SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S TWO NOVELS: *ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT* AND *WRITTEN ON THE BODY*

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to explore the categories of sexuality and gender through an analysis of Jeanette Winterson's well-known novels, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Written on the body*, against the background of Butler's concept of performativity and Cixous's *écriture feminine*. By underlining the constructedness of these categories and questioning the boundaries of patriarchal concepts and transgressing them, Winterson deconstructs the binary oppositions created by phallocentric discourse and problematizes the verdict that sexuality is inborn. Instead of this ingrained notion, she asserts that gender and sexual identities are culturally and discursively constructed by the dominant discourse. Although the dominant discourse favors heterosexuality over homosexuality and degrades sexuality into a binary frame of oppositions such as masculinity/ feminity and male/female, Winterson, in her novels, seeks an alternative to escape this ideological binarism and achieves to subvert the binary oppositions by highlighting the fluidity of sexuality and gender, and by creating amorphous characters like the ungendered narrator in *Written on the*

body or by bestowing on them bisexuality or homosexuality as in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit.* Hence, the main argument of this thesis will be to display Winterson's deconstruction and dissolution of the patriarchal categories in her novels and to emphasize her escape from the binary charade, in a fictional universe, with references to Butlerian performativity and Cixousian *écriture feminine*.

Key Words: Sex, Sexuality, Gender, Performativity, *Écriture feminine*

ÖZ

JEANETTE WINTERSON'IN
ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT
VE *WRITTEN ON THE BODY*
ADLI İKİ ROMANINDAKİ
TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET VE CİNSEL KİMLİK

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Bu çalışma Jeanette Winterson'ın tanınmış romanları *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* ve *Written on the body*'daki cinsellik ve toplumsal cinsiyet kategorilerinin Butler'ın edimsellik (performativite) ve Cixous'un *écriture feminine* kuramına dayandırılarak incelemesini amaçlamaktadır. Winterson bu kategorilerin kurgusallıklarını vurgulayarak ve ataerkil kavramların sınırlarını sorgulayıp bunları aşarak, fallik söylem tarafından yaratılan ikili zıtlıklara yapıbozum yöntemiyle bakar ve cinsel kimliğin doğuştan geldiği hükmünü sorunsallaştırır. Bu yerleşmiş fikrin yerine, Winterson toplumsal cinsiyetin ve cinsel kimliğin baskın söylem tarafından kültürel ve tarihsel olarak inşa edildiğini öne sürer. Baskın söylemin heteroseksüeli eşcinselden üstün tutmasına ve cinselliği erillik/dişillik ve eril/dişil gibi ikili sisteme indirgemesine karşın, Winterson, romanlarında, bu ideolojik ikililikten kaçmak için bir alternatif arar. Cinsel kimliğin ve toplumsal cinsiyetin akışkanlığını öne çıkararak ve *Written on the body*'deki toplumsal cinsiyetsiz anlatıcı gibi biçimlenmemiş

kahramanlar kurgulayarak ya da *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*'taki kahramanları biseksüel ve eşcinsel olarak kurgulayarak ikili karşıtlıkları altüst etmeyi başarır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı Winterson'ın romanlarında ataerkil kategorilerin yapıbozumunu ve çözülmesini göstermek ve Butler'ın edimsellik (performativite) ve Cixous'un *écriture feminine* kuramları arka planında Winterson'ın ikili tuzaktan kaçmak için kullandığı yazınsal yöntemleri irdelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet, Cinsel Kimlik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Edimsellik (Performativite), *Écriture feminine*

To Tolga

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INTRODUCTION

> There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender.
>
> ~Judith Butler

> Sexual difference is probably the issue in our time which could be our "salvation" if we thought it through.
>
> ~Luce Irigaray

> Censor the body, and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard.
>
> ~Héléne Cixous

What are little boys made of?
Frogs and snails and puppy dog tails.
That's what little boys are made of.

What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and all that's nice.
That's what little girls are made of. (Letherby 4)

The disposition of gender and sexuality has disquieted and distracted the minds of human beings from the very beginning of antiquity as dominant discourses have been struggling endlessly to stabilize this slippery territory and to freeze the fluid nature of these constructed categories by means of power relations, preponderant ideologies, religious dogmas, familial and cultural obligations. The above given rhyme is an illustration of man's desire to produce merely a dichotomous notion

of gender and sexuality in every walk of daily life. In the quest for construing human gender and sexuality, some questions have been raised to clarify the haziness and indefiniteness of those terms, such as: Does gender rank after sex? Is gender a construction evolving throughout centuries? Is sexuality congenital or constructed? Those questions paved the way for contrasting views on gender and sexuality like the essentialist view and the constructivist view.

1.1. Review of Literature

The essentialist view argues that sexuality is congenital and natural, and "appeals to unchanging universal characteristic, an 'essence'. This essence is thought to be outside of or prior to social and historical factors" (McLaren 21). For the essentialists, the body is an absolute and abiding space devoid of historical and social effects. Diana Fuss points out that for those who advocate the essentialist point of view, "the body occupies a pure, pre-social, pre-discursive space. The body is 'real', accessible and transparent; it's always there and directly interpretable through the senses" (qtd. in McLaren 22). However, the constructivist view moves beyond the essentialist perspective as it underlines the constructedness of all hierarchies and categories since it emphasizes that "all labels and categories in society and the meaning attached to them are socially defined" (Dillon 363). Therefore, the supporters of this view assert that homosexuality as well as heterosexuality and all the other categorical terms are human constructs, and because of the fact that they are created by human beings, there is no absolute and natural sexuality, but there are sexualities that vary from one culture to another.

By adopting a word, with a previously offensive connotation, "queer" as its title, queer theory subverts the ideology of heteronormativity, and "the adoption of the inclusive moniker 'queer' reflects the rejection of taxonomic sexual categories that initially had been established through sexological discourse in the late 1800s and early 1900s" (Voss 184). Queer theory, thus, renounces to define and demarcate the spaces of gender, sex and sexuality as it is a field that "refuses to be disciplined" (Sullivan v). Although the field of queer theory remains slippery as it cannot be easily characterized, there has been an ongoing effort to pin down the inner dynamics of this movement and the logic behind it. Davidoff attempts to conceive the term and the queer writing by proffering that queer theory "refers to the writing that has taken sexuality as its subject and has specifically addressed to the ways in which lesbians, gays, and transsexuals raise questions about conventional understandings of sex and the sexes, and perforce gender" (qtd. in Turner 3).

Along with the dominant voices, marginalized voices that have been cast off and have not been given voice are, too, heard and welcomed in "the unformed, inchoate, provisional character of the field" (Turner 9). It is a territory in which all categories, boundaries, hierarchies and binaries are dissolved, and sexual polarities and diversities are cherished and celebrated beyond the dichotomous, bi-polar and definitive arrangement of sexuality. Rather than considering ingrained categories and identities immutable and the basis of truth, queer theory dwells on the process in which Western binary couplings are produced; "because

the binaries are revealed to be cultural constructions or ideological fictions, the reality of sexed bodies and gender and sexual identities are fraught with incoherence and instability" (Valocchi 753). Thereby, queer theory defies the supposition that "sexual attitudes and practices or gender roles [are] 'natural' and unchanging" (Wiesner-Hanks 7).

Regarding queer theory's repudiation of any kind of categorizations and demarcations, it might be claimed that the field is indebted to Poststructuralism, rooted in the philosophy of French thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Both Foucault and Derrida problematize the essentialist and foundational Cartesian cogito descending from Descartes's assertion that "the National independent subject is the ground of both ontology (being) and epistemology (theories of knowledge)" (Namaste 195). Western epistemology rests upon the Cartesian duality taking individuals as the basis of truth and reality. However, Poststructuralism challenges the postulate of taking subjects as a reference point for external reality and attaining a stable and unified self. Poststructuralism evinces that there is no such thing as an immutable self/subject since subjects are not autonomous beings insulated from the social network surrounding them and capable of arranging their lives or shaping themselves. In contrast, they are caught up in a social network in which social institutions, traditional épistemes, grand narratives, dominant discourse and powerful political mechanisms such as language, gender and identity constitute them. Therefore, "the subject is not something prior to politics or social structures but is precisely constituted in and through specific social, political arrangements" (Namaste 195).

In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault traces the configuration of sexuality in different centuries and dissolves the conjecture that Western society has always repressed sexuality and restrained the mention of it. He argues that since the seventeenth century, there has been dissemination and accumulation of discourses on sex, ultimately engendering discrepant sexual minorities and categories. In his retrospective inquiry, Foucault deciphers the common belief that prude Victorian society abstained from talking about sex and struggled to silence it by means of creating a taboo out of it. Yet, Foucault elicits the truth behind the working mechanisms of that time, shatters this misconception and eventually alleges that modern societies do not restrict and repress sexuality. Contrary to the widely held belief, they mention sexuality bluntly. By this way, in the discourse that they have generated, they both reflect and treat sexuality as a secret and decipher its construction process. What one comes across upon analyzing previous centuries is the proliferation of discourses and devices around sex. Rather than censoring the content and demanding secrecy concerning sex, there has been an instigation to make people talk about sex more and more, to redouble the mention of it in everyday life and in social institutions like medicine, psychiatry, justice, pedagogy and education, and to enhance the strength and effectiveness of discourses.

Foucault also differentiates between two means of producing truth about sex: in societies such as China, Japan and India, *Ars erotica*, erotic art, in which sex is highly favored whilst pleasure is experienced freely, appeared. Thus, truth was

experienced within pleasure itself. However, Western societies abandoned *Ars erotica*, and instead, generated and acknowledged *Scientia sexualis*, the science of sexuality, based on the ancient tradition of confession which has been integrated into a scientific discourse. Foucault questions the formation of sexuality and emphasizes the prominence of confession in this process:

> How has sexuality come to be considered the privileged place where our deepest "truth" is read and expressed? For that is the essential fact: Since Christianity, the Western world has never ceased saying: "To know who you are, know what your sexuality is". Sex has always been the forum where both the future of our species and our "truth" as human subjects is decided. Confession, the examination of the conscience, all the insistence on the important secrets of the flesh, has not been simply a means of prohibiting sex or of repressing it as far as possible from consciousness, but was a means of placing sexuality at the heart of existence and of connecting salvation with the mastery of these obscure movements. In Christian societies, sex has been the central object of examination, surveillance, avowal and transformation into discourse. (Foucault 111)

To construct truth out of an individual, the hidden knowledge of sex should be revealed. From the Christian ritual of confession to the modern psychiatrist's room, sex has always been an indispensable part of confession. Sexual discourses intend to annihilate any form of sexuality which lies outside the scope of heteronormativity and which is labeled as "unproductive." Foucault affirms, "the transformation of sex into discourse and the dissemination and reinforcement of heterogeneous sexualities are perhaps two elements of the same deployment: they are linked together with the help of the central element of confession that compels individuals to articulate their sexual peculiarities- no matter how extreme" (Gergen 48). Then, various sexual discourses in the nineteenth century proliferated the fruitless and perverse sexualities. Foucault suggests that a "reverse discourse" has emerged, bringing about unnatural, abnormal,

unproductive and fruitless sexualities. Having been created by the dominant discourse, these categories demand for the right to speak and to be spoken about. Also, they ask for acknowledgement with the same vocabulary with which the dominant discourse has been written and definitely in the same discourse in which it has been revived. In a way, Western civilization "built a code of sex for its own self-assertion. It erected the heterosexual monogamous couple into the standard of morality and pillar of society" as a result of which "every other form of sex came to be regarded as contrary to nature and dangerous to society" (Merquior 123). Thus, *The History of Sexuality* lays bare the underlying mechanisms of "sex" by purporting that Western culture has configured a definite form of "sexuality" and contributed to its growth and categorization. In such a context, sexuality appear as an artifact rather than as an innate trait.

The other significant Poststructuralist figure who contributed to the development of queer theory is Jacques Derrida. He defies any ingrained and irrefutable thought system and challenges Western dichotomous way of thinking, which is based on Cartesian duality, and uncovers the underpinnings of it. Derrida achieves this with the help of an analysis that he calls "deconstruction" which aims to understand the mechanisms and grounds of binary oppositions. Specifically, with the concept of "supplementarity," Derrida puts forth that meaning is constituted in a way that a transcendental or metaphysical being/thing cannot figure out its formation. Derrida illustrates, "[s]upplementarity, which is *nothing*, neither a presence nor an absence, is neither a substance nor an essence of man [*sic*]. It is precisely the play or presence and absence, the opening of this play that no

metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend" (244). In this way, meaning cannot be demarcated and categorized since the thing that has stayed outside cannot be regarded as being fully outside; it is inside, too: "The play between presence and absence is the condition of interpretation, insofar as each term depends on the other for its meaning" (Namaste 198). An example might clarify this point even more: despite the fact that men reject women, consider them as a no/non man, a culpable entity and an inchoate being, they need this antithesis so as to define themselves and to exert their existence. Eagleton, too, elaborates on this intricate relation and interprets the situation as follows:

> Perhaps she [woman] stands as a sign of something in man himself which he needs to repress, expel beyond his own being, relegate to a securely alien region behind his own definitive limits. Perhaps what is outside is also somehow inside, what is alien is also intimate- so that man needs to police the absolute frontier between the two realms as vigilantly as he does just because it may always be transgressed, has always been transgressed already and is much less absolute than it appears. (133)

Another example is in the binary opposition of homosexuality/ heterosexuality. As in the opposition between men and women, heterosexuals lean upon homosexuals in order to be defined and categorized as "straight" though they condemn their retrogrades.

Queer theory desires to demystify the frontiers of not sexuality, but sexual identities, categories and hierarchies. It traces the answers to the following questions; how can one draw the boundaries of identity as s/he cannot talk about an irrevocable and stable kind of identity? What is the relation between sexuality and power? Should other alternatives be suggested instead of the binary

oppositions or should the fluidity and multiplicity of sexuality be felicitated or denigrated? Dwelling on the ideas of Foucault and Derrida and borrowing from them, queer theory displays that human beings cannot define themselves by drawing the boundaries of their sexualities. One cannot stand entirely outside of heterosexuality, neither can s/he stand entirely inside of it as sexuality is not natural and innate, but historically, discursively and culturally constructed.

Apart from philosophers who shaped the main features of queer theory, a genealogical account of sexual identity should be presented by focusing on same-sex desire in various cultures at various times in order to have a better insight into the constructedness of the notions of sexuality and gender. However, "sexuality's history is still finding its way, oscillating between embarrassed silence and tempestuous logorrhea" (Tamagne 3). Therefore, the exact denunciation, origin and process of sexuality cannot be consigned easily as "there can be no true and correct account of heterosexuality, of homosexuality, of bisexuality and so on. Indeed, these categories for defining particular kinds of relationships and practices are culturally and historically specific and have not operated in all cultures at all times" (Sullivan 1). Throughout history, each culture has a different understanding and perception of same-sex desire; while in some cultures it has been regarded as a sin against nature or as an illness that needs to be cured, in others it has been highly acclaimed and favored.

In *The Order of Things,* Foucault looks at the previous épistemes and displays the constitution of heteronormativity in the Western world. Turner asserts that

"inquiry since 1800 has not only revolved around 'men' as the central organizing concept; it has also reflected the assumptions and perspectives of men- typically heterosexual and white" (11). By this way, the binary stage has been set to perform the discriminatory scenario in which dichotomous and bi-polar side of things (such as heterosexuality/ homosexuality, men/women and male/female) comes into being, favoring the former over the latter. Indeed, binary categorization contains a hierarchy based on the differences as a result of which one leg of the binary coupling has always been attached more importance than the other. Despite the Western society's bi-polar, incommutable and hierarchical structure, a survey of ethnographic and anthropological data demonstrates that some cultures have transcended the heteronormative gender paradigm, and instead they have generated their own. The existing ethnographic literature provides four different forms of gender variations:

> 1) Some societies construct gender so as to contain distinct categories that are neither masculine nor feminine.
> 2) Some societies construct gender in ways that are bipolar, but in which the boundaries are markedly different from those common in Western Europe and North America.
> 3) Some societies construct gender so that, while the basic pattern is bipolar, people with one set of biological characteristics are able under specific circumstances, to step outside of the society's ordinary construct and enter the other construct.
> 4) A residual category- instances that do not quite fit our neatly created typology. This category is necessary to highlight the purely heuristic nature of the other three and to avoid sterile typological debates and argument. (Ember 4)

Different from the ingrained imperatives and dictations of heteronormativity, same-sex desire in different cultures at different times evinces the fact that the conception and understanding of sexuality and gender is discursively, historically

and culturally constructed. Moreover, the plenitude of sexuality suggests that it is not restricted to one distinct and unchangeable definition but is open to various attributions and configurations. So the existence of heterosexual desire in the dominant Western discourse does not necessarily mean that it is the only stable and right kind of sexuality, and that in this binary organization, homosexuality should be despised, devalued and deprecated. The understanding of sexuality bears ambiguity, fluidity and instability in itself outside the fixed strata of grounded and normative conventions.

Among the anthropological inquiries of fluid sexuality, Margaret Mead's investigation sheds light on the proliferation of sexuality in different cultural contexts and refutes the notion of universal gender and sexual norms. Mead is aware of the danger of assessing history of sexuality by analyzing merely the existing societies and goes for a new endeavor to ascertain each society on its own attributes. Her efforts contribute "to a more sympathetic understanding of the diversity of sexual pattern and cultures" (Weeks 15). With the help of her work, the inconsistency and immoderation of sexual and gender categories, and their discursively constructed nature are verified. In her *Sex and Temparement,* Mead examines three primitive societies of New Guinea; the Arapesh, the Mundugumor and the Tchambuli. On the basis of gender roles and the congenital aspects of sexuality, she attempts to explore whether those non-Western societies differ from Western ones, and whether the disposition of male and female attributes varies from one culture to another and/or is shaped by cultural configuration. Her book is "an account of how those primitive societies have grouped their social attitudes

towards temperament about the very obvious factor of sex difference" (Frayser 673). In the Arapesh, both men and women are characterized by female peculiarity; hence, the Arapesh are gentle, feminine and fragile. In the Mundugumor, both men and women are raised with the ideals of men, as a result of which they are fierce, martial and brutal. In the last studied tribe, the Tchambuli, Mead has observed that gender roles are subverted as women are raised like men in Western parameters. Therefore, in this tribe, women shave their heads, wander around unadorned and look after the household. In contrast, men are adorned, emotional and dependent on women.

After the exploration of those societies and the differences between them in terms of gender roles and sexuality, she highlights the fact that each society differs from one another by the division of male and female patterns which are not innate and biological. Other than temperament, "male and female are shaped from the beginning of their lives by the behavior of both sexes" (Frayser 673). At the end of her groundbreaking investigation, Mead comes to the conclusion that there are no universal, biological and congenital discrepancies between males and females, but there are disparities originating from cultural and social configurations and encodings of gender and sexuality. This anthropological account of gender and sexuality in diverse cultural contexts indicates the instability and fluidity of sexuality.

Along with Mead's research which points out the constructedness and amorphous nature of sexuality through anthropological evidence, it would also be

enlightening to track down the fluidity of sexuality in classical Athens and other communities. First and foremost, since Western discernment of sexual and romantic love springs from Plato's philosophy, it might be interesting to look at Plato's *The Symposium* (4 BC), a compilation of dialogues between Socrates and others, and "the earliest treatise on compassionate male same-sex relationships" (Merin 13). For Plato, the ideal and true love cannot be attained by women or by means of women. Likewise, Athenians considered perfection merely in men, not in women. In one of the dialogues in *The Symposium*, Aristophanes assorts human beings into different categories considering their desire towards males or females, and he asserts each person has been made to desert his half:

> Each of us, when separated having one side only, like a flat fish, is, but the indenture of a man, and he is looking for his other half, men who are a section of that double nature which was once called Androgynous are lovers of women; adulterers are generally of this breed, and also adulterous women who lust after men: the women who are a section of the woman do not care for men, but have female attachments; the female companions are this sort. But they who are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being slices of original man, they hang about men and embrace them…. (Plato 24-5)

Moreover, he glorifies same-sex desire and depicts it as a yearning for the missing half from whom one has been parted, "[w]hen one [of those boys who have reached manhood] finds his other half, whether he be a lover of youth or a lover of another sort, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and one will not be out of the other's sight even for a moment" (Plato 25). Similarly, Pausanias, a Spartan general, affirms the strength of same-sex relations; "I am convinced that a man who falls in love with a younger man of his age is generally prepared to share everything with the one he loves- he is eager, in fact, to spend the rest of his own life with him" (qtd. in Cohen 290). Hence, Plato,

in a way, institutionalized and legalized pederasty, and "it is this Platonic idealization of pederasty that most influenced later Greek culture and eventually the Christian west where it came to be known simply as 'Platonic Love'" (Provencal 8).

In Rome, as in Athens, there was not a categorized and stable distinction between heterosexuality and homosexuality; indeed, at that time, sexual identity was not defined by the norms that govern modern understanding of sexuality today. The Romans were cherishing fluid and free sexuality until Emperor Augustus, who at the end of the first century "passed a law called *Lex Julia de adulteries* which forbade intercourse between homosexuals" (Dode 24).

In the Middle Ages, sodomy, "sexual practices not having the aim of procreation" was considered to be a sin against nature (Sullivan 1). The word sodomy "originates from the ecclesiastical Latin term *pecatum sodomiticum,* meaning 'sin of Sodom'" (*Sex and Society* 824). By adopting the biblical story of the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and referring to God's destruction of the inhabitants of those cities for committing pederasty, the Church and other religious institutions employed it to condemn same-sex desire. As this kind of sexuality did not conform to the normal categorization, it was labeled as "abnormal" and tried to be repressed.

Byzantine society constructed a separate gender category called *eunuchs* who were castrated and acculturated kind of men, and who were considered neither

male nor female but who belonged to a third category. By transgressing bi-polar organization of gender, Byzantine society transcended the boundaries of binary trap; thus, the eunuchs in that society "offer an important example of an alternative gender category and of the need to understand how such categories function in society" (Ringrose 3). This third category evinces how slippery the area of sexuality and gender is, and how these notions can be configured differently by different societies.

The United States, too, has experienced the elasticity of gender and sexual identities and witnessed the cultural approval of their fluidity in various indigenous communities throughout history. In addition to the heteronormative gender pattern, different societies have had a third gender category. Like the *eunuchs* of the Byzantine society, another well-known example of the indefiniteness of gender roles can be seen in Native America, with *berdaches*, a term derived from a French word with Persian and Arabic origin used for male prostitutes. When the Europeans settlers came across them for the first time, they took them as homosexuals since *berdaches* were men in women's clothes and adorned. However, today they are called "a third sex" or "two-spirited persons" and [a]mong many groups, two-spirit people are actually thought of as a third gender rather than effeminate males (Wiesner-Hanks 218).

