Peeling the Orange: An Intertextual Reading of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the intertextual relationship between Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and the Bible, and the intertextual relationship between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Winterosn's documented life in her memoir *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* and interviews. With the help of the core concepts of paratextuality, allegory, and authorship, I shall work with Gerard Genette, Angus Fletcher, and Michel Foucault to examine the intertextuality revealed among the above-mentioned texts.

Key Words: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the Bible, Jeanette Winterson, intertextuality

Content

Introduction

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit written by British writer, Jeanette Winterson tells the story of Jeanette, a girl who is born and raised in a religious family under the influence of her pious mother and local community. Jeanette is home-schooled before her mother receives a letter to force Jeanette to be sent to school. In school, Jeanette becomes an outsider for her faith in God, and later in life, she is an outsider for her sexuality. She knows she is different, but her difference is not truly revealed until she meets a girl called Melanie. They quickly fall in love. As soon as the "scandalous" affair is discovered by Jeanette's mother, she asks the church to exorcise the demon in her daughter. Jeanette and Melanie are forced to break up. At the young age of sixteen, Jeanette leaves the church and her family. At the end of the book, she goes back home for Christmas, and sees her mother, not steadily holding on to the issue of Jeanette's sexuality any more, have embarked on a new but still religious life.

My research question would be how the Bible relates to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and how the novel relates to Jeanette Winter's personal life. How do the three of them interact altogether? This thesis paper aims to explore the intertextual relationship between the Holy Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, as well as the intertextual relationship between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and its author. Within the context of the former, I intend to examine the functions of the intertitles of the novel, and how biblical stories and the narrative of the novel establish a two-way dialog between each other. With regard to the latter, I will make use of Jeanette Winterson's autobiography, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, and elaborate on the author's role in the novel and literature at large.

Throughout the book, a clear intertextuality between the Bible and Jeanette's life is visibly shown. Living in a religious family, Jeanette's life is a religious life; her community is a religious community. In the beginning, she is raised to be a missionary and to serve the church. One finds a large number of biblical quotes and

hymns in honor of God in the account of Jeanette's life. Interestingly enough, the names of the chapters of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* are the names of the first eight books of the Old Testament. This appropriation of the Bible to some extent relates to the life story of Jeanette. Just as the first five books of the Old Testament are about the law of the world, the first five chapters of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* are also about the law of the world in which Jeanette lives in. It's a world of cruelness and obedience. In this world, a father figure like God is absent, instead, the law is represented by a feminine figure, Jeanette's mother. The last three chapters tell the dramatic changes in Jeanette's life after her affair with Melanie is let out of the bag, just as the next three books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth narrate the history of Israel.

In *Paratexts*, Gerard Genette writes about the functions of different kinds of paratexts, one of which is intertitles, i.e. the names of chapters. Generally, titles could be divided into thematic titles and rhematic titles, and intertitles can be divided into four major types: fictional narratives, referential (historical) narratives, collections of poems and theoretical texts (Genette, 298). I argue that the intertitles of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* serve as the narrative thread of the book, with the narratives of the Bible serving as an interpretative framework for the story of Jeanette's. Furthermore, these biblical stories render it possible to do an allegorical reading of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit.* Allegory is thus enlisted as a methodological concept and a mode of reading. Foucault, in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* argues that all periods of history have certain underlying epistemological assumptions. The Bible in this case, serves as an episteme or a pretext. It itself is an allegory, and it is used by me as an allegory to interpret *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

Apart from this strong intertextuality between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, there is also a close link between the novel and Jeanette Winterson's personal life. In the introduction of the book, Winterson asks the rhetorical question whether it is an autobiographical novel or not. She answers, "No not at all and yes of course" (Winterson, xv). Jeanette Winterson obviously shares a similar life story with

Jeanette in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. She was raised in a Christian family herself. Her own mother is a strong and pious woman, just like the mother in the book. Jeanette Winterson was raised to be a missionary as well. When she realized her lesbian sexuality at the age of sixteen, she left home and finally got into Oxford University. In her autobiography *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* published in 2011, she wrote about her first novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*: "It is semi-autobiographical" (Winterson, 1). Her sharing of her own name "Jeanette" with her protagonist is by no means a mere coincidence. In *In search of Lost Time*, Marcel Proust also gives his own name "Marcel" to his main character. Of course the Marcel in *In Search of Lost Time* is different from Marcel Proust. (Gerard Genette proposes/borrows a term for this genre, "autofiction".) This unclear demarcation between the hero and the author has led to critical reflections on the role of the author in his/her work. Foucault, in his famous essay "What Is an Author?", argues that the author might be dead as Roland Barthes had pronounced, but that he/she still exerts great influence on the text and how we read the text. In *Linguistics and Poetics*, Roman Jakobson proposes two schemes of fundamental factors and functions. The author, i.e. addresser is an inseparable part of both schemes, with a corresponding function of emotive.

I believe that this research in intertextuality on these two levels is of importance in that it firstly exemplifies how cultural and social constructions and Western canons play crucial roles in literature, and secondly how the author's traces in his/her work are still under debate in contemporary literary texts.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

1.1 Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality originates from twentieth-century linguistics. At the source of it stand Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality has been approached by different linguists in different ways, from structuralism to post-structuralism. Kristeva claims that “every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it” (Culler, 105). In her opinion, from the very beginning, a text bears the broad corpus of the texts before it. However, intertextuality is not just restricted to the relationship between different texts and different authors, it also deals with the relationship between the author and the reader. As an analytical concept, it is of great importance since it puts an emphasis on the relationality and interconnectedness of texts and discourses in contemporary cultural life. Within the general context of literature, intertextuality weakens the presence and position of the author on the interpretation of his/her own texts, thus leaving enough space for the reader/critic to bring new meanings to every text and every author.

Kristeva proposes a model consisting of two axes for the analysis of texts - a horizontal axis connecting the author and the reader, and a vertical axis linking the text to other texts. On the horizontal axis, intertextuality questions the notion of authorship. Roland Barthes argues that “it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is...to reach the point where only language acts, ‘performs’, not ‘me’” (Barthes, 143). Because language precedes the author, there is no originality in authorship but constant representation in regard to writing. Thus the meaning of the text cannot be reduced to the pure intention of the author of the text; instead, meaning resides in the shared corpus of the authors who came before him/her. In his 1967 essay, “The Death of the Author”, Barthes declares the death of the author and the birth of the reader. He argues that “a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (Barthes, 148).

Therefore, Barthes stands as one origin of the modern reader-response criticism, a school which focuses on the reader's interpretation of the text. According to Barthes, every reading is at the same time a new rewriting of the text. It is the reader who helps construct the text so that the reader becomes the co-author in his/her own right. On one hand, the reader endows the author's text with new meanings from his/her literary experience, while on the other hand, s/he is able to identify any text as "having been written before". The author and the reader do not stand as separate entities here; intertextuality examines their positions as both belonging to an intertextual web.

On Kristeva's vertical axis, intertextuality problematizes the boundaries between different texts. Similar in this respect to the notion of the author, the text is also a shared corpus of the different texts that came before it. In some cases, its reference to other texts is obvious, while in other cases, the reference can be quite ambiguous and hard to discern. In Fredric Jameson's view, this relationship of the text with other texts has great effect on both the reader and the author: "Texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through the sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or - if the text is brand-new - through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions" (Rodowick, 286). In Jameson's opinion, we can never view a text as an independent entity, isolated from other texts. This inter-reference among various texts renders it possible for readers and critics to enrich the text with new meanings and new interpretations.

Apart from these general aspects, intertextuality also allies itself with other issues such as feminism or gynocriticism. Intertextuality allows us a new opportunity to re-examine female writers and their writings, potentially permitting them to enter the monologically male-dominated literary canon. Outside literature, intertextuality also exerts great influence in modern life with the profuse use of multiple media nowadays. In the television industry, advertising business, and the World Wide Web, intertextuality plays an important role in combining different media to interact together. For instance, media companies, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation

have been keen to adapt literary classics such as Jane Austen's novels into television series so that television audience could appreciate literary works on the screen.

Meanwhile, French structuralists tackle intertextuality in a different way from Kristeva and Barthes. Gerard Genette proposes the term "transtextuality" as being more inclusive than "intertextuality". He divides transtextuality into five sub-categories - intertextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, and hypertextuality. According to Genette's taxonomy, intertextuality refers to the simultaneous presence of two texts or several texts, as well as the presence of one text within another; paratextuality is the relation between one text and its paratexts, such as titles and notes; architextuality examines one text with regard to the genre; metatextuality is the commentary of one text on another; and finally, hypertextuality describes the relationship between one text and a previous text (*Paratexts*, xviii-xix). These five sub-categories are interconnected to each other in that they inspect the various relationships between one text and other texts, and between a text and other contextual elements such as paratext and genre.

