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"Feminine Writing" in Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

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Abstract: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is a semi-autobiographical novel written by British author Jeanette Winterson. The novel narrates the growth story of Jeanette, a girl who gradually finds her own identity under the religious oppression brought by her mother and the church. This thesis is an analysis of how the author Jeanette embodies feminine writing in the novel. To clarify the definition of feminine writing, this thesis mainly borrows the viewpoint of "feminine writing" put forward by Hélène Cixous, a representative of the Western feminist criticism of the French realm. From the "male writing" represented by the Bible to the contradiction between the protagonist and her mother, the author deconstructs and debunks the binary opposition of male centrism, and then creates an unrestricted feminine discourse. Eventually, the author completely breaks free of the patriarchal and religious oppression and manages to reconstruct her subjective identity. The importance of female self-consciousness is conveyed through feminine writing in the hope that readers can boldly question and resist male authority.*

Keywords: *Feminine writing, subjective identity, Bible*

1. Chapter 1 Introduction

Jeanette Winterson was born in Manchester and studied English at Oxford. During this time, she wrote her debut novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, based on her experiences. The novel was published in 1985 and won the Whitbread First Book Award in the same year. Not only was it included in the Guardian's list of "The 1,000 Novels You Should Read Before You Die", but it was also adapted into a hit BBC series, winning Best Screenplay at Cannes and many other awards. The novel narrates the growth of the protagonist Jeanette from a first-person perspective. Because of her sexual orientation, she suffered from oppression from the church, family, and patriarchal society. In order to find her identity and true love, she finally took the road to break with her family and the church.

In the novel, the protagonist's mother is a devout but bigoted Christian. Jeanette was brought up as a future missionary and infused with plenty of rigid ideas. As Jeanette grew older, she was required to go to school and began to contact the world that her mother had previously blocked her from knowing. She learned the true ending of Jane Eyre's story and came to realize that there were many elements of disharmony between her mother's paranoid mind and the real world. The hidden contradictions broke out when Jeanette fell in love with Melanie, a girl of the same age. This unconventional love suffered from thwarting from her family, oppression from the church, and even humiliation from the whole patriarchal society.

Since the publication of the novel, scholars at home and abroad have focused on analyzing the protagonist from the perspectives of growth, ethics, and sexual orientation, or on studying the text from the perspectives of narrative techniques and intertextuality. Among them, few scholars have conducted in-depth research on the theme of "feminine writing". "Feminine writing" was put forward by French scholar Hélène Cixous. Combined with Jeanette Winterson's all-embracing and eclectic attitude towards writing, her novels can embody the spiritual core of "feminine writing". Whether focusing on the novel's content or its narrative techniques, the research related to the novel will more or less reflect the author's ideas about women breaking tradition, seeking and reconstructing their own identities. In the partly autobiographical novel, young Jeanette decides to follow her heart and pursue her own identity as the author Jeanette grows as a storyteller and speaks her inner voice through her writing career. Eventually, she broke with everything familiar and summoned up the courage to fight against the patriarchal society.

This thesis focuses on analyzing how "feminine writing" is reflected in this novel, which is roughly

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divided into three parts. First of all, combining post-structuralism and phallogocentrism, this thesis summarizes the main content of "feminine writing" proposed by Hélène Cixous. Secondly, this thesis analyzes how the author Jeanette Winterson deconstructs and debunks the "male writing" represented by the Bible, as well as the power structure and traditional ideology behind it, and also deconstructs the androcentric mode of thinking. At last, the contradiction between the protagonist and her mother in the novel will be deeply dissected. And this thesis intends to reveal the author's reconstruction of female subjective identity by analyzing the lesbian writing and body writing reflected in the novel. Through these three parts, a comprehensive analysis of feminine writing in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is completed.

2. Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Research Background

In 1985, British writer Jeanette Winterson published her novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, which, with the author's great narrative ability and unique humor, has been well received by readers. The novel, which won the Whitbread Award in the UK and then was selected to the Guardian's must-read 1,000 novels, is now a must-read for English majors at universities in the UK. BBC's adaptation of the same name has won awards from the BAFTA and the Cannes Film Festival for Best Screenplay.