From ancient periods to modern times, the third gender has been continuously defined by the somatic terms such as "androgyny," "hermaphrodite," or Freudian "true hermaphrodites." Against the background of researches on the inception and

origin of sexuality by sexologists like Havelock Ellis and Krafft-Ebbing, Freud explored the complexity of sexual desire and pondered on sexual orientation in both males and females. Freud's account of psychosexual development and his ideas on the nature of sexuality support the view that human sexuality is composed of not only biological but also social aspects: "Although [Freud] believed that the libido was an essentially biological drive, he acknowledged the important role that culture has in channeling this libido to different objects" (Fuller 106). In this way, Freud, too, maintains the constructedness and later acquisition of sexuality, and proffers that human beings are not innately confined merely to heteronormative patterns. Thus, Freud goes beyond the binary trap of heterosexuality versus homosexuality by displaying that all human beings are bi-sexual in nature but they are made to direct their sexual drive into solely one form of sexuality in the course of their infancy:

> Psychoanalytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind as a group of a special character. By studying sexual excitations other than those that are manifestly displayed, it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious. (Neu 176)

As can be seen in the above paragraphs, regarding the origin of sexuality, two contrasting views have come into being in history; those advocating the congenital facet of sexuality and those opposing the innateness of it and supporting instead the constructedness and discursiveness of it.

In his informative book, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory,* Sullivan traces the development of queer theory and various theorists' ongoing attempts to

theorize same-sex tendency. A German social commentator and activist, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) claims that homosexuality is innate, and it is "the result of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul" (qtd. in Sullivan 4). He says that some men are equipped with feminine drives and attributes, and some women carry masculine psyche within themselves. For Ulrichs, those men born with feminine motives tend to love men, and those women equipped with masculine traits tend to love women. Ulrichs coined the terms "Urning" for males and "Dailing" for females, thus, generating a third sex category which is neither male nor female but a synthesis of both categories.

Yet, Ulrichs' categorization of men and women regarding their sexual desire based on masculinity and femininity engenders another dichotomous and stereotypical deadfall since his theory does not reserve any space for "feminine" lesbians or "masculine" homosexuals; so, Ulrichs's thesis "is firmly founded on dichotomies such as male/female, active/passive, subject/object, mind/body and so on, which construct the world in terms of one valued term and its opposite" (Sullivan 6). Despite being a great challenge to the heteronormative understanding of sexuality, Ulrichs's theory cannot escape Western bi-polar organization, and it verifies normative gender standpoint.

Regarding sexual inversion, Richard Von Kraft-Ebing, too, stands out with his historic book *Pyschopathia Sexualis,* which looks at approximately two hundred sexual histories and explores various kinds of sexualities. Krafft-Ebing, like Ulrichs, believes that homosexuality is congenital. He believes that reproduction

is the ultimate aim of sexual desire; therefore, any other form of desire which does not result in procreation is labeled as perversion and vilified. For Kraff-Ebing, homosexuality is an indication of degeneration developing at the time of gestation and causing the sexual reversion of the brain.

Along with sexologists advocating the innateness of sexuality from an essentialist standpoint, there have been scientists whose views on sexuality have not been as deterministic as those of Ulrichs and Kraff-Ebing's. One of those sexologists, Havelock Ellis transcends essentialists' views and suggests that any kind of sexuality including homosexuality is constituted by joint working of nature and nurture. Ellis differs from Kraff-Ebing in that he does not see homosexuality as a disease but more like an anomaly or an abnormality: "In this sense, inversion, Ellis claimed, is analogous to color-blindness or color-hearing insofar as all three conditions are abnormal, but are not necessarily 'morbid' or 'harmful'"(Sullivan 8). Dissociating homosexuality from its so-called derogation and morbidity, Ellis suggests that since homosexuality is congenital, there is no point in struggling to treat or punish it. Moreover, as he does not disregard sexuality's constructedness historically and discursively, he believes in the possibility of eliminating homosexuality from very early on.

The last significant contributor to the sexual theory is Magnus Hirschfield, whose sexual theory is based on the notion of "the third sex." Following his predecessor Ulrichs's edifice of the third sex, Hirschfield, too, "used the concept of the third sex to describe a whole range of sexual intermediate types, like hermaphrodites,

androgynies and transvestites" (Erzen 135). Despite pursuing Ulrichs's inborn and deterministic paradigm of same-sex desire and the notion of intermediate sex in his earlier publication, Hirschfield relinquished this idea in his later works and "outlined instead a notion of what we might now call sexual pluralism which regularly contravened the rigid nineteenth century paradigm of sexual polarity" (Sullivan 12). Hirschfield's contribution to the field of sexuality is immense as he went beyond the binary organization of sexuality, and favored and cherished sexual diversity. Moreover, he challenged ingrained contention of sexual discomposure. Hirschfield is also well- known for founding the first homosexual rights organization, the Scientific- Humanitarian Committee. In a way, Hirschfield paved the way for other organizations challenging the heteronormative taxonomy of sexuality and seeking equality and tolerance.

Indeed, the acknowledgement of homosexuality and the positioning of homosexuals in the society owed substantially to homophile organizations which appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and to gay liberation movement which appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s. Intending to detach from their peripheral and marginalized positioning, homophile organizations have aspired to be integrated into the society, and to break away from their decentered locus. They have sought a center. As a matter of fact, in their endless efforts to be acknowledged, to obtain tolerance/ equality and to eliminate all the social, legal and religious denunciations, they have aspired to go beyond their exiled and marginalized position and to occupy a heterosexual niche rather than a homosexual one. To achieve their aim, they "set up educational programs and

worked towards political reform designed to increase tolerance of homosexuality and, in some cases, to decriminalize it" (Jagose 22).

Unlike gay liberation movement, homophile organizations did not struggle harshly and bluntly or apply sanctions towards those condemning homosexuals as they wanted to achieve an adjustment strategy and an assimilation orientation to be integrated to the mainstream culture. One of the significant homophile organizations is undoubtedly the Mattachine Society, which is considered a forerunner/ a pioneer for other subsequent groups. In their earlier discussions, they saw homosexuals as "a population unaware of its status as a social minority imprisoned within a dominant culture" (Jagose 3). The Mattachine Society's earlier policy was to engender and invigorate a collective identity among homosexuals so that they would become aware of the hegemonic, restrictive and repressive ramifications of the dominant/ centered discourse and eventually get up and fight against oppression. Yet, their struggle is entrapped in the assimilation aspect of their fight: they believed in a common ground which can unite both homosexuals and heterosexuals on the basis of "sameness." Sullivan posits that "one of the primary tenets of assimilationist discourses and discursive practices is the belief in a common humanity both homosexuals and heterosexuals belong" (23). In the course of time, the organization started to expand and moved from its Los Angeles base to New York and Chicago. Also, in 1953, the members of this organization published the first issue of a homosexual magazine, *One,* in which they glorified being gay, and felt "a combative pride in being gay" (Jagose 25). Later on, in its blossom, two opposite groups came into existence. The first party

"continued to represent homosexuals as a minority group oppressed by the dominant culture," and their adversary "advocated an assimilationist line, insisting that homosexuals were people like everyone else" (Jagose 26). The second group aimed at dissolving their peculiarities in the normalizing process and in the heterosexual society.

The Mattachine Society was criticized for basing its attempts merely on men, emphasizing the problems of men and disregarding the issues of women. However, in the course of ongoing discussions, another homophile organization called the Daughters of Bilitis, which was solely for women, emerged in 1955 in San Francisco in order to foreground the representation of women and their sexual identities in the mainstream society. In its statement of purpose published in its formation year, the society declared its aim and defined itself as "a women's organization for the purpose of promoting the integration of the homosexuals into society…" (Blasius and Shane 328). The organization intended to educate both the women belonging to its own circle and the society in general. With the help of education, those women would discover themselves and their sexual peculiarities, thus, they would adapt to the normalizing process more easily and exist in the heteronormative society without being condemned. Through education and public discussions and emphasizing "sameness" of homosexuals and heterosexuals, the Daughters of Bilitis also aimed to make the society accept homosexuality and to shake themselves free from all bias towards homosexuals. By following a scheme of quietude and submission, neither the Mattachine Society nor the Daughters of Bilitis ignited militarist feelings towards normative community or mutated into a

mass movement. That is, they could not evoke rebellious excitement among homosexuals because of their assimilationist notions, and they failed.

The late 1960s, however, witnessed a historic event with the Stonewall riots, marking the start of a radical shift from the assimilationist policy to a more militarist one. A vehement activist, Martha Shelley announces the arrival of gay liberation movement in 1972 as follows: "Look out straights, Here comes the Gay liberation front springing up like warts all over the bland face of Amerika [sic]…. We are the extrusions of your unconscious mind- your worst fears made flesh" (qtd. in Angelides 107). Stigmatized and marginalized by the dominant discourse, gay liberation movement challenged the status quo by questioning the normalizing process and by challenging the traditional views on issues such as gender, legal terms and marriage.

Jennis Altman argues that "gay liberation was much more the child of the counter-culture than it [was] of the older homophile organization; it [was] as much the effect of changing mores as their cause" (qtd. in Angelides 108). Regarding its attitude towards the understanding of "sameness," gay liberation movement differed from homophile organizations in that it dwelled on differences rather than similarities between homosexuals and heterosexuals. Actually, gay liberation was based on the notion of gay identity that they took pride in.

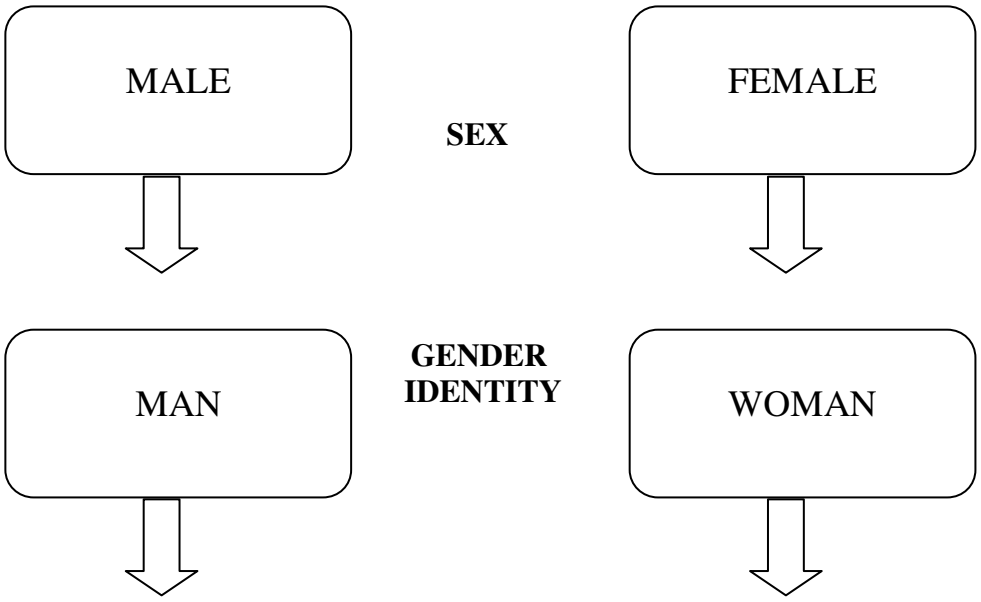
Their motto "Out of the closets, into the streets" reflects coming-out narrative, the public avowal of one's homosexuality, as they come to discover it. Only by

disclosing their sexual identity can they realize their selves since homosexuality is not a personality trait to be shrouded in mystery and locked in a closet. On the contrary, it is a "transformative identity" that should be exclaimed publicly to constitute a site of existence in which they can live their sexuality to the bitter end (Jagose 38). In gay liberalist circle, there was an endeavor to reach a society in which people are valued merely for being people, and not marginalized for their sex roles. They foreground that the prescriptive society generates its own sexual categories and gender paradigms which privilege heterosexual notions, and which disregard and stigmatize homosexuality. As Jagose puts, "[l]iberation theory presupposed a notion of an innate polymorphous, androgynous human nature. Liberation politics aimed at freeing individuals from the constraints of a sex/gender system that locked them into mutually exclusive homo/hetero and feminine/masculine roles" (59). Therefore, gay liberalists have struggled to eliminate the delimitation of gender and sexuality.

Other than gay liberalists, lesbian feminism, too, has emphasized a shift from ingrained sexual gender paradigm to the arbitrariness of those categories. In their ongoing effort to barricade the oppressive impetus of formative society and eradicate sex/gender binary organization, these groups have had a constructionist view of sexuality. They take homosexuality as an epistemological precedence, discrepancy and rupture in which the bipolar nature of sexuality and binary oppositions are entrapped. This binarism should be deconstructed in order to disclose the constructedness, flexibility and alterability of those frames.

1.2. Genealogy of queer theory

Despite the fact that a dimorphic gender system might bear within itself both same and opposite sexual couplings, the underlying assumption is that heterosexuality is the innate and natural one. Katz posits that "homosexuality is allowed as the binary opposite of heterosexuality only to serve as a foil of 'otherness' as a way to support the naturalness of heterosexual pairing." The world is believed to have been engineered "as a bipolar jigsaw puzzle with sexually matching parts which Butler referred as 'the heterosexualization of desire'" (qtd. in Lev 92-3). As it can be seen in Figure I below suggested by Lev, male is matched with its binary female, and this coupling is considered to be natural. So any other myriad matching excluding this frame is regarded as unnatural and strained.



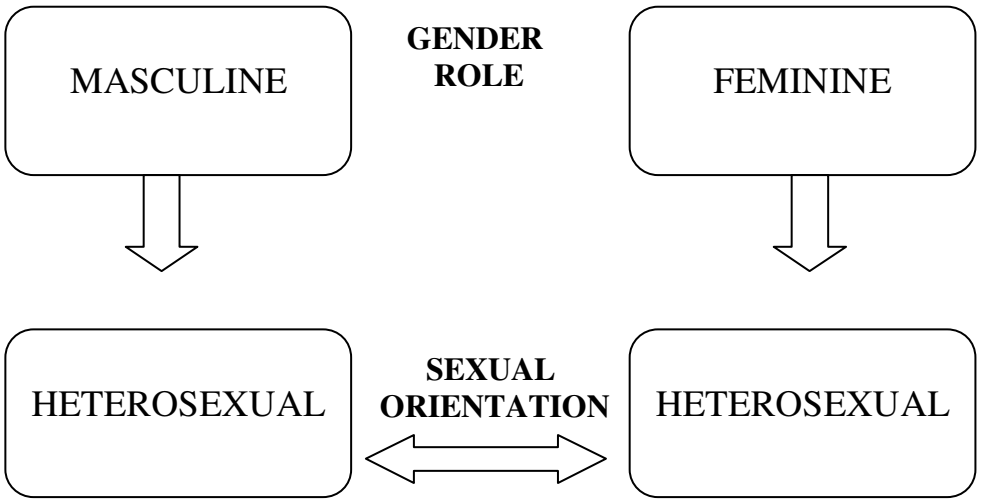


FIGURE I: It is assumed that each of these components lines up and ensures the next.

- If a person is a male, he is a man.
- If a person is a man, he is masculine.
- If a person is a masculine male man, he will be attracted to a feminine female woman.
- If a person is female, she is a woman.
- If a person is a woman, she is feminine.

If a person is a feminine female woman, she will be attracted to a masculine male man (94).

However, Figure II evinces that all kinds of sexuality have an elastic nature subsisting on a continuum which makes the existence of various sexualities and gender types such as transgender/ transsexuals, bisexuals and intersexes possible. In these categories, one can talk about stabilization of identity since people can shape their gender and sexual identities by playing with their behavior and performances. This understanding accommodates a place for 'both/and' alternative rather than being entrapped in enforced 'either/or' paradigm.

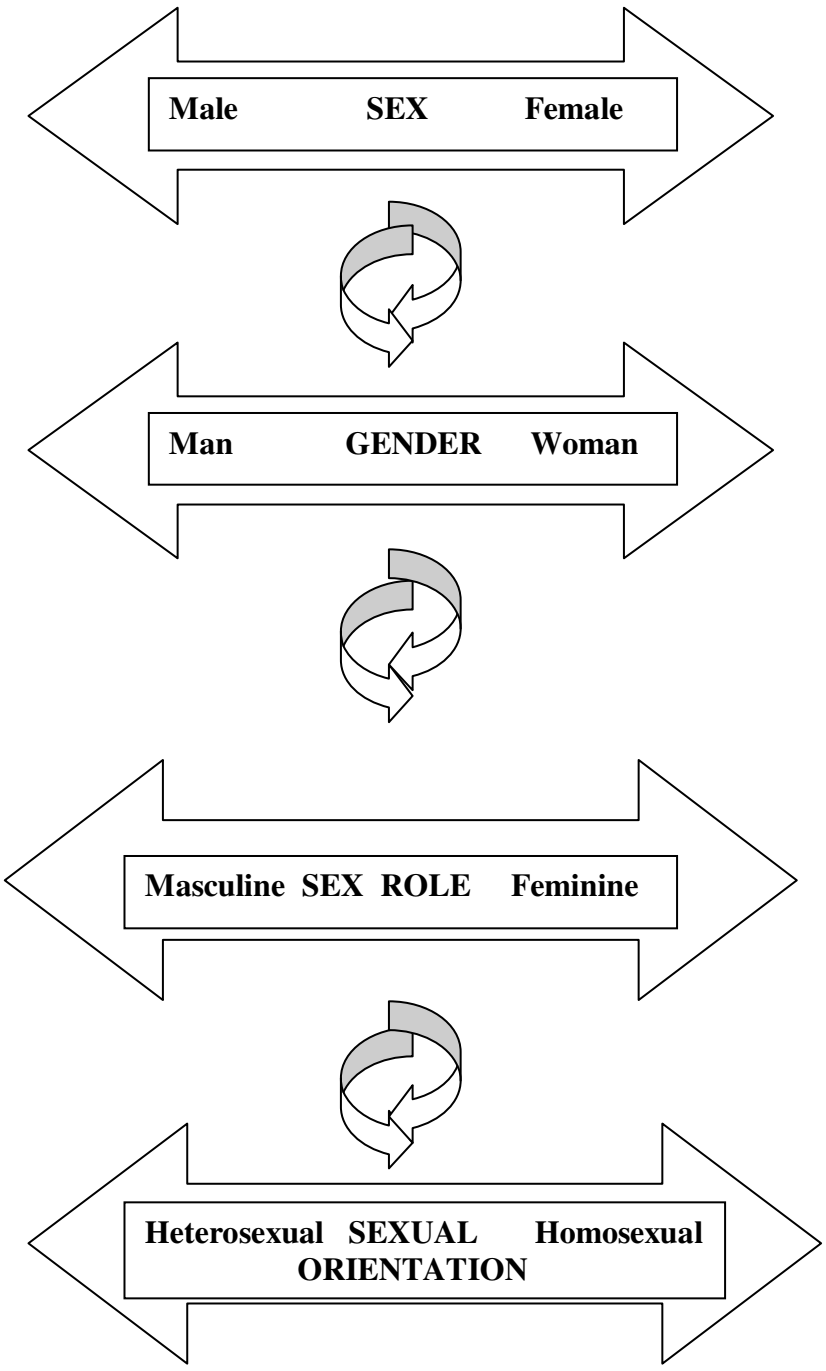


FIGURE II:

All components of identity are actually on a continuum. Sex, gender identity, gender role-expression and sexual orientation are not mutually exclusive (i.e., moving in one direction does not necessarily mean that one cannot also move in the other direction) (Lev 97).

Homophile organizations and gay liberation movement emerged in an effort to erase the masculine prejudice towards homosexuals, yet they have not succeeded in transcending the binary formation since they have strived for generating a gay identity which is, in any case, a category in itself. However, these organizations have paved the way for the term "queer" to come into being, which marks both a continuity of previous organizations and a separation from them. Queer has appeared like a rupture in the historical development of sexual categories and gender paradigms. Many literary critics and theorists have attempted to define the term queer and delineate its frontiers. Nonetheless, they have not been able to give a definite description of its origin. While to specify the exact date for the first use of "queer" is not possible, it is supposed to have dated back to 1990s. Susan Hayes traces perception of queer throughout history in a derisive manner and presents it as the combination of pertinent events:

> First there was Sappho (the good old days). Then, there was the acceptable homoeroticism of classical Greece, the excesses of Rome. Then, causally to skip two millennia, there was Oscar Wilde, sodomy, blackmail an imprisonment, Forster, Sackville-West, Radclyffe Hall, inversion, censorship; then pansies, butch and femme, poofs, queens, fag hags, more censorship and blackmail, and Orton. Then, there was Stonewall (1969), and we became gay. There was feminism, too, and some of us became lesbian feminists and even lesbian separatists. There was drag and clones and dykes and politics and Gay Sweatshop. Then, there was Aids, which, through the intense discussion of sexual practices (as opposed to sexual identities), spawned the Queer movement in America. Then, that supreme manifestation of Thatcherite paranoia, Clause 24, which provoked the shotgun marriage of lesbian and gay politics in the UK. The child is queer, and a problem child it surely is. (qtd. in Jagose 76)

Queer theory challenges the dominant Western epistemology, and it intends to decenter the supposed Cartesian subject. It refuses all kinds of identities, categorizations and hierarchies including the ones related to sexuality and gender,

and it rejects the heteronormative understanding of sex, gender and sexuality. Judith Butler, an immensely significant figure in the field of queer theory, embraces the constructionist view and deconstructs the underlying parameters by evacuating those terms and exposing them as constructed, not congenital. Butler traces the constitution of the subject and the configuration of sex and gender in her work *Gender Trouble*. She revives her well-known and groundbreaking theories like performativity, drag performance and parody in the same book. She seeks answers for her questions about sex and gender. She asks, "[w]hat will and will not constitute an intelligible life, and how do presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the 'human' and 'liveable'? In other words, how do normative gender presumptions work to delimit the very field of descriptions that we have for human?" (*Gender* xxiii)

She draws on phenomenological theory of "acts" adopted by Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and George Herbert Mead and the speech act theory of J. L. Austin, all of which are based on the claim that subjects themselves constitute social reality through language, social signs and gestures. However, Butler diverges from her predecessors with her more radical contention suggesting that subjects are merely objects being constituted by social acts rather than constituting them. Thereby, Butler engenders her own theory of performativity which is based on the constitutive acts of phenomenology. She also questions the essence of gender, and takes gender not as an immutable reality but an alternating one: "What we take to be 'real', what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality" (*Gender* xxiv). To this end,

Butler proffers that gender is constructed by being repeatedly performed: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (*Gender* 45).