My thesis will be structured around two parts - firstly, paratextuality and hypertexuality (of which allegory can be considered as a specific form) following Genette's classification and definition, and secondly the role of the author in relation to Barthes's, Foucault's and Genette's discussions. In a broader sense, all these concerns are different aspects of intertextuality as defined by Kristeva and Barthes. Thus I view intertextuality as an indispensable concept to examine the relationship between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and the Bible, as well as to analyze its relationship to what we know about the author Jeanette Winterson's life from other sources such as her memoir and interviews. The novel refers directly to the Bible and vaguely to Winterson's personal life in multiple places. Barthes takes intertextuality as the general condition of all texts. In his spirit, I take the intertextual approach as a vital way to read *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

1.2 Paratextuality and Allegory

The concept of paratextuality was first put forward by French structuralist Gerard Genette as a subtype of transtextuality in his famous *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997). In this study he defines paratextuality as "the subject of the present book, comprising those liminal devices and conventions, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), that mediate the book to the reader" (Macksey, xviii). In his later book exclusively dedicated to paratextuality, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), Genette categorizes paratexts according to thirteen specific types - the publisher's peritext; the name of the author; titles; the please-insert; dedications and inscriptions; epigraphs; the prefatorial situation of communication; the functions of the original preface; other prefaces, other functions (such as postfaces and later prefaces); intertitles; notes; the public epitext (such as public responses and auto-reviews); the private epitext (such as correspondences and diaries). Of these thirteen categories, I will discuss the notion of intertitles in my Chapter Two, and later on the concept of epitext in Chapter Three.

According to Genette, "[i]nternal titles are accessible to hardly anyone except readers, or at least the already limited public of browsers and readers of tables of contents; and a good many internal titles make sense only to an addressee who is already involved in reading the text, for these internal titles presume familiarity with everything that has preceded" (Genette, 294). Genette argues that generally there are two situations regarding intertitles: one is when intertitles are absent, and the other is when they are present in the book. He then discusses four major types of intertitles, each of which belongs to a specific genre: fictional narratives, referential (historical) narratives, collections of poems, and theoretical texts (Genette, 298). Among these genres, the fictional and historical narratives are of crucial importance to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. However, Winterson's employment of the biblical sources cannot be simply classified in accordance with any one of the types Genette has proposed. For believers, the Bible contains a faithful documentation of Jewish and early Christian

history, while for non-believers, it is completely fictional. Therefore I propose to add another category for this kind: religious narratives.

As far as Genette is concerned, intertitles announcing fictional narratives could be partly dated back to Homeric poems and the period of bardic recitations when they served as titles of performances. Within this category, Genette distinguishes between two types. The classical and traditional one concerns rhematic titles, i.e. titles consisting only of numbered divisions, such as "Chapter One". The more recent and popular one concerns thematic titles, i.e. titles which introduce the theme of the chapter. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, intertitles become more restrained and concise, consisting of only two or three words, or even one single word. Narrative intertitles which summarize the plot of the chapter almost completely disappear. A more modern change concerns the appearance of 'mute' chapters, where authors simply start a new chapter on a new page. Examples of this kind would be found in the French 'New Novel' (Genette, 309).

Intertitles introducing referential (historical) narratives originate from epic poems as well. In his discussion of this subtype of intertitles, Genette includes autobiography and biography. Classical biographies divide chapters chronologically, while modern biographers tend to use highly symbolic titles.

Genette argues that "with thematic titling goes a demonstrative - indeed, insistent - stance on the part of the author toward his work, whether or not a screen of humor muffles this insistence" (Genette, 315). Thematic titles reveal the authorial intentions regarding the structure and the development of the work, displaying the book to the reader in a way s/he desires[1]: "...one sign of a paratext's effectiveness is no doubt its transparency: its transitivity. The best intertitle, the best title in general, is perhaps the one that goes unnoticed" (Genette, 316). This last judgment sets a high standard for intertitles - they should be both comprehensible and invisible.

[1] The authorial intentions in the text will be discussed later in Section 1.3.

Genette's claim concerning intertitles and paratexts in general is largely linked to the author's role in literary texts when it comes to choosing items such as titles and prefaces. In this sense, Genette holds a critical position in my discussion related to authorial intentions in later chapters.

Another central concept in relation to my topic is allegory, which Genette might classify as a type of hypertextuality. Etymologically, the word 'allegory' derives from the combination of Greek *allos* ('other') and *agoreuein*, which means 'to speak openly'. Put simply, an allegory is a text speaking about one thing while implying another.

Angus Fletcher, in his book *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1982), sees allegory as a fundamental process of encoding our speech. It includes many literary kinds, from picaresque romances to modern-day utopian political satires. Fletcher argues that "the whole point of allegory is that it does not need to be read exegetically; it often has a literal level that makes good enough sense all by itself" (Fletcher, 7). As a consequence, allegory can be read both literally and symbolically, although only the reader who is already "in the know" will be able to infer the semantic surplus meanings from the text. Taking inspiration from Fletcher we may note that in contemporary theoretical writings, authors still utilize allegory as a tool to help them prove their points. For example, in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997), Judith Butler cites the parable Toni Morrison offered in her 1993 Nobel Lecture in Literature with regard to "oppressive language". In the parable, some children ask a blind woman to guess if the bird in their hands is still alive or already dead. The blind woman answers, "I don't know... but what I do know is that it is in your hands. It is in your hands" (Butler, 6). This parable serves Butler as an allegory to illustrate her own idea of "injurious speech". In Butler's reading, the bird represents language, the fate of which is in the hands of the children: "The writer is blind to the future of the language in which she writes" (Butler, 8).

Fletcher attaches great importance to the relationship between allegory and religion. As is widely known, the New Testament contains many parables narrated by Jesus as his teachings: “The terms of my description may suggest that allegory is closely identified with religious ritual and symbolism. This is not an accident” (Fletcher, 20). Psychoanalysis plays a critical role in analyzing this relationship. All these various analyses point to “...the oldest idea about allegory, that it is a human reconstitution of divinely inspired messages, a revealed transcendental language which tries to preserve the remoteness of a properly veiled godhead” (Fletcher, 21). Thus explained, the Bible is the oldest Western allegory - the archetype of allegory. Modern literature has seen plentiful characters and plots based on biblical heroes and stories, such as John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*.

Last but not the least, Fletcher also notices the challenge allegory poses to authorities. He argues that allegory reveals the conflict among various authorities. For example, during times of political oppressions, people use Aesop-language to avoid censorship while voicing their own views. At the same time, allegory may impose itself on the reader as a text which needs to be interpreted with extra meanings so that a mere literal reading is discouraged.

1.3 The Role of the Author

In *Linguistics and Poetics*, Roman Jakobson proposes his scheme of six factors involved in the act of verbal communication. At the starting point of this scheme is the addressor or author. In the corresponding scheme of their functions, the addressor relates to the function of emotiveness: “The so-called emotive or ‘expressive’ function, focused on the addressor, aims a direct expression of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion, whether true or feigned” (Jakobson, 1148). As far as Jakobson is concerned, the author certainly exerts great influence throughout the text by expressing his/her

emotions and attitudes. Besides, in accordance with both of Jakobson's schemes, it is the addressor/author who transmits the message to the addressee or the reader, which implies that he considers the authorial intention to be of critical importance when the addressee/reader is trying to decode or interpret the text.

In 1967, Roland Barthes ruthlessly proclaims the death of the author in one of his most notorious essays, "The Death of the Author". Invoking Balzac's novella *Sarrasine* (which serves him as an allegory as well), Barthes argues that "the effective, productive, and engaged reading of a text depends on the suspension of preconceived ideas about the character of the particular author - or even about human psychology in general" (Leitch, 1317). Barthes celebrates the death of the author which he sees as a precondition for the birth of the reader. Accordingly, he tries to explore the possibility of losing the origin of the text and thus removing the limit of authorial intentions. Moreover, by announcing the death of the author, Barthes challenges the authority of the God (the author) in a text. The author's death eliminates textual hierarchy and guarantees the freedom of different readers to produce different interpretations.

In 1969, Michel Foucault publishes his essay "What Is an Author?" as a response to Barthes's declaration. While Foucault accepts the desirability of dispensing with the author as the origin of meaning, he distinguishes four different author functions which point to the persistent presence of the author as a constraint on textual meaning:

> (1) the author function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects - positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals (Foucault, 113).

In other words, first of all, the author function acts as a form of protecting the author's property; it is not a constant feature of every text universally; it is not formed spontaneously but from complicated cultural constructions; and last, the author is not to be equated with "a real individual" who produces the text in the first place.

As a structuralist, Genette approaches the matter of authorship in a different way from Barthes and Foucault. Unlike Barthes, he certainly adheres to the idea that the author is alive; unlike Foucault, he approaches the functions of the author from the latter's discourses both inside and outside the text, which establishes a close link between the author as "a real individual" and the text. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Gerard Genette again discusses the author in his chapters about "epitext", the kind of paratext which is not materially attached to the text, but which circulates around it. He first divides epitexts into public and private ones. As regards the category of the public epitext, he divides it into three kinds - the publisher's epitext, the semiofficial allographic epitext (the epitext authorized by authorial assent to some extent), and the public authorial epitext, which consists of auto-reviews, public responses, mediations, and delayed autocommentaries. The private epitext includes correspondence, oral confidences, diaries, and pre-texts (Genette, 344-403). Hence, the author plays an important role in Genette's analysis of paratexts. Not only do the author's discourses in the text exert critical influence, but his/her background and other discourses, such as interviews regarding the text concerned, are also of critical significance to its interpretation.