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is Jeanette Winterson's debut novel, a semi-autobiographical Bildungsroman based on her experiences. With its feminist themes and novel narrative techniques, Winterson was hailed by the British press as "Woolf's successor" (Vinson and Kirkpatrick 38). The academic research on the novel focuses on the narrative features of postmodernism, the ethical issues, the theme of homosexuality and other issues. Among them, many scholars study it from the feminist perspective, but few of them study the theme of "feminine writing" in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

2.2. "Feminine Writing" and "Phallogocentrism"

"Feminine writing", a term of feminist critical theory, appeared in the middle of the 1970s and was put forward by the French scholar Hélène Cixous. As early as in the 1960s, the ongoing feminist movement welcomes its second wave; feminist theorists and feminist literary critics began to actively explore the terms related to women. During this period, feminist scholars launched a full-scale offensive, and they launched an unprecedented severe criticism around the phallus-centric society. On the one hand, they interpret and criticize the biased female images in male writers' works. The images of women by the British writer D. H. Lawrence, whose thoughts and actions are rooted in the male reproductive system, are typically exemplified by the fact that in the absence of male reproductive system, women have no right to think or act (Beauvoir 297). Beauvoir even went further as to say that "Lawrence fanatically believed in the supremacy of men" (296). Kate Millett read Beauvoir's book, and then she wrote the book, *The Politics of Sex*, in which she makes an in-depth analysis and critique of the male chauvinism of writers like Laurence. On the other hand, women's "the other" identity in the patriarchal society and family has been explored. *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteen-Century Literature Imagination*, co-published by American scholar Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, is a particularly vivid illustration of some feminist writers' deconstruction of this paradox. The female protagonists in these male writers' works are seen as soft and docile, catering to the patriarchal culture. In fact, as a contrast to the female protagonists, strong, disobedient and insane women also appear in their works.

With the development of Western feminist theory, a large number of critical terms have emerged. At the forefront were post-structuralism and structuralism, the former being a critique of the latter. Structuralism was a French philosophy from the 1950s to the 1960s that argued that any work of cultural output, especially a text, had an underlying logical principle or structure. Structuralists would use "binary oppositions" to deconstruct works in order to reveal the universal truths they contained, such as good and evil, male and female. However, post-structuralists believe that the subjective nature of a work cannot be a source of "truth", as human status, class and cognitive style all influence the way in which objective truths are perceived.

Due to the impact of post-structuralism on the humanities and social sciences, theorists have not only created such critical words as "patriarchy" and "male hegemony", but also stimulated a series of discussions about female writing, female discourse and female body (Liu 58). The concept of "feminine writing" and related theories were put forward by French scholar Hélène Cixous in the context of the

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second wave of feminist criticism. It has become a very representative term of feminist criticism, and promoted the theoretical construction of feminist literary criticism echoing the theoretical innovations and practical advocacy of the era. According to American scholar Toril Moi, the main theoretical framework for "feminine writing" is based on a series of theoretical or semi-theoretical works by Cixous. *The Newly Born Woman*, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, *Castration or disintegration?* and *La Venue l'écriture*, all these books aim to explore the relationship between women, femininity, feminism and text production (Moi 100). The central piece is *The Laugh of the Medusa*, which is the cornerstone of "feminine writing".

The concept of "feminine writing" was first put forward on the basis that women should make their voices heard in the society. In particular, it was a society that embraced phallogocentrism. "Phallogocentrism" was first proposed by the psychologist Sigmund Freud to study the characteristics of the external genitalia of infants, referred to as the baby libido. It is generally believed that "phallogocentrism" was first used to criticize the masculine prejudice by the French philosopher and the representative of the Western deconstruction Jacques Derrida. In the time of the post-structuralism, phallus was a metaphor for male dominance in economics, politics, art, science, and other areas, and is the interpreter of all authority. The female is the existence of the object without independence, and is only attached to the male. This thinking has seriously inhibited women's autonomy and creativity for a long time, at the same time, it has hindered women's access to social culture.

Women were largely suppressed by the patriarchal culture, and lost their voice in the patriarchal society. In order to fully rebel against the patriarchal culture, Cixous, like a poet, made a strong appeal: "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies--for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement" (875).

Cixous made it clear from the beginning that women seemed to be repressed by invisible violence, but she felt women were as much or even more powerful in writing as men. Women can write themselves, too. There are no limits. In fact, Cixous not only advocates "feminine writing" directly but also analyses the purpose, character, function, and method of feminine writing.

