

in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*) resistance towards the heterosexual hegemony in terms of her naturalizing the binary of good and evil to fit her lesbian view of life. Lesbianism is considered good and therefore heterosexuality must be evil (Doan 145). Throughout her literary works, Winterson describes sexual passion in the language and with the understanding of a parallel and informing spiritual faith and compassion. Helena Grice and Tim Woods write:

Despite the many differences between Winterson's texts, they return repeatedly to certain issues: love and desire; identity and subjectivity; artifice and aesthetic self-reflexivity; lesbian and gendered perspectives; the difficulty of forging a language suitable for the discussion of non-heterosexual love; and the relationships between narrative and reference... Winterson's fiction appears to resist simple categorization such as realist, postmodern, or fantasy, and the multiplicity of approaches to her fiction within the essays included within this volume attest to this resistance (Grice and Woods 7).

Jeanette's message, embodied in Winterson's novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, therefore, amounts to a reflection on the issues of lesbian identity and "coming out" accompanied by several ideas developed by lesbian cultural criticism. Jeanette's strength and the strength of this coming-of-age/coming-out novel, emerges from a profound and unshakeable conviction that her lesbianism is right and that any attempt to condemn or despise her, a celebrant of the most natural of passions constitute perversion. Winterson totally redefines normal and renders heterosexuality as unintelligible for Jeanette. The narrator explicitly states that she has "a number of notions about sexual politics" (Winterson 128) and about lesbian literature before blaming the congregation's views on "Inversion" to their reading of "Unnatural Passions" (Winterson 85). The narrator's irony is remarkable when Jeanette attacks both heterosexual inability to see sexual sameness as a source of attraction and the conflation of the categories "sex", "gender" and "sexual orientation" brought about by this blindness, when she states that "a homosexual is further away from a woman than a rhinoceros" (Winterson 128). Even though her mother attacked Jeanette's lesbian impulse, when Jeanette sat by her looking through the two pages of her mother's photograph album called 'Old Flames' she came through a yellowy picture of a pretty woman holding a cat she thought that her mother once experienced the same back in the days. When inquired about her, her mother turned the page and when they looked the next time, "it had gone" (Winterson 36) and she thinks that her mother is a hypocrite, "If there's such a thing as spiritual adultery, my mother was a whore" (Winterson 134). A definitive, straightforward attack upon religious discourse against homosexuality is launched when the fourteen-year-old Jeanette, states: "We [Melanie and Jeanette] read the Bible together, and usually spent half an hour in prayer" (Winterson 86) They firmly believed that the Lord had brought them together. Feminist cultural critics like Teresa De Lauretis have studied the gender dimension of narrative structure, and have concluded that the masculine element is always represented as active and mobile and the female as passive and inert (De Lauretis 94).

The issues of marriage and compulsory heterosexuality are further tackled in the narrator's pondering about the children's tale *Beauty and the Beast* in the text. Winterson's narrative attacks the idea of the tradition of marriage being a holy institution which offers women the only appropriate sphere for their sexual activity, relegating extra-marital sex to the arena of inner defilement. Later as the novel progresses, Jeanette finds out that her former lover Melanie is getting married soon, Jeanette makes this remark: ... "I didn't object to Melanie getting married, I objected to her getting married to *him* (Winterson 124). Here Jeanette is upset because Melanie instead of nurturing her lesbian impulse gave up entirely in order to appease the congregation, thereby, rejecting her quest and liberation of the self. Duncker writes about significant political shift in Winterson's work as a lesbian writing. Patricia Duncker labels Winterson's writing as 'queer' which by her definition "calls attention to the instability of gender...undermines fixed, settled, heterosexual discourses. The binary opposition between masculinity and femininity is fluid and unstable. [...] is cheeky, provocative, subversive" (Duncker 85). Oranges appear again and again throughout the book along with the question: "What about grapes or bananas? (Winterson 113). These oranges symbolize the dominant rhetoric that Winterson's mother embraces, as the only fruit. In the chapter entitled Joshua, Jeanette was forced to stay at home into the parlour until she repents. There she thought about the demon one would get depending on the colour of their aura and that hers is orange which if she ignores she is likely to end up in two pieces or lots of pieces (Winterson 109). When Jeanette sees Melanie after their relationship has ended, Melanie offers her an orange but Jeanette refuses to take it. Her refusal represents her refusal to succumb to the ideas of the status quo as has Melanie (Winterson 122). Throughout her life journey, even though she was aware of the fact that her increasing romantic preference for members of her own sex caused conflicts within her congregation Jeanette did not give up her quest for identity (of the self). She feels that God is not her enemy but his servants are. That is why she decides to leave everything, her family and church, but not her God. She says "I miss God who was my friend. I don't even know if God exists, but I do know that if God is your emotional role model, very few human relationships will match up to it" (Winterson 170). The decision however complicated it may seem, Jeanette embraces it wholeheartedly as she asserts "it is not judgment day but another morning" (Winterson 137). In *Oranges Are Not the Only*, fruit may be interpreted as a reconciliation of postmodernist and feminist tenets in that notions such as subjectivity as fragmented and proliferating, and the deconstruction of the dichotomy history/stories, fuse with the search for identity by an "eccentric" writer and protagonist-narrator by means of the rewriting of the master narrative of Christian religious discourse as a lesbian political manifesto "I am still an evangelist in the North, as well as the person who ran away. Perhaps for a while these two selves have become confused. I have not gone forward or back in time, but across in time, to something I might have been playing itself out" (Winterson 169). Being forced to leave her mother's house and the congregation,

