosexual love results in exile from society because of the protagonist's challenge to such banishment. In traditional fairy tales, love requires a heterosexual coupling. Yet, as a postmodern feminist writer who is concerned with the issues of male-female identity, gender divisions and heteronormativity in love relationships, Winterson's parodic rewriting functions to exceed social limits of love. Therefore, Winterson's fiction makes explicit the problem of love beyond social and moral boundaries. This is primarily what makes her postmodern fairy tale revisions in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* worth analysing.

In the first chapter "Genesis", Jeanette makes up a fairy tale in which she draws attention to the princess's "great energy and resourcefulness" (9) rather than to her search for an ideal prince. The princess is so industrious that she is "in danger of being burned by [her] own flame" (9). One day, while wandering in the forest, she meets an old hunchback who desires to die but has to transfer her duties to someone else. As a responsible princess, she takes her responsibilities:

- (1) To milk the goats
- (2) To educate the people
- (3) To compose songs for their festival (9)

Jeanette's princess model shows that a woman can do very well without marriage and prove herself by taking responsibilities. However, in traditional fairy tales, heroines seek happiness in marriage, their biggest drive is to find a handsome prince. In Winterson's revision, female roles are subverted. Women do not search for patriarchal love.

Trying to form her own opinions about love, independent of the traditional fairy tale genre, Jeanette makes up her own tale in the chapter "Leviticus." Even though the plot is estimated, about the search for love of a handsome prince, it is transformed by Winterson to construct love out of patriarchy. With a well-known beginning, Jeanette introduces a very beautiful woman living in the forest. In



addition to her beauty, “she was very wise too, being well acquainted with the laws of physics and the nature of the universe” (61). Presenting a female as an autonomous being with intelligence, Jeanette defamiliarizes the traditional female identity in tales. She also subverts the male identity of the prince: “He was considered by many to be a good prince, and a valuable leader. He was also quite pretty, though a little petulant at times” (61). Here, the use of the word “pretty” instead of handsome mocks and perverts the depiction of males in fairy tales. Showing her characters from a different perspective, Winterson not only challenges gender roles but also the automatic and habitual perception of love through parody.

The tale goes on with the prince’s search for a woman “without blemish inside or out, flawless in every respect” (61). It is ironic that he himself is not perfect as he is flawed with his “petulant” attitudes. After looking for the perfect woman for a long time, he finds her in the forest. Similar to the depiction of the female at the beginning of the tale, the perfect woman is also clever, bold and stands on her own feet. She does not belong in the terrain of the traditional fairy tale women. To illustrate, she does not seem enthusiastic when the prince’s advisor wants to talk to her:

‘Fair maid,’ he began.

‘If you want to chat,’ she said, ‘you’ll have to come back later, I’m working to a deadline.’

The advisor was very shocked.

‘But I am royal,’ he told her.

‘And I’m working to a deadline,’ she told him. (*Oranges* 63)

She is brave enough to rebel against the authority. She has more important jobs than looking for a husband. Later, she refuses the prince’s proposal, an unusual ending. I think her boldness destabilizes traditional discourses of love. In other words, through parodic rewriting of the traditional fairy tale ending, Winterson subverts the habitual and automatic discourses of love because the perfect woman is not bound to male ownership. As her love is free from such oppression and barriers of heteronormativity, she can lead her life happily without getting married to a man whom she does not love.

Moreover, the re-telling of Sir Perceval and King Arthur emphasizes Jeanette's exclusion from home, church and society owing to her lesbian love. Leaving King Arthur and his home, Sir Perceval has hard times: "Tonight, bitten and bruised, he dreams of Arthur's court, where he was the darling, the favourite. He dreams of his hounds and his falcon, his stable and his faithful friends. His friends are dead now. Dead or dying" (135). Here, Sir Perceval's exclusion and loneliness are comparable to Jeanette's. Like him, Jeanette leaves home, does not see her friends again since they are dead or dying. Winterson parodies Sir Perceval's story to demonstrate Jeanette's collision with the church that imposes on her a life without being able to love freely, without boundaries. Yet, Jeanette's love offers a welcome contrast to the church because it allows no limits to be set.