As her point of departure, Butler takes Simon de Beauvoir's claim, "[o]ne is not born, but, rather becomes a woman," and emphasizes gender's constructed nature. That is, she adopts the Beauvoirian viewpoint that gender is not something one is born with, rather it is something one performs/ does and eventually becomes. She interprets this catchphrase by stating that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time- an identity, instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" ("Performative" 1). As gender is a construct rather than an inborn attribute, a predetermined sex does not necessarily mean following and conforming to a predetermined gender edifice. So Butler contends that gender can be performed and reenacted in myriad ways, even in ways that are against heterosexual framework of gender embodiment. Also, drag performance and parody are referred to by Butler as subversive bodily acts as they "reveal ontological inner depths and gender cores as regulatory fictions" (Butler and Salih 93): "The notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing and the sexual stylization of butch/ femme identities" (*Gender* 187). For Butler, drag subverts gender categories, reverses the inner/ outer and unfolds the illusionary nature of gender.

As stated above, Butler does not support the essentialist view which is based on the assumption that gender and sex are congenital. In contrast, she asserts that both gender and sex are constructed in and through time. Further, she attests that through bodily movements and acts, there occurs the illusion of "an abiding gender self" ("Performative" 1). So if the ground on which gender identity is built is comprised of the stylized repetition of acts, but not of an immutable and pre-discursive self/ identity, then, Butler posits, "the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style ("Performative" 1).

Then, for Butler, gender is performative; it should be performed to come into being. She also raises such questions as: "How is that identity shaped, and is it a political shaping that takes the very morphology and boundary of the sexed body as the ground, surface or site of cultural inscription?" (*Gender* 175) She refuses the prescriptive view that femininity and masculinity are the markers of a biological sex. Rather, she accredits that "there is nothing given about gender, nor is there any pre-cultural or pre-discursive sex that provides the basis for its cultural construction" (Jagger 2) since the sexed body is regarded as the site and/or surface on which cultural values are inscribed. For her, "[t]he 'body' often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as 'external' to that body" (*Gender* 175).

During the constitution of gender, human beings are exposed to a range of gender characteristics, and they are forced to act on those gender features. Through the regulatory practices, the body is culturally and historically inscribed and sexed. As a matter of fact, the sexed subject is constituted in the Symbolic which

> consists in a series of demands, taboos, sanctions, injunctions, prohibitions, impossible idealizations and threats- performative speech acts, as it were, that wield the power to produce the field of culturally viable sexual subjects: performative acts, in other words, with the power to produce or materialize subjectivating effects.
>
> (*Bodies* 106)

Upon the subjects' entering into language/ the Symbolic, the regulating discourses transform them into gendered and sexed subjects to make them perform and maintain certain stylized actions. The normative, prescriptive and regulatory dominant discourse appropriates and freezes the slippery and fluid nature of sex, sexuality and gender by locating these notions in univocal and restrictive identitarien categories and conditioning human beings to perform and to perpetuate those acts: "This productive reiteration can be read as hegemonic norms. Discursive performativity appears to produce that which it names, to enact its own referent, to name and to do, to name and to make" (*Bodies* 107).

After displaying the constructed and changeable nature of gender, Butler also asserts that "there is no sex that is not always already gender; or as she puts it, 'sex by definition will be shown to have been gender all along'" (Butler and Salih 91). Salih states, "this means that, as before, there is no 'natural body' which preexists culture and discourse, since all bodies are gendered from the beginning

of their social existence" (Butler and Salih 91). Butler seeks to apprehend the underlying contrivance of sex. She asks;

> And what is "sex" anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal or hormonal, and how is a feminist critic to assess the scientific discourses which purport to establish such "facts" for us? Does sex have a history? Does each sex have a different history or histories? Is there a history of how the duality of sex was established, a genealogy that might expose the binary options as a variable construction? Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? (*Gender* 9)

Butler comes to the conclusion that sex, too, is culturally and discursively constructed like gender. Therefore, the difference between gender and sex is eradicated since both of them are human constructs having evolved culturally and discursively throughout history.

Besides Butler's theory of performativity, Hélène Cixous's notion of *écriture féminine* or feminine writing will also be referred to in this study in order to display Winterson's efforts to dissolve the binary organization engendered by patriarchy. In her 1975 essay called "Sorties," Cixous takes her departure by questioning the position of women in phallogocentric community:

> Activity/ passivity,
> Sun/ Moon,
> Culture/ Nature,
> Day/ Night,
>
> Father/ Mother,
> Head/ heart,
> Intelligible/ sensitive,
> Logos/ Pathos,
>
> Man
> Woman. ("Sorties" 63)

By listing oppositions and calling the constructed stage as "a universal battlefield," in which the victory is always hierarchized and granted to men, Cixous seeks another alternative to break away from logocentricism in which "the woman is passive; or she doesn't exist" ("Sorties" 64). In her attempt to detach from logocentricism degrading women, Cixous asks, "[w]hat would become of logocentricism, of the great philosophical systems, of world order in general if the rock upon which they founded their church were to crumble?" and answers, "[t]hen, all the stories would have to be told differently, the future would be incalculable, the historial forces would, will, change hands, bodies; another thinking as not thinkable will transform the functioning of all societies" ("Sorties" 65).

Cixous heralds a different economy called *écriture feminine* against the patriarchal and masculine one in which she attempts to "break away from cultural stereotypes, essentializing concepts and their attributes such as man/ woman, masculine/ feminine, active/ passive" (Conley 7). Since Cixous is against categorization and hierarchies in dualistic understanding, she cannot form the boundaries of this innovative writing, theorize and mould it in terms of principles and rules. Cixous does not want to be captured in the very trap she has been fleeing, and highlights the importance of the incapability of theorizing *écriture feminine*. Cixous posits that "[a]t the present time, defining a feminine practice of writing is impossible with an impossibility that will continue; for this practice will never be able to be *theorized*, enclosed, coded, which does not mean it does not exist" ("Sorties" 97).

Cixous accredits that a writing that belongs merely to women, free from the regulations of the dominant discourse, and fraught with "pre-verbal spaces of the unconscious and the instinctual drives" might subvert patriarchal language othering women: "A return to rediscovery of the body" is the path to liberation since throughout history women have been dispossessed of their bodies and selves through being possessed (Blyth and Sellers 94). In order to regain their femininity usurped by men and to challenge the dominant discourse regulated by the phallus, women must write, and they must do so by means of their bodies. "She must write her self, because this is the invention of a new insurgent writing which, when the moment of her liberation has come, will allow her to carry out the indispensable transformations in her history…" ("Laugh" 350). Cixous alleges that women's writing can serve at two levels:

> *a.* Individually. By writing her self, women will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display- the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor the breath and speech at the same time….
> *b.* An act that will also be marked by woman's seizing the occasion to speak hence her shattering entry into history, which has always been based on her suppression. ("Laugh" 350)

Thus, through the medium of writing, women can break away from the boundaries of the phallogocentric thinking, transcend Platonic binarism and be positioned in history.

1.3. Aim of the Study

In this dissertation, the discursively, culturally and historically configured categories of gender, sex and sexuality will be analyzed against the background of Butler's theory of performativity and Cixous's *écriture feminine*. The fluidity of the above mentioned categories and how this is fictionalized by Winterson in two novels *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Written on the body* will be put under scrutiny. The dissertation will concern itself also with the binary nature of these categories and how Winterson's novels decenter them.

By questioning the boundaries of patriarchal concepts and transgressing them in her writing, Winterson deconstructs the binary oppositions created by the Western metaphysics and problematizes the assumption that sexuality is inborn. Instead of this ingrained notion, she asserts that gender and sexual identities are culturally and discursively constructed. Although the dominant discourse favors heterosexuality over homosexuality and degrades sexuality into a binary frame of oppositions such as masculinity/ femininity and male/female, Winterson, in her novels, seeks an alternative to escape this ideological binarism and achieves to subvert the binary oppositions by highlighting the fluidity of sexuality and by creating her characters amorphous like the ungendered narrator in *Written on the body* or by bestowing on them bisexuality or homosexuality like the protagonists in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit.*

With *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson subverts heterosexual understanding of sex and gender and dissolves binary oppositions by assigning a

"coming out" quest to her protagonist. She shatters ingrained and normalizing notions about sex and gender by displaying that sexuality and gender are human constructs. By this way, Winterson attacks, questions and challenges the dominant discourse privileging heterosexuality as the predetermined sexuality and disregarding same-sex desire. By creating her narrator as nameless and ungendered in *Written on the body*, Winterson defies the binary framework of sexuality and emphasizes that detached from all categorizations and representations of gender, the body just desires. It does not desire necessarily a female or a male body, but it merely desires. In such a context, the sexual ambiguity of the narrator deals a heavy blow to the conventional understanding of sex, sexuality and gender.

In the second chapter of the study, the discursively, culturally and historically configured categories of gender, sex and sexuality in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* are to be analyzed in light of Judith Butler's theory of performativity. Through a detailed analysis of performativity, the embodiment of human subject and the illusory and fluid nature of aforesaid categories will be displayed. In the third chapter, *Written on the body* will be studied by deconstructing the binary nature of categories and by attempting to decenter the text in light of Cixous's *écriture feminine*.

CHAPTER II

BUTLERIAN PERFORMATIVITY IN *ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT*

> What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh, no, it's curved like a road through mountains.
>
> ~Tennessee Williams

> Somewhere, sometime, something was lost, but no story can be told about it; no memory can retrieve it; a fractured horizon looms in which to make one's way as a spectral agency, one for whom a full 'recovery' is impossible, one for whom the irrecoverable becomes, paradoxically, the condition of a new political agency.
>
> ~Judith Butler

> Tell me, do you really think you go to hell for having love?
>
> ~Rufus Wainwright

In this chapter, the main characters in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* will be analyzed in the light of Butlerian theory of performativity which claims that "the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised and consolidated through time" ("Performative" 4). Rather than perceiving the body as a predetermined and pre-discursive essence and fact, Butler supports that the body is constituted as a result of discursive practice and sedimented acts. Theory of performativity will be employed in this study to disclose the fact that gender roles are not the markers of innate, congenital and natural identities, but they are

the results of specific gender acts. As Butler points out, "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence" (*Gender* 34).

Those gender acts are dictated by the network of power generating the dominant discourse and surrounding it; thus, they are learned and repeated in and through time. Performative and stylized acts in the fabricated and unnatural identitarien categories lay bare misleading and fallacious impressions of a self/ subject prior to its construction. Butler proffers that "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (*Gender* 34). Nietzsche suggests that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed- the deed is everything" (qtd in *Gender* 34) but Butler reinterprets Nietzschean allegation: "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender: that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (*Gender* 34). In other words, the subjects do not constitute reality; on the contrary, they are being constructed by the deed. In such a conjecture, subjects transform into objects/ effects, and deeds/ acts mutate into agents/ subjects.

Winterson, in her novels, attempts to destabilize and to transcend the binary frame which precludes the multiplicity and fluidity of sexuality and gender. In her works, the conventional understanding of gender and sex and the perception of the derogative binaries male/female, man/woman and masculinity/femininity are dissolved. To lay bare the constructedness of these categories, Winterson

establishes her own language "which defies the conventional, preexisting discourse, transcending language as a manifestation of social convention, thus allowing for an exploration of individual description and experience of the different perspectives which can be put on reality" (Jorgensen 13). Like Butler, Winterson supports the view that the body is a site on which the cultural inscriptions and patriarchal prescriptive restrictions are affixed. Winterson proclaims:

> I think that sexuality or the versions of sexuality that we are served up from the earliest moments are prescriptive and in many ways debilitating, people don't get a chance to find about themselves. They are told who they are, that they fit in to certain patterns. How many people can honestly say that they have made their own choices? But that's largely because of the picture book world that we're offered the story that we are told about ourselves rather than being encouraged to tell our own stories.
>
> (qtd. in Asensio 270-1)

The body on which cultural inscriptions are engraved is a recurrent theme for Winterson's novels, and plays a dyadic role "as the subject/ object of desire and pleasure and as a means of breaking down the binary conception of gender" (Jorgensen 18). In an attempt to evade the binary organization of gender, Winterson conceives the body as empty space waiting to be inscribed and bedecked. In her epigraph to *Sexing the Cherry*, Winterson delineates that "[m]atter, that thing the most solid and the well-known, which you are holding in your hands and which makes up your body, is now known to be mostly empty space and points of light" (8). So, "instead of maintaining a binary opposition between the solid, physical body and the abstract, fluid self, Winterson aims at un-sexing the body and through this reveal the self as well as the body as discourse or empty space and points of light" (Jorgensen 20).

Oranges has given rise to different feelings among literary critics and ardent readers, ranging from anger and scorn to acknowledgment and admiration. Accordingly, those having read the novel have called it with diverse attributes: some have called it an autobiography, some a *Bildungsroman* and some a lesbian coming-out story. However, Winterson renounces all these labelings, and she herself characterizes her novel as such:

> *Oranges* is a threatening novel. It exposed the sanctity of family life as something of a sham. It illustrates by example that what the church called love is actually psychosis and it dares to suggest that what makes life difficult for homosexuals is not their perversity but other people's. Worse, it does these things with such humor and lightness that those disposed not to agree to find that they do. (qtd. in Grice and Woods 5)

"*Oranges* is primarily the story of young Jeanette and how she learns to discover and welcome her desire, which in turn allows her to construct her subjectivity beyond the impositions from external agents," another critic, Lopéz remarks (157). An adopted seven-year-old girl starts her life under the influence of her Christian fundamentalist mother, Louise, who dominates Jeanette and her metaphorically absent father, made passive by her mother's assertiveness and dominance throughout the novel. Jeanette's mother refuses to send Jeanette to school until the age of seven and instead educates her with her biblical doctrines and dogmas. Her mother's real purpose in adopting Jeanette is to raise a missionary and to create a servant to God. In the absence of social friends other than church members and necessary education other than the Bible teaching, Jeanette is isolated from the outer world and entrapped in the world of her exorbitant religious mother. Yet, her exclusion from the external world is

disrupted when she is commanded to attend the school. Stuck between realities created by her mother and realities of the real world, Jeanette is marginalized at school. She cannot discard her religious background. Her assignments, talks, essays and art projects are colored with religious elements and quotations from the Bible, and this in-betweenness makes her an outcast.

As time goes by, Jeanette discovers distinctions between her own opinions and those imposed by the Church, and questions the credibility of other women's assumption that men are beasts. One day, Jeanette encounters a girl named Melanie with whom she becomes friends soon. Jeanette starts to visit Melanie at her home to study the Bible. Shortly after words, they indulge in a love affair. As Jeanette feels extremely happy in her relation with Melanie, and does not consider it a sin, she shares her happiness with her mother. Then, the following Saturday, both Jeanette and Melanie are ordered to come to the church where the priest makes them confess their sins and repent. Though Melanie repels immediately, Jeanette resists and flees to Miss Jewsbury's house, who, too, is a lesbian.

The following days, the members of the church attempt to exorcise the demons out of Jeanette. As she is resistant, she is locked into a closet for thirty-six hours without being given any food at all. After this traumatic event, Jeanette gives up her resistance and pretends to ask for forgiveness, yet deep inside she knows that she has done nothing to offend God, and loving someone is not a sinful act. After Melanie's departure, Jeanette participates actively in the church affairs again. However, her involvement is interrupted when she is caught with a newly convert,

Katy. Her mother is convinced that Jeanette's tendency would cause their downfall, and she forces Jeanette to leave home as she thinks that the evil would contaminate her family if Jeanette continues to stay with them. Deprived of her family and friends, Jeanette attempts to reestablish her life from scratch. Sometime later, Jeanette returns home only to find out that her mother is still stuck with her religious dogmas. Yet she has softened a little since she has taken up listening to a radio channel broadcasting religious programs.

"An inner journey of Junginian individuation," Jorgensen suggests, is at the core of the novel, in which the main character, Jeanette, attempts to deconstruct her fictionality and to discard gender roles imposed on her before all else by her castrating and comminatory mother and then by the matriarchal and threateningly religious community she inhabits (18). In the novel, Jeanette plays a significant role as a consequential character hovering between masculinity and femininity since she struggles to trespass the boundaries of heteronormative understanding of sexuality and gender. Despite having been raised in a religious family endorsing the Law of the Father, Jeanette transcends her configuration and rewrites her *self* defying and evading all grand narratives such as patriarchy and the myth of origin.

2.1. Devouring Mother/ Absent father

Jeanette is exposed to her mother's incessant religious indoctrinations and dictations which disregard what Jeanette really wants, and which, instead, serve for Louise's one and only aim in life: to raise her daughter as a missionary for the Lord. That is, rather than regarding Jeanette as a human being who has her own

desires, the mother conceives her as a perfect instrument for her Lord. Thus, Louise thrusts on Jeanette some gender roles she is supposed to perform by taking religion as her exclusive guide. However, religion has a precise and immutable theology of sexual ethics which dictates that there should be merely one kind of sexuality, that is heterosexuality, and which renounces the fluidity and multiplicity of sexual domain. Its prescriptive and restrictive sexual paradigm asserts that gender follows from sex, and desire follows from gender. That is, in this theology, gender roles are derived from biological sex, which paves the way for gender/sexuality fundamentalism.

Therefore, masculinity is thought to be a retrograde of femininity or male is assumed to be a retrograde of female. In this compulsory heterosexual trajectory, then, there is an imposed and irrevocable correlation between sex, gender and desire. This heterosexual configuration of sexuality discards the possibility of other sexualities and discontinuities or as Butler notes, "[t]he cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of 'identities' cannot 'exist' and those in which practices of desire do not 'follow' from either sex or gender" (*Gender* 24). When this regulatory binary frame is digressed, and "certain kinds of 'gender identities' fail to conform to those norms of cultural intelligibility," in other words, when a man loves a man or when a woman loves a woman instead of practicing the prescriptive doctrine, "they appear only as developmental failures or logical impossibilities from within that domain" (*Gender* 24).

Louise is the incarnated form of the Church as she manages her life as well as others' lives within the regulatory heteronormative religious framework. In the beginning of the novel, Jeanette becomes a passive medium on which specific cultural acts are inscribed by her mother. The mother does not curb Jeanette's performativity, because, in Butler's words "constraint is not necessarily that which sets a limit to performativity; constraint is, rather, that which impels and sustains performativity" (*Bodies* 95). Thus, she tries to freeze or stabilize Jeanette's sexuality.

Jeanette gradually becomes aware of her mother's binary logic, and in the course of time, she apprehends Louise's ongoing endeavor to locate her sexuality into a heterosexual frame based on her religious doctrines. Louise can readily accept dualistic conceptions and overlook alternate possibilities. Because, for her, there are solely two sexualities: one can either be a man or woman, and there is no place for other sexual and gender varieties such as lesbians, transsexuals and transgenders. A case in point is, when hearing about "the family life of snails" on the radio, Louise feels as if she were insulted. She remarks, "the family of snails, it's an Abomination, it's like saying we come from monkeys" (*Oranges* 21). In her refusal to imagine animals copulating, Louise implies that she cannot endure the idea of having alternate views and possibilities. In other words, Louise is captured in the heterosexual logic which necessitates identification and desire to be opposed; however, Jeanette can see through the illusory essence of this view. It might be helpful to refer to Butler at this point: "The heterosexual logic that requires that identification and desire be mutually exclusive is one of the most

reductive of heterosexism's psychological instrument: if one identifies as a given gender, one must desire a different gender" (*Bodies* 239). Yet, the austere postulate cannot always be achieved since in real life people can desire those of the same gender, and this paradoxical nature of identification undermines the heterosexual matrix.

Louise imposes on Jeanette the idea that in the world there are only binaries, and she has to make a choice between the binaries. Jeanette recalls some memories from her formation years in which her mother cannot transcend the binary understanding she is trapped in. In her mind's eye with references to these memories, Jeanette observes that her mother has specific and definite boundaries from which she does not digress: her mother "had never heard of mixed feelings. There were friends, and there were enemies," and she specifies her mother's extreme dichotomous apprehension in a list:

> Enemies were: The Devil (in his many forms)
> Next Door
> Sex (in its many forms)
> Slugs
>
> Friends were: God
> Our dog
> Auntie Madge
> The novels of Charlotte Bronte
> Slug Pellets. (*Oranges* 3)

Thus, Jeanette states, "I discovered that everything in the natural world was a symbol of the Great struggle between good and evil" (*Oranges* 16). Louise can perceive the world as either friends or enemies, male or female, good or evil, and

she preaches Jeanette to shape her life by depending on the binaries she herself has followed throughout her life. By taking Jeanette as a substitute for Christ, Louise attributes special powers to Jeanette and regards her "a missionary child, a servant of God, a blessing" since she believes that Jeanette can change the world (*Oranges* 10). Jeanette emphasizes her mother's disappointment for not being the Virgin Mary and insinuates her envy to compensate for this failure:

> And so it was that on a particular day, some time later, she followed a star until she came to settle above an orphanage, and in that place was a crib, and in that crib, a child. A child with much hair.
> She said, "This child is mine from the Lord."
> She took the child away and for seven days and seven nights the child cried out, for fear and not knowing. The mother sang to the child, and stabbed the demons. She understood how jealous the Spirit is of flesh.
> (*Oranges* 10)

In Louise's project to attain the position of the Virgin Mary, Jeanette cannot/ must not go out of the plan made for her whole life, and cannot question the Church's understanding of sexuality. Ironically, imposing herself so much on Jeanette, Louise serves for the opposite result. She does not let her submit herself to the patriarchal metaphor, thus stabilize her sexuality. In fact, this was foretold to Jeanette herself by an old woman long ago but Jeanette could not figure out what she said. Once, when Jeanette was out for collecting black peas, she ran into an old woman prophesying about her sexuality and foreshadowing her future sexual orientation. The old woman looked at Jeanette's palm, "'you'll never marry,' she said, 'not you, and you'll never be still'" (*Oranges* 7). In the course of the narration, Jeanette refuses the place reserved for her, and the prophesy of the old woman turns out to be true as Jeanette refuses to be shaped by restrictive indoctrinations of the heterosexual paradigm.