Jeanette begins her quest for the self and autonomy as she takes on a series of odd jobs to support herself which in her mind led her to echo Virginia Woolf as these odd jobs can offer her: "A room of my own, at least" (Winterson 158). Jeanette had no intention of going back to the safety of her mother's home and the church which clearly highlights that despite the many perils that will be coming across Jeanette is willing to go through all hardships. Till the end of the novel, Jeanette is steadfast to have a full lived life and to be true to herself without being controlled by the congregation or by her mother in particular. Jeanette's journey is marked by her struggle for self-knowledge, quest for identity and freedom. In the end, her refusal to be a victim of oppression helps her achieve an awareness of her inner self as she comes to fully accept and celebrate her lesbian identity. However, with her increasing maturity she also realize that she cannot completely detached herself from her family as she laments: "Families, real ones, are chairs and tables and the right number of cups, but I had no means of joining one, and no means of dismissing my own" (Winterson 176).

Winterson is concerned in terms of returning the lost meaning to the self. She is not restricted to what she has experienced or what she knows, and she lets herself loose outside of her own dimension which makes possible 'a total escape from Self' (Winterson 188). Similarly in all her writing her characters have the desire to go beyond what is already known along with the passion to go beyond what is common. In that way, they embrace uncertainty and the beauty they hope to find and achieve there demands a letting go, an escape from old values and traditions, and an openness, that is coupled with an alternative thinking and a passionate determination. Through her literary art, Winterson opens up a new consciousness which examines the vulnerable and self-doubting intricacies of the self. It has established that, Winterson, through her characters, advocates, alternative ways to understand the sexual, emotional, and intellectual self. Her characters endure pain and hardship in order to discover the self and explore their sexual identity even as she recognizes that there are characters that have an ambiguous sexual identity that struggle between incompleteness and wholeness.

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Changing Images of Women in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*

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Abstract: The concept of "New Woman" has given rise to the emergence of a new area of study and research. This concept appeared on the literary horizon in the latter half of the 19th century in Europe and North America. Many of the Indian novelists, dramatists, journalists and social reformers supported the movement. The image of 'New Woman' is pertinent in the works of Manju Kapur. Her female characters struggle for self-esteem and freedom. Transcending the threshold of their homes, they do all which are considered taboos in the present social fabric. The novelist weaves together bodily experiences of woman like pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood, abortion and divorce and the emotions attached to these phenomenon like uncertainty, stress, disappointment.

Keywords: Femininity, Patriarchy and freedom.

The emergence of New Woman in the late twentieth century is a global phenomenon. The pioneers in this field aim at a society where a woman is not forced to be feminine but an independent identity. They imagine a feminine utopia in which 'wholeness' would take place of 'Otherness'. This Woman centered Psychology challenges the traditional image of woman as an angel shrew or a caretaker. In India, it is a hard task to liberate the minds from the shackles of these acceptable beliefs which consider woman a symbol of self-devotion and sacrifice. According to Jayanti Sharma "When society becomes too oppressive, it is an indication of revolt. In Indian society, forces of rebellion are slow, but their existence cannot be ruled out" (Sharma, 140). She is conditioned and brought up through the examples of Sita and Savitri. 'Stridharma', a separate religion for woman confines her role in the four walls of her house as a mother, sister, daughter and wife. She is supposed to curb her own dreams and desires in order to fulfill the happiness of others. Germaine Greer in *Sex and Destiny* says: "The most valuable commodity in the family is a loving heart where happiness consists in seeing others happy. (Greer, 289). But this is not the case with Manju Kapur's women characters. They are the women of the 21st century struggling for their freedom and self respect. Her debut novel *Difficult Daughters* is populated with women characters. Written against the backdrop of partition, these female characters are divided into three categories: Pre-independence, independence and post-Independence. The first category includes Kasturi, Virmati's mother, Ganga, the estranged wife of her husband and Iajwati, her aunt. Playing the traditional role, they merge and organize themselves in the service of domesticity and children. They don't live for themselves but only for others. Jean Baker Miller, in *Toward a New Psychology of Women* aptly states that for many women "The threat of disruption of an affiliation is perceived not just as a loss of relationship, but as something closer to a loss of self" (Miller, 89).