In the final analysis, as far as I am concerned, the author is never really dead in the text. The interpretation of a text involves a three-way interaction between the text, the reader, and the author, rather than relying on one of these elements. This is especially true, as Genette claims, when it comes to the interpretation of an autobiography, a semi-autobiography or an auto-fiction, in which the author and his/her real life play a vital role. In such cases, one cannot separate the author from his/her own work. In the

next chapters, I shall examine the intertextual relationships between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, and between the novel and its author Jeanette Winterson's life as it is documented in her memoir.

Chapter Two: Intertextuality between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

2.1 The Paratextual Relationship between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

The plotline of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is constructed upon and driven by the religious belief of Christianity. Jeanette is adopted and raised to be a missionary in a Christian family. After her love affair with a girl is exposed to her mother and the church, she is forced to leave her family. Obviously there is an intertextual relationship between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. The most conspicuous indication of this intertextual relationship is provided by the table of contents of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*: apart from the introduction, which serves as a preface to the fiction as a whole, its eight chapters are respectively named after the first eight books of the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Besides, biblical stories and quotes are referred to repeatedly throughout the novel. These references to, or rather, appropriation of the Bible indicate not only the Christian environment where Jeanette lives, but also the development of her story through the history of Israel in the Bible. In this way, the laws of the Bible become the laws of Jeanette's world. The history of the Israeli people implies the history of Jeanette, in that the Bible, as the exclusive moral guideline within her community, directly affects Jeanette's personal life. Creating this intertextual relationship between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and the Bible, Winterson has placed her book against a more macro backdrop, equating an individual's private history with the public history of a religious group, and hence attesting to her idea that all history is socially constructed.

In the Bible, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy constitute the five books of Moses. They lay down the laws in the Old Testament; however, their importance exceeds this function. The laws are not only the rules

established by God, but also a religious covenant with Him. When the covenant is broken, so is the faith in Him. Similarly, in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, when Jeanette transgresses the covenant by starting a love affair with a girl, her relationships with both God and her mother, who like God, represents ultimate authority for Jeanette, are broken.

The Book of Genesis is divided into two sections: the first part relates the beginning of the world and the spread of sin, culminating in the destructive flood in the days of Noah; the second part focuses on Abraham and how God deals with him. Through Abraham, God promises the world that He will bring salvation and blessings to His people. Consequently, people begin to trust in God. Abraham's calling marks an important stage in the development of God's relationship with His people. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the chapter "Genesis" tells the beginning of the novel as well: Jeanette is adopted and raised by a religious family, living under the pressure of a zealous mother. Jeanette has been homeschooled, until at the end of this chapter, she is forced to go to school. Similar to the Bible, this chapter reveals the beginning of Jeanette's life story and the "devastating flood" of her life, the termination of her homeschooling. In this chapter, I read Jeanette's mother as symbolizing Abraham, through whom God's words are spread to his children and the people. In the Bible, God institutes a covenant firsthand with Abraham, promising that He shall bring blessings to him, his family, and his next generations. Abraham and his family learn that they can put trust in God in times of famine and feasting. One generation after another, God's promises are spread in a great nation. Similarly, in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Jeanette's mother represents Jeanette's initial contact with God. Her mother's pious prayers and trust in God lead Jeanette to trust in God as well. The covenant between Jeanette and God is thus established.

The second book of Moses, Exodus, documents how Israel is born as a nation. The word "Exodus" bears the meanings of "exit" and "departure", signaling that the Israeli people are led by Moses away from Egypt, a place where they are deeply hurt. In

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette, leaving her protecting home, enters into the school life. This chapter marks her birth as an independent person. In this chapter, Jeanette first experiences the conflict between her religious belief and secular life. The school becomes her Egypt, where she is treated differently and where she is misunderstood by her fellow classmates. For example, in the sewing class, when asked to work on a verbal embroidering project, other children come up with sentences such as "TO MOTHER WITH LOVE" and birthday motifs, but Jeanette wants to embroider the text "THE SUMMER IS ENDED AND WE ARE NOT YET SAVED" (Jeremiah 8:20). Because of this reference to the Bible, her teacher accuses her of upsetting other children. Unfortunately, Jeanette's home is her Egypt as well, due to her mother's dominance over her for many years.

The next biblical book, Leviticus, contains God's guidelines for His newly redeemed people, teaching them how to worship, praise and obey the holy God. It records the laws the priests of Leviticus must obey. This book contains some of the rules and laws given by Moses himself to the people of Israel. Similarly, in the corresponding chapter of the novel, it is shown that Jeanette has accepted the rules and creeds her mother sets up for her. For instance, in the opening scene of this chapter, Jeanette and her mother hear a loud noise coming from their next door neighbors. Her mother identifies it as a sign of fornication, while Jeanette, not knowing what it means exactly, is sure that it signifies a sin (Winterson, 69-71). In the second part of this chapter, a tale of a prince who is determined to find a perfect woman as his wife is narrated. Nevertheless, he learns from a beautiful woman he has found that perfection does not reside in flawlessness, but in the balance between different qualities and strengths. This tale corresponds to Jeanette's disagreement with the priest: when the priest declares that perfection is flawlessness, Jeanette realizes that "it was at this moment that I began to develop my first theological disagreement" (Winterson, 78). This disagreement marks her first protest against the religious authority and forebodes a more formidable storm in the following chapters. Both the main plot and the imaginative tale pose a challenge to the theme of Leviticus - the worshipping of God

as the only perfection of the world.

The fourth book of Moses, Numbers, takes wanderings for its theme. Most of this book is about the Israelis' wanderings in the open wilderness. The lesson of Numbers is that it might be necessary to pass through the wilderness, but one does not have to live there for life. This lesson corresponds to the desire expressed in the chapter "Numbers" in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*: one should be able to explore one's true desires without being abandoned by one's community. The chapter "Numbers" marks the turning point of Jeanette's life and the novel. In this chapter, Jeanette tries to assess the matters of love and marriage, bringing a feminist perspective to these subjects. Later she meets Melanie and gradually falls in love with her. This chapter reveals Jeanette's exploration of her sexuality and her true self.

Deuteronomy, the last book of Moses, is at the same time the last book of the law, as Winterson suggests in her novel. The Book of Deuteronomy contains various farewell messages from Israel's leader. Its addressees are the new generation and the laymen of the religious world. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the chapter "Deuteronomy" is the shortest as well as the most unique one. It is not so much a chapter of a novel as a short reflection, in which the narrator discusses time, history, and the lessons to be learned, just as the Book of Deuteronomy in the Bible aims to do. Compared with other chapters in the novel, this chapter resembles the corresponding Bible book the most because it speaks directly to the reader. Nevertheless, the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy and the novel's eponymous chapter are quite different in that the biblical book pays close attention to the basic law of the Israeli people, while the novel's chapter questions the nature of time, history and laws. Concluding the first section of her novel with such a didactic and challenging chapter, Winterson draws the reader's attention to her philosophical skepticism of history and of narration. She proposes that history is constructed by humankind, just as, I argue, is the case with the relationship between the Bible and this novel:

> Very often history is a means of denying the past. Denying the past is to refuse to recognise its integrity. To fit it, force it, function it, to suck out the spirit until it looks the way you think it should. We are all historians in our small way (Winterson, 120).

To validate this point, Winterson makes *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* an experimental fiction, interweaving her main story with various narrative threads such as Arthurian legends and mythic tales. Winterson's adoption of raw materials from her personal life and mythic legends and from her semi-autobiography induces the reader to question the nature of a novel, history, and life.

In the Bible, after the five books of the law come the twelve historical books, from the Book of Joshua to the Book of Esther. Winterson employs the first three historical books, the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth in her novel. The Book of Joshua tells the story of the capable leader, Joshua, who has led Israel in three major military campaigns. The lesson of Joshua is that victory comes through faith in the holy God and obedience to Him, instead of through violent wars or numerical advantages. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the chapter "Joshua" witnesses how Jeanette's mother and her church deal with her love affair with Melanie. To some extent, this account bears the character of a military war between conservative religious faith and individual freedom in sexuality and love. In an attempt to save her, Jeanette is exorcised and confined, a treatment which conjures up the images of ancient witch trials and the persecution of aberrations such as homosexuality. However, by the end of this chapter, Jeanette falls in love with another girl called Katy, which symbolizes the beginning of her acceptance of her true desires.

The biblical Book of Judges, presents complete contrast to the Book of Joshua. In Joshua, obedient people conquer the land through the power of God, while in the Book of Judges, disobedient people are defeated again and again due to their rebellion against God. During those years, governed by different leaders, Israel is in lack of a

central leadership for the people. The Book of Judges demonstrates how Israel sets aside God's law and follows its own counsel. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the chapter "Judges" is fragmented. In the beginning, Jeanette remains in the church while at the same time she keeps her affair with Katy going. But in the end, she finally decides to move out, step into the wide world, and set up her own law.