After her encounter with the fortuneteller, Jeanette runs home, trying to understand what the old woman meant as Jeanette never thinks of getting married anyway. Along with the prophesy which blurs her mind, Jeanette mentions the two old women running the paper shop and living together. She narrates, "one day, they asked me if I'd like to go to the seaside with them. I ran home, gabbled it out, and was busy emptying my money box to buy a new spade, when my mother said firmly and forever, no. I couldn't understand why not, and she wouldn't explain." Afterwards, it turns out that Louise forbids Jeanette to have any kind of contact with them as "they dealt in unnatural passions" (*Oranges* 7). These two women generate a world of women as they do not have any contact with men. In other words, they defy the society's heteronormative sexual paradigm, and choose to come to terms with their desire by excluding compulsory sexuality imposed by the patriarchal discourse. Louise's binary understanding is again exposed in her attack on lesbianism. Louise disclaims the so-called unnatural/ unhallowed one, homosexuality, and welcomes supposedly natural/ acceptable one, heterosexuality.

In her theory of performativity, Butler maintains that "performative acts are forms of authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and a binding power" (*Bodies* 225). Echoing what Butler says, in her attempt to make Jeanette perform accepted gender roles by exerting her authority, Louise dwells upon the power of words. Her language which is full of biblical allusions and intermingled with religious

dogmas impersonates the tenets of the Church. It can be regarded as an instance of performative acts since, as in Butler's words, "implicated in a network of authorization and punishment, performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed" (*Bodies* 225).

By blurring the line between fact and fiction and by drawing on biblical lexicon, Louise employs religious stories to cast some normative sexual/ gender roles on Jeanette. After forbidding Jeanette's visits to the paper shop, Louise tells her a story "about a brave person who despised the fruits of the flesh and worked for the Lord itself" (*Oranges* 7). Louise tries to set an example for Jeanette by exalting that brave person who disclaims "the fruits of the flesh," in other words, all sexual desire hidden within the body. By using fruit as an objective correlative, Louise refers to gender and sexual categories, and tries to influence Jeanette so that she would follow the compulsory framework presented to her. Louise expects Jeanette to relinquish any kind of sexual orientation and to focus solely on the Lord. Here, Louise is like a teacher giving assignment to her students; yet, in this case, Louise is giving a gender assignment which is, in Butler's words, "never quite carried out according to expectation, whose addressee never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate" (*Bodies* 231). Jeanette is not aware of the gender role assigned to her, and she is like a passive medium/ a blank sheet on which formalistic inscriptions are written.

Absorbed in the Church's maxims and her mother's perpetual impositions, Jeanette spends her earlier years studying the Bible and reading the Book of Deuteronomy so that she would become a missionary. Yet, Louise interprets the Bible according to her restrictive perception and offers Jeanette a mechanical reading of it. Louise is vacillating between her religious fanaticism and her endeavor to shape all the things/ people around her with her prescriptive doctrines like restrictive heterosexuality and religious life style. With her ironic and humorous tone, Jeanette remarks that "my mother is very like William Blake; she has visions and dreams and she cannot always distinguish a flea's head from a king. Luckily she can't paint" (*Oranges* 9). This remark implies that Louise creates a world of her own delusions and lives there, and indicates her inability to differentiate between reality and illusions.

Interestingly enough, when Louise cannot make sense of the things in the Bible or when the things are not as she wants, sometimes she changes the reality according to her needs. Jeanette states "sometimes my mother invented theology" (*Oranges* 5). Though there can be more than one interpretation of the Bible, her understanding forestalls other exegeses and possibilities. While playing Bible quizzes, Jeanette hints that their perception of the Bible is mechanical:

> She was very regular. I put the milk in, in she came, and taking a great gulp of tea said one of three things:
>
> 'The Lord is good' (steely-eyed into the back yard).
> 'What sort of tea is this?' (steely-eyed at me).
> 'Who was the oldest man in the Bible?' (*Oranges* 4).

Although Louise and her community are genuine believers, they only perceive the literal in the Bible, thus, they cannot embrace alternate possibilities, and they are entrapped in a binaristic view of the world.

One of the most noteworthy memories in Jeanette's formation years is when she gets deaf. Nobody can diagnose it, a result which leads Jeanette to question the competence of all the people living around her. As both Louise and her evangelistic community are blinded by the doctrines of the Church and by the single-mindedness caused by their dualistic perception of the world, they cannot see the fact that Jeanette cannot hear due to her deafness. On the contrary, they relate her silence to the spiritual transformation (*Oranges* 24). Since Jeanette cannot hear, she does not react to the pastor's speech, which strengthens the church members' allegation that Jeanette is "full of the spirit." Jeanette says, "I didn't hear a word; just sat there reading my Bible and thinking what a long book it was. Of course this seeming modesty made them all the more convinced" (*Oranges* 24).

Were it not for Miss Jewsbury, who takes her to the hospital, Jeanette would remain deaf for the rest of her life. Jeanette's deafness can be regarded metaphorically as her refusal to hear the patriarchal metaphor that forces her to kill her authentic self and mutate into a stereotypical young girl. In other words, she becomes deaf to the Bible and to its clichés. Louise cannot see the literal truth in Jeanette's case because of her religious delusions. She does not act like a conventional mother figure with a sense of responsibility towards her child, and

she does not feel guilty for her negligence. In her practice, then, despite parroting the teachings of the Church, she creates a space in which she can exert her authority. From another perspective, then, Louise is a subversive woman/ mother figure as she evacuates the notions of feminity and maternity. That is, Louise reconfigures her own understanding of womanhood and motherhood within the dominant discourse.

After her recovery, which becomes a turning point in her quest, Jeanette realizes that all the dictations, impositions and prescriptions that have been forced on her by her mother and her religious community can be questioned. Jeanette expresses the ambiguity she feels towards the Church as follows, "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" (*Oranges* 26-7). Even though Jeanette is just a child, she can perceive that something is wrong with the Church. Her confidence in her mother, at the Church and in its repressive teaching is shaken even more during her stay in the hospital when the only visitor is Elsie Norris, a substitute mother figure for Jeanette. As Louise is occupied with the church's events, she does not come to the hospital and visit her daughter. Unlike Louise, Elsie approaches Jeanette as a nurturing and mother-like figure, and liberates her from the dualistic understanding of the Church by displaying that there is not merely one truth, one perception and one world. Jeanette can appreciate Elsie's potential to welcome and cherish plurality. At the hospital, Elsie reveals her open minded world view and wants Jeanette to shun singularity, as "what looks like one thing may well be another" (*Oranges* 30).

Elsie negates the conception of oneness: "'There is this world,' she banged the wall graphically, 'and there's this world,' she thumped her chest. 'If you want to make sense of either, you have to take notice of both'" (*Oranges* 32). Thus, Elsie defies the one and only perception of reality, and advocates the multiplicity of the reality. As Elsie broadens Jeanette's vision, she becomes an important figure in Jeanette's quest for subjectivity and for her struggle to disown gender roles cast upon her.

Louise's single-mindedness, bigotry and entrapment in the binary frame is also reflected in her insistence on the fruit "orange" which she considers "the only fruit" (*Oranges* 29). Instead of the biblical forbidden fruit "apple" which led Adam and Eve to be expelled from the Garden of Eden and to their fall, Winterson makes use of another fruit, orange. As apple descends from the Tree of Knowledge, its connotations are multi-layered. Here, orange can be conceived as a metaphor for heteronormativity and oneness. By taking orange as the only fruit, Louise defies all the disjunctive possibilities for sexuality and restricts the notions of gender and sex, and puts them into the compulsory heterosexual matrix generated by the dominant discourse. By offering her oranges, Louise attempts to repress Jeanette's feelings falling out of the heterosexual trajectory and to stop her daughter's ongoing efforts to discover her true self. However, orange can be interpreted in another light and might imply subversive elements, too. When Adam and Eve were tempted to taste the apple from the forbidden tree, they fell from grace. By eating the fruit, they transgressed the boundaries, and challenged the patriarchal metaphor signified by the apple. In their trangressive attempt, they

faced an end and a beginning, which is a kind of rebirth beyond the restrictive boundaries of heaven. Ironically, by foregrounding her own fruit, Louise offers an alternative to the patriarchal metaphor, and consolidates the maternal metaphor in her effort to compete with the Virgin Mary. Like apple, which is a challenge from Adam and Eve to the patriarchal metaphor, orange develops into a subversive element too, but this time, it comes from the mother. Accordingly, Louise focuses exclusively on oranges and her motto is, "oranges are the only fruit" (*Oranges* 29).

In stark contrast to the powerful mother figure, Jack, Jeanette's father, is almost an invisible figure in their life. As a matter of fact, men in general are ghostly figures in *Oranges*. By bestowing extreme power and freedom to create their own space on women in *Oranges*, Winterson problematizes and subverts gender roles assigned to women and men. In the dominant heteronormative binary frame, women are associated with weak attributes, and men with strong ones. However, in Winterson's story, women have created their own kingdom/ queendom in which men are stripped off their conventional roles. In contrast to traditional and archetypal framework, men are weak albeit harmless, and women are the ones who are strong. In *Oranges*, women have eliminated men in both public and private arenas, and have direct contact with the embodied/ incarnated agents of the Law, which is the Church.

At the very beginning of the novel, Jeanette refers to her parents, "like most people I lived for a long time with my mother and father. My father liked to watch

the wrestling, my mother liked to wrestle; it didn't matter what. She was in the white corner and that was that" (*Oranges* 3). Instead of her father who is supposed to wrestle, a sign of *strength* associated with manliness, Louise does Jack's part and wrestles. Thus, Jack is placed in a *subordinate* position identified with women in heteronormative gender frame. As in this example, gender roles are reversed since strength/ activity /assertiveness pass to the woman from the man, and weakness/ passivity/ submissiveness are now associated with the man. Andermahr asserts that "much of the novel's humor involves the depiction of a family life in which conventional gender expectations and roles are reversed" (52). Jeanette's mother subverts conventional gender paradigm as she is dominant/ active/ strong, and her husband is submissive/ passive/ weak. His existence is nominal for both his wife and daughter. Accordingly, while referring to her father, Jeanette calls him "her husband," not "my father," hinting that her mother, not her father, is the authority figure (*Oranges* 5).

Having a passive and an invisible role throughout the novel, this effeminized and psychicly forsaken father figure is continuously negated by the phallic, castrating and strict mother figure. This strong and unruly woman does not sacrifice anything from her identity and her religion for the sake of others, or she does not abdicate her supreme role as a religious guru for her daughter, her husband and her matriarchal and evangelist community. Her ultimate aim is to construct the others, especially her daughter, in her own image. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when, with the help of Jeanette's memories, it becomes evident that Jeanette's adoption is not because of her parents' impotence of begetting a child,

but it is because of Louise's abstention from copulating. In the very first page of the novel, Jeanette observes that "she had a mysterious attitude towards the begetting of children; it wasn't she couldn't do it, more she didn't want to do it. She was bitter about the Virgin Mary getting there first. So she did the next best thing and arranged for a foundling. That was me" (*Oranges* 3).

Louise competes with the Virgin Mary and mimics her. Like her, Louise desires to identify with the Father. Like her, she does not want to have a husband and does not want to bear a child but she goes for a foundling and gets Jeanette and takes her as a substitute for Christ. Rather than a son like Christ, Louise adopts a daughter which is again a challenge to the patriarchal metaphor. It might be that Louise feels identified with a daughter as neither of them is castrated. Louise seems to have chosen such a weak man as Jack because he is incapable of castrating them. On one occasion, when Jeanette and Melanie are talking about their fathers, Jeanette exclaims that she has no father like Melanie, which is a sign of Jeanette's low esteem of her father: "she [Melanie] talked about the weather and her mother, that she had no father. 'I haven't either,' I said, to make her feel better. 'Well, not much.' Then, I had to explain about our church and my mother and me and me being dedicated to the Lord" (*Oranges* 83). Jeanette is devoid of a powerful father figure, and she is fatherless in metaphorical terms, as a result of which she cannot submit herself to the Law of the Father and cannot be castrated or symbolically positioned. However, she identifies with the mother, who is not a conventional mother. Louise is in the place of a man; in a way, she is a manly woman. She is devouring and strong, which causes Jeanette to identify with her

mother and to desire the same sex according to Butler's conjecture of gender identifications. Butlerian readings of Lacan and Freud help us comprehend Jeanette's gender identifications, and decipher the heterosexual compulsory gender ideology generating the binary matrix better.

2.2. Judith Beheading Holophernes

In gender configuration, the notion of the Oedipus complex and identification with the same sex parent or the opposite sex parent is important in the institutional psychoanalysis as it is thought to determine whether the infant would be homosexual or heterosexual. Butler offers a rereading of Freud and Lacan, which renders the Oedipal scenario's heterosexual understanding culpable, and which makes Jeanette's quest more comprehensible for readers.

2.2.1. Freud and Gender Identifications

Freud presumes that all infants go through a period of incestuous desire for their parents. The resolution of this desire determines the sexual orientation of the infant, and the development of the ego and the superego. Between the ages of three and five, the male infant desires his mother, and he has hostile feelings for his father whom he regards as a rival. Under the father's possible threat, the child discontinues his incestuous desire for his mother and identifies with one of the parents. Freud posits that there are two probabilities of this identification. Either the child experiences a negative complex leading into identification with the same sex parent and desiring the opposite sex or the child undergoes a positive complex leading into identification with the opposite sex parent and desiring the same sex.

Thus, in this conventional Freudian surmise, a negative complex engenders heterosexuality in which the object of desire is the opposite sex, and a positive complex brings about homosexuality in which the object of desire is the same sex.

Butler, however, approaches the Oedipal scenario from a different perspective: "She concentrates on unpicking Freud's assumptions in order to demonstrate that what he conceives of as a natural and universal phenomenon is, in fact, the construct of a heteronormative discourse" (Lloyd 82). Freud assumes that all infants are bisexuals possessing both masculine and feminine dispositions. When the child has masculine dispositions, the desire is oriented to the mother, and when the child has feminine dispositions, the desire is channelized to the father. However, Butler infers that "the conceptualization of bisexuality in terms of *dispositions*, feminine and masculine, which have heterosexual aims as their intentional correlates, suggests that for Freud, *bisexuality is the coincidence of two heterosexual desires within a single psyche*" (*Gender* 82). In other words, Freud's estimation of psycho-sexual development is grounded in "a prior prohibition on homosexuality" (Lloyd 83). Thus, according to Butler, "within Freud's thesis of primary bisexuality, there is no homosexuality, and only opposites attract" (*Gender* 82). Butler attempts to demonstrate that masculinity and femininity are ramifications of identification, a process in which "an individual acquires its identity, or aspects thereof, from someone (or something) else" (Lloyd 83).

In an attempt to support her argument that masculinity and femininity are not natural dispositions but effects of identifications, Butler draws on Freud's texts

"Mourning and Melancholia" (1915) and "The Ego and the Id" (1923). Here, Freud proffers that when an object is lost, mourning occurs whereby the libido of the lost object is oriented towards another object. With mourning, the subject reconciles with the loss and his/her ego breaks loose from this restraining burden. However, when the subject cannot overcome the loss, s/he might experience melancholia in which the lost object is conjugated to the ego with all characteristics of the loss. Thus, it can be asserted that the ego's formation is based on mourning and melancholia; it is the effect of identification.

Butler takes Freudian understanding of identification and re-employs it for gender identifications suggesting that the subject's sexual orientation is also formed melancholically. Butler, too, believes that "gender identification is a kind of melancholia in which the sex of the prohibited object is internalized as a punishment" (*Gender* 85-6). At the resolution of the Oedipal complex, the boy indeed identifies with the father as he has lost his mother as object of desire, and he cannot overcome this loss. Thus, he has internalized the father and incorporated him into his ego. When it comes to the girl, the same process occurs as she has lost her mother as her object of desire as a result of which the girl identifies with the mother because she cannot surmount the mother's loss. Here, one might give a hearing to Lloyd, who says that "[h]eterosexual desire is bought, therefore, at the price of denying- or, in psychoanalytic language, disavowing or foreclosing prior homosexual desire" (85).

Jeanette, stuck in the heterosexual matrix with imposed identifications, hovers between masculinity and femininity. Divided between her own desire and compulsory identifications, she cannot have a unified sexual identity. As Jeanette does not have a real father figure, she identifies with her mother and internalizes all characteristics of the lost object- the mother in this case- into her ego. Yet, instead of a castrated mother figure, Jeanette has a manly mother who endorses the Law of the Father and who is entrapped in the binary organization. As her mother is not a traditional woman, but a devouring and a castrating figure replacing the father figure, she orients her desire not to the opposite but to the same sex.

Despite the seemingly enforcement of the heterosexual desire by her mother and her evangelist community, Jeanette does not buy heterosexuality with the price of losing/ disavowing/ foreclosing her prior homosexuality. In contrast, she fights for her authentic self and comes to terms with her desire. In other words, instead of submitting to the heteronormative sexuality, though it has been imposed on her so hard, she embraces her lesbianism and deciphers the constructed nature of sex and gender. As a practicing Christian, she does not accept the established assumption that God would punish and condemn those who do not follow the path of heterosexuality. Jeanette comes to think that her mother and her community create their own truths and attempt to impose them on her. Jeanette does not yield to the patriarchal metaphor for the sake of living within the boundaries of heterosexuality. In the end, by refusing to foreclose her homosexuality despite the punishment given by her mother and the church members, Jeanette challenges the

dominant discourse and achieves to lay bare the underpinnings of the dominant discourse.

2.2.2. Lacan and Gender Identifications

Lacan's psychoanalytic discourse reveals how social constraints affect the process in which "sexed" subjects come into being. By borrowing from Freudian sexuality and the Oedipal complex, Lacan expands the trajectory of sexuality by rescuing it from the haunting effects of pure anatomy, and incorporates language into his agenda. Lacan proffers that both subjectivity and subject are formed in the signification process which follows the infant's entering into language/ the Symbolic order. By submitting to the Law of the Father, not to face the threat of punishment, the subject becomes "sexed." Butler asserts that for Lacan: "one assumes [sex] under the threat of punishment, that is, a position one is constrained to assume where those constraints are operative in the very structure of language and, hence, in the constitutive relations of cultural life" (*Bodies* 96).

Like Freud, Lacan believes that the Oedipal stage is central to the development of "sex." Yet, Lacan proffers that the phase is substantial for the development of language, too. For Lacan, "in the Oedipal scenario, the symbolic demand that institutes 'sex' is accompanied by the threat of punishment. Castration is the figure of punishment, the fear of castration motivating the assumption of the feminine" (*Bodies* 96). The probable punishment for the figure of castration is the existence of "two inarticulate figures of abject homosexuality; the feminized fag and the phallicized dyke" (96). So, frightened by the possibility of occupying such

abject positions, the infant's submission to the Law of the Father terminates incestuous desires and prepares the ground for "normal" sexuality.

Lacan, too, employs the term "phallus" which is the privileged Symbolic signifier, and he differentiates between being the phallus and having the phallus while explaining the formation of "sexed" positions. Both of these positions require "the other" to identify with. In order to "be the phallus," women depend on the desire of men, and in order to "have the phallus," men depend on the desire of women. So, in Lacan's scheme, there is no place for abject/ marginalized/ homosexual forms of sexuality, which is the target of Butler's criticism since she asserts that heterosexuality occurs as a result of a phantasmatic identification. Lloyd infers that:

> if the assumption of sexed position requires an identification with a position already 'marked' out within the symbolic domain, and if, given lack, this identification is "phantasmatic" (a position the subject aspires to fill but never can), then the way that heterosexuality is established in the symbolic is by regulating the terms of identification. (91)

Thus, Butler assumes that sex is a kind of identification, and "identification is a site at which prohibition and deflection are insistently negotiated" (*Bodies* 100). In the process of acquiring a sex through identifying with the other, the subject is exposed to an imaginary threat, "imaginary and forceful, forceful precisely because it is imaginary" (100). Then, Butler questions what happens to the one defying the Law, and what is the appropriate punishment for the one refusing to submit to the Law of the Father and encountering the imaginary punishment. In case of failure to submit to the Symbolic positioning of the feminine, the subject, then, renounces yielding to castration, as a result of which the necessary

identification with the castrated mother would not take place and the relegated father figure to desire would come into being. Butler purports that:

> The failure to submit to castration appears capable of producing only its opposite, the spectral figure of the castrator with Holophernes's head in hand. This figure of excessive phallicism, typified by the phallic mother, is devouring and destructive, the negative fate of the phallus when attached to the feminine position. (*Bodies* 102)

In *Oranges*, despite the threat of punishment and exclusion, Jeanette refuses to submit to the Law of the Father. In the novel, rather than the literal father figure, the Church is the representative of the Symbolic order. As the literal father cannot exert his power and authority, he cannot represent the Law. In the absence of the necessary features to have a binding power on his family, Jack cannot castrate Jeanette and Louise, as a result, he cannot make them submit to the patriarchal metaphor. Instead of a castrated mother figure "being the phallus" for the man, Jeanette has a castrating mother, "having the phallus." As Louise is identified with the phallus, she exhibits exorbitant and destructive phallicism, and attempts to approximate Jeanette into the Symbolic order. This phallic mother, ironically, wants Jeanette to identify with the Law and struggles to castrate her and to make her perform heteronormativity which is considered to be the sole sexuality. Jeanette refuses to submit to the Law of the Father, thus, takes her place in the margins of the dominant discourse.

By refusing the Law and deciphering culturally appropriated gender identities cast upon her, Jeanette disrupts restrictive gender binaries and reveals that gender is a continuum, not a dualistic and closed system. In the rupture caused by gender performativity, Jeanette cherishes the fluidity and multiplicity of gender, and

abnegates the singularity of phallicism. While referring to the female characters in Winterson's works, Stowers emphasizes their refusal to be categorized and located into singularity and fixity by "following pleasures which are suggested to be more female, pleasures of palimpsestic representation instead of official exclusionary paradigms; of fluid multiplicity instead of phallic singularity" (99). Jeanette, like other Winterson characters, chooses to depart from her phallic mother's restraints by embracing viscosity of gender and sexuality.

2.3. Jeanette's eating the Forbidden Fruit and falling from grace

As Jeanette moves from childhood to adulthood, she reconfigures her own world view with the help of both the secular view of the school and the effects of other people around her. This is her awakening from her mother's religious bigotry and single-mindedness. Her dissociation from the Church takes place when the pastor delivers his sermon on perfection and asserts "perfection is flawlessness" (*Oranges* 60). Interestingly, Jeanette comes to realize that she does not agree with the pastor, and eventually, she says, "it was at this moment that I began to develop my first theological disagreement" (60). Now, having doubts about the reliability of the Church, Jeanette moves into another domain in which she questions the nature of men and women, and the relations between them.

