Queer and Monstrosity in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*

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Pro Gradu Thesis
Spring 2008

Tampereen yliopisto

Englantilainen filologia

Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos

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Pro gradu -tutkielma, 82 sivua

Kevät 2008

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tarkastelen sitä, kuinka ruumiita ja identiteettejä tuotetaan ja rakennetaan Jeanette Wintersonin *Sexing the Cherry* -romaanissa (1989). Keskityn ruumiisiin ja identiteetteihin erityisesti queerin ja hirviömäisyyden näkökulmasta.

Teoreettinen näkökulmani on feministinen queer-teoria. Apuna analyysissani käytän erityisesti Judith Butlerin teoreettisia käsitteitä, kuten sex/gender-sukupuolijärjestelmä, performatiivisuus ja heteronormatiivisuus. Toisena teoreettisena apuvälineenä käytän hirviömäisyyttä, joka haastaa rajoja esimerkiksi maskuliinisen ja feminiinisen, normaalin ja epänormaalin, luonnollisen ja luonnottoman välillä.

Analyysissani olen kiinnostunut siitä, kuinka hirviömäisyyden avulla voidaan kyseenalaistaa luonnollistettu yhteys feminiinisyyden ja naisruumiin välillä sekä tuottaa parodisia abjekteja ruumiita. Lisäksi käsittelen teoksen tuottamaa käsitystä seksuaalisuudesta ja esitän, että teoksessa haastetaan heteronormatiivisuutta hirviömäisyyden avulla. Myös subjektin alkuperäisyyden ihanne sekä heteronormatiivinen lisääntyminen kyseenalaistuvat, kun tutkin romaanissa esiintyviä ”syntytarinoita” ja lisääntymistä queerin ja hirviömäisyyden näkökulmista käsin.

Tämän jälkeen käsittelen ruumiita ja identiteettejä paikan ja ajan käsitteiden avulla. Tutkin queerin ja hirviömäisyyden käsitteiden avulla kuinka ruumiit ja identiteetit rakentuvat paikassa ja ajassa. Paikan käsitettä avaan tutkimalla representaatioita kaupungeista. Esitän, että identiteetit ja ruumiit rakentuvat vastavuoroisessa suhteessa kaupunkeihin, jolloin paikan käsite voidaan nähdä dynaamisena. Lisäksi teoksen eri narratiivien aikakäsitykset ovat tarkasteluni kohteena, koska romaani purkaa dikotomiaa, jossa julkinen aika ja yksityinen aikakäsitys asetetaan vastakkain. Lisäksi romaanin narratiivien ja niissä esiintyvien ruumiiden ja identiteettien yhdistyminen toisiinsa haastaa heteronormatiivisen aikakäsityksen.

Avainsanat: queer, monstrosity, body, identity, place, temporality

Contents

1. Introduction

In this pro gradu thesis I will study and analyse Jeanette Winterson's novel *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). The aims of this research are to close-read *Sexing the Cherry* and detect how bodies and identities connected to queer and monstrosity are constructed in it. In addition to bodies and identities, I will look at different constructions of cities and temporalities in *Sexing the Cherry* and study whether place and time can be read from a point of view of queer and monstrosity, too.

Jeanette Winterson is an English author, essayist and editor. She was born in Manchester and studied English in Oxford. She published her first book *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) at the age of 23. She has published ten novels altogether, but also an essay collection, short stories, a comic book, and a children's book. Winterson has also dramatised her novels for television and theatre and has made a script for a television film, as well.[1] Her work often deals with the themes and problematics of history, arts, body, and sexual identity.

Sexing the Cherry is a tale of Dogwoman, a woman of huge proportions of body and power of will, and her son Jordan, an explorer, who live in the 17th century in London. As a boy, playing with a boat on the banks of Thames, Jordan meets John Tradescant, an adventurer and the gardener for the King. Jordan becomes his apprentice and he sails round the world with Tradescant, exploring foreign lands and bringing exotic fruit and plants back to Britain. During his journeys to faraway places Jordan discovers cities of wonder: one that is not bound by gravity, one of words and one that has been destroyed by love, for example. In the City of words, Jordan meets the Twelve Dancing Princesses and eventually falls in love with the youngest,

[1] www.jeanettewinterson.com/about_jeanette.htm

Fortunata. In London, Dogwoman lives her life breeding dogs for a living (hence the name Dogwoman), struggles against the political and religious rise of the Puritans, survives the Plague, and eventually sets the city on fire. At the end of the novel Dogwoman and Jordan leave burning London together.

Sexing the Cherry is a mixture of literary genres: a postmodern novel, a historical novel, and a fantasy. It has a complex and unlinear narrative structure in which different first-person narratives take turns. Most of the narratives are, in fact, told by the two protagonists, Dogwoman and Jordan, but there are also two other significant narrators, namely, Nicolas Jordan, a young naval cadet, and an environmental activist, who from now on I will refer to as the Activist. The narratives of these two are situated at the end of the novel and are mainly set in the contemporary London. In his narrative, Nicolas tells about his childhood and his wishes to become a sailor and also his work as a naval cadet for the British Navy. The Activist' tells in her narrative about her childhood, work, and her political activism on environmental issues. At the end of the novel Nicolas and the Activist meet each other.

All the novel's first-person narratives are marked by a drawing: Dogwoman is marked by a banana, Jordan by a pineapple, and all the Princesses with the same princess-like picture. Like Jordan, Nicolas is marked by a pineapple, too, but it is a pineapple split in half. Similarly, the Activist's mark is a banana, like in Dogwoman's case, but split in half. It is significant that the same fruit is used between different narratives. It refers to the narrative fusion that occurs within and between the different narratives and narrators in the novel. This narrative fusion and the similarities are elaborated more in the fourth chapter in the discussion on queer temporalities.

Moreover, the novel is divided into four sections: the first one goes unnamed and it consists of the Jordan and the Dogwoman alternate narratives. In the Dogwoman

narratives, Dogwoman describes her everyday life and thoughts. She also reminisces the childhood of Jordan and how his fascination on travelling and exploring began. In the Jordan narratives, Jordan contemplates his travels in the imaginary cities, such as the City of words and the City that moves its place. The second section is called “The Stories of the Twelve Dancing Princesses” and it consists of the Jordan narrative in which the first-person narratives of eleven sisters are embedded. In this section Jordan encounters these princess-sisters in the City of words and, in their respective narratives, they tell him the stories of their life. These little stories reflect their experiences in their marriages all of which have been arranged by their father. The youngest sister of the princesses, Fortunata, is, however, missing because she has escaped the arranged marriage.

The third section is named “1649”, after the year of trial and execution of King Charles I. This section is the longest one and, again, the narratives of Jordan and Dogwoman alternate. In this section Dogwoman is busy fighting against the Puritans and supporting King Charles I. Jordan, on the other hand, is still travelling and eventually finds Fortunata and falls in love with her. He also continues his contemplating on time and memory. The fourth section is titled “Some Years Later”. In this section the narratives of Nicolas and the Activist occur side by side with those of Dogwoman and Jordan. These contemporary counterpart narratives fuse with those of Dogwoman’s and Jordan’s. In the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman is pleased because she meets Jordan again after his journeys and because the Puritan rule is over. However, the Plague torments London and Dogwoman has to struggle to keep Jordan alive after he becomes ill. Finally, Dogwoman sets the Plague-ridden city on fire. There is only one piece of the Jordan narrative in the fourth section which is the last

one in the novel. There Jordan leaves the burning London but this time his mother is with him.

I have organised my discussion in such a way that in the second chapter of this thesis I will introduce and explain the theoretical concepts on queer and monstrosity that I use in my analysis. Judith Butler's theoretical formulations on the sex/gender system, heteronormativity and performative gender identities are the central theoretical tools for my queer readings of the novel. Monstrosity as liminality, hybridity, and queer, illustrated, for example, by the theories of Rosi Braidotti, Margrit Shildrick, and Judith Halberstam, is the other important theoretical concept of this thesis. In the third chapter I will study how monstrosity is constructed in the novel through the representations of Dogwoman, Jordan, and the Puritans and examine whether these constructions of bodies and identities could be read queerly. First, I will examine how Dogwoman's body is constructed as monstrous and how this relates to gender identity and abjection. Second, I will examine how sexuality is made monstrous in the novel through the representations of Dogwoman and the Puritans. Third, I will study how origin stories and heterosexual reproduction can be read from a queer and monstrous perspective. The construction of cities and temporalities as potentially queer and monstrous and how they relate to bodies and identities will be the topic of the fourth chapter. In this chapter I will combine the theoretical concepts of queer and monstrosity with the theoretical ideas on place and time. In the last chapter I will conclude my research results and consider further departures for analysis.

I have chosen this particular novel by Jeanette Winterson because of its ambiguous and intriguing views on gender, sexualities and bodies. In fact, the problematics of gender, sexualities, and bodies are recurrent and strong themes in Winterson's novels

in general. Nevertheless, especially *Sexing the Cherry* interests me, for it entails noteworthy constructs of body and identity, especially in the form of Dogwoman. Her monstrous and overwhelming presence throughout the novel literally demands attention. In addition, the significance of place and time cannot be underestimated in the case of Winterson and her novels. In *Sexing the Cherry*, too, they are important themes to consider. As a matter of fact, the fantastical and monstrous cities depicted in the novel and the complex narrative structure that calls attention to ambiguous and multiple temporalities encourage me to include them in my analysis. These reasons contribute to my decision to study particularly bodies and identities as well as places and temporalities in *Sexing the Cherry*.

In addition, *Sexing the Cherry* has been a source of scholarly analyses for many years, so there is an existing dialogue that I can participate in with my own views. In *Sexing the Cherry*, scholars have often been interested in the postmodern aspects of its narrative structure[2] (Makinen, 2005, 82–109) or its employment of history.[3] The monstrous representation of Dogwoman has also intrigued many.[4] However, only few of these scholars discuss the novel from the point of view of other than feminist and lesbian studies (*ibid.*).[5] Therefore, in this thesis my plan is to employ especially queer studies to *Sexing the Cherry* and allow my views negotiate with these lesbian/feminist interpretations and also those that are informed by queer theory. In this thesis I will

[2] See, for example, Marilyn R. Farwell's *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives* (1996), Lisa Moore's "Teledildonics: Virtual Lesbians in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson" in *Sexy Bodies. The Strange Carnalities of Feminism* (1995) and Laura Doan's "Jeanette Winterson's Sexing the Postmodern" in *The Lesbian Postmodern* (1994).
[3] See, for example, Jeffrey Roessner's "Writing a History of Difference: Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Angela Carter's *Wise Children*" in *College Literature* (2002) or Angela Maries Smith's "Fiery Constellations: Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* and Benjamin's Materialist Histography" in *College Literature* (2005).
[4] See, for example, Paulina Palmer's *Contemporary Lesbian Writing: Dreams, Desire, Difference* (1993), Lynne Pearce's in *Reading Dialogics* (1994), and Farwell (1996).
[5] For scholars who use queer theory in their study of *Sexing the Cherry*, see Elizabeth Langland's "Sexing the Text: Narrative Drag as Feminist Poetics and Politics in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*" in *Narrative* (1997), Doan (1994), and Pearce (1994).

refer to several researches who have studied *Sexing the Cherry* such as Doan, Moore, Smith, Pearce, Stowers, and Roessner.

The reason I have chosen queer theoretical approach for my analysis in particular is that it enables parodic, contradictory, and ambiguous readings of literature. Indeed, it offers interesting departures for understanding and "wondering" about the constructions of sex, gender, sexuality, and the body in addition to place and time, too. Furthermore, I think it is important to posit myself within the strange world of queer. I think it is politically crucial to question and criticise the naturalised heteronormative culture and emphasise this in an academic environment, as well. I think it is definitely not self-evident that queer theory is explored and embraced outside Women's Studies' departments, let alone English departments. Therefore I think it is meaningful to make my pro gradu thesis on a cross-disciplinary basis and include the theoretical tools and thoughts provided by queer theory.

Rather than defining what queer theory is, I intend to explain what queer theory does. Many critical treatments of queer often connect it with the categories of ”lesbian” and ”gay” and more generally to variations of sexualities and genders. Even though institutionally speaking queer has most considerably been associated with lesbian and gay subjects, its framework also entails such topics as transgenderism, cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity, and gender-corrective surgery. (Jagose, 1996, 2–3) Indeed, "queer" is used to describe identities and practices that can highlight the instability in the supposedly stable and causal relationship between anatomical sex, gender, and sexuality. The identities and practices have the potential of unveiling this relationship as an ideological fiction of normalised heterosexuality. (Corber and Valocchi, 2003, 1)

Queer theory has not been produced by only lesbian and gay politics and theory, but it has been greatly influenced by poststructuralism, too.[6] This shift in influence can be witnessed in feminism and postcolonial theory, as well, as some feminists problematise the unified and universal identity of "woman" and postcolonialist critics denaturalise "race". Jagose sees these conceptual shifts as the historical context for any queer analysis. (Jagose, 1996, 77) According to William B. Turner, the investigation of foundational, apparently unquestionable, concepts is central to queer theory (Turner, 2000, 3). These seemingly indisputable concepts are often made intelligible by binary oppositions. Queer theorists deconstruct these binaries, such as mind/body, man/woman, and heterosexual/homosexual, in order to destabilise them, and make them seem queer. However, instead of reversing, undermining or destroying the relationship of these binary categories altogether, queer deconstruction could "highlight the inherent instability of the terms, as well as enabling an analysis of the culturally and historically specific ways in which the terms and the relation between them have developed, and the effects they have produced". (Sullivan, 2003, 51)

When studying of the historical and cultural meanings attached to binary categories and identities, queer theorists refuse a naturalised ontology in which the binaries simply reflect existing conditions in the world. On the contrary, they emphasise that persons do not fit into these categories in a consistent way. (Turner, 2000, 34) For instance, feminist and queer scholar Judith Butler has studied gender identity. She understands gender as "an ongoing discursive practice … open to intervention and resignification" (Butler, 1990, 33). She claims that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender" because "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (*ibid.*, 33). Indeed,

[6] Especially the work Michel Foucault has inspired many queer theorists. See, for example, *History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (1990) and *Power/Knowledge* (1980).