The Book of Ruth is a cameo story of love and devotion dealing with the themes of exile and relationship between women, a daughter and her mother-in-law in this case. The main character, Ruth, is a woman who chooses to stay in Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi, after her husband's death. She abandons her pagan background and clings to the Israeli people and their God. Curiously enough, the Book of Ruth is one of the few books in the Bible with a woman as its main character. Winterson's novel ends with a chapter entitled "Ruth", leaving a feminist trace to the fiction. In the chapter "Ruth", Jeanette wanders around in the world, working as an ice-cream van driver to support herself. In the end, she comes back home to spend a Christmas, and sees her mother, not obsessed with Jeanette's sexuality as before, still practice her faithful law. Jeanette may not be able to stay with her mother for good as Ruth does with her mother-in-law in the Bible, but her coming back suggests the inseverable relationship between Jeanette and her mother.

Through the comparison between the Bible's and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*'s table of contents and between each book's and chapter's general ideas, it is obvious that Winterson appropriates the main themes of the first eight books of the Old Testament to construct the plot of her own novel. The first five chapters of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* set up the law of the religious community, the law Jeanette's mother and her church piously obey and force Jeanette to obey as well, while in the last three chapters, the novel culminates in conflict but moves towards a calm ending. Finally accepting her sexuality and desires, Jeanette breaks with the old law and lays down her own law. Jeanette's mother, for the love of her daughter and her God, eventually admits that oranges are not the only fruit.

Gerard Genette distinguishes between four types of intertitles: fictional narratives, referential (historical) narratives, collections of poems, and theoretical texts (Genette, 298). As I mentioned before, Winterson's appropriation of the Bible's themes, narrative order, and book titles is difficult to fit into any of these kinds: believers, may consider the Bible to be a historical narrative, while for non-believers, it belongs to fiction. To avoid the debate of reading the Bible as a fictional or historical work, I propose to add the category of 'religious narratives' to Genette's taxonomy. The religious narrative employs biblical quotes or stories, or in this case directly appropriates the Bible's narrative structure, to indicate the theme and development of the chapter.

2.2 An Allegorical Interpretation with Some Close Readings

A comparison between the Bible's and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*'s tables of contents and between each book and its corresponding chapter reveals not only Winterson's appropriation of the Bible's intertitles as a type of paratext, but also her employment of biblical stories, both directly and indirectly, to enrich the structure and connotations of her novel, providing an allegorical framework for the book. One example is the inverted power position of the mother figure in the novel vis-a-vis the figure of God in the Bible. In the novel, the supreme power is embodied by Jeanette's mother, not her father. In effect, Jeanette's father does not make many appearances in the book. Traditionally, as in the Bible, the father figure fulfills the most powerful role when it comes to the construction of the law and the world. However, in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, a mother figure takes the place of the father figure, acting like the God in the novel. This shift, to some extent, reflects Carl Jung's and Sigmund Freud's theories of Electra Complex. In Freud's theory, the daughter resolves the complex with her jealousy of her father's phallus by blaming the mother for her lack, thus developing a hatred towards her mother (Scott, 8). In the beginning, Jeanette obeys her mother cautiously and slightly sympathizes with her father, but when she develops

her own thinking and falls in love with Melanie, she gradually begins to oppose her mother to achieve freedom in the matters of love and sexuality. The female authority of Jeanette's mother and Jeanette's challenging of that authority manifest female power in Winterson's novel.

Apart from explicit and implicit biblical references throughout *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson weaves in many mythic legends and tales as different narrative threads, dispersed among which we find recurring symbols and images such as the orange and the brown pebble (Winterson, 145, 167, 174, 183, 189). These either help enrich and develop the main plot, or suggest the theme of the chapter or the novel in general. In this section, I shall first discuss the image of the orange in the novel, and secondly, analyze the tales and legends in four different chapters respectively, namely the chapters entitled "Leviticus", "Joshua", "Judges", and "Ruth".

2.2.1 The Orange

One of the recurrent images throughout the novel is the image of the orange. It first appears in the title of the book, which is a sentence quoted from Nell Gwynn in the flyleaf of the novel as a motto and repeated by Jeanette's mother at the novel's end. Nell Gwynn was a royal mistress of King Charles II of England and Scotland. Before becoming his mistress, she was a fruit vendor. On the left side of this motto appears another one, a quote from Mrs. Beeton's cookery book. This quote is part of a recipe for orange marmalade: "When thick rinds are used the top must be thoroughly skimmed, or a scum will form marring the final appearance". Mrs. Beeton's quote seems to indicate that when making orange marmalade, the mixture should be purified, or else the final marmalade will be destroyed, while Nell Gwynn's quote suggests something else: there are other possibilities than oranges when choosing fruits. These two quotes about the orange demonstrate two different attitudes in the novel - on the one hand, Jeanette's mother requires her to be 'pure', or heterosexual in this case, obeying God and the church; on the other hand, there are more possibilities than one

in sexuality. Moreover, these two could-be-true-could-be-false quotes demonstrate Winterson's opinion on the nature of fictional narratives and history: both are fabricated by human minds, thus making it difficult to distinguish if they are factual or fictitious.

What reinforces the image of the orange is that Jeanette's mother offers her oranges several times throughout the novel. Jeanette remembers how once, when she lost her hearing to some extent, she was sent to hospital. When she was confused and frightened there, her mother gave her an orange: "I peeled it to comfort myself, and seeing me a little calmer, everyone glanced at one another and went away" (Winterson, 36). Jeanette's mother claims at that time that oranges are the only fruit. Whenever an unsettling experience befalls Jeanette, for example, when she says she does not want to go to school again, her mother offers her the orange. In the chapter "Joshua", Jeanette starts to contemplate the issues of love and demons. She believes that everyone has their own demon and hers is obviously an orange demon "that beguiles" (Winterson, 138). Seeing Jeanette ramble in the sleep, her mother gives her a bowl of oranges. As she tries to peel the largest one, she thinks about other options like grapes or bananas. This is the first time when Jeanette doubts the monopoly of the orange. When she sees Melanie for the last time in her youth, Melanie offers her an orange as well, which she resolutely rejects. Unlike Melanie, who surrenders to the church and its law, Jeanette makes her own decision of rebellion; and by rejecting Melanie's orange, she rejects her mother's orange and her mother's law.

In conclusion, the orange represents the repressive heterosexual law Jeanette's mother and her church have imposed on her. In the final chapter, when Jeanette comes back to her old home, "'after all,' said my mother philosophically, 'oranges are not the only fruit'" (Winterson, 219). This observation implies that her mother is finally beginning to accept the coexistence of different worldviews. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is thus a coming-out fiction describing how Jeanette struggles to break free from her mother and her religious belief and eventually accepts her true self, making others,

especially her mother who is the power figure of the family, aware that heterosexuality is not the only sexuality in the world.

2.2.2. The Chapter “Leviticus”

As much as half of the chapter “Leviticus” is covered by a pseudo fairy tale starting with the phrase “Once upon a time”. In the tale, a prince wants to find a woman who is perfect both inside and outside to be his wife. After three years of searching, his advisors still cannot find such a woman. His companion, a goose, tells him that the woman he desires does not exist in this world. Hearing this, the prince becomes angry and chops off the goose’s head. Three more years pass, and the prince writes a book called *The Holy Mystery of Perfection*. One day, when one of the advisors is reading the book in the forest, he hears a beautiful singing which leads him to a beautiful woman. The advisor sees her as the perfect woman the prince has been looking for. Therefore, he asks to let him take her to the prince, but the woman refuses, saying that she is not interested in marriage. Three days later, the prince and his court arrive at her house. Still, the woman refuses his proposal. She leads the prince into her house and for three days and nights, she explains to him what perfection is: it is not flawlessness, but a symmetrical balance and harmony between one’s qualities and strengths. Coming out of her house, the prince admits to his advisors that he has been wrong, avowing his intention to write a new book and apologize publicly for killing the goose. Nonetheless, the advisors insist that the prince is never wrong, and the prince is persuaded. The next day, he gathers all the court and the village together. He then gives a speech on how the woman has been wrong on perfection. When the woman retorts, the prince gives the order to behead the woman. Her blood forms a lake and drowns the advisors and most of the court. The prince manages to survive by climbing into a tree. Just as he is reflecting on the course of events, a man who sells oranges appears. The prince buys a dozen and asks if he has anything else. The man says he only sells oranges. Then the prince asks if he has anything to read. The man pulls out a book which describes the creation of a perfect person, ending up with a man who

has a bolt through his neck. The prince snatches the book away immediately and leaves.

This pseudo fairy tale, I believe, has its *raison d'être* in Jeanette's first theological disagreement with the priest on the concept of perfection. When the priest sermonizes that perfection is flawlessness, which is also what the prince in the tale believes in, Jeanette starts to put up an inner resistance. This tale is wrapped in a rather traditional fairy tale semblance; however, it becomes unconventional when the advisor meets the woman. Unlike what happens in traditional fairy tales, the woman refuses to marry the prince. Later, when the prince gives a speech to the village, she dares to stand up for herself and object to his opinions. In this tale, the woman is wiser than the man. The goose, who tells the prince that no perfect woman exists, is also referred to by the pronoun "she". The characters of the woman and the goose thus lend a feminist color to the tale. Their defiance of the heterosexual and patriarchal authority demonstrates what Winterson tries to convey to the reader: a woman may possess the power of wisdom and independent thinking as well as a man.