Furthermore, the last chapter "Ruth" includes intertextual relations between Winnet's story which is a fictional tale made up by Jeanette and King Arthur's knight Sir Perceval's story. Winnet is a girl adopted by a sorcerer. Her father trains her. Everybody in her society loves her. She has good relations with her dad until she falls in love with someone whom her father rejects. Sir Perceval is Arthur's purest knight. Like Winnet, he has to leave his place. He leaves the court so that he can be mature enough to develop himself. He needs to take responsibility, learn how to survive and travel to some places on his own to achieve his aim. To begin with, the fairy tale about Winnet Stonejar functions to show the protagonist's exile from home due to her love choice. This story bears parallels with Jeanette's. Both are apprentices of their adoptive parents, Winnet as an apprentice of a sorcerer and Jeanette is her mother's apprentice as a missionary. When Jeanette falls in love with a female, she has to leave church and her family to escape from domination. Similarly, because of her love for the wrong person, Winnet's father, the sorcerer sends her away from his castle:

'Daughter, you disgraced me,' said the sorcerer, 'and I have no more use for you. You must leave.' Winnet could not ask for forgiveness when she was innocent, but she did not ask to stay. (147)

Even though she does not feel guilty, like Jeanette, Winnet does not stay. Thus, Winnet's story is told to fit Jeanette's own conclusion. So it is told to provide a subversive account of patriarchal love. Her violation of moral boundaries reinforces the argument against compulsory heterosexual couplings. In addition, Jeanette's

desire for the freedom to love across barriers ends in her departure from her society. Despite labelled as an outcast, Jeanette manages to rewrite her own life story by escaping from gender roles. This occurs through storytelling which is told at the beginning of the novel: “Storytelling [...] enables children to adapt, edit and invent life stories of their own” (6). Hence, Winterson allows Jeanette to adapt, edit her love stories out of heterosexual expectations so that Jeanette can fulfil her desires. In her story, love does not rely upon the male-female binary, rather it inverts rules. Lastly, Sir Perceval’s tale is rewritten for the same parodic purpose: to demonstrate the theme of exile:

Sir Perceval curses himself for leaving the Round Table, leaving the king, and the king’s sorrowing face. On his last night at Camelot, he found Arthur walking in the garden, and Arthur had cried like a child, and said there was nothing. (166)

To sum up, through parody, Winterson rewrites the rules of hegemony, presents a serious criticism of heterosexual love.

Briefly, this chapter of my thesis includes Winterson’s fictional re-creations of fairy tales that allow Jeanette’s love to overcome strict rules of traditional society, to disrupt the dominating theme that love is a norm bound operation. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, by putting Jeanette in a world of fiction, Winterson shows how the protagonist can fight against solid boundaries through her experience of transgressive love with the same sex.

## CONCLUSION

My thesis topic presents insights vital to women’s liberation from gender norms. In addition, it discusses the feminist politics of love. Love is a significant issue of humanity for a long time. People have tried to bind it with social norms and restraints of gender roles. However, Jeanette Winterson and her works *Sexing the Cherry* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* are a big part of the struggle against boundaries drawn for love. In this thesis, it is observed that her postmodern feminist writing argues against those boundaries. As narrative strategies, she uses fantastic and parody in her interrogation of love. Critically, with brilliance of mind and consistence, she resists the heterosexual matrix of her society in love relationships

and to do this, she transgresses limits of love. Considering Winterson's purpose, this study has aimed at analysing the above-named novels in terms of the subversion and deconstruction of traditional conventions and norms of love.