Anna-Marie Jagose sees the impact of the poststructuralist theorisation of identity as temporary and contingent, joined with an increasing awareness of the constraints of identity categories as regards political representation, preparing the way for queer to develop as a new form of personal identification and political organisation (Jagose, 1996, 77–78). Indeed, Turner points out that "queer theory is political in its insistence that the unqueer reading of identity . . . serves to distribute power among persons" (Turner, 2000, 32).

Because of the problematics of identity, that queer itself is committed to, it is necessary that queer has no logical and coherent set of characteristics. According to Jagose, this "fundamental indeterminacy" makes queer an intractable field of study. (Jagose, 1996, 96) Nikki Sullivan summarises that queer theory is often constructed "as a sort of vague and indefinable set of practices and (political) positions that has the potential to challenge normative knowledges and identities" (Sullivan, 2003, 43–44). Jagose adds that queer's ambiguity is often considered to be the source for its mobilisation and it is seen as calling into question the conventional comprehensions of sexual identity (Jagose, 1996, 96–97).

In addition to questioning the stability of sexual and gender identities, queer theorists consider the intersections of sexuality and gender in relation to other constructed identity categories, like "race" and class. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick marks that queer reaches out to dimensions that cannot be incorporated under gender and sexuality. In her opinion, "race", ethnicity, postcolonial nationality, gender, sexuality, and other identity-constituting and identity-facturing discourses are crisscrossing with each other. Many "are using the leverage of 'queer' to do a new kind of justice to the fractal intricacies of language, skin, migration, state". (Sedgwick, 1993, 13)

Teresa de Lauretis claims that queer is “another discursive horizon, another way of thinking the sexual” (de Lauretis, 1991, *iv*), but some contest its effectiveness. Queer theory has been criticised for encouraging apolitical quietism when deconstructing identity categories (Jagose, 1996, 103). This criticism often has connections to the more general questioning of poststructural theory. Deconstructing the stable identity categories, which have, of course, been an important part of the lesbian and gay movements, raises concerns of erasing the “real life” identities and identifications. Jagose summarises that to some critics it seems that queer might devalue analyses elaborated by lesbian and gay critics on homophobia and heterocentrism (*ibid.*, 112).

Queer theorists, however, argue against this. Butler, for instance, writes: “The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated” (Butler, 1990, 189). Michael Warner assures that queer is there to exist together with older modes of lesbian and gay identity, “opening up new possibilities and problems whose relation to more familiar problems is not always clear” (Warner, 1993, xxviii). Queer, in my opinion, could broaden the discussion of identity politics and make it less obvious and unproblematic. Queer theory is a field which does not assume itself as a “better” version of gay and lesbian, or a conspiracy against the accomplishments they have influenced. In Jagose’s view, queer’s main achievement is to pay attention to the assumptions and naturalisations inherent in any identity category, and also in queer. (Jagose, 1996, 126)

Butler, for example, notes that there is no need to predict precisely how queer will keep challenging normative structures and discourses. Quite the contrary, she proposes that the way in which queer understands that the consequences of its

interventions are not singular and consequently unexpected in advance, makes queer so effectual. (Butler, 1993, 226–230) Because of the risk of identity classifications naturalising themselves as self-evident and descriptive categories, just like the earlier lesbian and gay movements did, Butler argues that, to avoid reproducing normative identity categories, queer must be thought as a category in incessant formation. She proposes:

> If the term "queer" is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes, and perhaps also yielded in favor of terms that do that political work more effectively. (*ibid.*, 228)

Jagose points out that queer has developed out of theorising of often unexamined limitations in traditional identity politics. Therefore, queer has been developed for the most part "outside the registers of recognition, truthfulness and self-identity". (Jagose, 1996, 130) In Butler's opinion, this is the democratising prospect of queer because she thinks that identity terms and "outness" must be critically examined, for there are exclusionary operations in their own production, even though they may be useful in certain contexts. Butler asks:

> For whom is "outness" a historically available and affordable option?. . . Who is represented by *which* use of the term, and who is excluded? For whom does the term present an impossible conflict between racial, ethnic, or religious affiliation and sexual politics? (1993, 227, author's italics)

Jagose writes that "[a]cknowledging the inevitable violence of identity politics and having no stake in its own hegemony, queer is less an identity than a *critique* of identity" (Jagose, 1996, 131, author's emphasis). Jagose, however emphasises that queer cannot be outside the realm of problems stimulated by identity politics. Therefore, the critique that queer attracts, for example, on account of its ideas on

identity, should be allowed to shape queer's future directions, Jagose writes. (*ibid*.) In her view, queer is investigating both the preconditions of identity and its effects, but is not outside "the magnetic field of identity" (*ibid.*, 130–131). If anything, in Jagose's opinion, lesbian and gay investing in authenticity and political efficacy of identity categories and the queer's tendency to problematise those very categories enthuse each other and open up "the ambivalent reassurance of an unimaginable future" (*ibid.*, 131).

2. Theoretical Tools for Queer and Monstrosity

In this chapter I will define the theoretical concepts concerning body and identity which I intend to use in this thesis. In the first subchapter I will explain Judith Butler's radical formulation of the sex/gender system and her ideas of performative bodies and gender identities. Then I will discuss how Butler's ideas can be employed to discuss queer bodies and identities in *Sexing the Cherry*. In the second subchapter I will look at the theories on monstrosity and monstrous bodies by Rosi Braidotti, Margrit Shildrick, Judith Halberstam, and others. Then I will explain how their ideas relate to my discussion of the novel.

2.1 Queer Bodies and Identities

Poststructuralist and postmodern theorists have often questioned the Cartesian model of subjectivity. This Cartesian model establishes the rational individual as the centre of knowing and codes the transcendent, self-defining and self-sufficient subject as male. Knowledge itself is understood as universal and available to rational investigation. This conveys the idea of mind as disembodied, neutral universal. (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, 10) Many theorists have noted that the erasure of the body in the Cartesian mind-body split has been a "paradigmatic part of the oppression not only of women, but of a range of other others" (Shildrick, 2002, 1). This retreat from the body and embodiment has, moreover, denied those others access to subjectivity (*ibid.*). Queer theorists are a part of this tradition that questions the separation of mind and body as the basis of a knowing subject. In fact, these binary constructions are something that queer theories try to disrupt. For example, subverting the normative categories of woman and man, heterosexual and homosexual, self and

other are on the queer theorists' agenda. I will now further illustrate queer theory's interest in dislocating binary constructions by introducing the key concepts of Judith Butler. Her work on the body and the performative gender identities in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993) are a seminal part of queer theory's canon and should prove to be useful for my analysis.

The idea of biological sex and culturally constructed gender has been domesticated to the vocabulary of contemporary scientific discourses by feminist theory. This of course, has had the importance of highlighting that gender is not a stable category like sex is thought to be, which has, furthermore, enabled emancipatory and political movements and changes in society and culture. In the 1970's, Gayle Rubin, a feminist cultural anthropologist, first introduced the concept of sex/gender system, which problematised the naturalised relationship between the two concepts. In her essay, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" (1975), Rubin analyses the anthropological theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss and psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and argues that sex/gender system is "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (Rubin, 1975, 159). To summarise, biological "sex" is turned into human activity, or "gender", and this is deemed as natural through compulsory heterosexuality.

Butler, too, draws attention to the artificiality of the pair of concepts. Sex has been commonly understood as something unproblematic and stable and manifested in the two categories and bodies of "woman" and "man", whereas gender has been considered to be a cultural construction. Then, it could be argued that there is no apparent reason why genders should remain in the – still ever so naturalised – biologically determined categories of "woman" and "man" (Butler, 1990, 9–10). In

Butler's so called radical formulation of the sex/gender distinction she states that if, in fact, sex and gender are considered separate, it should not follow that to be a given sex, for example "woman", is to become a given gender. In more simple terms, the gender "woman" does not necessarily have to be a cultural construction of the female body, and the gender "man" does not have to imply a male body. Sexed bodies can be an occasion for various genders and gender itself does not have to be restricted to the two usual sexes. (*ibid.*, 10)

Indeed, Butler aptly argues that the presumed relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise constricted by it is implicitly reproducing a highly problematic belief. Furthermore, Butler asks, "what is 'sex' anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal . . . ?" and goes on further asking, "Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests?" (*ibid.*) For example, medicine, jurisprudence and religion have definitely helped to construct meanings to different bodies. In Butler's opinion, it follows that if the fixed character of sex is questioned, the construct named sex is, in the end, just as culturally produced as gender. Butler points out that perhaps "sex" has always and already been gender, and that "the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (*ibid.*, 10–11).

According to Butler, "sex" not only functions as a norm, but is also a part of a regulatory practice that actually produces the bodies it masters. This regulatory force is, therefore, productive power which demarcates, circulates and differentiates the bodies it controls. (Butler, 1993, 1) Butler continues that "sex" is, indeed, an ideal construct, not a simple fact or condition of a body. She writes:

> "Sex" is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the 'one' becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility. (*ibid.*, 2)

In other words, “sex” is a normative system through which bodies become intelligible to begin with; we need to be “sexed” to be “human”. Furthermore, it is a process through which regulatory norms materialise “sex” to bodies through a forcible reiteration of those norms. Butler incessantly emphasises the necessity to repetition, because it signals that the materialisation of the bodily norms is never quite complete. In other words, the need for constant repetitive acts to keep “sex” intact reveals the inconsistencies and constructedness of the norms. (*ibid.*)

Butler claims that bodies can never fully comply with the norms by which their materialisation is compelled (*ibid.*, 1–2). She writes that the regulatory norms of “sex” work in a performative fashion in order to constitute the materiality of bodies, and specifically to materialise the body to a “sex”, and “to materialise sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative” (*ibid.*, 2). The heterosexual imperative, or heteronormativity, as it is often called, is a process by which subjects are discursively formed and become understandable, intelligible and “make sense”. The exclusionary heterosexual matrix requires a simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, namely those who are not yet “subjects” but who, nevertheless, form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject. (*ibid.*, 3)

At this point Butler uses Julia Kristeva’s concept of the abject. Kristeva defines the abject as the in-between, the ambiguous and the composite, that which troubles identity, system and order, and disrespects boundaries and positions of the subject and the other (Kristeva, 1982, 4). In other words, the abject bodies are necessary in producing the proper subjects: the forming of a subject requires identification with the normative ideal of “sex”, which occurs through a repudiation which produces a domain of abjection (Butler, 1993, 3). Indeed, the subject cannot escape the outside, the abject within. In Butler’s view it is important to ask how “the bodies which fail to

materialise provide the necessary ‘outside’, if not the necessary support, for the bodies which, in materializing the norm, qualify as bodies that matter.” (*ibid.*, 16)

My aim is to incorporate Butler’s ideas of bodies produced by regulatory and discursive ideals to my analysis on Winterson’s novel. I will concentrate on the construction of gendered and sexualised bodies. I will attempt to detect the ambiguous abject bodies, or monstrous bodies, in the novels and study how they reconstruct and, perhaps, queer the binary categories of, for example, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, mind/body, and human/monster. These binary challenging bodies are, moreover, connected with the construction of identities, so I will next explain Butler’s ideas on performative gender identities.

Performativity is a concept of great importance to the exploring of the construction of bodies and identities in queer theory. In Butler’s opinion gender is made by performative gestures, by emulating and repeating the cultural codes that presume gender. Butler emphasises that people are not gendered and sexed because they are born to a certain kind of body. They are sexed because there are repeated cultural rules in which, for instance, a child born to a certain body is incorporated. In Butler’s theory cause and effect swap places because the shape of the body is not the cause of sex. In fact, the idea of gender exists because the repeated actions, gestures and roles do. (1990, 171-177) In other words, fixed labels to certain bodies are artefacts repeatedly performed by each individual which Butler perceives as a prior to the notions of sex and gender.

In addition to gestures and acts, also speech, clothing and virtually all gendered behaviour and expressions can be considered performative. It follows then that there are numerous places, spaces, and arenas in which gender trouble can be detected. Butler uses drag as an example of performativity because in drag the impression of a

primary or constitutive gender identity is parodied. In drag one plays with different corporeal or bodily levels; the anatomy of the performer in relation to the gender of the performer in relation to the gender performed. (*ibid.*)

The example of drag makes visible the different aspects of the gendered experience, which are often naturalised as one coherent heterosexual entity. Butler writes: "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency*" (*ibid.*, 175, author's italics). That is to say, while imitating gender, drag at the same time exposes the constructedness of the gender itself as well as the fact that gender is not self-evident and that it can be performed "differently". Butler claims: "Just as bodily surfaces are enacted as the natural, so the surfaces can become the site of dissonant and denaturalised performance that reveals the performative status of the natural itself" (*ibid.*, 186). In other words, the apparent "core" of the gender identity is revealed as an effect of repeated acts.

These parodies can also be understood as working in benefit for the hegemonic culture and reproduce stereotypes. Despite this they still question the notion of natural and unchangeable gender. The so called original or normalised genders are, in fact, "copies gone wrong" because Butler argues that we can never reach and realise the illusion of a foundational and inner gendered self. The gendered self is still constantly subordinate to the repetitive conventions that, furthermore, refer to other repetitions. Butler thinks that drag and other kinds of performative acts help in shaking up the mechanisms of the artificial gender system. (*ibid.*, 171–177)

It should also be noted that Butler's theory is rather pessimistic. The performative acts are not voluntary and playing with gender is not some kind of lifestyle shopping. Moreover, performativity does not imply here a singular or deliberate "act" but must be understood in the Butlerian sense as the repetitive practice by which discourse

produces the effects it names, regulates and constrains, for example the ”sexed” bodies (Butler, 1993, 2). One of the most repeated aspects in Butler’s theory is the compulsiveness of performing gender but despite this emphasis, Butler’s theory on performativity has often been understood too simplistically. Anne-Marie Jagose points out the peculiar misunderstandings of performativity as performance (Jagose, 1996, 86). According to Jagose, drag as a strategic parody has been understood as an exemplary of performativity even though it is rather an example of it.

Butler makes clear that performativity is “neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation” (Butler, 1993, 95). Butler emphasises the fact that gender is not like clothing that one puts on and off at will and repeats her argument:

> Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. . . . This iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (*ibid.*)

This quotation conveys rather forcefully the idea that performative acts are ritualised and constrained, and continuous repetitions. The threat of exclusion and violence of not complying with these reiterated norms further enforces the ritualized production of performativity. Despite the regulation, force, repetition, and threat of punishment imbedded in the notion of performative production, Butler, nevertheless, denounces determinism. She emphasises that the outcomes of these ritualised and constrained repetitions are not completely inevitable or pre-ordained. In other words, there is a potential for reiteration “gone wrong”, which is the spot for examining queer bodies and identities.