This tale I read as a projection of Jeanette's subconsciousness and imagination, in answer to the priest's sermon on perfection. What Jeanette argues is that if you merely look for the pure perfection of flawlessness, you might end up being a monster, as in the book the prince gets from the orange vendor, which is obviously an allusion to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. This tale testifies to Jeanette's development of independent thought, and at the same time foreshadows her homosexuality (in the tale, the woman refuses to marry the prince, which might indicate her different sexuality) and her rebellion against an intolerant heterosexual world.

2.2.3 The Chapter "Joshua"

In the chapter entitled "Joshua", there are two short stories interspersed through the plotline. The first one is a story about the Forbidden City, in which stones have great

power. This story appears during Jeanette's confinement at home after her love affair with Melanie is found out. It is a dream of Jeanette's, suggesting her inner struggle. In this chapter, Jeanette discovers her inner orange demon and talks with it. The stones in this prose story bear great significance. Jeanette describes the Forbidden City with stones in all four directions, yet a voice inside her tells her: "Do not be afraid. These are the ancients. Weathered and wise as they are, respect them, but they are not the everlasting substance. The body that contains a spirit is the one true god" (Winterson, 144). The stones are like the obstacles Jeanette has to face in reality. In her feverish dream, she understands that something inside her is changing. Following this dream the orange demon appears again. This time, it throws Jeanette a brown pebble and vanishes, and Jeanette is her old self again. For her, the pebble represents a weapon to defend herself against her mother and the world. Here, the stone and the pebble can be read as another intertextual reference, namely to the biblical story recounting how the shepherd boy David killed the giant Goliath by means of a stone fired from his sling (I Samuel 17:49). Similarly, Jeanette's brown pebble gives her strength to kill her 'giant', i.e. the social and religious obstacles blocking the development of her sexuality.

The second story is again like a feverish dream of Jeanette's. It depicts a secret garden on the banks of the river Euphrates. In the heart of the garden, there is an orange tree. In her dream, the garden is walled, and to eat the fruit of the orange tree means to leave the garden for good. This scene refers to the Garden of Eden in the Bible. Here the orange does not represent heterosexuality any more; it represents Jeanette's true inner desires. If Jeanette has the courage to face her true self, she will be driven out of the garden, the protective shelter, into the wilderness.

In this chapter, Jeanette is confined and exorcised due to her love affair and 'deviant' sexuality. Both of the two short stories resemble delirious dreams during this time. Jeanette is trying to battle against the outside world and its rules. By the end of this chapter, she becomes more determined to leave her adoptive home and accept her true desires.

2.2.4 The Chapter “Judges”

The chapter entitled “Judges” begins with a quote from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: “[n]ow I give you fair warning, either you or your head must be off” (Winterson, 163). In Carroll’s story, this sentence is not yet finished. The second half of it reads: “and that in about half no time! Take your choice!” (Carroll, 116). By the end of this chapter, Jeanette has firmly taken her choice; that she will quit the church and move out of her mother’s house.

Before making this choice, Jeanette’s narration is interrupted by two continuous stories of Sir Perceval, one of King Arthur’s Knights of the Round Table. In the first story, Sir Perceval sets out from Camelot to look for the Holy Grail. Arthur has begged Perceval not to leave, but he has made up his mind. A stone appears here, along with the sword Excalibur which cannot be pulled out. Another recurrent image is the plant growing in the center of the Round Table. In the chapter “Joshua”, the protagonist encounters an orange tree in a secret garden; yet in this story, the plant is a thorny crown. In her subconscious, Jeanette compares herself to Sir Perceval, setting forth on a quest for the Holy Grail, i.e. her true self. I read King Arthur as a representation of Jeanette’s mother or the church, who possesses the ultimate authority. Nevertheless, King Arthur can also be interpreted as the representation of future Jeanette because according to the legend, Arthur is the only person who can pull the sword out of the stone.

In the second story, Sir Perceval has been on his journey. Now that he is on the road, he feels his fatigue and hunger. He starts missing his friends and his old pleasant life back in Camelot. He dreams of King Arthur holding his own head in his hands. He tries to clasp his king, but Arthur becomes an ivy tree. When Sir Perceval wakes up, his face is covered in tears. In my view, this short story intimates what Jeanette will have to deal with once she leaves her home. The pain and suffering of Sir Perceval

become the pain and suffering of Jeanette herself.

Jeanette's appropriation and adaptation of Arthurian legend indicate her determination and courage when she confronts the extraordinary quest of her true self and desires. On the other hand, they directly suggest a same-sex relationship: there is brotherly as well as homosocial love between King Arthur and Sir Perceval. Projecting this same-sex relationship into Jeanette's life, between Jeanette and her mother, there is a mother-daughter relationship which cannot be cut off completely; at the same time, in her relationship with other women, she discovers her true sexual desires that cannot be denied.

In this chapter, Jeanette's mother and her church, who adhere to the heterosexual norm, accuse Jeanette of acting like a man, but she refuses to accept this charge. As far as Jeanette's mother is concerned, gender is a fixed concept: a woman is a woman and a man is a man. Her mother has already been convinced that gender is a socially constructed conception. This idea is further implied by the parallel between the male characters of the two Sir Perceval stories and the female characters in the novel.

2.2.5 The Chapter "Ruth"

The chapter "Ruth" begins with another pseudo fairy tale featuring a female protagonist called Winnet. One day in the forest, a sorcerer tricks Winnet into becoming his apprentice so that he can teach her the dying magic arts. After many years of staying with the sorcerer in his castle, Winnet actually believes that he is her real father, and that she has been with him in the castle since the day when she was born. Then one day, a stranger boy comes to the village. Winnet soon starts a friendship with him and invites him over to the castle on the day of a feast. However, the sorcerer thinks the boy spoils Winnet and becomes angry with him. He throws the boy into the darkest room in the castle. When Winnet frees the boy with her magic power, she asks him to tell the sorcerer that it is she who has seduced him. The boy

does what Winnet asks and the sorcerer feels that Winnet has disgraced him. He orders her to leave the village. Winnet cannot ask for his forgiveness because she is completely innocent, but she asks to stay anyway. The sorcerer offers her a choice: if she wants to stay, she can stay in the village and take care of the goats. Just as Winnet is about to cry, a raven appears and tells her that the sorcerer cannot take her power back and she'd better find a new place if she does not want to stay and be destroyed by grief. Unfortunately, the raven cannot leave with Winnet. Before she heads into the forest, the raven coughs his heart, a brown pebble, out for her so that she will remember how, a long time ago, the raven chose to stay and his heart grew thick with grief, and finally he was bound here all his life. At this moment, the sorcerer creeps in disguised as a mouse and ties an invisible thread on Winnet. Many days have passed, and Winnet runs out of food and clothes. She lies on the ground because she is unable to walk any more. A woman finds her and revives her with herbs. She takes Winnet back to her village and teaches her the language there. The villagers welcome Winnet, but she still feels like a foreigner. She has to conceal her magic powers because the villagers think the sorcerer is mad and dangerous. Because of this, she has to keep silent about her old world and pretends to be one of the villagers. Winnet has heard of a beautiful ancient city guarded by tigers far away from the village. No one has ever been there before, but Winnet makes up her mind to go there in spite of other people's mockery and doubt. She finds a map and sees that the city is girded by a river. She must get a boat and sail to the city, so she learns from boat builders. On Winnet's last night in the village, she dreams that her eyebrows become two bridges which lead to a hole between her eyes. The hole has a spiral staircase running down to her gut. She goes along the stairs and explores her inner territory. Deep down, she finds a horse and rides it. But every time she looks around, everything becomes different. She gets dizzy and will fall off if she does not jump off the horse. As soon as Winnet wakes up, she gets into a boat and rows out to the sea. She knows that she will never go back.

I read this rather lengthy tale as epitomizing Jeanette's life story: like Winnet, Jeanette used to be trapped in her mother's castle. When she actually lives in the society, she

has to hide her difference, but she still feels like an outcast. In the end, Jeanette decides to go after her true desires, just as Winnet goes to the ancient city where she will feel secure. The only crucial difference between Jeanette's and Winnet's stories is the inversion of the gender. For Winnet, it is a male figure that has been in control of her life, and she is driven out of the castle because of her love affair with a boy; Jeanette, for her part, has been under the wings of her mother, and she is condemned and confined due to her 'scandal' with a girl. This inversion again testifies to Winterson's idea that gender is socially constructed, not inherently fixated.