First, Cixous advocates feminine writing, arguing that women write themselves, write for themselves, and escape from the trap constructed by phallus centrism.

"Write! Writing is for you; you are for you" (Cixous 876).

"I write woman: woman must write woman" (877).

Under the control of phallogocentrism, women gradually lose their selves, but at the same time, they are ashamed of themselves for not having their selves. This is the result of women being brainwashed by the patriarchy culture. Instead of being able to think on their own, they internalize this tragic fate. "Write! And your self-seeking text will know itself better than flesh and blood" (889). Cixous believed that "feminine writing" was the best way to escape or even change fate. She believed it was time to bring out the latent energy of women. "Springboard" was used by Cixous as a metaphor for "writing", which is transformative and disruptive, with unexpected and more intense effects on social and cultural structures (879).

Secondly, although Cixous does not define "feminine writing," she distinguishes it from "writing by women". Cixous states that "feminine writing" is not the same as "writing by women", because there is no doubt that some women writers are "wolves in sheep's clothing," using the names of female writers, and in fact, they are creating content that caters to the preferences of the patriarchal society. In the same way, it is possible that male writers' works such as Jean Genet's, which is mentioned in the Cixous' commentary, also have a feminine temperament (879).

Moreover, Cixous believes that the patriarchal culture behind male writing is unitary, linear and rational. Feminine writing, on the other hand, is never represented by simplicity, linearity, or objectivity (Cixous 881). Feminine writing cannot be defined, nor can it be symbolized or encoded. It is fluid. Women need to write through their bodies and create strong and tenacious discourse system.

Additionally, Cixous embraces the maternal nature of women and encourages women to draw strength from it, which is a characteristic of women's independence and common to all women. "The mother, too, is a metaphor" (881). Women should embrace their qualities, in whatever capacity, and feel the power they bring to them.

In this period, many scholars tend to separate the male writing from the feminine writing, and do not

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recognize the correlation and commonness between the two. In fact, Cixous says bluntly that writing is bisexual or neutral. There is no limit to what is men/women in writing, and every writer's sense of self should be bisexual. Cixous maintains that before the female discourse system has been established, female discourse can learn from the system of male consciousness, thus refining and transcending.

However, there are conflicting voices about Cixous' feminine writing. At the top of the list were American feminist theorists, represented by Moi, who criticizes Cixous for being too theoretical and impractical, "Cixous' global appeal to 'woman's powers' glosses over the real differences among women, and thus ironically represses the true heterogeneity of women's powers" (Moi 123). Secondly, when Cixous talks about the discrimination between "feminine writing" and "writing by women", she does not make clear the criterion of judgment and the relationship between the author's gender and the gender characteristics of the text (Liu 64).

The third point is that Cixous seems to overemphasize the differences between men and women, yet again falls into the trap of the binary logic of patriarchal culture. It is undeniable that "feminine writing" has brought new thinking and new form to the development of feminist theory. But in the theory development, the contradiction and the tension are inevitable.

In 1991, "feminine writing" was translated into Chinese, and the translated scientific name tends to express "women's work". In 1992, in *Contemporary Feminist Literary Criticism*, "feminine writing" was added with Chinese characteristics and political significance, therefore, the Chinese female writers focus on the political appeal behind the gender writing. In 1999, "feminine writing" was translated as "feminine gender writing" in *French Feminist Discussion of Writing Theory*, written by Chinese scholar Song Sufeng. However, "feminine gender" really limits the strong shape of feminist identity expressed in Cixous. Nowadays, "feminine writing" is widely used to represent Cixous' thoughts, which inevitably leads to the deviation of meaning between different languages, but it does not affect the development of feminist theory in China.

2.3. Research of Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

Winterson's story is powerful in the work *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Emma Hutchison, an American scholar who has delved into Winterson's text, particularly its links to history and fantasy, believes that Winterson's storytelling in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is politically influential (359). Emma argues that stories not only help to construct political realities but also have the political potential for change. This is similar to Cixous' understanding of the influence of "feminine writing". Emma also comments that Winterson's narrative is multiple, fragmented, and nonlinear (365). In this regard, scholar Anne DeLong has also analyzed the myth-rewriting part of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* and concluded that Winterson's narrative is simultaneous, fluid, and pluralistic (266). Another foreign scholar, Zaydun Al-shara, analyses Winterson's treatment of religious texts, including the Bible and the Koran, by mimicking the way deconstruction critics interpret literary texts (238). Jana L. French focuses more on Winterson's portrayal of characters, combining a comprehensive analysis with postmodernism to study Winterson's unnatural portrayal of characters and his desire to modify them (233).