At this point Butler also stresses her idea of subjectivity that follows from her theory of performativity: “this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition

is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (*ibid.*). As Jagose summarises, performativity is the precondition of the subject (Jagose, 1996, 86). Indeed, Butler concludes that if gender attributes and acts are performative then there cannot be any pre-existing identity by which an act or an attribute can be measured; the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction. Gender identities' reality is created through sustained social performances, which means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true masculinity or femininity are also constructed as part of the concealment of gender's performative character. What remain hidden are the performative possibilities for increasing gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality. (Butler, 1990, 180) Therefore, there is always a potential to repeat the social performances of masculinity and femininity differently from the norm. In fact, Butler writes:

> Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically *incredible*. (*ibid.*, author's italics)

This idea of thinking and making genders radically incredible resonates Butler's understanding of performativity as producing intelligible bodies and gendered identities for subjects. It seems that, in Butler's vision, it is possible to produce incredible, or, in fact, unintelligible, genders and bodies that can problematise the heteronormativity of sex/gender system. This potential should be very useful for my analysis because in *Sexing the Cherry* are pushing the boundaries of the naturalised bodies and gender identities with force and joy.

In addition to examining bodies and gender identities in *Sexing the Cherry*, in the fourth chapter I will expand my queer readings to place and temporalities, as well. In the case of studying place, I will examine the cities that Jordan visits in his fantastic

journeys from a queer point of view, namely the City that moves its place and the City of Words. The temporalities, on the other hand, can be examined from the postmodern perspective by analysing it with Ursula K. Heise's views on postmodern temporal narratives. Moreover, I will also employ Halberstam's theoretical concept of queer time in my analysis. Halberstam uses this concept for describing the models of temporalities within postmodernism outside "the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance" (Halberstam, 2005, 6). My analysis of the Activist narrative in particular is informed by Halberstam's ideas on temporalities.

2.2 Monstrosity and Monstrous Bodies

Monsters have intrigued scholars for centuries. Rosi Braidotti, a feminist postmodernist theorist, has traced historical discourses on monsters, or the science of teratology in her article "Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Differences" (1996). She notes that a monstrous body is a textual body (Braidotti, 1996, 136) and, indeed, historically, monstrosity has been constructed by several interconnected discourses. In an attempt to define the concept of monster she has studied, for example, the Greek etymology of the term. Braidotti notes that it can mean both a prodigy and a demon. Indeed, monster is something that stirs up "both horror, and fascination, aberration and adoration. It is simultaneously holy and hellish, sacred and profane". (*ibid.)* Therefore, there lies an inherent contradiction in the monster and its body. Consequently, Braidotti claims that monsters function as signpost for the production of differences. She argues:

> The peculiarity of the . . . monster is that s/he is both Same and Other. The monster is neither a total stranger nor completely familiar; s/he exists in an in-

> between zone. I would express this as a paradox: the monstrous other is both liminal and structurally central to our perception of normal human subjectivity. (*ibid.*, 141)

Indeed, Braidotti distinguishes two historical teratological discourses in particular: those that construct gender and race as the marks of monstrous difference (*ibid.*). First I will shortly look at the discourse that links monsters to the female body.

To begin with, Braidotti writes that, historically, monstrous bodies have often been utilised in biomedical experimentations and practices. The female body has been a concern in these scientific discourses, especially in the ones to do with biological reproduction and birth. (*ibid.*, 139) In fact, the monstrous births have been an important epistemological question, be it the effect of sexual excess in the woman, intercourse during religious holidays or menstruation, astrological influence of stars and planets, "divine or diabolic intervention" or, most commonly, the uncontrollable imaginary powers of the mother (*ibid.*, 139–140, 145–149). Braidotti argues that the pathologising, controlling and disciplining the woman's body is one result of this teratological discourse (*ibid.*, 149).

The other historical discourse on monsters that Braidotti brings up is the racialisation of the monstrous body, which she traces back from antiquity's anthropological geography of monstrous territories and races, through narratives of colonial teratology, all the way to contemporary science fiction and its extraterrestrials and outer space colonisation (*ibid.*, 142–145). Braidotti notes how certain reoccurring themes and arguments are recycled in discourses of racialisation of the monstrous body, despite the specificity and singularity of historical time or racialised groups (*ibid.*, 145). She concludes:

> The monstrous body, more than an object, is a shifter, a vehicle that constructs a web of interconnected and yet potentially contradictory discourses about his

> or her embodied self. Gender and race are primary operators in this process. (*ibid.*, 150)

In other words, the epistemological curiosity represented by teratological discourses constructs monsters and monstrous bodies and yet monsters are not merely an object of study and the effect of discursive practices. They are also "constitutive" of those very practices (*ibid.*). Therefore, Braidotti suggests that monster is a process rather than a stable object of study.

In addition to Braidotti, there are, naturally, other influential theoretical explorations on monsters that are relevant for the theoretical background for my thesis. Donna Haraway, an American feminist philosopher and biologist, has touched upon the issue of monsters in her book *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991). According to Haraway, the boundaries of community in Western imaginations have always been discerned by monsters:

> The Centaurs and Amazons of ancient Greece established the limits of the centred polis of the Greek male human by their disruption of marriage and boundary pollutions of the warrior with animality and woman. Unseparated twins and hermaphrodites were the confused human material in early modern France who grounded discourse on the natural and supernatural, medical and legal, portents and diseases - all crucial to establishing modern identity. The evolutionary and behavioural sciences of monkeys and apes have marked the multiple boundaries of late twentieth-century industrial identities. Cyborg monsters in feminist science fictions define quite different political possibilities and limits from those proposed by the mundane fiction of Man and Woman. (Haraway, 1991, 226)

In other words, through Western history and imagination the various monstrous bodies have defined the self in relation to the other. Indeed, Haraway understands monsters as historical boundary creatures, as the reappearing sign that constructs, represents and signifies differences and limits (*ibid.*, 2). Although my discussion on *Sexing the Cherry* does not involve the problematics of technology and machines[7], in

[7] More information on Haraway's ideas on technology, cybernetics and cyborgs, see "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991).

my view, the general idea of the cyborg monster can be used to analyse “organic” monsters, too. That is to say, the emphasis on liminality that Haraway is arguing for is, nevertheless, valid for discussion on monstrosity.

Being informed by the historically influential monster theories of Braidotti and Haraway, my theoretical framework for analysing monstrosity and monstrous bodies in *Sexing the Cherry* is mainly founded on the work of two scholars, namely Margrit Shildrick and Judith Halberstam. Shildrick studies historical monsters and monstrosities in her book *Embodying the Monster* (2002). What makes monsters monstrous is most often “the form of their embodiment” (Shildrick, 2002, 9) that is marked as deviant and unnatural. Shildrick writes that since Aristotle’s natural scientific arguments about the natural human body there have been persistent attempts to categorise and explicate monstrosity in terms of “the pathology of abnormal corporeality” (*ibid.*, 3–4). According to her definition, monstrous bodies are those bodies that “in their gross failure to approximate to corporeal norms are radically excluded” (*ibid.*, 2) Yet, her use of the word “monster” or “monstrosity” is not intended to repeat the negative connotation of that ascription but to question the binary that opposes the monstrous to the normal. Shildrick argues:

> Monsters, then, are deeply disturbing; neither good or evil, inside or outside, not self or other. On the contrary, they are always liminal, refusing to stay in place, transgressive and transformative. They disrupt both internal and external order, and overturn the distinctions that set out the limits of the human subject. (*ibid.*, 4)

In other words, Shildrick emphasises that monstrous bodies problematise the differences and the boundaries between self and other. That is to say, similarly to Braidotti and Haraway, Shildrick asserts the liminality of the monster. She claims that even though the persistent desire to categorise and explain monstrosity through the pathology of deviant corporeality, there is a more disruptive intuition that the

monstrous cannot be confined in the place of the other (*ibid.*, 3–4). To Shildrick the monstrous is a necessary signifier of the normal self that is discursively constructed against what it is not; and just as necessarily the monstrous remains unstable. The necessity that the subject must be defined against another displaces the apparent security of the subject. (Shildrick, 2000, 307–308) In fact, monsters may not be outside at all:

> Although [monsters] are always there in our conscious appraisal of the external world, they are also the other within. In seeking confirmation of our own secure subjecthood in what we are not, what we see mirrored in the monster are the leaks and flows, the vulnerabilities in our own embodied being. (Shildrick, 2002, 4)

Like Butler, Shildrick includes Julia Kristeva's theoretical concept of the abject in her discussion of the monster. Shildrick concludes that human monsters, too, both function as the binary opposite that confirms the normality and centrality of the accultured self, and simultaneously threaten to break up that same binary by being too human. She emphasises that the abjected is never definitely externalised. Therefore monsters' failure to wholly occupy the place of the other gives away the vulnerability of "the distinctions by which the human subject is fixed and maintained as fully present to itself and autonomous" (*ibid.*, 55–56).

In her book, *Skin Shows* (1995), Judith Halberstam studies various literary and cinematic monsters and develops a theoretical formulation in which Gothic fictions generate monstrosity. According to Halberstam, Gothic novels and horror films are technologies that produce the monster as a remarkably mobile, permeable, and infinitely interpretable body. Halberstam sees the monstrous body as a meaning machine that can condense as many fear-producing traits as possible into one body. Therefore, monsters can represent gender, "race", nationality, class, and sexuality in one body. (Halberstam, 1995, 21–22) Halberstam suggests that usually within the

technologies of monstrosity the monster works as a kind of trash heap for the discarded scraps of abject humanity. Indeed, monster-making is a suspect activity because it relies upon and shores up conventional humanist binaries. (*ibid.*, 143) Halberstam understands monstrosity in terms of narrative technologies that produce a perfect figure for negative identity (*ibid.*, 21–22).

However, the monster, in itself otherworldly, supernatural form, wears the mark of its own construction (*ibid.*, 106). Halberstam describes the Gothic as a discursive strategy which produces monsters as a kind of temporary but influential response to social, political and sexual problems. At the same time as the Gothic style creates the monster, it draws attention to the plasticity or constructed notion of that monster. (*ibid.*, 95) According to Halberstam, the technology of monstrosity is written upon the body and the artificiality of the monster denaturalises the humanness of its enemies (*ibid.*, 106). That is to say, monsters can make strange, or queer, the categories of beauty, humanity and identity (*ibid.*, 6). Halberstam suggests that "monstrosity is almost a queer category that defines the subject as at least partially monstrous" (*ibid.*, 27). Despite her hesitance, to Halberstam, the monster always represents "the disruption of categories", "the destruction of boundaries", and "presence of impurities" (*ibid.*). All in all, Halberstam reinforces the liminal and the transgressive aspects of monstrosity just like Braidotti, Haraway, and Shildrick do.

These theories of monstrosity in mind, my intention is to valorise how monstrosity and especially monstrous bodies are constructed in *Sexing the Cherry*. This I intend to do particularly by examining Dogwoman's monstrosity. It is the size, ugliness, and excessiveness of her body and the ambiguously gendered identity and behaviour that reach monstrous proportions and are the main object of my study. Furthermore, Shildrick's theory of the monsters as sites for questioning the boundaries between

bodies and identities and subverting the "normal" is one theoretical departure that should prove to be apt for studying the novel. Moreover, although my focus on monstrosity is not embedded in Gothic style or novel as it is the case in Halberstam's argument, I will, nevertheless, state that the idea of technology of monstrosity is suitable to illustrate the complex construction of *Sexing the Cherry*'s monstrosities and opens potential routes for queer readings. In addition to Shildrick and Halberstam, I will also cite other scholars, such as Braidotti, Haraway, Jeffrey Cohen, and Mary Russo on their ideas on monsters and monstrosity.

In addition to bodies and identities, I am also interested in how place can be constructed as monstrous. In the 4th chapter I will examine especially London and Dogwoman and the interconnectedness of the monstrosity they produce. My theoretical background is based on Doreen Massey's theory of spatiality in which she argues that place is constructed through social relations and, that place, vice versa, contributes to the construction of social relations and identities of place (Massey, 1994, 2).

All in all, my main theoretical concepts I use throughout my thesis, side by side, are queer and monstrous. Even though their meanings and operations often overlap, being both employed as a postmodern term of liminality and as a tool to make visible the naturalised binary constructions, they are not synonyms. In this thesis, I will use queer as a more general term, as a point of view, not least because the theoretical paradigm I operate in is, indeed, queer theory. Monstrosity in this thesis is, perhaps, an instance of a monstrous offspring of postmodern theory, in which the meanings of "deviant" bodies and identities are renegotiated and reproduced.

3. Monster-making – Bodies, Identities and Queer

In this chapter, I will analyse how monstrosity and monstrous bodies are constructed in *Sexing the Cherry*. I will study several representations of bodies, gender and sexual identity, as well as origin stories and see how they construct monstrosity. Then I will argue that some of these constructs can potentially queer bodies and identities. In the first subchapter, I will argue that Dogwoman's body can be understood as monstrous and as challenging gender binaries. In the second subchapter, I will study examples on how sexuality and sex acts are constructed as monstrous in the novel and suggest that they may queer sexual identities and binary structures. In the third subchapter, I will look at how origin stories can be read from a queer point of view and how heterosexual reproduction system is constructed as monstrous in *Sexing the Cherry*. My main focus in this chapter is on the representation of Dogwoman, the protagonist of *Sexing the Cherry,* as she is abundantly connected to monstrosity because of her body, actions, and gender identity. I will also refer to the representations of other central characters, such as Jordan and the Puritans.