Butler underlines that "[b]ecoming a gender is an impulsive yet mindful process of interpreting a cultural reality laden with sanctions, taboos and prescriptions" ("Sex" 40). In accordance with Butler's words, until her inquiry, Jeanette has continuously been instructed about the gender roles. Though initially Jeanette's

gender choice seems to be her preference, it is actually formed and dictated by the corporeal styles which are pre-discursive because as Butler evinces "the choice to assume a certain kind of body, to live or wear one's body a certain way, implies a world of already established corporeal styles" ("Sex" 40). Jeanette is born into the settled world of established gender and sexual norms, and she merely interprets and approximates them with the influence of her powerful and prescriptive mother.

Upon Jeanette's entering puberty, Louise consolidates her impositions and dictations on Jeanette as she is frightened of losing the control of her daughter's life and of failing to locate her into compulsory patriarchal trajectory. On one occasion, they go shopping together, and despite Jeanette's objection and unwillingness to buy a new coat, Louise gets her a bright pink mac. Entrapped within this coat, Jeanette recalls a film she has seen titled *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Though Jeanette refuses to wear it, her mother insists so. Jeanette seeks for a way of escape; so, she makes up some excuses:

> "It is a bit big,"
> "You can grow into it."
> "But Mum…."
> "We'll have it."
> "But Mum."
>
> It was bright pink. (*Oranges* 79)

In the traditional binary organization, certain gender stereotypes have been produced and coded within the society. From the very beginning of their lives onwards, human beings are exposed to a definite social dualistic framework

dictating what each sex is permitted to do and not to do, or what gender roles each sex should internalize. That is, in the conformist matrix, women and men are made to perform certain gender roles in the society, which produces the practical extension of those restrictive gender expressions. One of the most common stereotypes is associating girls with pink and boys with blue. Jeanette wants to evade this stereotypical binary frame when she refuses to wear pink and prefers trousers to skirts but she fails. So, she is made to give specific stylized performances of femininity that are coded in the society's dichotomous thinking. By performing what her mother has dictated on her, Jeanette creates the illusion of an abiding self or as in Butler's words, "acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body" (*Gender* 185). To sustain the illusion of the unified self, the subject should perpetuate pursuing gender coercion. Before figuring out the negative ramifications and restrictions on her, Jeanette has accorded with those enactments and performed what has been cast upon her. Because, those stylized performances and signs are presented as natural by the system of normative sexuality through her mother.

Louise attempts to suppress and control Jeanette's desire by regulating her body according to the heterosexual paradigm. She would like to shape Jeanette's body by the social codes and inscriptions, but initially, Jeanette's body as a medium is to be destroyed and reconfigured for the culture to come into existence. Here, the pink coat is like a rubber straight jacket aiming to congeal the body by preventing its flow. Nevertheless, "squeezing her daughter into a pre-pubescent 'little girl'

package indicates how delusional Mother really is, as though a rubber straightjacket will prevent Jeanette's body from developing sexually" but Jeanette resists the destruction of her body and sacrificing her desire and authenticity (Bailey 11).

Before encountering Melanie, which is the turning point in her life, Jeanette lives through a process in which she questions the nature of men, and tries to figure out what "sex" means without the restraining and cliché-ridden definitions of the society. The chapter titled Numbers narrates Jeanette's dream in which she is about to marry. The interesting thing about her dream is that instead of a bridegroom, Jeanette has various possibilities, which is indicative of Jeanette's ambiguity, ignorance and confusion about men and of her attempt to avoid singularity and to cherish plurality. Jeanette narrates her dream as follows:

> It was spring, the ground still had traces of snow, and I was about to be married. My dress was pure white and I had a golden crown. As I walked up the aisle, the crown got heavier and heavier, and the dress more and more difficult to walk in. I thought everyone would point me, but no one noticed.
>
> Somehow I made it to the altar. The priest was very fat and kept getting fatter, like bubble gum you blow. Finally, we came to the moment, "You may kiss the bride." My new husband turned to me, and here were a number of possibilities. Sometimes he was blind, sometimes a pig, sometimes my mother, sometimes the man from the post office, and once, just a suit of clothes with nothing inside. (*Oranges* 71)

Although it looks like a happy traditional wedding dream, it turns out to subvert "normalcy" with its end offering a range of possibilities rather than one single expected end. The dream starts like a usual wedding scene; Jeanette wearing a crown and a white dress as they are indispensable parts of conventional weddings.

Yet, as Jeanette moves towards the altar, her dress and crown get heavier and heavier. She cannot carry those ready-made covers of the society but no one can notice her discomfort. The peculiarity of her dream emerges when the priest remarks "you may kiss the bride." Instead of a bridegroom, Jeanette has a number of possibilities, which reveals her floating gender and sexual identity open to other sexes and embracing the diversity of sex and gender markers.

Puzzled by her dream and disturbing talks of women about their husbands, Jeanette goes to the library in order to seek answers to the questions blurring her mind. She says: "in the library I felt better, words you could trust and look at till you understood them, they couldn't change half way through a sentence like people, so it was easier to spot a lie" (*Oranges* 72). Even the library cannot dispel her apprehension about the nature of men. In contrast, her discomfort and confusion increase with the story she has read titled "Beauty and the Beast." She is mystified by the world's wonders as theory and practice do not overlap in real life. If a beast can be turned into a prince with a kiss, then what about her horrid uncle Bill or other men around her? With the seeds of doubts in her mind, Jeanette draws a "terrible conspiracy":

> There are women in the world.
> There are men in the world.
> And there are beasts.
> What do you do if you marry a beast?
> Kissing them didn't always help. (*Oranges* 72)

In her efforts to attain the answers to the issues regarding men, Jeanette infers that marriage is not a sensible act but a dangerous one, and implies in the above given quotation the danger of marriage; if one marries a beast, there is no escape from it.

On this point Mendez aptly says that "for someone like Jeanette, so firmly rooted in her relationship with her mother and a larger close-knit female community, the disfunctionality of the heterosexual relationships around her serve only to reassure her in rejecting the phallocentric ethos" (24). Inhabiting the world of women devoid of powerful men figures and being coded by her mother with the assumption that sex and fornicating are unholy, Jeanette develops negative feelings towards men and heterosexual marriages. When her auntie states, "there's time enough for you to get a boy," Jeanette resists and says, "I don't think I want one" (*Oranges* 73). Her answer reveals her negative attitude towards marriage as a bond between two people. With the collapse of heterosexual marriages and relations in front of her eyes, Jeanette questions the specific cultural framework engendering truths about gender and sex.

As she can see through the phallogocentric discourse generating categories and presenting them as "natural," Jeanette refuses to be included in those grand narratives and to inhabit a place in this binary frame. She becomes the familial heroine of Wintersons' repertoire attempting to lay bare the constructedness of patriarchal categories, and through her:

> Winterson's fiction focuses particularly on 'refusing' lies related to sex and gender roles, she attacks various artificial sources of sexism which disseminate and perpetuate lies about what is 'natural' behavior for men and women, religion and scripture, androcentric political, economic, familial hegemony, romance novels; and scientific discourses about bodies. (Rubinson 115)

Despite the lies imposed by the dominant discourse, Jeanette sees that there are many truths to be discovered and to be narrated, not merely one truth that belongs

to the heterosexual matrix. So, in her confrontation with identitarien categories and gender/ sex fabrications, Jeanette becomes determined to follow her desire.

Following her query of women/men relations, the narrative moves to the time when Jeanette falls in love with Melanie for the first time, an incident which alters her life radically. As Jeanette has not experienced anything so intensely before, she cannot name and define her feelings. For the first time in her life, she feels happy and has a great time with Melanie. Jeanette defines this unfamiliar but enchanting feeling as follows: "She [Melanie] stroked my head for a long time, and then we hugged and it felt like drowning. Then I was frightened but couldn't stop. There was something crawling in my belly. I had an octopus inside me" (*Oranges* 89). Jeanette stays away from home very often to be with Melanie, and Louise suspects that Jeanette might spend her time with a boy:

> "There's a boy at church I think you're keen on."
> "What?" I said, completely mystified. (*Oranges* 86)

In Louise's binary understanding of sexuality and gender, there is place only for heterosexual positioning. If Jeanette does not come home as she used to do, then it must be a boy issue. Entrapped in her restrictive world view, Louise cannot perceive alternate possibilities, and disregards the probability of other sexual practices. Hence, she expects Jeanette to assume normative sexual and gender expressions, and to like the opposite sex.

Because, "the reiteration of authority must be corresponded by a repetition or citation on the part of those interpellated, a performativity on their side: 'she' and

'he' must linguistically confirm it again and again" (Bech 189). By calling Jeanette a girl/ a missionary/ a special child, Louise determines her place, locates Jeanette into a heterosexual trajectory and injects the idea of femininity to her. Louise inscribes Jeanette's body with gender markers and makes Jeanette affirm and strengthen her femininity by reiterating/ performing/ confirming linguistically those prescriptive gender expressions. On the linguistic encoding, Butler delineates that performative speeches entrap one in a closed system and designate her/his positioning before s/he can assert and discover her/his self by propounding that:

> Gender norms operate by requiring the embodiment of certain ideals of femininity and masculinity, ones that are almost always related to the idealization of the heterosexual bond. In this sense, the initiatory performatives, "It's a girl" anticipates the eventual arrival of the sanction, "I pronounce you man and wife." (*Bodies* 231-2)

As the time Jeanette and Melanie spend together increases, their love becomes more intense. From time to time, after drowning in each other's body, Jeanette and Melanie remember Pastor Finch's sermon on "Unnatural Passions" (*Oranges* 85), and they are scared of committing a sin. Jeanette questions the possibility of committing a sin, and asks Melanie, "Do you think this is Unnatural Passion?" and Melanie replies: "Doesn't feel like it. According to Pastor Finch, that's awful" (89). Yet, they do not comprehend such a wonderful feeling can be the abhorrence Pastor Finch has mentioned. They continue their intimacy till Jeanette makes the mistake of telling her feelings to her mother. Since Jeanette takes their relation as innocent, she sees no harm in sharing this with Louise: "I explained how much I wanted to be with Melanie, that I could talk to her, that I needed that kind of friend. And…. And…. But I never managed to talk about and…. My mother had

been very quiet, nodding her head from time to time, so that I thought she understood some of it" (102). However, Louise cannot tolerate same-sex relations, which leads to Jeanette's marginalization and excommunication. In front of other people who come to the church for their regular service, Jeanette and Melanie's relation is denounced by the Pastor. By pointing them, he says:

> "These children of God have fallen under Satan's spell."
> "These children of God have fallen foul of their lusts."
> "These children are full of demons." (104)

Attempting to resist all these condemnations of being impious, Jeanette remarks, "[t]o the pure all things are pure" (105). Jeanette cannot detach herself from the Lord. She is still a believer, but she interprets the Bible differently from both her mother and her evangelist community. Those fanatically religious believers refuse to perceive alternate truths and accept solely one literal meaning of the Bible.

When the Pastor demands Jeanette and Melanie to ask for forgiveness, Melanie repents immediately and yields to the Law. However, Jeanette withstands:

> "I love her."
> "Then, you do not love the Lord."
> "Yes, I love both of them."
> "You cannot."
> "I do, I do, let me go." But he [Pastor Finch] caught my arm and held me fast.
> "The church will not see you suffer, go home and wait for us to help you." (105)

According to the Church, one cannot love someone from the same sex; if they do, they defy the Lord and should give up His love. Yet, Jeanette loves both the Lord and Melanie.

As part of the so-called treatment of Jeanette's profligate sexual orientation, pursuing the imperatives of the Church, her mother locks Jeanette in a room where she spends thirty-six hours without food and light. In a way, Louise tries to castrate Jeanette and to position her in the Symbolic order. Jeanette renounces to follow the heterosexual paradigm cast upon her. She abandons performing femininity, in consequence of which she is castigated with "excommunication," "a relegation to the spheres of the unliveable, unviable, uninhabitable" (Bech 189). She is punished because she does not fix the influx of gender and sexual identity markers. This performative act as an assertive lesbian figure arouses horror.

Despite all these, Jeanette does not yield to the prohibitive performatives, and does not form libidinous attachments. She does not give up following her desire but she gives up performing gender reality. Her resistance exasperates her mother and the church members.

In the beginning, Jeanette is a good daughter by her mother's criteria as she is heavily involved in biblical study. When Jeanette abandons performing gender/ sexual/ heteronormative acts, she is banished and marginalized since she is gradually digressing from the patriarchal circuit. Contrary to Pastor Finch's assertion that Jeanette's soul is at stake because of her lesbianism causing her fall under Satan's spell, the truth indeed is that the authority and integrity of the Church is in danger as Jeanette's lesbianism is a threat to them. Thus, "[f]orcing her to repent is more about preserving the androcentric, heterosexual, social

structure that is advocated and relied upon by the church than saving Jeanette" (Rubinson 113).

In the room where Jeanette is locked, an orange demon appears as demons "entered wherever there was a weak point" (*Oranges* 108). Jeanette states, "[i]f I had a demon, my weak point was Melanie, but she was beautiful and good and had loved me" (108). Here, Jeanette is being subversive as her demon is Melanie, and she is not ugly, evil or scary, but beautiful and good. After hearing the voice of the orange demon, Jeanette wonders why it is here talking to her. The thing says, "[w]e're here to keep you in one piece, if you ignore us, you're quite likely to end up in two pieces, or lots of pieces, it's all part of the paradox" (109). The demon offers oneness and unity within a heteronormative frame so that the person would not fall into pieces. Yet, Jeanette does not desire oneness; she wants plurality and fluidity. Andermahr says that, "[i]t is possible to interpret Jeanette's demon as a daemon, an aspect of herself, which in an internal dialogue, allows her both to express qualms about her lesbianism and to receive reassurance of its positive value" (55). Moreover, it is also possible to interpret the orange demon as the ego created by the patriarchal discourse. As the demon cannot assert its aim openly, its intentions and appearance cannot be apprehended fully: "Jeanette's demon is neither good nor evil and can therefore not be confined within the system of binary oppositions which permeates the church" (Jorgensen 34).

When Jeanette asks "what sex are you?" the demon answers "doesn't matter, does it? After all, that's your problem" (*Oranges* 109). By refusing to reveal its sex,

that is, to be located in the dualistic organization, the demon underlines the constructed nature of categories. It asserts that having a sex or becoming a sex is one's own problem. So, whether the orange demon is male or female, and whether it has good intentions or not is not specified, and left in ambiguity. About this ambiguity Doan says that, Winterson's aim of "challenging and deconstructing a range of grand narratives including oppressive gender binaries" is revealed once more with the depiction of the orange demon being neither good nor bad and neither male nor female (qtd. in Andermahr 50). Avoiding categorization and restrictive utterings in the depiction of the demon, Winterson attempts to deconstruct the binary coupling, and to transcend to a fluid terrain in which all the binaries are dissolved.

Subsequent to the exorcism performed on Jeanette by the church members who lock her in a room for long hours, she falls ill, which is interpreted by the missionary community as an indication of God's "cleansing her of all her demons" (*Oranges* 112). Stuck in her conformist values, Louise cannot forgive Jeanette. When the Pastor tells Jeanette that "the Lord forgives and forgets," Jeanette thinks "perhaps the Lord does, but my mother didn't" (112). Louise burns all the evidence of Jeanette's relation with Melanie such as letters and cards as if this could erase what Jeanette has felt/ feels and transform her desire into a heterosexual matrix (112). Louise's irreversible act accelerates Jeanette's detachment from her mother because Jeanette regards her act a "betrayal," "in her head she [Louise] was still queen, but not my queen any more, not the White Queen any more. Walls protect and walls limit. It is the nature of walls that they

should fall. That walls should fall is the consequence of blowing your own trumpet" (112).

With the collapse of her faith in the Church and her mother, Jeanette can see beyond the walls that her mother has built around her. These walls are there merely to restrict her self rather than protect her, and Jeanette discards them. Additionally, she celebrates her lesbian identity, and gradually, "her intellect and desire combine to precipitate a fall into reprobation from which Jeanette realizes she can recover only if she re-writes the narratives forming her identity" (Bailey 61). Hitherto, Jeanette has accepted solely oranges that Louise has given her whenever Jeanette feels weak and sad. Now, as she is alienated from the Church and her mother, Jeanette repudiates her mother's motto, "oranges are the only fruit," and questions "what about grapes or bananas?" (*Oranges* 113). She looks for other alternatives, because Jeanette cannot internalize categories constraining her, as a result of which she comes up with her own reading of religion/ the Bible/ categories by inserting fairy tales and biblical allusions into her narration. As a matter of fact, the novel can be regarded as a subversive reading of the Bible and the fairy tales to problematize the myth of origin, and eventually the patriarchal discourse engendering and sustaining normative categories, and presenting them as congenital/ natural.

2.4. The Fairytales/ The Bible: Dissolution of binaries and subversion of patriarchal discourse

Jeanette as a subject in a constant flux raises objections to grand narratives generated by patriarchy. To lay bare the underpinnings of the dominant discourse,

to disclose its working mechanisms and to uncover the artificiality of its categories such as gender and sex, Jeanette challenges the myth of origin by disrupting the linear time trajectory and by problematizing time as a continuum. For this purpose, she juxtaposes fairy tales and biblical allusions within the narrative. "This disruption can be related to the novel's suspicion towards the grand narratives of religion, the family and the heterosexual aim," which are fabricated by patriarchy veiling their constructedness behind the story of the origin (Bentley 115). Regarding the origin, Butler maintains that "the story of origins is… a strategic tactic within a narrative that, by telling a single, authoritative account about an irrecoverable past makes the constitution of the law appear as a historical evitability" (*Gender* 46). Butler underlines the urge of the Law to construct a truth out of the origins as natural and prior to the subject in order to conceal its constructed nature:

> The self-justification of a repressive or subordinating law almost always grounds itself in a story about what it was like before the advent of the law and how it came about that the law emerged in its present and necessary form. The fabrication of those origins tends to describe a state of affairs before the law that follows a necessary and unilinear narrative that culminates in and thereby justifies the constitution of the law. (*Gender* 46)

By refuting the myth of origin, and thus, problematizing categories, performativity theory attracts the attention to performative nature of subjects/ hierarchies. It suggests that there is no prior subject/ self before its constitution but it comes into being by performing specific corporeal acts and by assuming the illusion of an identity. Thus, "patriarchy institutes univocal and discrete meanings in its place, so that sex and gender come to be seen one" (Heathcoten 139). This process works through binary oppositions such as masculine and feminine which

are generated by reducing desire, sex and gender into "a single, 'cohesive' chain that mirrors- and secures- the logic of the heterosexual imperative" (Heathcoten 139). Through naturalizing gender in a binary organization and regulating desire by means of patriarchal paradigms, heterosexual desire is practiced and cherished, yet homosexual desire is cast aside and degraded.

Sharing Butlerian ideas about the unnaturalness of the patriarchal categories and the potency of the dominant discourse in the subjectification process, Winterson digresses from the linear narrative and intertwines fairy tales and biblical stories together. Integrating sub-stories into the main narrative subverts the linearity of the text, and paves the way for the dissolution of the grand narratives grounded within the dominant discourse- in this case, fairy tales and the Bible- and for the revelation of the imposed gender/ sex predicament. So, by "echoing biblical themes while subverting their restrictive interpretations, and interpolating tales illuminating the primary narrative, Winterson deconstructs Jeanette's received ideology and demonstrates the ways in which self and reality are narrative constructions" (Bailey 61).

The incorporation of fairy tales and biblical stories into the narrative not only disrupts the linearity of the novel but also points out Jeanette's efforts to escape her mother's essentialism and to rewrite her own narrative. This is foreshadowed by Elsie Norris' wise statement on the multiplicity of reality, and by Jeanette's discovery of alteration in *Jane Eyre*'s ending by Louise. When Jeanette asks Louise about how she has decided to marry her father, Louise refers to the story of

Jane Eyre; yet she changes the end of it. Louise rewrites the story by making Jane marry St John Rivers in the end. However, it does not take long for Jeanette to discover the real ending: "I found out, that dreadful day in a back corner of the library, that Jane doesn't marry St. John at all, that she goes back to Mr. Rochester. It was like the day I discovered my adoption papers while searching for a pack of playing cards" (74-75).

On discovering her mother's insincerity, Jeanette questions her life and identity, and she comes to realize that she has been living in a world founded on delusions and lies. Jeanette reconsiders the categories of reality/ history/ story. Eight chapters named after eight books of the Old Testament "recast the wanderings of the Chosen People and the construction of the Law as the wanderings of Jeanette seeking her Promised Land and the writing of her own history" (Bailey 61). Jeanette concludes that there is no one reality/ history/ story, but a multiplicity of realities/ histories/ stories. Furthermore, Jeanette maintains that each person is the historian of his/her own world as s/he engenders her/his own fiction. Thereby, one cannot talk about the singularity of the truth:

> Everyone who tells a story tells it differently, just to remind us that everybody sees it differently. Some people say there are true things to be found, some people say all kinds of things can be proved. I don't believe them. The only thing for certain is how complicated it all is, like string full of knots. It's all there but hard to find the beginning and impossible to fathom the end. (*Oranges* 93)

Apart from offering an alternative world view to Louise's deterministic and constraining frame of reference by presenting the slippery nature of all the narratives, fairy tales and biblical allusions, the narrative also displays the crucial

moments in Jeanette's life in which she has to choose between her matriarchal/ evangelist community and her own desire. With the juxtaposition of those narrative elements, Jeanette creates a space for her innermost desire that the Law expects her to repress, and correlates her experiences in real life with her dreams in fairyland.