Most of the domestic scholars base their research on the cross-use of multiple texts in the novel, and Winterson's rewriting of myths and fables shows her deconstructing and debunking the patriarchal cultural contained in the sources. Scholars Wang Feifei and Hu Xiaojing have studied the novel from the perspective of intertextuality. The former discusses Winterson's subversion of traditional values and her seeking self-identity (Wang 4); the latter explores the awakening of women's self-consciousness and their self-growth (Hu 27). Similarly, they both find Winterson's positive quest for identity. Based on Bakhtin's "Carnival theory" and Sokolsky's "Defamiliarization", Yang Guowei studies how Winterson challenges the tradition by the means of "parody" with features of postmodernism, and achieves the goal of self-pursuit (47). This is in common with the aim of Wang Feifei's discussion (17). When studying the style of Winterson's novels, the scholar Wang Suying proposes that the author blends fantasy and reality, thus breaking the boundaries of history and narration, and destroying the coherence of narration (60). With Michel Foucault's theory of discourse, power, and alternate space, she explores the alternative space of Heterotopia in the novel.

The author's use of pluralistic texts, especially the subversive adaptations of myths and fables, has attracted much attention in academic research. Scholars have studied it from the perspectives of narrative techniques, growth ethics, and feminism, but few scholars have focused on the theme of "feminine writing" in the novel. The existing research has touched upon "feminine writing", but there are still gaps in it and can be evolved.

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3. Chapter 3 Deconstruction of Phallogocentrism

3.1. Parody of the Bible

"Parody" is a vague term with no clear definition. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, parody is interpreted as "a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry" (Baldick 185). "Parody" often refers to the use of other works by the author in his works to ridicule, satire, and even salute. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, the author uses the technique of "parody" to closely combine the Bible and the novel.

In the novel, the first chapter "Genesis" shows from the very beginning that the world that mother knows is extreme, which is exactly in line with the dualistic opposition implemented in the Bible. Since the creation of God, the world has been divided into two parts: light and darkness, good and evil.

There were friends and there were enemies.

Enemies were:

The Devil (in his many forms)

Next Door

Sex (in its many forms)

Slugs

Friends were:

God

Our dog

Auntie Madge

The novels of Charlotte Bront ë

Slug pellets. (Winterson 1)

After that, Jeanette re-shaped the image of her mother many times through a variety of stylistic metaphors, describing her as the Virgin Mary, Zeus, Satan, King Arthur, and wizard (DeLong 264). These images transcend the traditional boundaries of male and female, good and evil, and break the discourse principle of binary opposition.

The catalog is directly named after the first eight chapters of the Bible: "Genesis", "Exodus", "Leviticus", "Numbers", "Deuteronomy", "Joshua", "Judges", and "Ruth". The novel is given a formal and solemn shell, but the content of the novel records young Jeanette's worldly growth. This is the first step in the author Jeanette's deconstruction of the Bible. Within the framework of biblical sublime, the author skillfully blends familiar Biblical material into the everyday life of the girl Jeanette. When Jeanette's mother explained the origin of Jeanette, she compared herself to the Virgin Mary, indicating that the girl Jeanette was a gift from God, a child of God, destined to fulfill the life of a missionary (Winterson 2). It also alludes to the similarity between the girl Jeanette and Christ. However, the girl Jeanette discovers her true origin and thus shatters this explanation. Jeanette does not become a missionary at the end of the novel.

"Seven" is the number of Satan's heads in the Old Testament. There are seven fallen angels called Satan and they represent seven sins. At church, Reverend Finch thought the girl Jeanette was the devil incarnate because she was seven years old at the time. Incredibly, everyone in the church believed it, so much so that the girl Jeanette went deaf for three months with inflamed lymph glands and no one noticed it, thinking it was God's work. The inhumanity of the church is fully demonstrated in this story. They associated childbirth, old age, illness, and death with God and think they are some kinds of omen of God.