3.1 Monstrous Gender Identity and the Abject Body

Margaret Shildrick defines monstrous those bodies that "in their gross failure to approximate to corporeal norms" become monstrous (Shildrick, 2002, 2). Cohen, on the other hand, explains that monsters are disturbing the "order of things", hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies defy systematic structures. In fact, the monster becomes a treacherous form that keeps floating between forms, threatening to smash distinctions. (Cohen, 2002, 6) In *Sexing the Cherry* the monstrosity constructed through an external incoherent and monstrous body is best illustrated by the

protagonist Dogwoman, whose body and appearance are represented descriptively monster-like and who even threatens the distinctions between femininity and masculinity. In the next quotation from the Dogwoman narrative, she describes her looks, size, and strength in the context of lifting up a circus elephant:

> How hideous am I?
>
> My nose is flat, my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are a poor show, being black and broken. I had a smallpox when I was a girl and the caves in my face are home enough for fleas. But I have fine blue eyes that see in the dark. As for my size, I know only that before Jordan was found a travelling circus came through Cheapside, and in that circus was an elephant. . . .
>
> One night, pushing along with a ribbon in my hair, I thought to try and outweigh Samson [the elephant] myself. I had taken a look at him and he seemed none too big for me. So I got hold of a man who was bawling and jeering at the crowd to pit themselves against a mere beast and said I would take the seat. . . .
>
> I am gracious by nature and I allowed myself to be led. 'I will have to search you,' said the creature, rolling his eyes to the crowd. . . .
>
> 'Touch me you won't,' I cried. 'I'll show you what there is.' And I lifted up my dress over my head. I was wearing no underclothes in respect of the heat.
>
> There was a great swooning amongst the crowd, and I heard a voice compare me to a mountain range. . . .
>
> It is a responsibility for a woman to have forced an elephant into the sky. What it says of my size I cannot tell, for an elephant looks big, but how am I to know what it weighs? A balloon looks big and weighs nothing. (24–25)

In this excerpt Dogwoman is a challenge to the ideals of female body in various aspects: she is huge in her size, "like a mountain range", and constructed as ugly in her "hideousness", with "heavy eyebrows", "caves in the face" and "black and broken" teeth. In fact, Shildrick's idea of monsters as the "gross failure to approximate to corporeal norms" appears to be accurate in Dogwoman's case, too, because she does not represent the ideal female body.

Furthermore, Dogwoman never doubts her overwhelming strength realised in an ability to lift up an elephant, nor does she hesitate to show off her naked body to the crowd. This attitude of Dogwoman makes suspect the link between traditional female body and feminine gender identity associated with passivity, beauty, and purity and

connects the female body of Dogwoman to masculinity instead. In fact, as Butler suggests in her dislocation of sex/gender system, there is no natural connection between male bodies and masculine gender identity or female body and feminine gender identity. Therefore, it could be argued that because Dogwoman's confidence and shamelessness connote masculinity, it is a challenge to the traditional representation of female body.

In fact, Dogwoman's body and behaviour clearly exceed the boundaries of normalcy in the quotation above. Despite her masculine behaviour she is, nevertheless, aware of feminine "virtues" and employs feminine accessories. For example, she wears "a ribbon in her hair", is "gracious by nature", and acknowledges "the responsibilities as a woman". These wry signs of femininity in contrast to the monstrous female body and masculine behaviour, in my opinion, deconstruct gender binaries of femininity and masculinity resulting in the monstrous body and gender of Dogwoman. As mentioned at the beginning of this subchapter, Dogwoman is the very hybrid monster whose ambiguous body and incoherent gender identity challenge the systematic structure of sex/gender system and its binary logic of gender identity. In fact, as Braidotti asserted, Dogwoman operates as the shifter in an in-between zone, between the binary of femininity and masculinity. Halberstam's idea of disrupting categories and boundaries is relevant here, too, because it is exactly what Dogwoman as a monstrous character is doing, namely disrupting the categories of gender identity and body.

The theme of challenging the gender binaries through monsterization of female masculinity continues in the Jordan narrative. What, then, is interesting from the point of view of female masculinity and Dogwoman, is how Jordan describes his wishes to become more masculine and more like his mother:

> I want to be brave and admired and have a beautiful wife and a fine house. I want to be a hero and wave goodbye to my wife and children at the dock, and be sorry to see them go but be excited about what is to come. I want to be like other men, one of the boys, a back-slapper and a man who knows a joke or two. I want to be like my rip-roaring mother who cares nothing for how she looks, only for what she does. She has never been in love, no, and never wanted to be either. She is self-sufficient and without self-doubt. . . . She is silent, the way men are supposed to be. (101)

In this quotation, Jordan desires to be "a hero", "like other men", "one of the boys", and like his "rip-roaring mother". Interestingly enough, here Jordan adds his mother to the chain of masculine traits of heroism, heterosexual family and homosocial bonding, in other words, as the masculine heroine for Jordan. Indeed, in his view, Dogwoman possesses the masculine features traditionally connected to males: disinterest in appearances and love, self-suffiency, lack of self-doubt, and silence. Therefore, in both of the two previous quotations, the connection between femininity and female bodies is questioned. In other words, Dogwoman's monstrous body and gender identity defy the sex/gender system.

Now to continue on the associations between femininity and monstrosity, I turn to Shildrick who has highlighted the "essential excessiveness of women" that she has tracked through Western history (Shildrick, 2002, 31). That has to do with a tradition that, according to Shildrick, associates masculinity with the limit and the femininity with the limitless. She writes that women's bodies express "an indifference to limits evidenced by such everyday occurrences as menstruation, pregnancy, lactation . . . ", and that "women are out of control, uncontained, unpredictable, and leaky: . . . in short, monstrous" (*ibid*.). This bodily excess and limitlessness, indeed, produces monstrosity in the Dogwoman narrative, as well:

> I could scarcely step outside without sweating off me enough liquid to fill a bucket. These waterfalls took with them countless lice and other timid creatures, and being forced to put myself often under the pump I can truly say I was clean. (21–22)

Here Dogwoman's sweating is so excessive that it produces "enough liquid to fill a bucket" and is described as "waterfalls". Considering the excessive sweat, it is noteworthy that Dogwoman's bodily excess is not demonstrated by menstruation or lactation, or other bodily phenomena traditionally connected with femininity and female bodies. Instead, her excess is the monstrously abundant sweat, a more masculine excretion, associated often with, for example hard manual labour. To add to this challenge to femininity and female body, Dogwoman is a willing hostess of other living creatures, such as lice and fleas. These elements of "impurity" that produce the bodily excess further increase the monstrosity of Dogwoman's body.

Indeed, I am further arguing that Kristeva's notion of the abject body and its excessive nature, which I discussed in the second chapter, become relevant in the case of Dogwoman. In relation to her studies on grotesque female bodies, Russo argues that, "blood, tears, vomit, excrement—all the detritus of the body that is separated out and placed with terror and revulsion (predominantly, but not exclusively) on the side of feminine" can be understood as abjection (Russo, 1994, 2). The abject body and its horrific excretion are parodied rather literally in the Dogwoman narrative. In the next quotation Dogwoman, Jordan, and Tradescant disguise themselves in order to sneak into the trial of the King Charles:

> I swathed myself about in rags black as pitch, and put on an old wig we begged from a theatrical. Then I made myself a specially reinforced wheelbarrow and sat in it like a heap of manure.
> …
> 'I cannot, sir,' I cried, 'for I have the Clap and my flesh is rotting beneath me. If I were to stand up, sir, you would see a river of pus run across these flags. The Rule of Saints cannot begin in pus.'
> …
> 'Then, please,' said I, rolling my eyes winningly, 'please, clear a path for us, for I will have to stagger up the steps into the gallery while my daughter [Jordan] catches any fluids that may flow from me. It is the stench of a three days' dead dog and not for the noses of the tender.' (68–69)

Here Dogwoman compares herself to " a heap of manure", claims to the guards that she has a venereal disease, namely "the Clap" and that her genital organs are "rotting". In addition, she warns the guards of "a river of pus" and a "stench of a three days' dead dog". This, indeed, is the ultimate cavalcade of abject excretion which produces an effect of parody of the excess of feminine body. According to Butler and my discussion on her ideas in the 2nd chapter, parodying the alleged core of gender identity is one way to reiterate compulsory performative acts "wrongly". In fact, the parodic hyper-abject body that Dogwoman constructs for herself reveals the very constructedness of the sexed body and its naturalised links to gendered identity.

Moreover, it is significant how Dogwoman uses words such as "waterfalls" and "river" when describing her actual excessive sweat and made up pus. It seems that these water related metaphors from the natural world anchor Dogwoman's body into wild and uncontained elements of nature. However, this "naturalness" of Dogwoman's abject body is so excessive, that it, in my view, makes visible the constructedness of the "naturalness" of female body, too. This, again, adds to the monstrous excess of Dogwoman's body and gender identity.

3.2. Monstrous Sexualities

The monstrosities associated with sexual identities present in *Sexing the Cherry* offer relevant departures for queer analysis, too. Now I will analyse how monstrosity is constructed through representations of sexualities and sexual acts. I will focus on the representations of Dogwoman and the Puritans in the Dogwoman narrative and employ especially Cohen's ideas on monstrosity.

According to Halberstam, “where sexuality becomes an identity, other ‘others’ become invisible and the multiple features of monstrosity seem to degenerate back into a primeval sexual slime. Class, race, and nation are subsumed, in other words, within the monstrous sexual body . . .“ (Halberstam, 1995, 7). Halberstam compares 19th century gothic horror to the contemporary film and notices that while the threat of the earlier monsters often rests on the monsters’ physical dreadfulness and deviousness, the contemporary horror generates from the violence of identity crisis, namely in sexual identity crisis (*ibid.*, 6). Halberstam continues that it is the threat of indeterminate sexuality and its ambiguous relationship with gender identity that creates monstrosity (*ibid.*).

Halberstam emphasises a more detailed analysis on monsters that traces the multiple aspects of monstrosity, instead of focusing only on gender and sexuality. As a whole, it is true that the sexual and gender identities are in the spotlight in *Sexing the Cherry* but issues considering class are relevant in the novel, too. Therefore, it is reasonable to study the representations of sexual and gender identities in detail but also attempt to incorporate into the analysis other concepts associated with identity, whenever it is possible.

The so called deviant sexual desire, identities and acts are often open to monsterization (Cohen, 1996, 9). However, in both the Dogwoman and the Jordan narrative, the monster-making gaze is somewhat explicitly directed at normative heterosexuality; the heterosexual desire, marriage and sexual acts. In the Dogwoman narrative, heterosexuality is constructed monstrous by representing heterosexual acts and encounters as enforced, awkward, and occasionally involving violence. Dogwoman’s mother provides her daughter childhood introduction and education on gender identity and heterosexual relationships as follows:

> When I was a girl I heard my mother and father copulating. I heard my father's steady grunts and my mother's silence. Later my mother told me that men take pleasure and women give it. She told me in a matter-of-fact way, in the same tone of voice she used to tell me how to feed the dogs or make bread. (107)

In this passage the heterosexual act is constructed as an inevitable routine between mother and father, as mundane a practice as the daily chores one is obliged to perform every day, such as "to feed the dogs or make bread". The traditional heterosexual division of gender roles in sex are in place, too, for "men take pleasure and women give it". This further contributes to the ordinariness of the act. Indeed, the reason why the mundaneness of sexual acts in heterosexual marriage is highlighted here is perhaps to deconstruct this heterosexual practice as the corner stone of the inevitable naturalness of the binary heterosexual identities and roles of husband and wife, father and mother. In other words, representing the heterosexual act as monotonous and arbitrarily ordinary does not actually normalise its status as the norm of sexual behaviour, but instead makes it seem dubious. In Butlerian sense, the unveiling of heterosexual acts as forced and dull habits emphasises the performative nature of sexual identities and therefore queers the naturalised idea of heterosexuality.

Despite her socialisation on the realities of heterosexual identities, Dogwoman has not entirely internalised the rules and expectations of heterosexual desire and sex. This failure in the process of passing on the heritage of normative heterosexuality to the next generation problematises the ahistorical impression of the unavoidable truths of the heterosexual paradigm. Dogwoman's attitude towards heterosexual identity and sex is illustrated in the next passage as she later in her life is confronted by a man asking for "sexual favours":

> A Man accosted me on our way to Wimbledon and asked me if I should like to see him.
>
> 'I see you well enough, sir,' I replied.

> ‘Not all of me,’ said he and unbuttoned himself to show a thing much like a pea-pod.
>
> ‘Touch it and it will grow,’ he assured me. I did so, and indeed it did grow to look more like a cucumber.
>
> ‘Wondrous, wondrous, wondrous,’ he swooned, though I could see no good reason for swooning.
>
> ‘Put it in your mouth,’ he said. ‘Yes, as you would a delicious thing to eat.’
>
> I like to broaden my mind when I can and I did as he suggested, swallowing it up entirely and biting it off with a snap.
>
> As I did so my eager fellow increased his swooning to the point of fainting away, and I, feeling both astonished by his rapture and disgusted by the leathery thing filling up my mouth, spat out what I had not eaten and gave it to one of my dogs.
>
> The whore from Spitalfields had told me that men like to be consumed in the mouth, but it still seems to me a reckless act, for the member must take some time to grow again. None the less, the bodies are their own, and I who know nothing of them must take the instruction humbly, and if a man asks me to do the same again I’m sure I shall, though for myself I felt nothing. (40–41)

In this quote from the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman seems to be rather curious of sexual acts and men’s bodies as she seems to know not much of them even though she is an adult. Indeed, even though she is inexperienced, she “likes to broaden her mind” and “takes the instruction humbly”. The violence of her behaviour, namely biting off the Man’s penis and spitting the remains for her dogs, coupled with the unemotional frankness of her attitude towards oral sex, constructs the heterosexual act monstrously queer. As a matter of fact, this scene from the Dogwoman narrative exhausts the heterosexual act from the presupposed co-dependent relationship between sex, gender, and desire, in fact, the one Butler attempts to challenge. That is to say, monstrous Dogwoman does not fit into the traditional female body and does not behave according to the logic of performing the proper feminine gender identity. In addition to the lack of heterosexual desire for the heterosexual act, this triangle of sex, gender, and desire begin to seem monstrous and unnatural.