In the chapter titled *Leviticus*, Jeanette experiences her first theological disagreement with the Church on the concept of moral perfection, which heralds her prospective dissociation from the teachings of the Church. When the Pastor gives a sermon on the necessity of attaining moral perfection, Jeanette repudiates such a rigid attitude, and the interpolated story of a prince seeking for the perfect woman is inserted into the narrative to problematize the potency of the Law. In this tale, there is a prince obsessed with finding the perfect woman. One day he meets her and asks her to marry him. However, a radical problem emerges when the princess does not want to marry him as her understanding of perfection differs from that of the prince's: "The search for perfection, she had told him, was in fact the search for balance, for harmony" (*Oranges* 64). By declining the prince's proposal and, thus, uncovering the defects in his narrative, the princess challenges the order of patriarchy. That is why she should be killed. Bailey comments on this as follows:

> The perfect woman has to die because she will not perform the script written for her and because she can (and does) point out the flaws in its assumptions. Anyone who might have witnessed her challenge the prince's narrative must die as well, their deaths acceptable losses in the struggle to keep the text pristine and its meanings stable. (63)

After the death of the princess, the prince carries on with his quest. Then, he comes across a vendor who "only does oranges," which reminds of Louise's insistence on oranges as the only fruit (*Oranges* 67). The tale of the prince looking for perfection correlates with her mother's quest for a perfect daughter abiding by the tenets of patriarchy. Both the prince and Louise are entrapped in their single-mindedness, and their bigotry and dualistic perception of the truth cause the destruction of other people. The prince causes the death of the princess for not following the path of patriarchy, and Louise wants to cause the psychic/ authentic death of Jeanette by imposing the Church's doctrines on her.

After the exorcism ritual and her excommunication by the church due to her relation with Melanie, Jeanette continues to narrate her life and what she has gone through: her expulsion from her home, her attempts to start a new life and lastly her urge to come back home. In the chapter titled Judges and Ruth, pivotal narratives of two tales are interpolated: the quest for the Holy Grail by Sir Perceval and the story of a sorcerer's apprentice called Winnet Stonejar. With the Arthurian knight of Round Table, Sir Perceval, Winterson "establishes a parallelism between Jeanette's quest for individuation and Sir Perceval's mythical quest, thus adding a mythical overtone to Jeanette's individual life-story and so turning it into the archetypal representative history of lesbian women at large" (Onega 147).

Like Sir Perceval, Jeanette is in exile to discover the Holy Grail, a search which can be taken as Jeanette's true search for her self devoid of patriarchal society's

indoctrinations and her mother's impositions. The Holy Grail stands for the absent signifier/ jouissance/ the metaphysical zone. It is impossible to reach the Holy Grail as it is a site of existence created to perpetuate living. Having departed from their given homes and favoring to seek their innermost desire far away from this given home, Jeanette and Sir Perceval reveal that they long for a home to which they can belong. In the tale of Sir Perceval, Winterson attacks the gender/ sex fundamentalism, instead of which she offers the fluidity of these categories by displacing Jeanette (in real life) with Sir Perceval (in the alternate fairyland). Jeanette's association with Sir Perceval, not with a woman, becomes a challenge to the patriarchal organization which is based on prescriptive couplings and gender/sex fundamentalism.

In addition to the tale of Sir Perceval, the story of Winnet, an apprentice of a sorcerer, reveals Jeanette's uncertainty about whether to stay or to pursue her desire. In the story of Winnet, the sorcerer becomes the owner of Winnet when he guesses her name correctly as "naming meant power" (*Oranges* 142). Winnet is taken to the sorcerer's castle. On arriving at the castle, Winnet forgets everything about her previous life. From then on, Winnet becomes the sorcerer's adopted daughter. His truth becomes Winnet's truth, and his world becomes Winnet's world: "She believes she had always been in the castle, and that she was the sorcerer's daughter. He told her she was. That she had no mother, but had been specially entrusted to his care by a powerful spirit" (145). The sorcerer teaches her everything he knows, and they get along well until the time Winnet falls in love. The sorcerer asks her to leave: "'Daughter, you have disgraced me' said the

sorcerer, 'and I have no more use for you. You must leave'" (147). Thus, her journey towards a beautiful city which no one has gone before starts. She is determined to go to that city where "truth mattered and no one would betray her" (158). However, before leaving the castle, the sorcerer disguises himself as a mouse "tying an invisible thread around one of her buttons" (148). With the thread, the sorcerer wants Winnet to come back home, yet, Winnet does not.

There are strong parallelisms between Winnet and Jeanette as both of them are adopted, and when they defy the authority of their parents by falling in love with the wrong person and desiring to follow their own paths, both are banished and forced to abandon their homes. Despite the fact that Winnet does not return to the sorcerer's castle, Jeanette comes back to her mother for a final confrontation as Jeanette thinks that the invisible threads are attached to her. She states "there are threads that help you find your way back, and there are threads that intend to bring you back" (160). So, the threads cast upon her bring her back to her mother who has become a little bit more tolerant as she tears apart her motto by saying, "After all…, oranges are not the only fruit" (*Oranges* 172). In Winnet's story, Winterson inserts, again, gender displacement into the narrative as Louise is represented by the male sorcerer holding power. By reversing genders in the fairy tales, and by assigning the characters opposite gender roles, Winterson subverts the phallogocentric nature of those tales and underlines the slippery nature of the heteronormative categories.

Hence, in view of Butlerian theory of performativity, *Oranges* can be taken as a challenge to the heterosexual matrix as it lays bare its constructedness and unnaturalness. Though raised by her mother within binary understanding of gender and sex, Jeanette realizes her own constructedness in the course of time. At this juncture, the dualistic perception of these categories is disrupted and shattered. The conventional association of women with men and female with male is demolished when Jeanette rejects performing gender roles created by the dominant discourse and cherishes her lesbianism, instead. By the traditional patriarchal society, Jeanette is regarded as feminine and coded as such; yet, she craves to assume the opposite role by pursuing her desire in her quest to discover her *self*. The dominant discourse tries to suppress marginalized and polymorphous figures in an attempt to squeeze them into compulsory heterosexuality. By refusing to be frozen into a "sexed" body and to be located in heterosexual desire, Jeanette is positioned in a decentered/ denaturalized space. Butler states:

> The presuppositions that we make about sexed bodies, about them being one or the other, about the meanings that are said to inhere in them or to follow from being sexed in such a way are suddenly and significantly upset by those examples that fail to comply with the categories that naturalize and stabilize that field of bodies for us within the terms of cultural conventions. Hence, the strange, the incoherent, that which falls "outside", gives us a way of understanding the taken-for-granted world of sexual categorization as a constructed one, indeed, as one that might well be constructed differently.
>
> (*Gender Trouble* 149)

Jeanette refuses what Butler calls as "a totalization of [the] 'I'" (Butler and Salih 122). Butler attests that "to claim that this is what I *am* is to suggest a provisional totalization of this 'I'. But if the I can so determine itself, then that which it excludes in order to make that determination remains constitutive of the determination itself" (qtd. in Salih 122). However, Jeanette repudiates the

totalization of the *I*/ her self, and refrains from restricting her *I* to a totalizing mould. Instead of terminating the plurality of her *I*, Jeanette chooses to explore all her alternate selves, favors indefiniteness, which precipitates the process of her subjectification. Lopéz comments that "in the operation, she becomes decentered, but the point is that the decentered self is still an agent subject, one that not only allows but celebrates the rift caused by the multiplicity of positions that she allows her self to occupy in the textualisation of her subjectivity" (251).

By way of conclusion, Jeanette metamorphoses into a rupture in the dominant discourse as she does not conform to the constraints of the heterosexual matrix. She becomes a symptom of the breakdown of the assumed link between the signifier "female" and the signified "woman" by problematizing the arbitrary nature of those concepts and by the mismatch between her biological sex and her desire. She becomes a threat to the heteronormative dominant discourse by revealing the possibility of alternate sexes/ genders.

CHAPTER III

CIXOUSIAN *ÉCRITURE FEMININE* IN *WRITTEN ON THE BODY*

> Let a body venture at last out of its shelter, take a chance with meaning under a veil of words, WORD FLESH. From one to the other, eternally, broken up visions, metaphors of the invisible.
>
> ~Julia Kristeva

> The fact that we are all human beings is infinitely more important than all the peculiarities that distinguish humans from one another.
>
> ~Simone de Beauvoir

> I know, I remember but hold me, remind me of how her woman's body was made taboo to us.
>
> ~Adrienne Rich

"It is the clichés that cause trouble," says the undisclosed narrator of *Written on the body*, hinting at her/his attempt to go beyond the totalizing implications and regulations of the phallocentric society (*Written* 71). Winterson, with the help of her controversial and provocative narrator, explores the limits and nature of sex, sexuality and gender merely by reemploying those notions against the background of the social foundation on which they are created. *Written on the body* is a sensual and sentimental elegy for the lost one. It offers a map of the body and desire, the path of which is drawn on the anatomical structure of the body. In the very beginning of the novel, Winterson asks a question which recurs throughout

the novel; “Why is the measure of love loss?” and attempts to draw the taxonomy of desire on the body. Winterson challenges the conventional phallocentric narrative and succeeds in transcending it by not bestowing an identity, a gender and a name on her narrator. The ungendered narrator reveals her/his indefinite liaisons with both males and females, and experiments with the boundaries of love by passing from one lover to another. The vivid flashbacks to her/his previous relationships like “I had a girlfriend once” and “I had a boyfriend once” recur constantly in the novel.

However, one day, s/he falls for a red-haired, married woman called Louise, and s/he is trapped in this passionate affair. Though Louise is married to an annoying oncologist named Elgin, she betrays her husband, and they have a relationship lasting approximately for a year. Nevertheless, halfway through the book, s/he learns that Louise has cancer. Not to create psychological turmoil in Louise’s life, the narrator abandons her/his new lover, too. At this point, the attempt to revive the lost one by writing her body and writing on her body starts to occupy the mind of the narrator. S/he begs Louise to let her/him protect her and write her body as she is defenseless against the enemies inside. The narrator appeals, “Will you let me crawl inside you, stand guard over you, trap them [the enemies] as they come to you?” (*Written* 115). The ungendered and nameless narrator gets obsessed with human anatomy, and to have access to Louise’s body intimately, s/he breaks down her body into smaller pieces, and rewrites them through lyrical melodies. In parallel with the narrator’s attempt to break Louise’s body into pieces, Morrison,

by drawing on Butler's theory performativity, suggests that Winterson's texts perform and should perform on two levels:

> Firstly, they must carry out a genealogical investigation of flesh and its pleasures, tracing the processes by which sexed bodies are materialized over time. Secondly, they must find new and imaginative ways to disrupt the sedimentary processes of hetero-normativity, bearing narrative witness to the sexually ab-normal, the perverse and the intolerable. (174)

Through creating an ungendered narrator refusing to declare her/his name/gender and desiring to rewrite her/his lover's body using an evocative language rather than the phallocentric language which enslaves bodies, Winterson attacks the so-called bodily integrity, evacuates the notion of female body appropriated by patriarchy, thus, parodies the phallocentrism on which binary charade is set. In parallel with Cixous's theory "based upon a vacillation between the body as a concrete object and the body as a signifier in the discourse of the unconscious," Winterson also considers writing a salvation of women's bodies and their unconscious (qtd. in Binhammer 73).

Therefore, Winterson draws an ungendered narrator and her/his venture consciously employing *écriture feminine* to reappropriate her/his beloved's lost/absent/silenced body through an innovative language. With the help of strategically and poetically exerted voice of an androgynous narrator and a palimpsest of the female body, "the narrator's experiment in *écriture feminine* has succeeded in translating the patriarchal into a new feminine self/text/world" (Onega 130).

3.1. Undisclosed Narrator

3.1.1. Undisclosed Name

Names, naming and being named are problematized in the text since the biggest absence and challenge to being positioned or trapped into epistemological categories is the undeclared name of the narrator. Butler, too, mentions the power of names and states that "all referring ends up phantasmatically producing (and missing) the referent to which it aspires" because the name fixes, embodies and entraps free-floating signifiers into the mould called identity, and positions the self in the dominant discourse (*Bodies* 208). By accepting the performatives, authoritative speeches, which have a binding power, the subject is situated in a network of ideology/punishment/authorization, and becomes surrounded with the dominant discourse from which s/he cannot escape. Without being named and interpellated, the "I" cannot be positioned in the discourse. Only by being named does the "I" come into existence since "there is no 'I' who stands *behind* discourse and executes its volition or will *through* discourse," which means the subject does not pre-exist the discourse but s/he is mobilized in the process of being positioned (*Bodies* 225).

Lacan explores in *Seminar II* the extent to which names can maintain the integrity of the subject's identity as "naming constitutes a pact by which two subjects simultaneously come to an agreement to recognize the same object" (qtd. in Butler *Bodies* 152). However, it is a social pact that depends on the Law of the Father demanding the total control and compliance of the subject under patronymic names in return for a lasting identity. "Enduring and viable identity is

thus purchased through subjection to and subjectivication by the patronmy" (*Bodies* 153). Yet, what if one rejected being positioned in the dominant discourse? What if s/he disclaimed the name as a site of existence but generated her/his own space? Then, s/he will venture to subvert the performativity cast upon her/him by not disclosing her/his name; thereby, disclaim the position granted by the dominant discourse as in the case of Winterson's ungendered and nameless narrator who challenges the patriarchal metaphor.

In her first novel, *Oranges,* Winterson deals with the issue of naming, and through her protagonist, she highlights its significance in romantic love and relation. Jeanette suggests:

> [t]here are many forms of love and affection, some people can spend their whole lives together without knowing each other's names. Naming is a difficult and time-consuming process; it concerns essence, and it means power. But on the wild nights who can call you home? Only the one who knows your name. (*Oranges* 170)

Also, on another occasion, when the sorcerer sees Winnet, he says, "I know your name," and Winnet gets intimidated as "naming meant power. Adam had named the animals and the animals came at his call" (*Oranges* 142). In *Oranges*, Winterson stresses the power that can be conceded from names and naming process, and questions names' potential to situate one into the patriarchal order. However, in *Written on the body,* her approach to naming process assumes harsher implications as it becomes the critique of grand narratives and as proper names are associated with the Law of the Father and being positioned under the patrimony.

Rather than bestowing a name on her narrator, Winterson chooses a not-naming strategy, which raises questions about identity and identification. Devoid of a name and consequently a position in the patriarchal discourse, the narrator is like a floating signifier defying "the role allotted to it, refusing to be altogether relegated to the task of signification" (Critchley and Marchart 193). The narrator cannot assume a signified on this slippery and unfixed ground since s/he has discarded the labels and identities imposed by the patriarchal discourse. As can be seen in Gilmore's words, "what is missing is the signifying chain of identity that presumably corresponds to a material reality in which identity coheres through the progressive, motivated and linked signification of sex, gender and sexuality" (130).

Besides creating a narrator disowning a name, which can be read as the narrator's attempt to blur the relation between herself/himself and the patriarchal metaphor, Winterson also attacks the myth of origin in the Western metaphysics. Derrida asserts that metaphysics endeavors to obtain complexity from simplicity and from an origin which has presence within itself. For Derrida, "any such 'presence' is not really originary at all, but at best a *secondary* effect that must emerge from an 'earlier' state that he famously calls *difference.*" Namely, "present origins are always in fact projected (or, rather, retro-jected) on the basis of a situation in which they are already lost" (Bennington 20). The reason why they are retrojected as origins is to deny the fact that they have never come first, yet they are alleged to have come first. In order to create a totalizing history and a grand narrative which has an underlying ideology working for its good, metaphysics tries to

"reappropriate presence … through notions of adequacy of presentation, of totalization, of history" (Niranjana 40). It means the origin is a myth, and also an originary translation. Therefore, the nameless narrator lays bare the constructedness of history/origins of the dominant discourse, and deciphers the process of reappropriation by refusing to enter the ideological network and patriarchal categories with her/his undeclared name, background and history.

3.1.2. Undisclosed Gender

Another conspicuous feature of *Written on the body* is that although the narrator does not reveal any gender references about herself/himself, s/he mentions her/his sexual relations with other women and men. As suggested by Moore, "the narrator's undeclared gender makes the space of narration a 'virtual space,'" (108) and further in this virtual space, the anxiety caused by not reaching any information about the narrator in terms of her/his name, age, occupation and background upsets the readers and frustrates their expectations. Winterson, by disrupting the traditional narrative line and incorporating the gender ambiguity of her narrator; and through the shift of her narrative, the integration of different points of view, the dissection of bodily integrity and flashbacks into her narrative, invites the readers to a fictional game. She seems to test whether the readers can endure when the story falls apart and joins together again.

In her challenge to the traditional understanding of sexual identities, Winterson aggravates most of the readers as she does not follow the determinate heteronormative sexual paradigm which

> prescribes human beings with biological male sex to understand themselves as men, follow the bodily and aesthetically approved appearance outlined for men and direct desire at women. Correspondingly, human beings with biological female sex should understand themselves as social women, follow the bodily and aesthetically approved appearance outlined for women and direct their desire at men. (Søndergaard qtd. in Jørgensen 119)

The readers are muddled regarding the gender of the narrator as in one page they witness her/his affair with a woman and in another page with a man. Winterson seems to problematize the gender/sexual boundaries by assigning different gender/sexual roles to her narrator. "Eventually, it becomes clear that s/he is not a seamless character but constructed by the stories s/he tells, with different identities evoked by various memory flashbacks typically beginning with 'I had a girlfriend once' or 'I had a boyfriend once'" (Lindenmeyer 50).

The narrator's fluid and uncategorized sexual identity acts in one place under the cover of a heterosexual man or in another place under the cover of a lesbian having countless affairs with women such as "Inge, Catherine, Bathsheba, Judith, Estelle" (*Written* 72). Likewise, s/he wears the mask of a heterosexual woman or a gay being with different men such as Crazy Frank "whose chest jewelry rattled when he walked" (*Written* 94) or Bruno who "found Jesus under a wardrobe" (*Written* 150). Yet, the narrator does not want to be embodied and classified according to heteronormative gender and sexual criteria "because it [this strategy] forces the reader into the text to coordinate the different masks and perspectives

the narrator offers" (Kauer 42). Being aware of her/his constructedness and fictionality, the narrator engenders a labyrinthian network entrapping the reader in confusion and obscurity.

In contrast to the conventional understanding which advocates increasing the reliability of the narrator so that the reader can be convinced and drawn into the narration more easily, Winterson consciously dictates to her narrator the idea that s/he is not reliable. The narrator questions her/his credibility: "I can tell by now that you are wondering whether I can be trusted as a narrator" (*Written* 24) or trying to remember what s/he has said earlier, "Did I say this has happened to me again and again?" (*Written* 17). The narrator struggles to transfer her/his past into present. By stating something indecisively and then restating it, the narrator consolidates the distrust felt by the restless readers. While recalling the scene in which s/he and Louise lay on their bed, the narrator cannot indicate the time precisely. S/he points out:

> That year the branches were torn beneath the weight, this year they sing in the wind. There are no ripe plums in August. Have I got it wrong, this hesitant chronology? Perhaps I should call it Emma Bovary's eyes or Jane Eyre's dress. I don't know… Nevertheless, I will push on. There were plums and I broke them over you. (*Written* 17-8)

Through these indeterminate statements, Kauer asserts, "the reader is made to see that what he or she will get is fiction, not facts or rather uncertainties instead of straightforward categories" (44). By repudiating the categories that engender an abiding self such as name and gender, the narrator wants the readers to become aware of the restrictions around them and to cherish multiplicity rather than sticking to singularity. Rubinson, too, supports the idea that the narrator's

strategically undisclosed sexual identity paves the way for multiplicity and ambiguity: "the narrator's sexual ambiguity teaches us to become aware of how we view the world in polar and essentialized terms; the ambiguity implicitly challenges the 'naturalized' status of positivist- influenced biological essentialism" which casts ingrained, stereotypical and readily-made gender roles upon human beings (220).

In order to make the readers realize the inconsistency and versatility of sexuality, the narrator deliberately dwells on false assumptions and hints regarding her/his gender and sex. Sometimes s/he becomes Alice in Wonderland, stating that "I shall call myself Alice and play croquet with the flamingoes" (*Written* 10), and sometimes after recalling memories with one of her/his earlier boyfriends, s/he enounces, "I still blush" and asks herself/himself "Why do I feel like a convent virgin?" (*Written* 94). After tracing the hints, the readers falsely assume that they have successfully discovered the narrator's gender and freeze the body as a woman. As the readers are stuck in their heteronormative gender biased understanding, they associate blushing with womanly features, and delude themselves regarding the narrator's gender and sex. Yet, as the narration progresses, and as the readers have more access into the narrator's memories, they encounter statements that can be taken as the opposite of the previous assumption. Besides calling herself/himself "Alice," the narrator also refers to herself/himself as "an unhappy Socrates" (*Written* 13) and "the Lothario" reading *Playboy* (*Written* 20).

The unsteadiness and ambivalence in the narrator's gender continues when the narrator and her/his anarchist, feminist and obsessive girlfriend, Inge, go to destroy some chosen urinals "which were all concrete Nissan huts, absolutely ugly and clearly functionary of the penis" (*Written* 22). This is Inge's aesthetic crisis because she cannot help destroying phallic symbols. Moore posits that "the movement of the characters in and out of this male-gendered space provides the opportunity for numerous identifications and counter-identifications (on the part of both characters and readers) with those who have entered through the door marked 'Men'" (qtd. in Grosz 109). The narrator comments on the scene when entering men's toilet: "a typical occasion would be to find five of them, cocks in hand, staring at the brown-streaked porcelain as though it were the Holy Grail. Why *do* men like doing everything together?" (*Written* 22) By attributing a double-coded meaning to her narrator's question, Winterson again plays a trick on her reader as the inference of the narrator's gender depends on the perception of the readers. On one level, the narrator can be perceived as a man who complains about his fellow men and who dissociates himself from them. He looks at them from a masculine distance. However, on another, by complaining about men's habits in her/his grumbling question as if s/he is a woman, the narrator detaches herself/himself from the other men and observes them from a feminine distance, as a result of which those men mutate into the other, and the narrator assumes the shape of a woman.