The girl Jeanette was taught the Bible by her mother. Her mother thought school was a place of sin. But local law required Jeanette to attend a school or her mother would go to jail. The girl Jeanette, referring to St. Paul, a famous convert, wondered why her mother didn't want to go to jail as often as St. Paul. Even the most devout are required to obey the laws of the state and have their children systematically educated in schools. The Bible could be described as rules, but abiding by the law is the foundation of one's existence.

At first, the novel hilariously describes Jeanette's origin, before a second ontological story suddenly

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takes on a lyrical tone. With the plot markers before and after, the author Jeanette imitates the stylistic techniques of Genesis, transforming the style from prose to poetry (Brown 236). Jeanette often switches styles in her novels and uses biblical stories as metaphors for the life of the girl Jeanette. The bible is extremely historical and orderly, in which the genealogy of succession is repeated over and over again in order to be objective and reliable. The novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is abundant, diversified and fantastical, which proves that feminine writing is not simple, linear and objectified (Cixous 881). The author Jeanette puts herself into her work to make narrative personal and passionate.

3.2. Challenges to Male's Writing

In the novel, it is obvious that female characters are more prominent than male characters. Jeanette's father appeared only a handful of times and was sometimes referred to only as her mother's "husband". Instead, women in the novel actively participate in the church, and preach in the secular world, until the religious hierarchy suppresses them at the heart of the novel's crisis. From these aspects, the matriarchal characteristics of the community and church in the novel can be found. Here is a woman who is writing women, and she portrays the images of women created by the women themselves, not limited to the characteristics that men set for women and regardless of male requirements. In the novel, the author cleverly sets the role who makes rules and orders for the girl Jeanette as her mother and gives her an image different from the traditional gentle mother, who educates Jeanette through repeated moralizing and threatens her daughter with religious preaching. Occasionally she would lose temper and even beat her.

At the same time, the author clearly describes her dislike of men in the chapter "Numbers", comparing men to pigs and beasts. The author mentions the fairy tale "*Beauty and the Beast*" here, and it can also reflect the author's satire on the male image. Because in the fairy tale, the beast is kissed by the beauty and turns into a handsome prince, but there is no such lucky magic in life. In the conversation between Doreen and Nellie, the bad image of male promiscuity portrayed in the profile is contrasted with the image of a lesbian who is loyal to feelings. The author challenges male-centrism, breaking the boundary between masculinity and femininity and subverting the differences between men and women.

The author Jeanette uses a variety of styles to build the structure of the novel but does not organize them in order. The intention in the fable is profound, and Tetrahedron and prince are the distinct representatives. First, the author uses "elastic bands" and "subtle as silk" to create an environment full of soft feminine qualities for the king, including melting treasures for tribute. "Tetrahedron himself is 'graceful,' a morphing, shifting shape that opposes his 'sworn enemy' 'the foul Isosceles,' a figure that evokes images of linearity and trinity, traditional concepts of order" (DeLong 265). Each side of the tetrahedron has different experiences and different feelings. In addition to good and evil, there are stories of love and absurdity, and the author Jeanette breaks down the binary opposition and linear logic represented by traditional patriarchy.

In the prince's story, he is dedicated to finding the perfect woman. However, the prince himself is a symbol of imperfection, comical, bad-tempered, and slovenly dressed. The woman in the story is excellent, but she rejects the courtship of the prince and it also rejects the value orientation that heterosexual women should be chosen by men. Women's actions are subversive, and the establishment of women's image is also noble, powerful. All this goes against the grain of traditional women. At the same time, the women in the story are striving for balance and harmony, which can be nearly perfect but not perfect. Here lies the author's disassembly of phallogocentrism and absolutism. As Cixous says, by accepting the challenge of the speech dominated by Phallogocentrism, women will identify themselves in a different place from the symbols of the past (881). Women carve women's names into new areas and then continue to expand the practice.

When the girl Jeanette met Melanie for the first time in the market in the town, she accosted Melanie. After that, they got along with each other a lot. The girl Jeanette's initiative and desire for love did not conform to the traditional female image. But women have the right to face and pursue their own emotions and desires. These are women's possessions, pleasures, and organs, which should not be confined to women's bodies (Cixous 880). This is the natural power of women. Without it, women can only become servants and shadows of men. Like Doreen, she relies on her children to maintain her marriage with Frank. She was humble in life, clinging herself to men. She is full of complaints but can only say a few words with friends, dare not break the current situation.