Dogwoman is not, however, untouched by or outside of the heterosexual matrix, she just does not operate within the expected realm of reproducing and maintaining the heterosexual binary categories. As a matter of fact, the following passage from the

fourth section of the novel, namely after the Puritan rule is over, highlights the parodic elements Winterson has employed in her construction of heterosexuality in the Dogwoman narrative:

> I did mate with a man, but cannot say that I felt anything at all, though I had him jammed up to the hilt. As for him, spread on top of me with his face buried beneath my breasts, he complained that he could not find the sides of my cunt and felt like a tadpole in a pot. He was an educated man and urged me to try and squeeze in my muscles, and so perhaps bring me closer to his prong. I took a great breath and squeezed with all my might and heard something like a rush of air through a tunnel, and when I strained up on my elbows and looked down I saw I had pulled him in, balls and everything. He was stuck. I had the presence of mind to ring a bell and my friend came in with her sisters, and with the aid of a crowbar they prised him out and refreshed him with mulled wine while I sang him a little song about the fortitude of spawning salmon. He was a gallant gentleman and offered a different way of pleasuring me, since I was the first woman he said he had failed. Accordingly, he burrowed down the way ferrets do and tried to take me in his mouth. I was very comfortable about this, having nothing to be bitten off. But in a moment he thrust up his head and eyed me warily.
>
> 'Madam,' he said, 'I am sorry. I beg your pardon but I cannot.'
>
> 'Cannot?'
>
> 'Cannot. I cannot take that orange in my mouth. It will not fit. Neither can I run my tongue over it. You are too big, madam.'
>
> I did not know which part of me he was describing, but I felt pity for him and offered him more wine and some pleasant chat.
>
> When he had gone I squatted backwards on a pillow and parted my bush of hair to see what it was that had confounded him so. It seemed all in proportion to me. These gentlemen are very timid. (106–107)

As well as reinforcing Dogwoman's monstrous size and proportions, this passage depicts the heterosexual act as a peculiar practice between a man and a monstrous woman. The fact that Dogwoman's genitalia is described as large as an "orange" and powerful enough that a man stuck there must be prised out with a crowbar by helpful friends, parodies again the expectations on heterosexual act and the different and complementary roles of the female and male body and feminine and masculine gender identities in it. In fact, the heterosexual act between a man and woman is demystified and stripped off of its naturalised status, as there is hardly any explicit pleasure involved but discomfort, misunderstandings and clumsiness instead. In my opinion,

highlighting the previous heterosexual act as a parody of the naturalised sex/gender system queers the notion of coherence between gender identities and heterosexual desire.

Another aspect of the Dogwoman narrative that is significant from the point of view of monstrosity and sexuality is the juxtaposition of Dogwoman with the Puritans. In order to provide a background for this juxtaposition I turn to Cohen. He claims that monsters have often been operated as a vehicle of prevention, as a warning post in order to preserve. Cohen writes that "the monster of prohibition polices the borders of the possible, interdicting through its grotesque body some behaviours and actions, envaluing others" (Cohen, 1996, 13). In other words, the monster of prohibition exists to mark the boundaries in the culture, the boundaries that should not be crossed. Cohen continues:

> A kind of herdsman, this monster delimits the social space through which cultural bodies may move, and in classical times (for example) validated a tight, hierarchical system of naturalized leadership and control where every man had a functional place. (*ibid.*, 13–14)

The Puritans are represented as a religious and political force, producing and maintaining a strict moral code. In the Dogwoman narrative, Preacher Scroggs and Neighbour Firebrace in particular, seem to be so preoccupied with the monstrous Dogwoman that they harass her with their political and religious dogma. For example, these Puritans "requisition" Dogwoman's house and try to burn it down and as Dogwoman fights back, they set the Roundhead guards on her with their muskets (64–67). In the context of the Dogwoman narrative, she is the "grotesque body" that manifests the "evil" and, for the Puritans, represents the boundary that should not be crossed. At the same time, Dogwoman guides the Puritans toward true virtue by marking the cultural boundaries between mind/body, good/evil, man/woman, and human/monster. Nevertheless, Dogwoman's strong sense of personal moral

philosophy is constructed as an opposite force against the Puritans in the narrative. In other words, she does not remain in the role of Cohen's "prohibitive monster". The next citation illustrates Dogwoman's attitude toward the sexual morals of the Puritans:

> For myself, I would rather live with sins of excess than sins of denial. The Puritans, who wanted a rule of saints on earth, and no king but Jesus, forgot that we are born into flesh and in flesh must remain. Their women bind their breasts and cook plain food without salt, and the men are so afraid of their member uprising that they keep it strapped between their legs with bandages. (67)

Here Dogwoman associates Puritans with denial of the flesh, or, in other words, that of the body and sexuality. Moreover, the concept of excess is, again, connected with Dogwoman. Indeed, Dogwoman prefers "sins of excess" over "sins of denial". This, furthermore, highlights how Dogwoman posits herself against binary and complementary heterosexual identity categories represented by the Puritans' need to constrain and discipline their heterosexual bodies, or in other words, "women bind their breasts" and men keep their "member" "strapped between their legs". In fact, this reminds us of the ambiguous heterosexual sex acts involving Dogwoman in the previous subchapter and reinforces the queer interpretation of heteronormative bodies.

At the beginning of this subchapter, I noted that the so called deviant sexual desire, identities and acts are often open to monsterization (Cohen, 1996, 9). The deviousness, or monstrosity, was an attribute of mainly the representation of Dogwoman and her experiences of heterosexual acts in my analysis, as well, but in addition to that the Puritans are represented as monstrous by Dogwoman herself in the Dogwoman narrative. The antagonism and rivalry of different sexual moral conceptions between Dogwoman and the Puritans culminate in the brothel where, in turn, the Puritans are made monstrous. Dogwoman helps a friend, who works as a prostitute in the brothel, in disposing the bodies of killed customers, who are mostly of Puritan religion. It

happens that prostitutes, too, have experienced the persecution of the Puritans and the pressure of their sexual morals. When they visit the brothel the prostitutes take an advantage of the opportunity to oppose the Puritan rule and kill them. The prostitute lets Dogwoman witness several Puritan clergymen engaging in various sexual acts with pigs, old women, and whipping. The next quote demonstrates the attitude of Dogwoman and the prostitute toward the Puritans' sexual behaviour:

> 'Is this the usual manner of satisfaction?' I asked.
>
> 'There is no usual manner,' she said. 'There is only the unusual. These men are of God's Elect, do you not know? Surely God's Elect are entitled to pleasure?' Then she laughed hideously and told me the man was a great supporter of Cromwell and would be dead by morning.
>
> 'Do you trade only in Puritans then?'
>
> 'We trade in those who need us. Have you not seen their sheets with holes?'
>
> I said I had not, but had heard of them from the wife of my parson, Preacher Scroggs.
>
> 'We have no shortage of preachers here,' she said. 'Look.'
>
> She led to another door and opened the flap. On a low bed a woman was being entered in the usual position, but on top of the man was another man, clinging as a beetle to a raft and busy by the back passage.
>
> 'How heavy that must be for the woman,' I cried, and at the same moment the two men sat up and began embracing each other's face with their emissions.
>
> It was then that I recognized them.
>
> 'It is Preacher Scroggs and Neighbour Firebrace.' (86–87)

Here the Puritans are seen as performing different sexual acts that are represented from the point of view of Dogwoman as peculiar and from the point of view of the prostitute as a sign of the Puritans' sexual hypocrisy. Apparently, in their view, the acts of homosexuality, s/m, sex with animals and sex with older women demonstrate the Puritans' perverse attitude toward sex. As the chance arrives, Dogwoman decides to take revenge on the two Puritans that have harassed her many times. She hides in the brothel and surprises Preacher Scroggs and Neighbour Firebrace with a freshly ground axe. In the end, the ridiculed bodies of the two Puritans are dismembered, executed, and left for the use of "eager crowd of good gentlemen" in the brothel.

These two previous quotations on the Puritans, from the point of view of Dogwoman, construct another kind of monstrosity, the perverse body of the Puritan. As a matter of fact, the Puritans, interestingly enough, are the victims of the very same prejudiced attitude toward deviousness that they have enforced on Dogwoman. The Puritans are now enjoying "pleasures of the flesh" and "sins of excess" but are punished because of their hypocrisy, or enforcing their binary thinking on others. Yet, it is rather ambiguous from the perspective of queer theory to construct something as perverse. On the contrary, it has been a seminal task of the queer theorists' to deconstruct the concepts dealing with the so called perversity and perverse bodies. In effect, Cohen notes that the monster is persistently attached to prohibitive practices because of its function as normalising, enforcing, and terrifying sign. However, the monster is also a seductive construction that can produce powerful escapist fantasies as a momentary exit from restrictions. (Cohen, 1996, 16–7) The Puritans in the Dogwoman narrative are represented as striving to expel the perverse, or the monstrous, in their community whether it be sexual behaviour or behaviour not in accordance of stable gender binary as in Dogwoman's case. In the spirit of Cohen's claim, the monstrousness of sexuality and sexual acts becomes "the monster" for the Puritans, the one that serves as the warning signal of illegitimate behaviour and, at the same time, the one that attracts.

According to Cohen, "the monster is transgressive, too sexual, perversely erotic, a lawbreaker; and so the monster and all that it embodies must be exiled or destroyed" (*ibid.*, 16). As the Puritans in the previous quotation are constructed as exactly this, namely "transgressing" the binary of heterosexual and homosexual in their sex acts, being "too sexual" and "perversely erotic" and, finally, "lawbreakers" of their own conceptions on sexual and gender purity, they literally become the victims of the two

monstrosities they depended on. That is to say, first, the Puritans are seduced and engulfed by the hybrid monster of their sexual hypocrisy and desire, and second, destroyed by the monster of Dogwoman, the one that has served the Puritans to mark the faltering boundary between them and others, between denial and excess.

Ironically enough, it is the two clergymen of the Puritan religion, the most fervent characters to condemn others on the basis of religious dogma in the Dogwoman narrative, who are the only ones punished for their monstrosity. The scene of execution in the brothel highlights the hypocrisy of the Puritans' public conduct and dramatises the consequences of the sins of denial (Roessner, 2002, 107). Indeed, the Puritans are not forgiven for their monster making, but instead, they perform the function of ritual scapegoats for Dogwoman. Cohen, inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin, argues as follows:

> What Bakhtin calls 'official culture' can transfer all that is viewed as undesirable in itself into the body of the monster, performing a wish-fulfillment drama of its own; the scapegoated monster is perhaps ritually destroyed in the course of some official narrative, purging the community by eliminating its sins. The monster's eradication functions as an exorcism and, when retold and promulgated, as a catechism. (Cohen, 1996, 18)

In other words, the monster represents the differences and "sins" of the society, and needs to be ritually destroyed in order to restore the "official culture's" normalcy, cohesion, and purification.

Therefore, what constitutes the act of ritualistic purging in the Dogwoman narrative is the murder of the two Puritans performed by Dogwoman. His instance of ritualistic purging does not only occur in order to reproduce and maintain the norms of the "official narrative" of the community, as suggested by Cohen. On the contrary, it occurs as an example of mutiny against the community's norms guarded by the Puritans. Dogwoman has rebelled against the normative sexuality represented by the Puritans and sees her own of moral views prevail, "for the good" of the community.

Indeed, Cohen concludes that the “simultaneous repulsion and attraction at the core of the monster’s composition accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity, for the fact that the monster seldom can be contained in a simple, binary dialectic . . . ” (Cohen, 1996, 16). This echoes my earlier discussion of Shildrick in which she argued that monsters are “neither good or evil, inside or outside, not self or other. On the contrary, they are always liminal, refusing to stay in place, transgressive and transformative” (Shildrick, 2002, 4). Therefore, as Cohen and Shildrick suggest, in addition to my preceding discussion, the representations of the Puritans’ and Dogwoman’s antagonism refuse to conform neatly in the binaries of good/evil and / normality/monstrosity. In fact, the Dogwoman narrative queers and renders ambiguous the question of who, in the end, is more monstrous; the monstrously proportioned and violently behaving Dogwoman, or the hypocritical and “perverse” Puritans. All in all, echoing Halberstam’s ideas on technology of monstrosity, Dogwoman narrative has served as another complex technology of monstrosity that reveals its own monstrous constructedness through problematising the monster-making production.

However, the execution of the two Puritans is not only an effect of Dogwoman’s anger at sexual hypocrisy, but we can find other interpretations for the murders in the Dogwoman narrative, as well. One interpretation could be political, one that has to do with the struggle for political hegemony. Dogwoman represents herself as a loyal royalist, who despises the ones endangering the throne. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Dogwoman uses the same method of execution for the Puritans as the Puritans have used for King Charles I. As a matter of fact, earlier in the novel Dogwoman ha witnessed the event of King’s execution at the gallery. King Charles I lay his head on a block and the executioner cut off his head with an axe. Now Dogwoman similarly

forces her Puritan victims on a block and kills them with an axe. The second potential interpretation of the execution of the Puritans, which, of course, is interconnected with the political motive, has to do with class struggle. It is significant to notice that Dogwoman is a lower class woman and the Puritans are ruling upper class men, to be precise, clergy men. Their antagonism and the eventual murder of the Puritans offer, then, another potential reading dealing with the class struggle.[8] Indeed, it can be argued that Dogwoman operates as the avenging monster against the Puritan order and her monstrosity is fuelled with sexual, political, and class related motives.

3.3 Queer Origins and Monstrous Reproduction

I will now analyse how origin of the subject and reproduction are constructed in *Sexing the Cherry*. I will study the extraordinary "births" or "origin stories" of Dogwoman and Jordan and suggest that they can be read from a queer point of view. I will also look at the representation of grafting in the novel and argue that it constructs heterosexual reproduction system as monstrous and causes gender ambiguity.

According to Haraway, in the Western humanist imagination the mythological "origin stories" centre on the alleged original innocence and unity of the subject (Haraway, 1991, 150–151). She asserts:

> An origin story in the 'Western', humanist sense depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss and terror, represented by the phallic mother from whom all humans must separate, the task of individual development and of history, the twin potent myths inscribed most powerfully for us I psychoanalysis and Marxism. (*ibid*. 151)

In other words, Haraway criticises the psychoanalytical and Marxist theoretical investments on the inevitable and progressive origin story that begins from the

[8] For short analysis of class in *Sexing the Cherry*, see, for example, Smith (2005).

"original unity" with/in the mother and continues to the "compulsory" separation from the mother all the way to the development and the history of the subject and self-identity. However, Haraway argues that by retelling the origin stories the myths of origin can be reinterpreted and the premise of identity politics can be problematised. (*ibid*. 175) She claims:

> With no available original dream of a common language or original symbiosis promising protection from hostile 'masculine' separation, but written into the play of a text that has no finally privileged reading or salvation history, to recognize 'oneself' as fully implicated in the world, frees us of the need to root politics in identification, vanguard parties, purity, and mothering. (*ibid.*, 176)

Indeed, in Haraway's view, the reinvented origin stories that have no investment in "original symbiosis" or "salvation history" break the logic of the birth and development of the Western subject and challenge the foundation of stable identity categories.