Nonetheless, the narrator's identification with the female point of view does not last long since it turns out that the narrator actually makes fun of her/his feminine

attachment. In order to distance herself/himself from the position appropriated for her/him, s/he teasingly quotes from Inge, who insistently attacks on patriarchy: "[t]his urinal is a symbol of patriarchy and must be destroyed" (*Written* 22). Winterson, then, reverts to the narrator's own voice and continues tampering with her readers and frustrating their restrictive and multiplicity-lacking expectations. The fluid and mercurial narrator states:

> Then (in my own voice), "My girlfriend has just wired up the Semtex, would you mind finishing off?" What would you do under the circumstances? Wouldn't impending castration followed by certain death be enough to cause a normal man to wipe his dick and run for it? They didn't. Over and over again they didn't, just flicked the drops contemptuously and swapped tips about the racing. I'm not a mild-mannered sort but I don't like rudeness. On the job I found it helped to carry a gun. (*Written* 22-3)

The narrator's authentic voice hints that s/he may be a man; a normal man carrying a gun on the job and having a girlfriend. Vacillating between being male and female, the narrator blurs the lines between two definite gender paradigms, imposed by patriarchal discourse. By attaining different bodies and masks, s/he refuses to act on merely one gender. As Butler avers, "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence" (*Gender* 34). Yet, the narrator's voluntary choice, which is not to be moulded into any gender identity, forestalls regulatory acts, the aim of which is to congeal fluidity and multiplicity of sexuality. Accordingly, gender signifier cannot be frozen on the narrator's body. Thus, the narration subverts Butlerian performativity, shuns performing only one gender and consequently, destroys patriarchal agenda. For Moore, the undisclosed narrator

> is a figure (or perhaps a narrative space or category) that appropriates the experiences and investments of variously gendered and sexualized

> beings in a structural enactment of Winterson's particular Virtual Reality. This is a figure constructed of disparate body parts, desires, identities and histories, put together in a postmodern pastiche….
>
> (qtd. in Grotz 110)

In the space allocated to her/him, the narrator sways from one gender identity to another, and cannot be attached to a fixed sexuality as s/he is like a drop of quicksilver refusing any form of viscosity. "The reader of the novel, however, finds him/herself continuously led astray by allusions to the narrator's sex: signs which it is impossible to ignore and not try and pick up and put together to form a clear, sexed picture of the narrator" (Jørgensen 121).

Another significant scene in which the readers believe momentarily that they have derived a clue about the narrator's sex and gender is the lurid dream scene. In this vivid scene, the narrator visits one of her/his ex-girlfriends, Amy, and encounters a vagina dentata on the letter-box:

> Poking out of the letter-box just at crotch level was the head of a yellow and green serpent. Not a real one but livid enough with a red tongue and silver foil teeth. I hesitated to ring the bell. Hesitated because to reach the bell meant pushing my private parts right into the head of the snake.
>
> (*Written* 42)

While fighting with herself/himself over ringing the bell, the door opens, and Amy utters; "You've nothing to be frightened of…. It's got a rat-trap in the jaw." Afterwards, Amy "returned with a leek and shoved it into the snake's mouth. There was a terrible clatter and the bottom half of the leek fell limply onto the mat" (*Written* 42). Lindenmeyer contends that "[t]his passage plays with popular assumptions about castration and penis envy: the snake as implement of the phallic woman, the snake's jaw as vagina dentata" (51) since "the toothed vagina

is the classic symbol of men's fear of castration, expressing the unconscious belief that a woman may eat or castrate her partner during intercourse" (Linstead 169).

Nonetheless, Amy consoles the narrator by stating "[y]ou've nothing to be frightened of" (*Written* 42), which is double-coded depending on the expected gender of the narrator. If one considers the narrator a woman, then she cannot feel castration anxiety as she has already been castrated. Since women are devoid of outer genitals, in psychoanalytic terms, they are already been castrated. Thereby, the narrator has nothing to lose, and it is pointless for her to feel intimidated by the rat-trap. In another scenario, if the narrator is a man, he may feel anxious about getting castrated and about being left imperfect. However, Amy says that "it is for the postman" (*Written* 43). Thus, the narrator's fear is pointless as the rat-trap is not set up for him. "Winterson never affirms the importance of the penis/phallus as marker of sexual difference, but plays around it, offering only shifting positions of phallic woman/castrated woman/man ridden with castration anxiety that can never be immovably allocated" (Lindenmeyer 51).

Here again, the readers are invited to the disentangling process of discovering the narrator's sex and gender colored with ambiguity and haziness, and to employ their "cultural background what Søndergaard calls 'the cultural quilt' to decipher the gender of the narrator and the different clues are read in the light of culture" (Jørgensen 121). Coded by the phallocentric society, the readers have learnt following certain signs and stereotypes in the dualistic gender paradigm, thus, they can be on the safe side and rest under the shadow of the heteronormative

dominant discourse. Søndergaard also mentions the readers' attempts to freeze the terrain of sexuality: "individuals are read as signs of gender. No matter how confusingly the individual forms its appearance, its co-actors will never give up. They can be apprehensive, but will struggle endlessly to become able to reach a conclusive reading" (qtd. in Jørgensen 121).

In parallel with the readers' urge to be sure about the gender and sex of the narrator, *Written on the body* is full of signs, hints and false assumptions that might specify the narrator's sexuality and pierce the mystery; yet, the gender markers in the text serve dual purposes, and eventually, they turn out to designate both the male and female sex.

Along with the narrator's previous sexual affairs before her/his beloved Louise, the novel also gives an account of the aftermath of their affair, the sorrow and mourning process the narrator experiences after s/he leaves Louise. Starting as a monologue of the undisclosed narrator who tries to come to terms with the loss of her/his lover, the narration is intermingled with incessant references to Louise and the narrator's deep feelings and sufferings. Fluctuating between memories of the ex-girlfriends and boyfriends, the readers are tempted to trace down sexual clues in the story of Louise, too. When Louise remembers the first time she saw the narrator, she says; "you were the most beautiful creature male or female I had ever seen" (*Written* 84). However, Louise and her implicit statements disappoint the readers' expectations as the previous lovers have done.

Anna Fähranaeus raises some questions about Winterson's ungendered and nameless narrator, and regards it as a challenge to the imprisonment and congealment of the body. She asks:

> Is it possible that Winterson's use of a character with a materially featureless and thus unspecified sex in mundane situations that are readily associated with gender is an attempt to liberate not only the body, but thought, attachments, likes and dislikes from gender? To, in a sense, capture the psychological reality of personality without skewing of material sex.
>
> Is the featureless narrator an attempt to separate what is normally taken as written on the gendered body and to say: Look, the associations are there without the body and thus the writing is superimposed, imprisoning the body. (188)

The narrator's oscillating between femininity and masculinity, and refusing to be frozen positions her/him into the status of Kristevian subject-in-process "which is always in a state of contesting the law either with the force of violence, of aggressivity of the death drive or with the other side of this force: pleasure and *jouissance*" (McAfee 69). The traditional Western discourse necessitates a single monolithic unified self having clear-cut boundaries and definite gender/sex/identity paradigms. Yet, the subject-in-process defies the definiteness and oneness of this postulate, and instead, favors being in a constant flux. The term of the subject-in-process "is a reminder that a process of differentiation continuously constitutes subjectivity; there is no core, fixed, unified self" (McAfee 69).

Not only does the narrator challenge the established notions by abstaining from disclosing her/his name, gender and background, but also s/he subverts the

appropriation of the body by patriarchy, and ventures rewriting the body; this time by experimenting with language and turning the patriarchal and centered language into a feminine and decentred one. Only by this way can the narrator liberate the body from patriarchal imprisonments, decipher the constructedness of the body, attain a fluid and an unsubstantial body image and eventually create a rupture in the traditional discourse.

3.2. The re-appropriation of the body as a written text

> 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?... 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 and now I am alone on a rock hewn out of my own body. (*Written* 9)

The above given monologue of the narrator starts the narration, and displays the narrator's intense feelings and love for Louise. Despite the elusiveness of her/his gender, the narrator's words refute the essentialist maxim that desire should be directed to the opposite sex. As the gender and sex of the narrator is not mentioned explicitly, the narrator cannot be positioned in the paternal Law. Yet, her/his fluidity, indefiniteness and peripheral positioning do not stop the narrator from loving her/his lover so much and grieving after her departure.

Subsequent to many insincere liaisons with both males and females, the narrator eventually plunges into a love bearing and defying clichés concurrently. All s/he wants is Louise as "under her fierce gaze [her/his] past is burned away" (*Written* 77). Casting her/his previous affairs aside, the narrator comes to realize the strength of love and this red-haired woman's influence on her/him. Absorbed in

new feelings, the narrator cannot understand whether what they experience is real or not. As in her/his previous relations, the narrator supposes that Louise will abandon her/him: "You said, 'Why do I frighten you?' Frighten me? Yes you do frighten me. You act as though we will be together for ever. You act as though there is infinite pleasure and time without end. How can I know? My experience has been that time always end" (*Written* 18).

Yet, Louise, the "Pre-Raphaelite Heroine" (*Written* 99), who does not belong to the era in which she lives, acts according to "the wrong script" (*Written* 18) against the narrator's pessimistic expectation that she would desert her/him. However, Louise does not act according to the expected script and does not desert the narrator but deserts her husband, Elgin. Since Louise is not a conventional woman figure, she sacrifices her marriage, which stuns the narrator. S/he cannot believe Louise's unexpected attachment, and comments:

> "You said, 'I love you and my love for you makes any other life a lie." Can this be true, this simple obvious message, or am I like those shipwrecked mariners who seize an empty bottle and eagerly read out what isn't there? And yet you are there, here, sprung like a genie to ten times your natural size, towering over me, holding me in your arms like mountain sides. (*Written* 119)

In the vastness of infinite pleasure, Louise and the narrator engender a space which is "uncluttered by association" and which "redeems [them] from the accumulations of a life time in which they cherish the void belonging to them and the desire they have for each other" (*Written* 81). The narrator, in a way, experiences *jouissance* "which is the attainment of an absolute satisfaction, a

pleasure with no limits…. *Jouissance* is the acme of unchecked pleasure where the subject loses itself in ecstasy...” (Green 45).

Lost in the gratification and satisfaction provided by these novel feelings, the narrator attempts to depict the depth of Louise’s love: “Louise took my face between her hands. I felt her long fingers tapering the sides of my head, her thumbs under my jawbone…. I put my arms around her, not sure whether I was a lover or a child. I wanted her to hide me beneath her skirts against all menace” (*Written* 80). Devoid of a place in the patriarchal community and occupying the niche of an individual on the periphery, the narrator desires to fill in her/his Lack with Louise, and thereby transforms her into the position of the source of *jouissance*. Further, their intimacy and bond remind Kristeva’s concept of the semiotic which is an “evocation of feeling, desire or unconscious drive, a flow of words that is more emotive than logical” (Hölbling 285). Rather than confirming the rational and the realistic, the narrator sustains an overflow of desire and senses. Despite their special bond and *jouissance* they experience, the narrator and Louise’s affair is disrupted by the intrusion of Louise’s husband, Elgin who says that Louise has “Chronic lymphocytic leukemia” (*Written* 101).

After discovering Louise’s leukemia, the narrator feels as if s/he were disintegrating:

> Two hundred miles from the surface of the earth there is no gravity. The laws of motion are suspended. You could turn somersaults slowly slowly, weight into weightlessness, nowhere to fall…. You are stretching slowly slowly, getting longer, your joints are slipping away from their usual places. There is no connection between your shoulder

> and your arm. You will break up bone by bone, fractured from who you are, you are drifting away now, the centre cannot hold. (*Written* 100-1)

In this way, the mourning phase starts for the narrator and s/he attempts to reinvent her/his lost lover by employing the power of language and by splitting of Louise's leukemic body into minimal but miscellaneous pieces to rewrite and discover it in the light of a feminine language devoid of any coercive and imprisoning heteronormative performatives. The narrator abandons Louise so that she can get her husband's professional help. In the emptiness created by Louise's absence, the narrator feels the strong urge to revive Louise. Her/his desire to "'know' Louise 'intimately' shows that s/he is attempting to recover *jouissance* they had previously enjoyed" (Onega 125). The narrator defines her/his experiment as follows:

> If I could not put Louise out of my mind I would drown myself in her. Within the clinical language, through the dispassionate view of the sucking, sweating, greedy, defecating self, I found a love-poem to Louise. I would go on knowing her, more intimately than the skin, hair and voice that I craved. (*Written* 111)

In her/his voyage to discover Louise's body, the narrator resembles herself/himself to Columbus, and endeavors to guess what he might have felt while discovering America. S/he asks, "How could I cover this land? Did Columbus feel like this on sighting the Americas?" (*Written* 52). At first sight, the narrator's question recalls manly colonialization of women's bodies as penetrable territories and a dark continent, which generates another binary organization by positioning men as colonizers and women as colonized. The narrator's query also reminds one of Cixous's allusion to men's imprisonment of women's bodies. Cixous proposes that men have alienated women from their own bodies by

making them their own enemies, restricting their site of existence and creating an area of absence:

> As soon as they [women] begin to speak, at the same time as they're taught their name, they can be taught that their territory is black: because you are Africa, you are black. Your continent is dark. Dark is dangerous. You can't see in the dark, you're afraid. Don't move, you might fall. Most of all, don't go into the forest. And so we have internalized this horror of dark. (*Laugh* 349)

However, the narrator gets intimidated by the profundity of exploring the body, and thereby chooses writing to delineate the dissolution of her/his body and Louise's body into one another and transgressing the boundaries of each and every bodily limitation. Thus, "writing becomes a manifestation of passionate sexual love that enables the lover to cross the boundary between self and other and thereby fully inhibit the other's being" (Harris 129).

3.2.1 What is written on the body?

In her/his expedition to the undiscovered and hidden segments of her/his lover's body, the narrator also encounters Foucauldian bodies that have been moulded by history. For Foucault, the body is "the surface on which events inscribe themselves (whereas language marks events and ideas dissolve them)" (Dosse 248). Foucault's notion of the body bears in itself the allegation that the body is the ramification and outcome of power relations, and his concept of discursively shaped body comes into being through regulatory regimes and normalizing practices. Accordingly, Foucault believes that the body is the precondition for subjectivity, and highlights the power mechanisms that shape subjectivity, mind and psyche.

In order to reveal the effect of power relations on the body, Foucault gives the example of a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite, Herculine Barbin, who was compelled to change her/his sex to male after an affair though at birth she was assigned a sexual identity, female. With the help of legal documents and medical reports, Foucault discusses how Barbin's so-called true sex is determined by the dominant discourse. Before suffering from severe pains and confessing to a doctor, Barbin was enjoying pleasures granted to both sexes. Nevertheless, after her confession to the representatives of the medical institution and then to the religious institution- to a doctor and to a priest- Herculine was forced to change her name and act like a man by juridicial power. "Authorities confer and affect [her/his] legal transformation into a man whereupon s/he is legally obligated to dress in men's clothing and to exercise the various rights of men in society" (*Gender* 133). Hindered by the repressive discourse which necessitates accepting merely one sex and gender rather than embracing multiplicity, Barbin's body was congealed so that it might offer univocity. Butler avers that "we might read this body here fully textualized, as a sign of an irresolvable ambivalence produced by the juridicial discourse on univocal sex" (*Gender* 135). Submitting to the regulatory practice of power on her body and being unable to transfer from female to male, Barbin could not handle the anxiety, and eventually committed suicide. In his trace of human sexuality, Foucault comes to the Nietzschean conclusion that the body is "totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body" (*Nietzsche* 83).

In the novel, immersed in her/his lover's body, the narrator encounters the traces of Foucauldian bodies, and realizes that Louise's body is inscribed by history as it turns out that her body carries the scars of previous histories: "I have had you beneath me for examination, seen the scars between your thighs where you fell on barbed wire. You look as if an animal has clawed you, run its steel nails through your skin, leaving harsh marks of owners" (*Written* 117). On Louise's body, there are the signs of history implying that her body does not purely belong to her; yet, it is inscribed by some owners. The narrator, too, is aware of the marks left on Louise's body. S/he observes:

> The glossy smoothness of the inside of your upper lip is interrupted by a rough swirl where you were hurt once. The tissues of the mouth and anus heal faster than any others but they leave signs for those who care to look. I care to look. There's a story trapped inside your mouth. A crashed car and a smashed windscreen. The only witness is the scar, jagged like a dueling scar where the skin shows the stitches.
>
> (*Written* 117-8)

The narrator's mentioning of Louise's scars brings to mind female castration in which female genital is referred to as castrated, and is likened to an inchoate penis and/or a scar. In spite of the marks left by history, the ambiguous narrator believes that s/he can save Louise from the impingement occurring over her body by rewriting it as Louise has done to her/his body previously. The narrator engenders a virtual space for her/him and Louise in which they can evade the patriarchal footprints, and melt in each other's bodies. By referring to Louise's writing on her/his body, the narrator evinces:

> Articulacy of fingers, the language of the deaf and dumb, signing on the body body longing. Who taught you to write in blood on my back? Who taught you to use your hands as branding irons? You have scored your name into my shoulders, referenced me with your mark. The pads of your fingers have become printing blocks, you tap a message on to my

> skin, tap meaning into my body. Your morse code interferes with my heart beat. (*Written* 89)

Louise rescues the narrator from the binding effects of the society, deciphers her/him, and displays her/his constructedness since, at the time they met, the narrator was unaware of her/his fictionality. Louise sees right through the narrator, and attempts to show her/him what s/he cannot see. Louise notes, "you cannot see what I can see…. You are a pool of clear water where the light plays" (*Written* 85). Through re-appropriating her/his lover's body, and making her/him realize her/his constructedness, Louise has "translated [her/him] into her own book" (*Written* 89). Hence, the autodiegetic narrator breaks free from the marks of history by being written on the body, which is "a secret code only visible in certain lights; the accumulations of a lifetime gather there. In places the palimpsest is so heavily worked that the letters felt like braille" (*Written* 89). Though the narrator abstains from disclosing her/his whole story, s/he cannot resist unraveling under Louise's deciphering, and submits to her/his lover's writing process, which causes her/him to become a text, too. S/he suggests, "I like to keep my body rolled up away from prying eyes. Never unfold too much, tell the whole story. I didn't know that Louise would have reading hands. She has translated me into her own book" (*Written* 89). Lindermeyer, too, believes that in the novel, "the distinction between 'body' and 'text' becomes blurred, lovemaking turns into a hermeneutic act of reading and translating the beloved's body" (55). She also points out, "if the text inscribed on the body can be changed and translated, the body is no longer a mere passive object of inscription by an all-powerful history" (55).

Lindenmeyer's allegation echoes Cixousian *écriture feminine* which "is a strategic writing practice designed to facilitate the expression of women's subjectivity and desire" (Eileraas 84). With the help of experimenting with language, *écriture feminine* opens up the possibility of representing the female body which is regarded as inferior compared to male body, and thereby impersonates the weaker leg of the binary organization: women< men. By generating a site of existence recovered from the effects of male territory, and employing a blend of both masculine and feminine points of view and multiplicity, *écriture feminine* grants women the possibility of discovering their 'selves'. By breaking free from the influence of men, they embrace plurality. Thereby, it heralds the emergence of an innovative style of writing which is fluid, open and decentered in opposition to the phallocentric language which is irrevocable, close and centered.

Cixous believes in the power of writing as "writing is about possibilities as much as it is about the impossible. It is the body of possibilities in the act of writing that permits the impossible to come through." (qtd. in Ang) Through translating the body to the paper, the rational to the irrational, the reason to the feeling and the signifier to the signifier, and through writing the other, the paternal law is dissolved. Since various implications and meanings come into being, this process displays the fact that there is no one stable reality but multiplicity of realities. Thus, translation challenges the origin of meaning, and secures the eruption of the body into the text. Cixous states:

> I don't 'begin' by 'writing': I don't write. Life becomes text starting out from my body. I am already text. History, love, violence, time, work,

> desire inscribe it in my body, I go where the 'fundamental language' is spoken, the body language into which all the tongues of things, acts and beings translate themselves, in my own breast, the whole of reality worked upon my flesh... recomposed into a book. (*Coming to write* 52)

Here, Cixous also alludes to the Foucauldian postulate that the body is inscribed by history. In addition, Cixous affirms that writing coexists with the body as she takes the body as a text on which the Symbolic Order acts. In this way, Ang proposes that "Cixous blurs the boundaries between writing and life, treating life as writing and writing as life." By treating the body as a text, and the text as a body, and thereby translating the Symbolic Order into the feminine terrain, Cixous destroys the patriarchal agenda and shatters the binary organization. Consequently, Cixous transforms the impossible into the possible.

In the novel, in spite of the narrator's ambiguous statements about her/his life, s/he allows the readers to have an insight into her/his job. S/he is a translator, and translates from Russian to English (*Written* 94). Translation has a significant place in delineating the feminine desire. Ang suggests that the feminine:

> is the necessary in articulation, but in itself cannot be articulated because the Symbolic Order functions on grounds of the *propre* (signifier to signified), and this excess belongs to the realm of the non- *propre* (signifier to signifier in an endless chain)…. Thus, feminine desire can only be demonstrated through unveiling of the *propre* through play and translation.

Thus, the narrator's occupation as a translator takes a new, albeit a symbolic meaning, and it makes the narrator capable of "undertaking the practice of *écriture feminine* and, by so doing, of giving expression to and making real their

[her/his and Louise's] unrealisable desires and dreams" (Onega 124). Susana Onega contends that Louise and the narrator's;

> activity of writing/translating each other's body has revolutionary intent, since as Nicole Brossard has pointed out, "the skin of a woman which slides on to the skin of another woman provokes a sliding meaning creating the possibility of a new version of reality and fiction, which [she] would call a tridimensional vision." It is this "sliding of meaning" brought about by the mutual writing/translating of the narrator's and Louise's bodies that creates le corps/texte or "cortex", the new feminine space in the Symbolic Order within which they can give expression to their perfect love as desiring subjects/subjects of desire. (124)

In the rupture constituted by their repudiation of the paternal law and in the feminine space characterized by their excessive and obsessive desire, the narrator and Louise translate and transform one another. They revive the *jouissance* they lost beforehand and since then sought incessantly to recover. The narrator's chivalric act to separate from Louise to save her life implies the presence of a protective male figure and again gives a false hint about the hazy sex of the narrator. This also contributes to the fragmentation in the narrator's self. The reason for the narrator's dissolution and dissection stems from the fact that Louise gives meaning to her/his existence. When the narrator gives credit for the equation body=text engendering the symbolic feminine space for their desire, s/he feels as if the ground were slipping away from her/him: "I grapple but my body slithers away. I want to brace myself against something solid but there is nothing solid here" (*Written* 101). Previously the narrator refers to their profound affection as "held by a single loop of love" or as King Solomon's knot associated with truth and perfection (*Written* 88). After Louise's prolonged absence, the narrator experiences a deep anguish, as a result of which the cord conjoining their bodies

weakens and detaches, and s/he cannot hold on to something solid. The narrator dissolves, and her/his body is no longer solid, but fluid.