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4. Chapter 4 Reconstruction of Subjective Identity

4.1. Conflicts Between Mother and Daughter

In the novel, the girl Jeanette lives with her dominant foster mother for a long time and follows her to participate in all church activities, which caused that through childhood Jeanette could not live according to her sense of self.

The novel opens with a preliminary description of her mother's extreme black-and-white beliefs. The girl Jeanette has been immersed in the preaching of such rules in her growth but at that time she can derive pleasure from religion. Her mother thought school was a place full of sin and kept Jeanette away from the outside world by exposing her to biblical dogma. As a result, Jeanette could not make friends at school and caused some trouble to her classmates and teachers. She could not experience normal school life, but she still thought that everything her mother says is authoritative. The reason is that the girl Jeanette can gain strength from religion and thus status in the family, and satisfaction for herself.

The discovery planted the seeds of doubt in Jeanette's mind when she stumbled across her adoption papers while playing. Later, Jeanette's biological mother came to visit, but the foster mother mercilessly drove her out and insisted that the girl Jeanette is God's gift for her (Winterson 99). Jeanette was somewhat curious about her biological mother, but since she never appeared, the girl had no feelings for her biological mother. However, the foster mother was very domineering towards Jeanette, refusing her to see her biological mother, making derogatory remarks about her biological mother, and even spanking her when she caught Jeanette talking on the phone (100). It reflects the foster mother's domineering personality and desire to control Jeanette, which also lays the fuse for the subsequent story. The girl Jeanette was not well cared for by her foster mother when she was ill, and she repeatedly tried to soothe her with oranges when she needed attention. When Jeanette's love affair was discovered, her foster mother burnt everything related to Melanie and followed the priest's instructions to lock her up and punish her. She was abused by the people who should love her most. From the foster mother's point of view, all matters of religion must take precedence over the daughter, and her daughter must remain pure for the sake of the religious cause. All these make the girl Jeanette full of pain. Religion has become a way for her foster mother to control her, and the church has become a place full of darkness and fear.

With the appearance of the orange demon, the girl Jeanette gradually walks out of her foster mother's control and walks into the demon's control. However, Jeanette is not as easy to control as she was when she was a child. It is undeniable that under the strict and domineering treatment of her foster mother, she has never stopped exploring the potential of self-consciousness. She learned the relativity of truth by exploring the concept of love in the church early in her life (Hutchison 361). At the same time, this insight aroused her rebellious feelings and led her to establish subjective identity. She chose to retain what the devil had told her to be, and to continue searching for ways to satisfy both her love for God and her love for herself.

Conflicts between young Jeanette and her foster mother are gradually aroused and the relationship slowly breaks apart, but the force of deception and abuse is not enough to cut the cord. A child's relationship with her mother is not limited by the suppression of childhood, and a mother can trigger something in the child's body that can influence the child's hesitating. A mother fills her child with the urge to express words and power (Cixous 882). At the end of the novel, grown-up Jeanette was in the kitchen where the novel began, watching her mother listening to a religious broadcast. In the last chapter, the author wrote the story of the girl Winnet and the wizard, which is about the parallel fantasy story between her and her mother. The wizard denotes Winnet's foster mother, who turns into a mouse when she leaves the castle and sneaks into her room and ties an invisible thread to her button (Winterson 149). With the thread, Winnet can never escape the wizard's control, just as the girl Jeanette can be pulled back by her foster mother at any time. The mother becomes a metaphor (Cixous 881). The inspiration and strength that Jeanette draws from her mother are crucial to her gaining an independent identity (Liu 60).

4.2. Lesbian Writing and Body Writing

In the novel, the girl Jeanette does not have a rosy vision of love in her childhood. Her family is made up of her mother's dominance and her father's compromise. Her mother told her the beautiful story of Jane Eyre, but later she found that her mother had tampered with the ending so she began to doubt the absolutism conveyed by her mother. Later, when she eavesdrops on Doreen and Nellie, she discovers that women always compromise for bad guys. However, she found kindness and happiness from the two female owners of the bookstore that her mother had forbidden her to visit. Her surroundings make her

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loathe men and she even worries that all women will marry beast-like men. The beautiful things she was exposed to were mostly from women, which made her realize that heterosexuality wasn't her only option. The girl Jeanette couldn't help but approach Melanie when she first met her. Her love for Melanie was similar to her love for the church, and she discovered her need for desire during her intimate contact with Melanie. "It has always been this way, nothing can intrude" (Winterson 93). She felt the security of love.