What is, then, notable in *Sexing the Cherry* is that it challenges the inevitable and repeated origin myth and offers "alternative" origin stories for both Dogwoman and Jordan's becomings to the world. Jordan's biological birth or parents are not elaborated in the novel; instead, Jordan is found in the Thames and taken home by Dogwoman. In the Jordan narrative he describes the beginning of their shared life:

> 'Remember the rock from whence ye are hewn and the pit from whence ye are digged.'
>
> My mother carved this on a medallion and hung it round my neck the day she found me in the slime by the river. I was wrapped up in a rotting sack such as kittens are drowned in, but my head was wedged uppermost against the bank. I heard dogs coming towards me and a roar in the water and a face as round as the moon with hair falling on either side bobbed over me. She scooped me up, she tied me between her breasts whose nipples stood out like walnuts. She took me home and kept me there with fifty dogs and no company but her own. (10–11)

In this account of Jordan's origin he is found in the Thames by Dogwoman and taken home by her. It is significant that the medallion Dogwoman makes for her son urges

him to remember his origins. But the origins are not in the natural birth and nuclear heteronormative family, instead they are in “the rock” and ”the pit”, or in other word in the slime of the river and in the bosom of Dogwoman.

In the Dogwoman narrative, immediately after the Jordan narrative on the same subject, she recalls the first encounter with her son as follows:

> I call him Jordan and it will do. He has no other name before or after. What was there to call him, fished as he was from the stinking Thames? A child can’t be called Thames, no and not Nile either, for all his likeness to Moses. But I wanted to give him a river name, a name not bound to anything, just as the waters aren’t bound to anything. When a woman gives birth her waters break and she pours out the child and the child runs free. I would have liked to pour out a child from my body but you have to have a man for that and there’s no man who’s a match for me. (11)

What is interesting is that Dogwoman challenges the heterosexual and biologically determined premise of reproduction in the previous quotation. That is to say, she knows that to give birth, woman needs a man to conceive. However, she sees this heterosexual precondition impossible for “there’s no man who’s a match” for monstrous Dogwoman. Indeed, she has now become a mother to a son she has named by herself, without a man and without giving birth.

Despite having been born and raised in the “traditional” way, Dogwoman’s alternative origin is also constructed as ambiguous and Dogwoman is, in fact, represented as being found like her son, on the banks of the Thames. In the Jordan narrative, Jordan contemplates on the possible emergence of Dogwoman:

> I think she may have been found herself, long before she found me. I imagine her on the bank, in a bottle, the bottle is cobalt blue with a wax stopper wrapped over a piece of rag. A woman coming by hears noises from the bottle, and taking her knife she cuts open the seal and my mother comes thickening out like a genie from a jar, growing bigger and bigger and finally solidifying into her own proportions. She grants the woman three wishes and throws the bottle out to sea, and now she has forgotten all that and sits with her dogs watching the tide. (79–80)

Here Jordan imagines his mother to be a foundling, too. It is notable that Jordan sees Dogwoman's becoming to the world as a process of "thickening", "growing bigger and bigger" and then "solidifying to her own proportions". It seems that Dogwoman's imagined release does not involve infancy or childhood, but, in fact, she becomes instantly monstrous in her proportions, without "mothering". She then does her "work" as a genie, granting three wishes for the woman who helped to deliver her, and then "throws the bottle out to sea". In other words, Dogwoman's subjectivity does not rely on "the original symbiosis" in order to exist. Instead, she disposes of "the womb", or the bottle, and "forgets" the details of her becoming.

In the next quotation from the Dogwoman narrative, the dislodging of innocence and wholeness as the formative basis for subjectivity continues. Dogwoman tells us how her father tried to sell her as a child to be publicly exhibited as a "freak". Dogwoman manages to escape and kills her father. She goes on: "I have forgotten my childhood, not just because of my father but because it was bleak and unnecessary time, full of longing and lost hope" (107). Indeed, this quotation represents Dogwoman's childhood, not as the foundation of identity and self, but as a "bleak and unnecessary time". As a matter of fact, Lisa Moore asserts that Winterson is writing "an anti-origin story" (Moore, 1994, 121) in which the characters understand childhood, the "founding experience of identity" as flexible, ultimately "unknowable" and "forgotten" (*ibid*., 118). Jordan, too, speculates about the meaning of childhood in the Jordan narrative:

> *Time 4* : Did my childhood happen? I must believe it did, but I don't have any proof. . . .
>
> . . . I will have to assume that I had a childhood, but I cannot assume to have had the one I remember.
>
> . . . I have heard people say we are shaped by our childhood. But which one? (92)

Jordan takes the questioning of the meaning of childhood a step further and asks whether his childhood has ever happened, or whether there are several alternate ones. This, furthermore, challenges the naturalised premise of subject formation as stable and progressive and suggests instead that there might be alternate origin stories.

Indeed, both Jordan and Dogwoman are of queer origins which do not rely on the wholeness and universality of the subject's birth or beginning. Instead, their origins are constructed as ambiguously imaginary and fragmented. To emphasise the queer aspects of these origin stories, they also problematise the heterosexual reproduction system. In other words, the logic of compulsory heterosexuality producing and maintaining the illusory effect of naturalised relationship between sex, gender, and desire, is undermined by the queering of origins. Moreover, what, in my opinion, makes these subversions of reproduction and "originality" in the Dogwoman and the Jordan narratives queer, is that the occurrence of birth or becoming alive is associated with discovery and coincidence, not in the inevitability of heterosexual act, conception and birth. It is significant that what seems to connect the mother and the son to each other in kinship is not the birth or blood ties but the likeness of their emergence to life, or in other words, being found.

The heterosexual reproduction system is queered through the construction of cherry grafting, as well; hence the name of the novel, *Sexing the Cherry*. In the Jordan narrative, Jordan describes the art of grafting rather enthusiastically, but Dogwoman remains hesitant:

> Grafting is the means whereby a plant, perhaps tender or uncertain, is fused into a hardier member of its strain, and so the two take advantage of each other and produce a third kind, without seed or parent. In this way fruits have been made resistant to disease and certain plants have learned to grow where previously they could not.
>
> There are many in the church who condemn this practice as unnatural, holding that the Lord who made the world made its flora as he wished and in no other way.

> Tradescant has been praised in England for his work with the cherry, and it was on the cherry that I first learned the art of grafting and wondered whether it was an art I might apply to myself.
>
> My mother, when she saw me patiently trying to make a yield between a Polstead Black and a Morello, cried two things: 'Thou mayest as well try to make a union between thyself and me by sewing us at the hip,' and then, 'Of what sex is that monster you are making?'
>
> I tried to explain to her that the tree would still be female although it had not been born from seed, but she said such things had no gender and were a confusion to themselves.
>
> 'Let the world mate of its own accord,' she said, 'or not at all.'
>
> But the cherry grew, and we have sexed it and it is female.
>
> What I would like is to have some of Tradescant grafted on to me so that I could be a hero like him. He will flourish in any climate, pack his ships with precious things and be welcomed with full honours when the King is restored. (78–79)

Dogwoman names the grafting literally as "monster making", as it, in her view, defies the natural order of the plant's genesis. The binary construction between nature and culture is commented here as the plants of nature are joint together with the help of a cultural process of intentional grafting and, furthermore, to produce a "third kind". Indeed, the monstrous cherry that is generated here operates both in the field of nature and culture making this oppositional binary seem unintelligible.

According to Laura Doan, the grafted cherry in *Sexing the Cherry* is a hybrid that reveals the interaction and interdependence between the biological predecessor and cultural interruption. Even though the hybrid does not totally avoid or destroy the biological matter of the primary cherry, it is, nevertheless, the cultural practice of grafting that is responsible for the creation of the hybrid. (Doan, 1994, 152) Doan continues that the process of grafting in *Sexing the Cherry* is not introduced as an "artificial, scientific reproductive mechanism, but as a sexual reproduction outside of (beyond) a heterosexual model, spawning a third sex relatively free of binarisms" (*ibid.*, 153). I concur with Doan in that, even though grafting seems to occur in the realm of plant kingdom, it definitely supports the novel's tendency to challenge the

"naturalness" of heterosexual reproductive system. Indeed, to produce "a third kind, without seed or parent" clearly problematises the reproductive system and creates an alternative origin story for the cherry.

However, I disagree with Doan on the claim that grafting and this "third kind" should produce a "third sex relatively free of binarisms". The fact remains that the cherry is sexed as female by Jordan which, in the end, anchors the hybrid cherry in the binaries of biological sex. Nevertheless, it is Dogwoman who exclaims that grafting is a suspicious and ambiguous business, the business of making monsters. The monstrosity constructed here has queer potential because, in Dogwoman's words, "such things had no gender and were a confusion to themselves". Ironically enough, it is Dogwoman who sees the "confusion" of grafting and the gender and monster trouble it causes as worrying, even though it is she who, to begin with, has constructed herself in the Dogwoman narrative as a monstrous woman, with monstrous body, incoherent gender identity, and disregard to the normative gender system. Dogwoman's attitude towards monstrosity in others resonates the monsterization of "the perverse" Puritans in the previous subchapter. These contradictions in relation to monstrous Dogwoman and her monster-making illustrate that even the consciously monstrous Dogwoman cannot help but be beware of another monstrous creation. This, in my view, again, queers monstrosity because Dogwoman's monstrosity is not unconditionally positive, celebrated or emancipatory. Instead, it is ambiguous and productive, indeed, as Halberstam intended, a technology of monstrosity because it draws attention to the plasticity or constructed notion of the monster.

Now to consider Jordan in the previous quotation, it is notable that just like Dogwoman recognises the gender confusion in grafting, Jordan's wrestles with these

problematics, as well. As I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Jordan struggles with the expectations of masculine gender identity and wishes the masculinity manifest in his mother would transfer to himself, as well. In fact, according to previous quotation, Jordan's thoughts on body and identity cannot be reduced to a coherent masculine body and gender identity. In fact, Jordan wishes that he might be able to apply the gender constructive grafting with himself, too. As a matter of fact, perhaps the implicit reason why Jordan emphasises to his mother that the cherry tree is female is because Jordan is represented as being uncomfortable with the expectations of masculine identity and behaviour. To settle "the confusion" the grafting brings forth in him, he wishes that "some of Tradescant", or some of his masculine heroism, could be grafted onto him. This crisis in masculinity in the context of grafting further challenges the naturalised link between men and masculinity.

4. Cities and Temporalities

In this chapter I will study how place and time are constructed in *Sexing the Cherry*. In the first subchapter I will study how different cities are constructed in the novel and how these constructions of place relate to bodies and identities. I am interested in examining whether I can read them from a queer point of view. I will also analyse whether these places and spatial identities produce monstrosity. In the second subchapter I will analyse the various temporalities constructed in the novel and how they affect bodies and identities and if these combinations could produce queer notion of time.

4.1 Queer and Monstrosity in the Cities

Space is of interdisciplinary interest for many kinds of scholars; not only the geographers, philosophers, and scientists but also, for instance, literary critics, historians and cultural critics are studying space (Best, 1995, 181). In this thesis, my more detailed interest in the field of the spatial is that of place.[9] Feminist geographers have criticised mainstream geographers and their tendency to understand space and place in a dichotomous relationship where space is understood as a masculine term associated with the public and urban cities, whereas place is interpreted as a feminine term associated with the private and the countryside (Rose, 1996, 62).[10] My understanding of spatiality and place has to do with what Doreen Massey, a feminist

[9] Place as a concept is somewhat difficult to determine and scholars seem to struggle with its definitions. I have noticed that their discussions on place are often vague and ambivalent (see, for example, David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1989)). However, I try to keep the focus on my study "in place", even though, for the sake of argument or clarity, I occasionally have to refer to space and spatiality, as well.

[10] For more information on the discussion of the dichotomy of space and place and the feminist critique of geography, see Gillian Rose (1996).

geographer, has argued, namely that it is not the case of examining social relations that occur in a fixed and static space, but quite the opposite. In fact, it is the space that is "constructed out of social relations". (Massey, 1994, 2) Massey, too, discusses the concept of place and criticises earlier geographers' views that understand place as "bounded, as in various ways a site of an authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity" (*ibid*., 5). As a matter of fact, place could be seen as something whose meaning is in constant flux and endlessly negotiated in the contexts of various social relations. Massey recognises place as "a particular articulation of those [social] relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations" (*ibid*.). However, Massey continues that this particularity of social relations is not all included within the place itself creating a space relying on authenticity and originality, but instead, the place also includes relations beyond that very place. This understanding of place helps when arguing against the claims of internal histories or timeless place-related identity categories. Indeed, Massey concludes that "the identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple" (*ibid*.) and therefore she supports the idea that the specificities of a place and identities connected to it are constructed through interrelations instead of controlled boundaries and placing one identity against another in opposite position (*ibid*, 7).

This view of spatial identities is valid from the point of view of queer theory, as well. It could be argued that if social relations shape places, and also the identities connected to those places, then it would be interesting to study, for example, how sexuality, gender and class could be queered from the point of view of space and place. Furthermore, in my opinion, place can be understood as producing monstrosity through the bodies, identity constructions, and social relations that operate in

interrelation to that specific place. On the other hand, as I will later argue, a place can also be constructed as monstrous.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, place is often dramatised through cities. However, the cities constructed in Dogwoman and Jordan's respective narratives differ from each other significantly. The Dogwoman narrative focuses on London whereas in the Jordan narrative, in addition to London, Jordan visits the City of words, the City of silver, the City of epidemic love, and the City that moves its place. First, I will discuss the Dogwoman narrative and the way London is constructed in interrelation to Dogwoman's character and body. Then I will see if this relation between London and Dogwoman produces monstrosity. Second, I will examine the constructions of cities in the Jordan narrative and then I will compare how the two narratives differ from each other from the point of view of place and what it could mean from queer theoretical perspective.