The character of Sir Perceval reappears in this chapter in two more short stories. In the first one, he comes to a glorious castle on a hill. The dwarfs who guard the castle tell him that he is welcome and lead him to a room for rest. Sir Perceval curses himself for leaving King Arthur and Camelot. Then he falls asleep and dreams of a bright sunbeam entering the room. The Holy Grail then enters the hallway, and King Arthur sits silently, looking out of the window. When Perceval wakes up, he decides it is time to greet his host, and he has seen the vision of perfect peace. In the second story, after the dinner with his host, Sir Perceval sits alone for a long time. He finds his two hands in a curious and different state: one is sure and firm, the other stark and uncomfortable. Sir Perceval is angry that night because his journey has been in vain so far. His host asks him about the reason why he leaves Camelot, but does not listen to him carefully, following his own assumptions - King Arthur is mad or the Round Table is ruined. Nevertheless, Sir Perceval leaves to pursue the Holy Grail only for his own sake. That night, he dreams that he becomes a spider hanging on to a tree, but a raven flies in and breaks the thread so he falls off and runs away.

These two Sir Perceval stories occur during the time when Jeanette comes back home. To me, the first story suggests that Jeanette finally finds her inner peace, while the second story demonstrates that she is to undertake her journey for her own sake, not for any other reason. Here the image of the raven returns. In Winnet's story, a raven comes to tell her which road she should take. In literature, the raven has always

assumed dual meanings. It symbolizes death and bad omens, but it is also regarded as relating to high intelligence. Generally speaking, the raven is related to prophecy. It is linked to gods, but not the widely-accepted ones. In both Winnet's story and Sir Perceval's dream, the raven plays an important role by showing the main characters the right way. Borrowing the raven's association with death and suffering, this road might be covered by thorns. However, the image of the raven casts a mythic veil over both Winnet's and Sir Perceval's choice, and thus Jeanette's choice, just as all these mythic tales and legends do in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

In Winnet's story, the three ravens raised by the sorcerer assume the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These three names appear earlier as the names of the three white mice which Jeanette's friend, Elsie Norris, keeps in a wooden box. The biblical story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego comes from the Book of Daniel. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are three friends of Daniel's. They are working for King Nebuchadnezzar when the Jews are in exile. One day, the king asks them to worship a golden image he has set up, but the three of them refuse because they are faithful Jews. For this act of disobedience, the king casts them into a burning fiery furnace in rage and fury. However, when he looks into the furnace, he sees four men in it, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and a fourth man who looks like the Son of God. It turns out that they have not died because of their faithfulness. So King Nebuchadnezzar frees them, promotes them and praises their God (Daniel: 3). I believe the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego reflects that of Jeanette: like the three men, Jeanette refuses to worship an authoritative god, the patriarchal heterosexuality. To punish her, her mother and the church throw her into a "burning furnace". However, Jeanette does not die. Her angel (who is at the same time her orange demon) saves her from suffering. Her faith in interpreting and worshiping God in her own way eventually saves her life. This story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego carries good tidings for Jeanette's future, implying that her sexuality and difference in interpreting God in her own way shall be praised one day.

Studying the different symbols and narrations interwoven with Jeanette's life story, it is clear to me that these minor narrations and symbols first of all serve as a suggestion of her state of mind and reflection on daily life. For instance, when Jeanette disagrees with the priest's sermon on perfection, she narrates the tale of the prince who has been trying to find a perfect woman as his wife to defend her viewpoint. Moreover, the narrations and symbols enrich the main plotline, adding a mythical color to the novel. Last but not the least, they support the view proposed by Winterson in the chapter "Deuteronomy", that history is artificially constructed, and furthermore, that the past of one's life always remains open to new interpretations. Winterson constructs Jeanette's life story through these different narrative threads and symbols, providing a web of intertextual correspondences which, in turn, invite an allegorical reading. A dynamic pattern of interaction emerges between these different texts that are brought into play; and it is this interaction which makes Winterson's use of intertextuality as an artistic strategy effective.

As I have mentioned in the last chapter, Angus Fletcher emphasizes the relationship between allegory and religion. He maintains that it is no accident that mankind uses allegory to represent divine messages. The biblical stories, mythic tales, and Arthurian legends in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* can likewise be read as allegories with underlying meanings, which require the reader to put in an extra effort to interpret them. As Fletcher proposes, allegories may pose severe challenges to authorities: in this case, these are Jeanette's mother, her church, and God. Some of the tales suggest Jeanette's disagreement with the church's sermons (see 3.2.2); some of them allude to her relationship with her mother (see my analysis of the Perceval tales).

Generally speaking, the intertextual relationship between the Bible and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is demonstrated, on the one hand, through Winterson's appropriation of biblical narrative structure, and on the other hand, on the story level, through the Bible's immediate influence on Jeanette's personal life. Conversely, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* affects the Bible as a critical commentary on its

teachings. The novel criticizes the intolerance preached by the Bible towards different worldviews and sexualities. It also questions the patriarchal moral system in the Bible and the British society in the seventies and eighties of the last century by characterizing its women characters as strong independent individuals, more so than their biblical counterparts. In the Book of Ruth, for example, the protagonist is eventually saved by two other men: her new husband, Boaz, and her son, Obed. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, by contrast, Jeanette does not need to be saved by a man; she is finally saved by her faith in her true self.

Although it is generally regarded as a fiction, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is in fact a semi-autobiography. After all, a vast portion of the novel is based on Winterson's personal life, as can be read in her interviews and memoir *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* (2011). Nevertheless it remains a mystery to what extent Jeanette's life and Winterson's really overlap. For as far as Winterson is concerned, history, personal or national, is constructed through narration, and life is half fact, half fiction in any case. To pursue this issue further, I proceed in the next chapter with a comparative analysis between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Winterson's personal life as documented in her memoir and interviews.

Chapter Three: Intertextuality between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Jeanette Winterson's Documented Life

3.1 A Comparative Study between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Jeanette Winterson's Documented Life

In her introduction to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson recalls the first days when she was writing the book: "It was not an accident, or an experiment, or a whim, it was a downstream force by a high wind. It was as though the book was already written, such was the speed and certainty of its being" (Winterson, xii). When she wrote *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson felt that she was constructing her own history as an individual through Jeanette's life story and a number of imaginative tales. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is generally regarded as a fiction; however, Winterson admits that it is both autobiographical and non-autobiographical in that Jeanette and Winterson herself share a similar but not entirely identical life. In 2011, Jonathan Cape published Winterson's memoir, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* as a supplement to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Winterson's personal life, as can be read in the memoir and other interviews, shares important events and turning points with Jeanette's life in the fiction, while yet being very different. In this section, I shall discuss in detail the major similarities and differences between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Winterson's personal life as documented in her memoir and interviews.

The general timelines of Jeanette's life and Winterson's life are the same: both are adopted by religious parents and are raised to be missionaries. However, their falling in love with a woman leads them both to leave the church and their homes. According to a *Paris Review* interview with Winterson, the author was born in Manchester (in the memoir, Winterson's adoption files were held in Accrington, Lancashire) in 1959 and later adopted by Constance Brownrigg and John William Winterson. At the age of fifteen, she had a love affair with a woman and subsequently left her church, her

community, and her home. She worked as an ice-cream van driver and a funeral makeup artist to support herself. Winterson first studied at Accrington College of Further Education and later acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from St. Catherine's College in Oxford University.

The title of the memoir is a quote from Winterson's adoptive mother. When her mother asked her why she had fallen in love with a girl, Winterson answered that she was happy with that girl. Hearing this, Mrs. Winterson asked, "Why be happy when you could be normal?" (Winterson, 114). This question reveals her mother's opinion on pursuing true self and desires: pretending to be normal is much more crucial than being happy with your true self but being seen as different. Using this quote as the title of her memoir, Winterson intimates to the reader that she has been questioning her life all along. Yet *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* is dedicated jointly to Constance Winterson, and to her other two mothers, Ruth Rendell, who is Winterson's friend, and Ann S., Winterson's biological mother. The relationship between Winterson and Mrs. Winterson can never be severed, just like the thread which the sorcerer ties to Winnet when she leaves for a new world.

In *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, Winterson portrays her mother as rigid, gloomy, and abstinent:

> She was a flamboyant depressive; a woman who kept a revolver in the duster drawer, and the bullets in a tin of Pledge. A woman who stayed up all night baking cakes to avoid sleeping in the same bed as my father. A woman with a prolapse, a thyroid condition, an enlarged heart, an ulcerated leg that never healed, and two sets of false teeth - matt for everyday, and a pearlised set for 'best' (Winterson, 1).

As far as Winterson is concerned, Mrs. Winterson adopted her because she wanted a friend, not because she wanted a child, like any normal mother. In her memoir,

Winterson remembers her mother as an extremely religious woman, just as Jeanette's mother in the novel. Mrs. Winterson read the Bible every night before sleeping and taught her family to reflect on its contents. Winterson's adoptive father is a worker at the docks. Since her family is a traditional one, Mrs. Winterson takes charge of family affairs. Similarly, Jeanette's father is rarely mentioned in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, because her mother is dominant in her family as well. Later on, Mrs. Winterson and her husband are divorced, and he marries another woman, Lillian, who is ten years younger than him, while in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the status of the relationship between Jeanette's adoptive parents is never mentioned. When *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* was published, Mrs. Winterson called her daughter to confront her with the question why she had used her own first name in the book if it was merely a fiction. Mrs. Winterson was angry at the way the story was told in the book. She was ashamed that she had to order the book under a false name.