Jeanette's neighbors are a group of pagans. Her mother not only spurned them, but also resisted sex. The girl Jeanette first learned about sex when she heard strange noises from her neighbors which had to be covered up with high hymns. Later, her mother told Jeanette her story of France to remind her not to let anyone touch the hem of her apron (91). When she's having sex with Melanie, she thinks there is a giant octopus inside her, dangerous and attractive. It was her first experience of sex. Miss Jewsbury then had sex with her to appease her. The author Jeanette describes sex through hearing, vision and touch, amplifying the local sensory feelings and making the mind and body combine. Women's sexuality is infinitely complex, and the eroticism of their narratives can be expressed on a very small or very large scale (Cixous 885). The fragmentary feeling of the body and the interweaving of the mind embodies the fluidity and imagination of Jeanette's writing, breaking the rigidity of female expression in the works of male writers (885). In Jeanette's second relationship, sex with Katy was more straightforward and natural. The author also writes from the so-called male point of view, but female writing is borderless and can be bisexual or anything else (889). The author Jeanette uses male discourse and logical symbols to reorganize, disrupt the spatial order, subvert the inherent value of sexual description with sensitive senses, and break the long-standing binary opposition between mind and body.

In the Prince's Story, the Prince wrote a book about perfection. The second part of it is written to describe the opposite of development, especially for homosexuals (Hutchison 267). "Part two: the impossibility of perfection. The restless search in this life, the pain, the majority who opt for second best. Their spreading corruption. The importance of being earnest" (Winterson 64). The last phrase, "The Importance of Being Earnest," borrows the name of Oscar Wilde's play, a work that satirizes and attacks hypocrisy. Here the author implies that perfection is impossible, and at the same time conveys the relativistic idea that perfection lies in balance and symmetry (Hutchison 266). To some extent, homosexuality is in the camp that can exist. This ingenious metaphor is a female discourse model initiated by subversion and the use of male order and linear logic in writing oppressed by politics and typical male economy (Cixous 879).

5. Chapter 5 Conclusion

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit demonstrates Jeanette Winterson's conception of childhood on the basis of her own experiences. As seen from the experience of the girl Jeanette, she has chosen to be honest with herself in the face of extreme oppression as she rolls through the ever-changing tide of betrayal, hatred, forgiveness, and advancement. No conflict is implacable, and no forgiveness is permanent. The author is aware of the limitations of what women can do, and she paints a wide variety of female characters and their relationships and complexities, and talks about men's writing. Whether these women were confident, timid, willful, or overbearing, they taught Jeanette how to be the woman she was.

Oranges were a comfort and meanwhile a restraint for Jeanette. Her mother soothed the girl Jeanette with oranges when she was ill, but ignored her request for an orange when she was frightened by the oppression of the church. It was then that she realized that oranges were false comfort, unable to cope with her predicament. The author Jeanette is inseparable from *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. She has shaken off the emotional grip of religion, but the novel still unfolds within the sacred structure. She wants to use the element that most influenced her gender identity to debunk the trap that lies behind it, the male order and the patriarchal culture. With the help of male discourse and logic, Jeanette creates a variety of subversive symbols and languages that destroy gender barriers, social classes, and rules and regulations (Cixous 886). Female subjective identity, female discourse and desire are not codified.

At the end of the novel, the author does not offer a specific solution to deal with the conflict peacefully, but suggests that this is a lifelong struggle for the girl Jeanette, and also for all women. Through the novel, the author intends to convey the importance of women's self-awareness and the author's unafraid attitude to male centrism.

The novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is often considered a Bildungsroman or lesbian writing. First, it does tell the story of Jeanette's growth from a young girl to an adult woman. Moreover, the author Jeanette's sexual orientation, coupled with the description of the protagonist's insistence on homosexual

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love and rebellion against religion and traditional values, makes it easy for readers to categorize the novel as lesbian writing. However, it should be pointed out that *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is an example of "feminine writing", and neither of the above categories is sufficient to define it. It can be interpreted in myriad ways, because imagination is not the prerogative of men, and women are not the ones who only write about their own experiences and lives.

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I'd like to end the thesis with a sentence from the novel: "That no emotion is the final one."

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