Sexing the Cherry is situated mostly in London, the capital of Britain. Several historically documented places, events, and historical persons are represented or mentioned in the novel, for example, the civil war, the rule of the Puritans, the execution of King Charles I, the Great Plague, and the Great fire of London. Despite the real historical background, the novel's London is not constructed as strictly and constantly following historical accuracy. On the contrary, the narratives of Dogwoman and Jordan portray London as a dynamic and contradictory place. Cohen notes that the places where monsters live are not only "dark regions of uncertain danger" (Cohen, 1996, 18). They can also be fantastical and utopian worlds of liberation. The monstrous habitants of these places may operate as bodies that can offer ideas or potentials of exploring other genders, other sexual practices, and other social customs. (*ibid.*) The 17th century London constructed in the Dogwoman

narrative is not a utopian or fantastical place with obvious distinctions to the "actual" historic places and events of London. On the contrary, the narrative constructs London as a patriarchal capital of a kingdom of various power struggles, be they political, religious, economical, or imperial, all of which are, of course, well documented facts in the history of Britain, as well. Despite the scarcity of fantastical elements connected to London in the narrative, Dogwoman's monstrous character seems to, nevertheless, serve as the body Cohen intended; a body through which the possibilities of different ways to think about femininity, masculinity, and identities, and agency dealing with place can be imagined.

Dogwoman's relationship to London is an ambiguous one. In the next extract from the Dogwoman narrative she describes her attitude towards London, her home town, the place where she lives, works, has a house, and raises her son Jordan:

> London is a foul place, full of pestilence and rot. I would like to take Jordan to live in the country but we must be near Hyde Park so that I can enter my dogs in the races and fighting. (13)

It seems that for Dogwoman, the city is a dirty and full of disease, indeed "a foul place". In fact, London has very few positive qualities in the Dogwoman narrative. It is ironic that the monstrous Dogwoman, whose excessive abject features I discussed in the previous chapter, explicitly despises the foulness and "rot" in her surroundings. This further complicates the technology of monstrosity that is the Dogwoman narrative because the monster-making gaze is not reserved for Dogwoman and the Puritans only but is extended to the decaying city, as well.

There are, however, even nostalgic elements towards London present in the Dogwoman narrative but, they have more to do with politics of power within the state. In Dogwoman's ideals, London is constructed as a mixture of the royal and religious order represented in the belief of the King and God. Furthermore, London in the

Dogwoman narrative could be interpreted as a metaphor of competing moral beliefs. For Dogwoman, London taken over by the Puritan order is a confusion of moral decadence of the Puritan's monstrous sexual behaviour and, on the other hand, the moral rigidity of the Puritan religious practices and rules. This attitude is condensed in the way Dogwoman despises the Puritans and worships the only alternative, the King. In the following quote Dogwoman describes the political struggle of the Puritan London and, on the other hand, the royal London:

> As far as I know it, and I have only a little learning, the King had been forced to call a Parliament to grant him more money for his war against the kilted beasts and their savage ways. Savage to the core, and the poor King trying only to make them use a proper prayer book. They wouldn't have his prayer book and in a most unchristian manner threatened his throne. The king, turning to his own people, found himself with a Parliament full of Puritans who wouldn't grant him money until he had granted them reform. Not content with the Church of England that good King Henry had bequeathed to us all, they wanted what they called 'A Church of God'.
>
> They said that the King was a wanton spendthrift, that the bishops were corrupt, that our Book of Common Prayer was full of Popish ways, that the Queen herself, being French, was bound to be full of Popish ways. Oh they hated everything that was grand and fine and full of life, and they went about in their flat grey suits with their flat grey faces poking out the top. The only thing fancy about them was their handkerchiefs, which they liked to be trimmed with lace and kept as white as they reckoned their souls to be. I've seen Puritans going past a theatre where all was merriment and pleasure and holding their starched linen to their noses for fear they might smell pleasure and be infected by it.
>
> It didn't take them long to close down every theatre in London once they got a bit of power. (26–27)

Here Dogwoman explicitly admires King Charles I and defends him and his politics against "the kilted beasts and their savage ways" (the Scots) and the Puritans. Dogwoman describes the Puritans hating, in her view, the true spirit of London, or "everything that was grand and fine and full of life", and being disgusted by "merriment and pleasure" represented by the cultural life of the common people, or the theatres. Finally, the Puritans "close down" the city's symbols of pleasure. As a whole, London is constructed here as the place of competing political ideologies and

social classes in which the Puritans are represented as the enforcing power of the state and the ruling class and the common people in London, including Dogwoman, as subjects to this power.

Indeed, the previous quotation emphasises Dogwoman's royalty to the King, his throne, and the religious beliefs he represents. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that gendered bodies and sexualities often play a central role as "markers and reproducers of the narratives of nations" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, 39). Especially women have often been constructed as the "symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour" (*ibid.*, 45). In fact, Dogwoman is constructed here as the symbol of nostalgia for the glory days of the nation's royal rule under which the collective of Londoners and English people used to live. It has to be noted, that despite her rebellious actions against the Puritans in addition to the transgressive challenge of her body and sexuality to the heterosexual matrix in the Puritan London, Dogwoman has, nevertheless, been interpreted as a "reactionary" character in relation to London, as well. Pearce associates Dogwoman and her body with "the preservation of the constitutional status quo" and "a deeply conservative force" because Dogwoman supports the reign of the King to the end (Pearce, 1994, 178–179). In other words, the fact that she does not question the patriarchal authorities of "monarchy, church and State", in effect, renders her reactionary (*ibid.*, 179). However, in my opinion, Dogwoman is constructed as an ambiguous protagonist in the Dogwoman narrative, as a monstrous hybrid that is, simultaneously, a rebel and a reactionary, a heroine and a villain. Monster as a representation of impurity disturbs categories, and demolishes boundaries (Halberstam, 1995, 27). This in-betweenness of Dogwoman can, then, be interpreted to produce a monstrous hybrid that threatens to destroy the very distinctions it seems to reproduce. Therefore, in the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman

is constructed as an agent of both change and status quo, and this agency is constructed through her relationship to London and the political events taking place there.

Eventually, Dogwoman gets what she has hoped and struggled for: the rule of the king is restored by King Charles II. The Puritans are executed and their tortured bodies ridiculed publicly. However, London does not seem to have restored its status as the long lost kingdom Dogwoman has wanted it to be. In actual fact, London is devastated by the Plague. In the next quote from the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman depicts the Plague ridden streets of London:

> God's judgment on the murder of the King has befallen us. London is consumed by the Plague. The city is thick with the dead. There are bodies in every house and in a street south of here the only bodies are dead ones. The houses are deserted, their shutters banging open in the night. (138)

Indeed, for Dogwoman, the Plague represents yet another result of the Puritan order and its crimes and she sees it as punishment by God upon London.

Dogwoman's body surmounts the Plague and, according to her, the monstrous size of her body as well as her moral superiority are the reasons for her survival: "My body is too big for sour-sickness to defeat it, and if it is a judgment on us all then surely I am the last to be judged" (139). In my view, Plague, nevertheless, leaves its marks on both Dogwoman and her London. In the next passage Dogwoman's mind and body are mixed with the city's "foul" atmosphere:

> When the Plague was over, in 1665, London was a quieter place and there were plenty of houses to be had. I approved of being able to go to market without having to fight through a Godless stream of foolish persons. But a strange sickness had come over me, not of the body, but of the mind. I fancied that I still smelt the stench wherever I went. I couldn't rid my nostrils of the odour of death. I began to think of London as a place full of filth and pestilence that would never be clean.
>
> 'God's revenge is still upon us,' I said to Jordan. 'We are corrupt and our city is corrupted. There is no whole or beautiful left . . .' (141, author's full stops)

The idea of corruption that Dogwoman repeats is twofold. On one hand, corruption means the abandoning of King's, and therefore God's rule, and giving in to the Puritans. On the other hand, corruption can refer to the material rottenness of the city and its people during the Plague. The corruption of the city and the people are, therefore, paralleled. Furthermore, it seems that because Dogwoman uses the pronouns "we" and "us" instead of "they" and "them", her body is not constructed as unaffected or being "outside" this interrelation between place and people. This is notable since in the previous quote Dogwoman claimed to be impervious to the ruin of the Plague. On the contrary, Dogwoman, too, is connected to the corruption of London in the Dogwoman narrative. This challenges the notion of place a geographical condition that can be observed objectively. Instead, place is seen as being incorporated in the bodies of its habitants and, at the same time, constructing and enabling identity formations of place.

As Massey has noted, the spatial is constructed socially, but space also constructs social relations (Massey, 1994, 264). Here in the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman's body is intertwined with place and its history that produce her to smell the dead bodies of the people of London. In my view, it could be argued that the Dogwoman narrative constructs London as a monstrous place full of rot, plague, death and corruption, indeed a place like "hell". In the spirit of the theory of abjection, which I discussed in the 2nd chapter, London constructed here represents the horror associated with the abject that has been traditionally associated with monstrous bodies. Regardless of her self-identified excessive abject body and the queer monstrosity it implies, which were mentioned in the third chapter, Dogwoman is, again, not hesitant to construct London as the monstrous result of the monster-making Puritans' doings.

Indeed, according to the Dogwoman narrative, the Plague has not purged the city and its people from their sins:

> Hearing this I set out around the streets, walking for comfort, but wherever I walked carried the same message. That this rot would not be purged. And I thought of the fire in the pit and of all the bodies whose ashes at least were clean.
>
> 'This city should be burned down,' I whispered to myself. 'It should burn and burn until there is nothing left but the cooling wind.' (141–142)

I discussed Dogwoman and the ritualistic purging of the community through the destroying of the monster, or the murder of Preacher Scroggs and Neighbour Firebrace, in the previous chapter. The "foul" and "corrupt" London has transformed into a metaphor of the Puritan hypocrisy. That is to say, Dogwoman sees the Plague as a continuance of the Puritan rule and corruption and therefore, the purging of the city, in Dogwoman's view, needs to be done again. This time the ritualistic purging is done by fire, and the scapegoats are the people of London. The material effect of political and religious atmosphere to bodies further accentuates the interconnectedness of place, body, and identity of place. The monstrous Dogwoman does her final monstrous deed and destroys the monstrous London. This complex and overlapping monstrosity in relation to Dogwoman seems to be a reoccurring feature in *Sexing the Cherry*. In fact, monstrous Dogwoman is employed not only to problematise binary structures and heteronormative gender identity but also the very concept of monstrosity itself.

In the Jordan narrative, Jordan sails abroad with John Tradescant, but what is notable is that we learn only little of actual geographic locations of their travels. As a matter of fact, the cities of imaginary kind are more important in the Jordan narrative. Jordan describes several cities, but I will concentrate only on two of them which are the City of words and the City that moves its place. Other cities are left outside my analysis because they do not encourage as relevant departures for queer theoretical analysis as these two cities.

The Jordan narrative constructs place through the act of travel. According to Moore, the Jordan narrative comments on the technologies of early modern exploration and scientific discovery and unveils their "fantasmatic status and limitations" (Moore, 1995, 116). Moore calls the cities into which Jordan drifts in his travels "weird geographies" and points out that they make the colonial process of mapping seem nonsense (*ibid.*, 117). For example, the City that moves its place every night explains this well:

> At sea and away from home in a creaking boat, with Tradescant sleeping beside me, there is a town I sometimes dream about, whose inhabitants are so cunning that to escape the insistence of creditors they knock down their houses in a single night and rebuild them elsewhere. So the number of buildings in the city is always constant but they are never in the same place from one day to the next. . . .
>
> As a subterfuge, then, it has little to recommend it, but as a game it is a most fulfilling pastime and accounts for the extraordinary longevity of the men and women who live there. We were all nomads once, and crossed the deserts and the seas on tracks that could not be detected, but were clear to those who knew the way. Since settling down and rooting like trees, but without the ability to make use of the wind to scatter our seed, we have found only infection and discontent.
>
> In the city the inhabitants have reconciled two discordant desires: to remain in one place and to leave it behind for ever. (42–43)

Mapping, as an act of naming and categorising "otherness" (Stowers, 1995, 146) and producing knowledge and fixing meaning to place and its people becomes impossible, as the city and its people refuse to be mapped or even found. Massey notes that it is often the case that "change, movement, history, [and] dynamism" are things connected with time whereas in contrast space is the lack and absence of these things (Massey, 1994, 257). In the Jordan narrative, then, the "subordinate" relationship of place to time is questioned. The city that is never in the same place, illustrates this well. In other words, place is constructed here as being in constant motion, making impossible to determine its origin or direction. In my view, this challenges the notion

of place as a stagnant category and, furthermore problematises the dichotomous relationship between space and time.

Another interesting city Jordan travels to is the City of words. It is a place where every word and sentence that is uttered from the mouths of people transforms into a cloud of words. In the Jordan narrative, the city is described as follows:

> The people who throng the streets shout at each other, their voices rising from the mass of heads and floating upwards towards the church spires and the great copper bells that clang the end of the day. Their words, rising up, form a thick cloud over the city, which every so often must be thoroughly cleansed of too much language. Men and women in balloons fly up from the main square and, armed with mops and scrubbing brushes, do battle with the canopy of words trapped under the sun.
>
> The words resist erasure. The oldest and most stubborn form a thick crust of chattering rage. Cleaners have been bitten by words still quarrelling, and in one famous lawsuit a woman whose mop had been eaten and whose hand was badly mauled by a vicious row sought to bring the original antagonists to court. The men responsible made their defence on the grounds that the words no longer belonged to them. Years had passed. Was it their fault if the city had failed to deal with its overheads? (17)

What is striking in this place is that the city is rather literally intertwined with the bodies of the people living there, because the words of the people become a material effect and context of the city. This can be interpreted as a comment on the theoretical idea of social relations being constructed discursively and, furthermore, as revealing how place is not a stagnant category, but should be viewed as a dynamic. Indeed, what makes the City of words even more noteworthy is the fact that the place, through the materiality of words, is in a power struggle with the habitants of the place. As mentioned in the extract above, the words “resist erasure” and even attack the people of the city by “biting” cleaners and “mauling” hands. This illustrates that spatiality is constructed by social relations and, on the other hand, that place is also a productive concept that affects the construction of social relations. In other words, the City of words constructed by the relations in the town has the literal power to act. This queers the notion of place because the city and its people become an organism and the

boundaries and the dynamics of power between place and people become ambiguous and uncertain.

In addition, the idea of performative speech acts could be employed in the analysis of the previous quotations of the Jordan narrative. Indeed, in the Butlerian view, the subject is constructed through the discursive performatives, and in the City of words, these performative speech acts remain visible and tangible and continue to construct the everyday life of the habitants of the city. This seems to dramatise the repetitive foundation of the performativity even further. However, as I noted when I discussed Butler's theory in the second chapter, the performative gender identity is maintained through repetition and this occurs "under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death" (Butler, 1993, 95). That is to say, the resistance against the sex/gender system that is produced by performativity is not easy or without its risks and, in fact, the people of the City of words have to constantly beware of the "biting and "mauling" words. Nevertheless, the citizens of the city seem to have a chance to confront the speech acts' reiterative power and, as a matter of fact, they try to erase the excessive amount of words floating in the city. This defiance represented by the cleaners' work, in my view, demonstrates the fact that performative actions and the subject positions they offer can be reworked and resisted.