Books are of great significance for Winterson, both as a reader and as a writer. Like Jeanette's mother, Winterson's mother hides non-biblical books from her, but they both leave certain books for their daughters. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, when Jeanette is little, her mother reads her *Jane Eyre*, only she changes the ending of the novel: in Jeanette's mother's version, Jane Eyre marries St John Rivers, not Mr. Rochester. Years later, when Jeanette can read for herself, she reads the book again and discovers that the ending is very different. This is an incident that happened to Winterson herself. In *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, she mentions that there were only six books in her house, and one of them is *Le Morte d'Arthur* written by Sir Thomas Malory (Winterson, 37). For Winterson, the story of Sir Perceval searching for the Holy Grail is of special importance because this story is about failure and second chances. When difficult times come for her work and life, the Perceval story gives Winterson hope and strength. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson adapts the story of Sir Perceval in two chapters. By doing this, she offers strength and comfort to young Jeanette. Jeanette, like Winterson herself, identifies with Sir Perceval subconsciously in that they are both on a journey to search for the

Holy Grail, the single most vital thing in their life, i.e. their true selves. Winterson's intrigue with Arthurian legends is also seen in another fiction of hers, *The Powerbook* (2001), in which she adapts the love story between Sir Lancelot and Guinevere.

Other similarities between Jeanette's life story in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Winterson's personal life as documented in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* include the mention of the gospel tent, where Christians gather together for a summer camp, and certain school memories. For example, in embroidery projects at school, both Jeanette and Winterson embroider the quote "the summer is ended and we are not yet saved" from the book of Jeremiah in the Bible onto their bags. According to Zoe Williams's review of Winterson's memoir on *The Guardian* website, Winterson's point in iterating these memories is "that the documents are intended as companions, to lay this one (*Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*) over the last (*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*) like tracing paper, so that even if the author poetically denies the possibility of an absolute truth, there emerges nevertheless the shape of the things that actually happened". As Williams suggests, Winterson wrote *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* in a half-myth-half-fact tone so that in reading the book, the reader realizes that there is no such thing as 'an absolute truth'. *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* is written in a fragmented and emotional way as well, which leads the reader to contemplate the question whether it is a memoir/autobiography, or, like *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, merely another version of Winterson's personal life. This question is certified by Winterson's two different versions of her search for her biological mother recorded in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* and an interview in *The Guardian* in 2010. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Jeanette finds her adoption papers when she is searching for a pack of playing cards. One day, a woman visits their house and has a meeting with Mrs. Winterson. After confirming with her mother that this woman is her biological mother, Jeanette, forbidden to see her, runs up the hill to vent her emotions. Like Jeanette, Winterson finds her birth certificate accidentally when she is still a child, but she never speaks about it. According to her memoir, her biological mother also visited

her once when she was little. Over the years, Winterson has been wondering about her true identity and her past - after all she was not named Jeanette Winterson when she was born; and her parents are not the ones who have given her life. With the help of her friends, Winterson contacts the local adoption agency and court to track her adoption files. During this strenuous time, she is given the opportunity to contact her biological parents. She also knows that the Wintersons were originally going to adopt a boy borne before her by the same mother, but that somehow the procedure did not succeed. Winterson calls her uncle, and then, one day, her biological mother, Ann, texts her subsequently, after which they arrange a meeting to get to know each other. Before this meeting, the only attempt Winterson made to reach out to her birth mother was when *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* was adapted into a BBC series. Winterson decided to change the name of the protagonist from Jeanette to Jess (Winterson once thought her mother's name was Jessica). However, in *The Guardian* interview in 2010, when asked if she contacted her birth mother after she had found her information, Winterson simply says: "No, She's dead". Which of these two disparate versions corresponds to what actually happened? No one, including Winterson, knows for sure, or maybe she simply refuses to tell the world. Perhaps the death of her biological mother was too painful for her, so she imagines meeting her and her half-brother, Gary, in the memoir; or perhaps knowing her birth mother could not bring comfort to her either, so she simply says she died before she could contact her. All this said, I conclude that *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* is in nature the same as *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*: half-fact and half-fiction, just one version of Winterson's documented personal life.

In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson questions the absolute truth of history and time. Likewise, I question the status of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* as a fiction, and of *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* as a memoir/autobiography: which part is true, and which part is not? To this question, Winterson, replies in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, that she cannot answer any of the questions regarding truth or falsehood; she does, however, mention

a specific character, Elsie Norris, who protects Jeanette as a friend. This character, Winterson points out, is a pure fabrication: “I wrote her in because I couldn’t bear to leave her out. I wrote her in because I really wished it had been that way. When you are a solitary child you find an imaginary friend” (Winterson, 6-7). In this same spirit, Winterson might have invented her meeting with her biological mother, Ann, because she could not bear to relive her mother’s death in this book again. It is also possible that Winterson’s memories about her past have changed over time; after all, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* was first published in 1985, when she was only twenty-five. Both *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Why Be Happy When You Could be Normal?*, then, are constructed from Winterson’s memories as well as her imagination. In her opinion, she can never tell her life as a fixated known fact: “I would rather go on reading myself as a fiction than as a fact” (Winterson, 154). Indeed, as a person who is in doubt about her own name, the most basic mark of individual identity, Winterson has every reason to question the reality of her life. Her life is more like a mystified fiction which can develop into various versions, than a fact.

No wonder Winterson adheres to her view that history, personal or national, is constructed through narration: “Part fact part fiction is what life is” (Winterson, 6). She says so in her memoir. In the *Paris Review* interview, Winterson clearly states that “[t]his is not autobiography in the way that you understand it. It is simply a way of using raw material”. In her memoir, Winterson continues to elucidate her idea of truth: “Truth for anyone is a very complex thing. For a writer, what you leave out says as much as those things you include. What lies beyond the margin of the text? The photographers frames the shot; writers frame their world” (Winterson, 8). According to Winterson, truth and lies are always difficult to keep apart in the text because the author has to focus on one specific angle to narrate the story, thus necessarily leaving out other aspects. Both *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* take only one specific angle to narrate Winterson’s life story: in the former, she figures as a helpless girl who grows to be stronger; in the latter, as a writer who tries to achieve inner peace. In the *Paris Review* interview, Winterson

confesses that "[i]t was necessary for me to leave behind my entire early background - physically, emotionally and intellectually... to have nothing to do with it. *Oranges* was a way of cleansing myself from all that".

On the other hand, when Winterson wrote *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, she probably did not mean to write about her personal past. In the introduction to Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, she declares:

> 1985 wasn't the day of the memoir - and in any case, I wasn't writing one. I was trying to get away from the received idea that women always write about 'experience' - the compass of what they know - while men write wide and bold - the big canvas, the experiment with form (Winterson, 3).

In this sense, in writing *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson was challenging patriarchal authority. Winterson calls *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* an experimental novel in that it employs a complicated narrative structure, which is non-linear. She argues for a spiral narrative and a spiral reading of her book because we do not think in a linear way. Winterson claims that "the spiral is fluid and allows infinite movement" (Winterson, xiii). Because of this 'infinite movement' of the spiral, she believes a spiral narrative suits her perfectly.

Winterson claims to understand how *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* works for the reader:

> Personal stories work for other people when those stories become both paradigms and parables. The intensity of a story - say the story in *Oranges* - releases into a bigger space than the one it occupied in time and place. The story crosses the threshold from my world into yours. We meet each other on the steps of the story (Winterson, 61).

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is of special importance for Winterson's readers in the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual) community because it is at the same time a coming-out story of a lesbian girl who struggles to tell her family and the church that homosexual love is no different from heterosexual love. The novel is acclaimed as a popular LGBT young adult literature. For Winterson's readers in the LGBTQIA community, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* serves as an allegory of their lives, just as the biblical stories, the adapted legends and mythic tales serve as allegories in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

Gerard Genette defines his concept of 'epitext' in *Paratexts* as a discourse which circulates around the text in question. The epitext, both private and public, can be used to examine the author's position in regard to his/her own work. In relation to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* could be seen as a public epitext allowing the reader to learn about another version of Winterson's personal life, along with her interviews in literary magazines and on newspaper websites. The similarities and differences between these two versions of Winterson's life make it clear that both books are cover stories of her life, "part fact part fiction", in her own words. That being said, both *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* can be read as *romans à clef*. Apart from these two books, many of Winterson's other works, such as parts of *The Powerbook* and *The Stone Gods* (2007), can be read as cover stories of her personal life; after all, as Winterson says in the *Paris Review* interview, a writer always takes raw materials from his/her own life.

3.2 The Role of the Author

The role of the author in the text has been an issue discussed by many literary theorists. Roland Barthes applauds the death of the author while Michel Foucault adheres to the idea that the author still exerts different functions in his text. In Winterson's case, it is obvious that the author plays an important role in determining

the meaning of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* since the text is semi-biographical, as Winterson has admitted. It not only presents a version of Winterson's documented life, but also reflects Winterson's views on her life and living in general.