In her/his farewell to Louise, the narrator yearns for her body, and feels in her/his bones the marks left on her/his body by Louise. Rescued from the haunting influences of the paternal law, the narrator's body is re-appropriated with desire, and inscribed with love and passion. S/he is aware of Louise's tremendous traces on her/him: "your hand prints are all over my body. Your flesh is my flesh. You deciphered me and now I am plain to read. The message is a simple one: my love for you" (*Written* 106). With the assistance of Louise, the narrator is purified from the totalizing imprints of history which inscribe bodies as a passive medium. Now the narrator is nothing but Louise. Incapable of carrying the burden of loss, s/he leaves her/his job as a translator, and dedicates the rest of her/his life to fill the Lack caused by her/his lover's grievous disappearance.

In her/his attempt to resurrect the beloved, the narrator buries herself/himself into the library, and gets obsessed with anatomy, which is the sole instrument to reach Louise's body intimately. Initially, on discovering Louise's illness, the narrator thinks about the ugly and unwanted results of this long and afflicting process, and envisages the physical transformation of Louise's body under the assault of cancer cells:

> Cancer treatment is brutal and toxic. Louise would normally be treated with steroids, massive doses to induce remission. When her spleen started to enlarge she might have splenic irridation or even a splenectomy. By then she would be badly anaemic, suffering from deep bruising and bleeding, tired and in pain most of the time. She would be constipated. She would be vomiting and nauseous. Eventually

> chemotheraphy would contribute to failure of her bone marrow. She would be very thin, my beautiful girl, thin and weary and lost.
> (*Written* 102)

S/he feels the risk that their romantic relation embellished with desire and passion might fade away, and mutate into brutal physical change. Intimidated with the possibility of losing her/his lover in the labyrinth of the medical discourse, the narrator reads intensively medical textbooks and their metanarratives about the wholeness of the body. Rubinson puts forwards that "the textbooks' anatomical descriptions of the body dissect, name, classify, and so seek to contain the body under a single rubric" (134). By naming body parts and situating them into a univocal and totalizing shape, the scientific and medical discourse appropriates the body into disparate units, and colonizes it through discursive practices rendering the body's perception as "natural." Nonetheless, through juxtaposing scientific and literary texts, and engendering a poetic discourse out of scientific texts, "Winterson urges us to see scientific genres of writing not as 'natural' but as a set of stories as constructed and constructing as other genres of story" (137).

Besides refraining from revealing her/his gender and performing on this haziness as a strategy to challenge the constructedness of heteronormative categories, the narrator also defies the body's integrity consolidated by the dominant discourse. Another critic Elizabeth A. Grosz touches on the issue of volatile bodies which are intended to be congealed:

> The body has far remained colonized through the discursive practices of the natural sciences, particularly the discourses of biology and medicine. It has generally remained mired in presumptions regarding its naturalness, its fundamentally biological and precultural status, its immunity to cultural, social and historical factors, its brute status as

> given, unchangeable, inert and passive, manipulable under scientifically regulated conditions. (x)

Considered as immutable, the body becomes a site for the projection of sexes, and a site on which sexual and gender roles are performed by sticking to the congenital and so-called natural biological roles. Noticing the restraints on the body imposed by essentializing scientific discourses, in *Written on the body*, "self-consciously Winterson sets out to sculpt literature into new forms to respond to the alienating, depersonalized threat of scientific postmodernism" (Rubinson 134). To reclaim the lover's body, the narrator subverts the ultimate purpose of wholeness by dissecting the body into smaller units. In other words, s/he mutilates the understanding of wholeness strategically and reverts to the ~~w/~~holeness by holding on to the gravitational field in which bodies are fluid, open and decentered, not to the solid grounds which petrify the floating bodies.

Lindenmeyer also supports the idea of bodily parts' connection by saying that "Winterson, using romantic conventions of boundary-transcending love as well as postmodern concepts of the body to deconstruct rigid identities and boundaries, escapes total dissolution by envisaging a connected-ness that is not relying on stable selves and surfaces: the gravitational field" (55). Getting free of the sapient anatomical and medical textbooks full of accumulative information, the narrator untangles a love poem, and generates a language sprung from both the body and the scientific discourse. For instance, the narrator describes the cavities in human body in anatomical and scientific language: "FOR DESCRIPTIVE PURPOSES THE HUMAN BODY IS SEPERATED INTO CAVITIES. THE CRANIAL

CAVITY CONTAINS THE BRAIN. ITS BOUNDARIES ARE FORMED BY THE BONES OF THE SKULL" (*Written* 119). The assertive scientific language disregards the existence of a subject, and embalms subjectivity with the shade of objectivity and ultimate realities: "Scientific discourse is supposed to link the reader directly to 'universal truths' about nature, but it offers a limited form of knowledge that is particularly challenged when confronting the complexities of human behavior and feeling" (Rubinson 224).

As opposed to the scientific single truth, the narrator embraces a variety of disparate truths as her/his narration employs poetic language blended with scientific language:

> Let me penetrate you. I am the archaeologist of tombs. I would devote my life to marking your passageways, the entrances and exits of that impressive mausoleum, your body. How tight and secret are the funnels and wells of youth and health. A wriggling finger can hardly detect the start of an ante-chamber, much less push through to the wide aqueous halls that hide womb, gut and brain. (*Written* 119)

Versifying Louise's body in poetic language, the narrator creates a counter narrative to the scientific metanarrative. While depicting Louise's body, the narrator does not conform to clichés or established notions which suggest that the human body is constituted by solid segments such as bones and/or flesh but s/he compares Louise to a tomb with various secret passages and hidden places. Thus, s/he sustains that Louise's body is fluid and resistant to the normalizing stabilization and totalization. Thus, Louise's body which is "ontologically transitional or liminal" (Morrison 173) mutates into a text, a love poem and a mysterious work of art. It subverts the ingrained notions about the immutable

perception of truth, and sexuality, and reflects "a self-conscious experiment in *écriture feminine*, carried out by an autodiegetic author-narrator whose aim, as Uta Kauer has succinctly put it, 'is no longer self-discovery but rather self-construction'" (Onega 124).

3.3. Poetic language: Subversion of Realistic scope

One of the concerns of the postmodern theory is to overcome the anxiety and uncertainity stemming from the Enlightenment philosophies which presuppose the totalization of the individual. Behind the closed and centered principles of the Enlightenment philosophies, there is a concealed ideology which Althusser defines "as a system of representations that naturalize the situation in which people live and therefore prevents them from fully understanding it" (qtd. in Herman 206). Apart from science and medicine, literature, too, projects underlying mechanisms that constitute an ideology. Further, it has an adopting and a naturalizing influence on the readers: "The classic realist variety embodies bourgeois ideology and oppressively engenders a subject position" that accepts the readily given truth (Herman 206).

In *Written on the body,* the ambiguous narrator's attempt to discard univocity and singularity is felt by the reader when s/he refuses the readily accepted propositions concerning the body's integrity. S/he challenges the doctors' premises by questioning their credibility. The narrator states, "in doctor-think the body is a series of bits to be isolated and treated as necessary, that the body in its very disease may act as a whole is an upsetting concept" (*Writtten* 175). S/he disagrees

with the presumptions of the doctors and their totalizing viewpoints. Instead of taking the body as a whole, the narrator prefers dissecting the body into pieces; and by this way displays the interaction between them. Rather than the product, in this case, the body, the narrator plunges into the process of knowing the body, and of familiarizing herself/himself with the interaction between bodily parts. S/he wants to revive Louise in her/his peculiar manner. S/he posits, "I would have her plasma, her spleen, her synovial fluid. I would recognize her even when her body has long since fallen away" (*Written* 111).

By favoring poetic language over realist language, the narrator challenges the closed nature of the text, and the clichés-ridden allegations of the dominant discourse. The narrator does not accept handing Louise over to the medical discourse, and bemoans:

> What would you do? Pass the body into the hands of strangers? The body that has lain beside you in sickness and in health. The body your arms still long for dead or not. You were intimate with every muscle, privy to the eyelids moving in sleep. This is the body where your name is written, passing into the hands of strangers. (*Written* 178)

For the narrator, the doctors are merely strangers who do not care about Louise or her body, and who attempt to appropriate her body to engender one type of body. Thus, the narrator eagerly hopes to get help from poetic language, which becomes "a means of disrupting reified relationships within so-called referential or utilitarian language…" (Delville 62).

Principally, conventional realistic language accepts the existence of an unproblematic relation between signifier and signified, and eventually creates a

closed chain which contains the compliance of signifier with signified. Yet, "the poetic function of language introduces ambiguity into the referential chain and thereby, problematizes the very creation of meaning" (Delville 62). Rather than accepting a signifying chain, the poetic language involves the dissemination of signifiers, thus disturbs the naturalness of realistic prose.

As one signifier leads to another signifier, one cannot talk about a signified reached in the end. The reflection of the split between signifier and signified becomes explicit in the poetic language, thus it can be implemented to subvert the underlying ideology supporting the dominant discourse in realist texts. By abandoning the closed and forestalled flow of signifiers, the poetic language favors the decentered subjectivication, and thereby engenders a transitional space in which not only "desire is mediated, worked through, transformed and sublimated, but also a space where new forms of desire may be created" (Schwab 36).

Using Louise's body as a shield against the boundaries of the heteronormativity, the narrator finds a new language by means of which s/he opens up a site of existence that saves them from the malignity of the society. In this site, they can act on their desire, passion and love. The narrator interfuses Louise into her/his body, and does not consider their bodies as disparate beings:

> 'Explore me,' you said and I collected my ropes, flasks and maps, expecting to be back home soon. I dropped into the mass of you and I cannot find the way out. Sometimes I think I'm free, coughed up like Jonah from the whale, but then I turn a corner and recognize myself again. Myself in your skin, myself lodged in your bones, myself floating

> in the cavities that decorate every surgeon's wall. That is how I know you. You are what I know. (*Written* 120)

Different from the medical discourse's definition of the body, the narrator refuses ingrained and immutable labels, and yearns to define the body with her/his own words and feelings. Particularly, her/his last remark, "you are what I know" reveals the narrator's dismissal of the realist and scientific language which attempts to draw the boundaries of the body. Instead, the narrator trusts her/his own poetic discourse which, s/he thinks, can bring up a purified and an alternate version of reality.

Moreover, in her/his definition, Louise changes into a bodily space that is fluid, mobile and open to interpretation. Therefore, in depicting Louise, the signifying chain is disrupted as Louise's body, a signifier, cannot convey the traditional understanding of the body as a whole and fixed being, a signified in this case. The narrator is aware of the impossibility of knowing Louise. S/he notes: "If I come to you with a torch and a notebook, a medical diagram and a cloth to mop up the mess, I'll have you bagged neat and tidy. I'll store you in plastic like chicken livers. Womb, gut, brain, neatly labeled and returned. Is that how to know another human being?" (*Written* 120) S/he refuses to know Louise in terms of conventional understanding and labels. S/he wants to rewrite Louise and to plunge into her deepest parts, which are not inscribed and acknowledged by the dominant discourse. Consequently, the narrator's refusal to accept the language of realism and her/his eagerness to employ poetic language makes the novel a text of bliss. As Barthes puts forwards, "the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that

discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language" (14).

3.5. Blissful Text

The narrator of *Written on the body* is an anachronic subject, creating a blissful text by challenging the conventional understanding of the text. Unlike the readerly text, which does not frustrate the readers and meet their expectations, the narrator in her/his text discerns the writerly text, and violates the principles of realism. The readerly text situates the readers into a passive position as they are supposed to accept whatever they read without questioning or criticizing it. The readerly text fails to transform the readers into a site of production. Thus, Barthes asserts that "the readerly texts are products other than productions" (*S/Z* 5). On the contrary, the writerly text:

> is a perpetual present, upon which no *consequent* language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages.
>
> (Barthes qtd. in Lucy 75)

Then, the writerly text buttresses multiplicity and plurality, and the readers are engaged in the text in front of them, questioning, interpreting and producing something out of the text. They are not merely readers, but they are also the producers of the meaning. Though the readers can achieve pleasure, which is "a state" through the readerly texts, they can also attain bliss, which is "*jouissance,*

an action" through the writerly texts (Barthes *Pleasure* vi). Barthes calls bliss "writing aloud," the aim of which is not

> the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language. (*Pleasure* 66-7)

In *Written on the body,* with the quicksilver-like narrator's experiment in *écriture feminine*, the readers not only read the text and face the loss of the beloved one, but they also touch the text. Interestingly enough, with the lively poetic language of the narrator intermingled with bodily language, the readers can feel the text. The novel, breaking free from the limitations of the repressive ideology of the dominant discourse, succeeds "in shifting the signified a great distance" and it, so to speak, "granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts" and makes the arrival of the bliss possible in the end (Barthes *Pleasure* 67).

Winterson, by constructing her narrator genderless and nameless, and experimenting with *écriture feminine*, achieves attaining a narrative that evades all categorizations, labels and restrictions of the dominant discourse. Rather than accepting the patriarchal language which entraps Louise's body within a centered point of view, the narrator employs a poetic language in her/his narrative, and consequently desires to re-appropriate her/his beloved's body outside the paternal definitions. By dwelling on the power of language, the narrator wants to attribute a transcendental feature to Louise. With the help of her/his poetic definitions, metaphors, and elevations, the narrator wishes to mutate Louise into a piece of art.

However, “the narrator admits that s/he attempted to ‘invent’ Louise, to make her into the object of her/his fantasy, but, again, this attempt is thwarted: ‘She wasn’t yours for the making” (Lindenmeyer 36).

Complying with the fluid and mobile position of the narrator throughout the novel, its open ending, too, suggests that the narrative is not finished yet. In her/his recluse life created without Louise and for her sake, the narrator sees Louise’s face from the kitchen door: “Paler, thinner, but her hair still mane-wade and the colour of blood. I put out my hand and felt her fingers, she took my fingers and put them to her mouth. The scar under the lip burned me. Am I stark mad? She’s warm” (*Written* 190). Not only the reader but also the narrator herself/himself cannot decide whether Louise is real or constructed by her/his delirious mood sprung from her/his desire and longing. Thus, Lindenmeyer proposes: “Winterson develops a narrative that confirms the power of desire and imagination and exposes, at the same time, the dark underside of the romantic tradition: the way women's bodies are used up to create a perfect romance” (58).

Yet, by tampering with the text and Louise’s body, the narrator deciphers the underlying mechanisms of the masculine and phallic convention entrapping women, and silencing their bodies. This ambiguous narrator underlines the impossibility of moulding identity into a univocal shape, and of categorizing it according to the paradigms of the dominant discourse. As suggested by Conley, “absolute knowledge represses the senses, effaces signifiers and the body in order to accede to an idealized signified and the spirit” (11). Nonetheless, “desire

undoes absolute knowledge, reason, mastery, decapitates paternal authority; divides the origin, the 'I'" (Conley 14). Out of their desire, the narrator and Louise generate a virtual space which functions as a site of existence for them, and protects them from the detrimental totalizing effects of the society.

As can be seen in the close reading of the text, the narrator's struggle in reclaiming her/his lover's body, freeing it from the boundaries of the paternal law and rewriting it with feminine and poetic language echoes Cixous's term, *écriture feminine* "which results in a variety of disruptive meanings being brought to bear on seemingly 'stable texts'" (Blyth 32). In order to disrupt the so-called stable texts:

> Cixous contends that 'woman should write her body'. What this means, she explains, is that women must pay attention to all the nonverbal, unconscious, instinctual drives and sensations of their bodies. They must accent language with the patterns, reverberations and echoes emerging from these states. (Blyth 94)

The narrator employs *écriture feminine* while trying to regain her/his beloved's body underneath the patriarchal tomb. With her/his experiment with language, the narrator achieves to break free from the patriarchal language, and transcends to the feminine sphere. S/he finishes the novel without a closed and specified ending, and again leaves her/his readers in ambiguity:

> This is where the story starts, in this threadbare room. The walls are exploding. The windows have turned into telescopes. Moon and stars are magnified in this room. The sun hangs over the mantelpiece. I stretch out my hand and reach the corners of the world. The world is bundled up in this room. Beyond the door, where the river is, where the roads are, we shall be. We can take the world with us when we go and sling the sun under your arm. Hurry now, it's getting late. I don't know if this is a happy ending but here we are let loose in open fields. (*Written* 190)

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Chapter I of this study has aimed to explore the categories of sexuality and gender and to display their discursively and culturally configured nature. With references to different views and researches conducted in different time spans of history and in different parts of the world, it has asserted that gender and sexual identities are not congenital and immutable but vary from one culture to another. However, in the Western culture, in order to produce merely one type of sexuality and gender, the dominant discourse which is characterized by phallocentrism, has created ideologies, inscribing cultural and specific meanings on the territory of sexuality and gender. The dominant discourse in the West has opposed the idea of marginalized and diversified sexuality and gender, and has intended to destroy the possibility of fluidity. To control the domain of sexuality and gender, it has tried to demote these categories to the binary frame such as the masculine/the feminine, the male/the female and the heterosexual/the homosexual in which the previous leg of the binary is favored more than the other one. However, by borrowing from post-structuralism, queer theory aims to transcend the dualistic heteronormative organization of sexuality and gender by challenging the conventional paradigm and cherishing sexual multiplicity.

One of the precursors of queer theory, with her notion of performativity, Judith Butler defies the essentialist view which suggests that sexuality and gender are

inborn. Instead of this totalizing and restrictive view, Butler embraces the constructivist view positing the idea that sexuality and gender are culturally and discursively constructed; and instead of a single sexuality, she underlines a diversity of sexualities. By going beyond the constructivist view, Butler expands her notion of performativity and puts forward that gender and sexuality exist as long as they are performed. The illusion of an abiding self with a unified sexuality and gender is created through repetition and the dominant discourse necessitates the individuals to perform the masculine and the feminine gender in a ritualized performance. In case of a failure to perform a specific and appropriate gender, the individual is threatened with the fear of castration under the Law of the Father. By occupying the position of a sexed subject within language, the subject is positioned in the heteronormative sexual paradigm. With her ideas, Butler shatters this illusion of a uniform self with a frozen and heteronormatively appropriated body. Besides Butler, another significant figure in disrupting phallocentrism is Cixous, whose suggestion of a new feminine mode of writing, called *écriture feminine,* creates a feminine space in which the binary organization is dissolved, and women are given a chance to express themselves. Cixous believes that, for women, writing is the only salvation to evade the restrictions of patriarchal hegemony. Both Butler and Cixous aim to transcend the dichotomous understanding of sexuality and gender by reconceptualizing their language, and their theories on these categories go parallel with Winterson's ideas concerning the fluidity of gender and sexuality.

In Chapter II, in the analysis of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit,* Butler's idea of performativity is employed to demonstrate Winterson's attempt to go beyond essentializing binary organization and to deconstruct the ideological categorizations of sexuality and gender. The protagonist of the story, Jeanette, repudiates the dictations of the heteronormative community concerning sexuality and gender, and ventures to discover her true self free from both her mother's, Louise, and her community's restrictions. Jeanette was stuck in a bi-polar understanding of the world at the beginning of the novel. However, as time goes by, Jeanette starts to realize the facts concerning the dictations of the evangelist community, and she wants to formulate her own understanding of religion and sexuality. Jeanette falls in love with Melanie and refuses to be shaped by the regulating discourse that requires her to perform the feminine gender and to be attracted to the opposite sex. Jeanette does not want to act on the prescribed regulations. Thus, she becomes a threat for the religious community regarding dissident sexualities as the work of the devil and unholy. In Louise's project, Jeanette should be a heterosexual girl complying with the prescription of the regulating heterosexist discourse. However, Jeanette's inaction disturbs the coherence expected from the subject and dislocates the heterosexual discourse as it suggests that identification and desire should be opposite to each other. In other words, one should get identified with the same sex but desire the opposite sex. Nevertheless, in her case, the binary relation between identification and desire disintegrates as Jeanette casts off normative sexual identity tailored for her. By choosing Melanie as her lover and by subverting religious dictations, Jeanette herself becomes a rupture in the dominant discourse in which the plurality of

gender and sexual identities can be cherished, and, in her identity configuration, the binary organization is dissolved, opening up the possibility of multiplicity.

Chapter III, which concerns itself with *Written on the body*, continues to demonstrate Winterson's endeavor, in her fiction, to challenge the dominant discourse, this time with references to Cixous's *écriture feminine*. In her/his quest to revive the lost lover, the narrator mutates the patriarchal and centered understanding of woman's body into a feminine and decentered text by dissecting her/his lover's body into small units and by reappropriating it outside the ills of the heterosexist matrix. In the end, the boundaries between the body and the sex are blurred as the body turns into a text. While defying the dichotomous and stereotypical perception of gender and sexuality, the narrator strategically abstains from revealing her/his name, gender and background. As naming means being positioned in the phallocentric discourse, the narrator deliberately shuns using her/his name. The lack of gender markers and the narrator's intentional usage of misorientation technique, engendered by the hazy description of her/his sexual relations with both men and women, echoes Butler's postulate that gender has an illusory essence and it cannot be squashed into normative shapes. The narrator subverts the ingrained paradigm and vacillates between moving from one lover to another with different sexualities.

The narrator not only problematizes the taken-for-grantedness of sexuality and gender but also questions the dualism established in Western thought by her/his language. In opposition to the masculine scientific language, the narrator integrates feminine poetic language into the narration. As the love between the narrator and Louise intensifies, the narrator's urge to penetrate into Louise's body increases. Yet, s/he is against the scientific notion that takes the body as a passive medium on which cultural and historical signs can be inscribed. Rather than considering the body as a totalized unit, the narrator stands for a fluid and malleable perception of the body, as a result of which s/he draws upon Cixous's *écriture feminine* to revive Louise by saving her from the patriarchal and restrictive imprints of history, science and medicine. Eventually, by splitting Louise's body and redefining it in poetic terms, the ungendered narrator succeeds in disrupting the cliché-ridden definitions of the body and generating her/his own understanding with an emphasis on feminine perspective. At the end of the novel, the narrator succeeds in changing the patriarchal body into a feminine text.

This study comes to the conclusion that Winterson fictionalizes the maxims of queer theory in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit,* and *Written on the body* in representing gender and sexuality as they refuse to depict these epistemic categories monolithically. These novels represent sexuality and gender on a slippery ground characterized by an open-ended mesh networking of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, and lapses. Due to the excess of dissonances and resonances in their nature, these notions spill over the moulds reserved for them by the

heteronormative discourse. Winterson's writing also dissolves the binary opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality, and defies the stability of the self. By problematizing the fixed sexuality and gender frame of the self, Winterson disturbs the heteronormative understanding of these categories, as a result of which she creates ruptures in the master narratives. These ruptures metamorphose in the course of the novels into alternative sites of existence and new spaces in which the characters can cherish their individuality and plurality, and this is Winterson's response to the monolithic dominant discourse.

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