Almost all Winterson's works protest against cultural constraints of homosexual love. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, her female protagonist Jeanette falls in love with a woman, in the parodies in *Sexing the Cherry*, men love men, women love women. In *The Passion* (1991), Villanelle has a lesbian relationship, in *Written on the Body* (2013), the protagonist is ungendered, and he or she falls in love with a woman. Throughout the novel, we see her or his passion for new sexual experiences. In this thesis, however, the main concern is to free love from dominant heteronormative discourses, which can be possible through deconstruction of binary oppositions. Hence, the most foregrounded investigation in this study is mainly in the form of binary oppositions, particularly the one between men and women. Resting on this opposition, the dominant ideology Winterson undermines is obviously women's submission and secondary position to men's. As a result, in her novels, she portrays her female characters as embodiments of the ideology she reveals. The Dog-woman, for instance, seems like a man and emerges as a woman of full character and she can subvert the limitations of the male-dominated society largely. Thus, it is possible to state that Winterson leads the way to more spirited and demanding female characters whom women themselves will play in the coming centuries.

In the first part after the introduction, I focused on the definition of transgressive love. The main point of writing that part was to show what transgressive love means and how Winterson uses it in the novels studied. In the same part, Ellam's arguments of Winterson's understanding of love have been mentioned, which is needed here since her works are mostly concerned with the issue of transgressive love. After that, postmodern feminist literature was analysed in terms of postmodern feminist critics Hutcheon, Irigaray, Cixous, Kristeva, Butler, Doan and Harraway's ideas on the subversion of patriarchal love. Following this, postmodern narrative strategies fantastic that refers to Todorov and Jackson's studies and parodic rewriting referring to Bakhtin, Rose and Hutcheon's opinions were mentioned to prepare a substructure for the analysis of the novels in the next chapter.

In the second part, the thesis starts analysing the work *Sexing the Cherry*. It introduces the adapted hero Jordan and his masculine mother, the Dog-woman. We

see Jordan's search for love, his unconscious desires, the binary oppositions between his inner world and physical world, between femininity and masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality. Winterson deconstructs all these binaries through Jordan's imagination. Additionally, Jordan makes his way to a fish-stall by cross-dressing, which later helps him question heterosexual norms. His grafting a gender-unspecified fruit overturns the natural and subverts gender roles in. What is more, this chapter demonstrates how, as Todorov suggests, speech acts can be used as a tool to subvert heterosexual discourses of love through fantastic hesitation. Subsequently, Jordan's imaginative world is connected to Jackson's unconscious mind. The explanation of the reason beyond Jordan's search of love is his wish to fulfil his unconscious desire. Through the end of this chapter, by Jackson's fantastic subversion, Jordan subverts all norms and values associated with conventional love. Moreover, the parody of Grimm Brothers' fairy tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" is investigated to show how rewritten tales can be used to overthrow traditional male-female binary, how they can transgress limits of love and subvert gender divisions.

The final work analysed here is *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Winterson uses the same logic: Love is not a gender-bound operation. In this novel, the female protagonist Jeanette falls in love with Melanie. She is punished harshly for this. Biblical subversive stories are studied here to show how they help transgress boundaries of love through Jeanette's lesbian love. Afterwards, fairy tales made up by Jeanette are analysed and it is observed that Winterson produces these tales to challenge social norms that inhibit fulfilment of unconscious desires as well as creating an imaginative world in which love is transgressed.

As a divorced woman who has long been undermined and criticized with my attitudes in a male-dominated society, I empathize with Winterson's challenge to all gender discriminations in these novels. My role is to cook, clean, look after the children and to submit. Yet, I am not bounded by my gender and so am strongly opposed to boundaries of any kind. That is why I chose to work on the issue of love without boundaries in these novels. Luckily, the strategies, Winterson uses, that is to say her subversive and deconstructive trait made my job much more fun in the process of writing this thesis. I hope this thesis proves her worldview about love that exceeds limits of gender.

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