Barthes, despite his declaration that the author is dead, argues for the freedom of the reader. The various ways the reader chooses to interpret the text, he claims, give the text new lives. In the process, authorial intentions are overshadowed, and the reader becomes the author's accomplice. For readers from different backgrounds and communities, the text is endowed with different connotations. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, as a semi-biographical coming-out story written by an adopted homosexual female writer, is of special significance for adopted children and the LGBTQIA community. In general, any person who struggles with life in his/her youth can identify with Jeanette in the book. A part of Winterson's personal history is enacted here, and the strong emotions in it lead the reader and the author to meet each other, which goes directly against Barthes. Hence, Winterson's authorial intention that she never wanted *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* to become a memoir, as she writes in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, is disregarded. As for this intention, Winterson claims that she was challenging the limitations imposed on traditional female writing, not unfolding her past to the reader. For Winterson, as she is well aware, her past is unknown, even to herself. She can only present her life story as a part-fact-part-fiction mixture. Therefore, her intention in writing *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* as a memoir/autobiography is also to be questioned, since, like *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the text is "part fact part fiction". Its partial fictionality is proved by my analysis of Winterson's two different versions of the search for her biological mother in the first section of this chapter.

Unlike Barthes, Foucault supports the idea that the author still exerts his/her influence over the text. He proposes four author functions which indicate the major functions of the author in relation to the text: firstly, the author function ensures the legal protection of the work; secondly, the author function does not apply to all discourses

universally; thirdly, the author function is not produced from a single spontaneous discourse, but from a series of complex cultural constructions; lastly, the author function does not coincide with "a real individual", because it can refer to several positions and subjects simultaneously (Foucault, 113). In the case of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson surely possesses the legal copy rights of the novel. Moreover, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* was not produced by Winterson as the only author. The various narrative threads and quotes throughout the book refer back to the Bible, Arthurian legends, and other existing texts such as Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Shelley's *Frankenstein*, etc. In short, Jeanette's life story in the novel is constructed on the basis of many previous literary and religious works. All these allusions to the writers and books which came before Winterson are, on the one hand, a tribute to these writers and books, and on the other hand, an inevitable result of her own position as a reader. Last but not the least, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* does not refer to "a real individual", neither Jeanette in the novel, or Winterson in reality. Instead, it should be regarded as one version of Winterson's documented personal life.

As a structuralist, Genette, approaches the role of the author differently than Barthes and Foucault. He acknowledges the importance of the author in the text by studying epitexts, the kind of paratext which circulates outside the text. In Genette's discussion, the author's discourses outside the text suggest a relationship between the author and the text, thus influencing the reader's interpretations of the text. Genette classifies epitexts into two kinds: the public epitext and the private epitext. Within the category of the public epitext, he further distinguishes between three kinds: the publisher's epitext, the semi-official allographic epitext, and the public authorial epitext, among which the last one is of most relevance to the authorial intention. The public authorial epitext includes auto-reviews, public responses, mediations (the media epitext), and delayed autocommentaries. Within the category of the private epitext, Genette includes correspondence, oral confidences, diaries, and pre-texts (that is, the epitext which is only addressed to the author himself, such as plans and drafts). Interviews

naturally fall into the category of mediations, which cover the aspect of the media epitext, while memoirs can be seen as a kind of diaries. In studying *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the role of Winterson's memoir/autobiography, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* and her interviews in literary magazines and on newspaper websites is self-evident. This is especially vital when one considers the fact that the modern world is dominated by social media, and that Winterson is an attention-attractive writer with a strong personality. One example of this personality, as witnessed by a social website is provided by the following anecdote. On June 15th, 2014, Winterson posted a photograph of a killed and skinned rabbit on her Twitter account, claiming that "Rabbit ate my parsley. I am eating the rabbit". This immediately induced a large amount of news coverage from *The Guardian* to *The Independent*, stirring up a debate on the Internet. Although Winterson has deleted the controversial photograph from her account now, she posted a series of follow-up statuses, including photographs of the washed and cooked rabbit meat, and photographs of her cat eating the rabbit's innards. Social media such as Twitter allow the reader to get in touch with the author in person fast and directly for the first time. In the incident of the rabbit-eating, Winterson comes across as a strong woman who does not give in easily, which provides a sharp contrast with the fragile Jeanette in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. The current Winterson perhaps shows her reader what Jeanette would grow up to be one day: a woman who has got rid of her fears and anxieties. On the other hand, social media websites can offer a stage for the author's performance. Due to the nature of the Internet and social media, people can exaggerate some of their characteristics. Either way, these media offer the reader a chance to know Winterson as a person. Therefore the author's discourses on social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook serve as the epitexts for the study of his/her works, as well as the study of him/her as a writer. Although Genette has included the media epitext in his category of mediations, he does not mention the ever-growing social media. I propose to add social media epitext to this category, as the author's posts on websites such as Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr should be taken into consideration when examining his/her texts. The inclusion of the social media

epitext allows Genette's theory to follow the new developments of the modern world in which the Internet plays a vital part. The role of social media is different from that of the traditional media, such as newspaper interviews in that social media such as Twitter and Facebook posts resemble public diaries - they are not meant to be read by others, but everyone can read them. Therefore, we know more about the author's life, presented from a different angle, than what s/he presents himself/herself on TV or in newspapers.

Generally speaking, within the genres of the autobiography and semi-biography, the author should certainly be taken into account when interpreting his/her works. Just as fictions, autobiographies and semi-biographies, too, are contrived by the author from the raw materials of his/her personal lives in certain respects. Therefore it is difficult to judge which part is true and which part is fiction. Autobiographies and semi-biographies merely represent one version of the author's documented personal life, and do not qualify as objective accounts. I agree with Winterson that both personal and national histories are socially constructed through human narration, and precisely that is the reason why the author plays a crucial role in interpreting the text: the reader relies in part on the author's choice of narration to interpret the text that the author has constructed.

Conclusion

My aim in this thesis has been to explore the intertextual relationships between the Bible and Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, as well as between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and Winterson's documented life in her memoir/autobiography *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* and other interviews. In the first section, I unfolded my theoretical framework in relation to the concept of intertextuality in a broad sense: from Julia Kristeva's and Roland Barthes's discussions of intertextuality in general and Gerard Genette's taxonomy of transtextuality, to Barthes's and Michel Foucault's theories of the role of the author in the text. In my discussion of Genette's classification of transtextuality, which, he argues, is more inclusive than intertextuality, I focused on two specific types of transtextuality: paratextuality and hypertextuality. The former category refers to the relationship between one text and its paratexts, such as intertitles, while the latter refers to the relation between one text and a previous text, which is of relevance to my discussion of allegory. As to the study of the role of the author, I brought the theories of Barthes, Foucault, and Genette together, highlighting their mutual differences: Barthes celebrates the death of the author; Foucault proposes the four major author functions; Genette analyses how the author influences a text through epitexts, the type of paratexts which exists outside the text in question. In the second part of my thesis, I drew a detailed comparison between the themes of the first eight books of the Bible and the eponymous chapters of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. To substantiate my allegorical reading of the novel, I analyzed the image of the orange, the adapted Arthurian legends, and mythic tales in the chapters of Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, relating them to the main character in Jeanette's life. In the third part, I studied the similarities and differences between Jeanette's life story in this semi-biographical novel and Winterson's personal life as documented in her memoir/autobiography and her interviews in *The Paris Review* and on *The Guardian.* More specifically, I discussed the role of the author, particularly in the genres of the autobiography and semi-biography.

I offered two proposals in this thesis. First of all, I proposed to add the category of religious narratives to Genette's classification of intertitles (Genette, 298). Secondly, when discussing Genette's categorization of public epitexts, I proposed to add the category of the social media epitext, as the modern world has been witnessing a large increase in social media discourse. Generally speaking, I agree with Winterson's view that history, personal or national, is socially fabricated through narration. Therefore, the status of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* as a fiction and of *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* as a memoir/autobiography should be questioned, since, as I have argued, both texts are semi-biographical, representing two different versions of Winterson's personal life, "part fact part fiction", in Winterson's own words.

More generally, this thesis has aimed to demonstrate the crucial role played by Western canons and classics in creating modern literary texts. As is well known, Western culture and literature are partly rooted in Christianity and the Bible. Winterson is a writer who has been deeply influenced by the Bible since her childhood. The Bible and Christianity provide a framework for the conflicts and struggles in her main character Jeanette's life story in the book. The abundant dialogues between *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and the Bible testify to the importance of intertextuality, my central topic in this study. Secondly, this thesis has attempted to substantiate Winterson's claim that history is socially built through human narration. Because of this constructedness of history and the role of the author in the text, particularly in the genres of the autobiography and semi-biography, the author cannot be easily dismissed. Winterson rebuilds Jeanette's or her own life through the reference to various texts before her, from the Bible to the adapted Arthurian legends to the fictional mythical tales. All of these different narrative threads affect the development of the plot in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, as well as conveying Jeanette's mental state when confronting the world.

The importance of intertextuality cannot be overstated, especially in modern literature,

where the ever-increasing use of the Internet and the development of the publishing industry have connected the authors from all over the world. Many authors, like Winterson, are devoted readers of the older and contemporary authors themselves. I hope this thesis may contribute to the ongoing discussion concerning the tension between intertextuality, which tends to diminish the importance of the author, and the enduring importance attributed to the author as a key to the interpretation of his/her works.

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