At the end of *Sexing the Cherry*, Dogwoman sails away from the burning London with her son. This is how the two narratives describe the same event, the first is the Dogwoman narrative and the second the Jordan narrative:

> The ship eased out into the darkness and in a few hours we had left behind the livid flames and the terrible sound of burning. We slid peacefully towards the sea, the wind behind us, the great sail fat. I looked at Jordan standing in the prow, his silhouette black and sharp-edged. I thought I saw someone standing beside him, a woman, slight and strong. I tried to call out but I had no voice.

> Then she vanished and there was nothing next to Jordan but empty space. (143–144)

> As I drew my ship out of London I knew I would never go there again. For a time I felt only sadness, and then for no reason, I was filled with hope. The future lies ahead like a glittering city, but like the cities of the desert disappears when approached. In certain lights it is easy to see the towers and the domes, even the people going to and fro. We speak of it with longing and with love. *The future*. But the city is a fake. The future and the present and the past exist only in our minds, and from the distance the borders of each shrink and fade like the borders of hostile countries seen from a floating city in the sky. The river runs from one country to another without stopping. And even the most solid of things and the most real, the best-loved and the well-known, are only hand-shadows on the wall. Empty space and points of light. (144, author's italics)

In the latter quotation, place can be understood as a construct that escapes stagnancy, originality, and fixed meanings. In fact, for Jordan, "even the most solid things and the most real, the best-loved and the well-known, are only hand-shadows on the wall". This refuses to anchor identities of place into stability, "solidity", and "reality" and, instead, suggests place should be thought like "the floating city" or "the river that runs without stopping". At the end of both narratives the words "empty space" are used, which, in my view, further emphasise the constructedness of place, that is, it cannot be fixed or treated as naturalised and objectified entity. In fact, place is "empty" of meanings and a prior essence until it is understood as constructed and reproduced through social relations and discourses.

4.2 Queer and Temporalities

In this final subchapter I will introduce the concept of time to my discussion. I will study how temporalities are constructed and interconnected in the narratives of *Sexing the Cherry*. I also plan to perform a queer reading of bodies constructed in the various temporal shifts that occur in the novel. In *Sexing the Cherry* the main protagonists,

Dogwoman and Jordan, both negotiate their relationship to time in their respective narratives but I will also take into account the Activist narrative as it proves to be a fruitful in its themes concerning time and body. I will first consider the Jordan narrative and see how temporalities are constructed in it.

According to Jago Morrison, there are two opposite developments of understanding time in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The radical sciences, called "the New Physics", in which universal and absolute time was questioned, was an important influence. In contrast, in the late 19th century the standardised and chronometric time for the service of the industrialised West was adopted. Both of these developments contributed to the rise of time as an important topic for modernist authors. (Morrison, 2003, 26–29) Heise has analysed the narrative structures of postmodernist novels and sees a difference between modernist and postmodernist novels in their construction of time. She notes that many modernist novels tend to be suspicious about or resistant to the standardised and mechanised public time and stress the individual or psychological understanding of time (Heise, 1997, 51). In postmodernist novels, on the other hand, both private and public temporalities become unstable categories and the notion of time in itself becomes problematic (*ibid.*, 38). Heise writes:

> One of the most striking developments in the transition from the modernist to the postmodernist novel is the disintegration of narrator and character as recognizable and more or less stable entities, and their scattering or fragmentation across different temporal universes that can no longer be reconciled with each other, or justified by recurring to psychological worlds. (*ibid.*, 7)

Indeed, it seems that the postmodernist novel, accordingly with postmodern theories, problematises the dichotomy of private time and public or social time: it leaves narrators and characters of novels "scattered" in temporal universes unable to rely on the dichotomous relation of either private or social formulations of time. *Sexing the*

Cherry can be understood to belong to the postmodernist tradition in its narrative structure, for its narrative structure is, indeed, temporally fragmented and the narrators and characters are constantly negotiating their relationship to multiple "temporal universes". Keeping Heise's ideas on the differences of modernist and postmodernist narratives and temporalities in mind, I will first analyse the Jordan narrative and the construction and attitude toward time.

Similarly to Morrison, Heise, too, explains that after mechanical and standardised public time was established it was confronted by an increasing cultural interest in the temporalities of the human mind. Consequently, one of the most frequent themes of the modernist novel was the potential conflict between the workings of private temporalities and the public time. (*ibid.*, 36) This conflict can be witnessed in the following quotation from the Jordan narrative, as well, where Jordan specifies his experience of time:

> My experience of time is mostly like my experience with maps. Flat, moving in a more or less straight line from one point to another. Being in time, in a continuous present, is to look at a map and not see the hills, shapes and undulations, but only the flat form. There is no sense of dimension, only a feeling for the surface. Thinking about time is more dizzy and precipitous.
>
> Thinking about time is like turning the globe round and round, recognizing that all journeys exist simultaneously, that to be in a place is not to deny the existence of another, even though that other place cannot be felt or seen, our usual criteria for belief. (89)

Here Jordan argues that "being in time" and "thinking about time" is not the same thing. Jordan uses the spatial metaphor of mapping to describe the problematic of "being in time". Evoking associations that generally involve maps include naming, categorization, and coherence. In Jordan's view, experiencing time like maps translates time into qualities of linearity, "flatness" and predictability.

Moreover, this quotation seems to suggest that the "being in time" essentialises into a "continuous present" and the inability to look beyond "flatness". In fact, "being

in time" is constructed here as a naturalised state of self that has "only a feeling for the surface" and that lacks the "sense of dimension". Jordan feels that "being in time" is insufficient to illustrate the complexity of time. Indeed, Jordan seems to categorise these relationships to time as passive, superficial, and stagnant. This essentialised view of stable temporal experience constructed here, in my view, echoes the modernist discourse on time. As Heise claimed, the modernist discourse criticises especially the standardised linear time conception that Jordan problematises in the previous quotation.

Despite this modernist part of "experiencing time" what seems to crystallise Jordan's philosophy on time and temporality is the other way of "experiencing time", namely "thinking about time". This view on time differs from "being in time", as it involves an act or practice of thinking, instead of more passively understood "being". In addition, "thinking about time" involves an understanding of simultaneity of temporalities and, therefore, "all journeys exist simultaneously". According to Stowers, representing time as "turning the globe round and round" and not as mapping "which attempts to name, categorize and fix Otherness" associates Jordan with "the escape from linear time" (Stowers, 1995, 146). However, it appears that Jordan constructs a hierarchy between different temporal visions, where he seems to appreciate more the more dynamic vision of time. This would, then point at the modernist way of understanding time and its tendency to rely on the binary hierarchy of standardised public time and personal psychological time. Yet, this hierarchy that Jordan seems to create in his "experiencing of time" is not without its ambiguities. "Thinking about time" is not a mere celebration of temporal confusion and incoherence. Indeed, "thinking about time" is deemed "more dizzy and precipitous" than the other understandings of time. This choice of words suggests somewhat

negative connotations. “Dizzy” brings to mind instability, physical nausea and incoherence, whereas “precipitous” means something unexpected, sudden, and unpleasant as well as dangerously steep. All these connotations contribute to the ambiguous nature of “thinking about time”.

The ambiguous and even contradictory temporal views elaborated above certainly fit the profile of postmodernist narrative temporalities, but also remind us of the conflict between the public time and private time. Indeed, Jordan seems to criticise the linearity and progressiveness of the public time and to prefer his personal view that, in Heise’s view, would characterise especially the modernist novel. However, the constraints of time are constantly defied in the Jordan narrative which, on the other hand, suggests a more postmodernist understanding of time. In the next quotation, Jordan contemplates on journeys independent from time and place:

> Time has no meaning, space and place have no meaning, on this journey. All times can be inhabited, all places visited. In a single day the mind can make a millpond of the oceans. Some people who have never crossed the land they were born on have travelled all over the world. The journey is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar, the wrinkles and lines of the body. The self is not contained in any moment or any place, but it is only in the intersection of moment and place that the self might, for a moment, be seen vanishing through the door, which disappears at once. (80)

Here Jordan describes his “journey” which radically disavows the material restrictions of time and place. In fact, they are denied a “meaning” or effect altogether. This view constructs time and place as unstable and unfixed in their meaning and time as such becomes suspicious to Jordan. This construction echoes Heise’s ideas on postmodernist concerns of time as Jordan feels that the self is fragmented in time and place and, in fact, “scattered across different temporal universes that cannot be reconciled with each other, or justified by recurring to psychological worlds” (Heise, 1997, 7). Moreover, the critique toward the epistemological discourse that understands time as universal in its linear and progressive course is evident here.

After all, Jordan's journey "is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar".

Furthermore, the journey problematises the idea of self as a whole and stable category. Jordan claims that self is not contained in "any moment or any place". Instead he seems to suggest that self is an elusive and "vanishing" construction that can only be witnessed momentarily, "in the intersection of moment and place". The idea of momentary self vanishing in time relates to Heise's ideas on postmodernist novel's narrative. According to her, constructing time "dividing and subdividing, bifurcating and branching off continuously into multiple possibilities and alternatives" is a common feature in postmodernist temporality (Heise, 1997, 55). Therefore, the quotation illustrates the connection between self and time where identities disappear only to reappear in other potential temporalities. What is suggested here is, perhaps, that the self is in constant, necessary and even involuntary motion in multiple, fragmented temporalities.

What is, nevertheless, implicit in the notion of journeying in time in the Jordan narrative is that Jordan's journeys seem to occur in the mind and in dreams. After all, he is "thinking about time". This emphasis on the power, or even omnipotence and omniscience, of the mind perhaps illustrates the division between mind and body, the seminal binary pair of the construction of the Cartesian subject. As introduced in the second chapter, the Cartesian subject is understood as rational, objective, and masculine and defined as being in control of the body. Jordan fits the profile of the traditional masculine and objective subject because he is represented as a part of the tradition of the exploring men, destined to map, categorise, and produce knowledge about the unknown worlds. Therefore, despite the problematising of the stability and naturalness of time and place in the previous quotations in the Jordan narrative,

Jordan's character cannot escape or operate totally outside of the dichotomy of the mind/body binary. To illustrate further the importance of the mind/body dichotomy in the novel in respect of time and place, as well, I will now focus on Dogwoman and see how time is constructed in the Dogwoman narrative.

As I noted in the previous subchapter, the Dogwoman narrative is constructed as being connected to a certain place and time, whereas the Jordan narrative has multiple journeys through time and place in it. Dogwoman sees place and time pragmatically, which is, of course, echoed in the narrative itself: Dogwoman, at least in the Dogwoman narrative, stays within the time and place construction of 17th-century London. Moreover, Dogwoman narrates her story in the past tense and her story follows a chronological order. Despite the Dogwoman narrative's emphasis on chronology, specific historical time of narrative, and one place, Dogwoman is able to witness Jordan's ability to "journey" and transcend time, place, and body. In the next quotation from the Dogwoman narrative, Dogwoman takes Jordan to see the first banana in England:

> I saw Jordan standing stock still. He was standing with both his arms upraised and staring at the banana above Johnson's head. I put my head next to his head and looked where he looked and I saw deep blue waters against a pale shore and trees whose branches sang with green and birds in the fairground colours and an old man in a loin-cloth.
>
> This was the first time Jordan set sail. (13)

Nevertheless, it is significant that Dogwoman herself does not embark on these journeys triggered by the mind or the dreams. This in my view has to do with the fact that Dogwoman is excessively represented as a corporeal character throughout the novel. In fact, the two narratives, that of Jordan and Dogwoman, could be seen as a negotiation of the mind/body dichotomy, that is, the masculine mind and the feminine body. However, Dogwoman's body is not as contained or restored in the metaphor of essentialised time and place, or her character represented as "a prison of the body", as

it may seem. Nor is the Jordan narrative simply an appraisal of the journeys of a transcendent mind, oblivious of the body. I will now examine "the journeys" the protagonists make through time, place, and the narratives of the novel and sees whether they could be read queerly.

There are several temporal slippages in the narratives of *Sexing the Cherry* that can, in fact, be read queerly. As an example of these slippages, I present the following passage from the Jordan narrative:

> *Time 2* : They are cat-calling the girl as she comes out of school. She hates them, she wants to kill them. They tell her she smells, that she's too fat, too tall. She walks home along the river bank to a council flat in Upper Thames Street. The traffic deafens her. She climbs up the steps at Waterloo Bridge to look at St Paul's. All she can see are rows of wooden stakes and uncertain craft bobbing along the water. She can't hear the traffic any more, the roar of dogs is deafening. Coming to herself, she kicks the bunch of hounds and drags her shawl closer to her. For a moment she felt dizzy, lost her balance, but no, she's home as always. She can see her hut. She laughs, and the wind blows through the gaps in her teeth. Jordan will be waiting for her. She doesn't have to see him to know he's there. (82, author's italics)

The "girl" in this passage, in the light of the whole novel, is the Activist, the first person narrator of the Activist narrative. Indeed, references to council flats and "deafening" traffic place the girl in the time frame of the Activist narrative in the contemporary London of the late 20th century. However, in the middle of the passage her body seems to shift into the Dogwoman narrative because the present day London has changed into the 17th century milieu with "the wooden stakes and uncertain craft" in the river familiar from the Dogwoman narrative. Not only is there a shift between time and place but there is a corporeal shift, too. This is evident because now "she" can hear the dogs and see the hut, which are associated with Dogwoman's hounds and home. Moreover, "she" has "gaps in her teeth" which hint at the body of Dogwoman, as well. In addition, the corporeal shift is represented in the passage by feeling "dizzy" and "losing one's balance". This dizziness and imbalance, in my view, can be

interpreted to signify the inequity and the shifting premise of subject in time and place. Indeed, the idea of wholeness of the subject and the body is vehemently put into a queer light because, when the Activist's body and Dogwoman's body are fused together in time and place, they defy the boundaries of bodies. To analyse further these bodily constructions in time, I will now focus on the Activist narrative.

The Activist narrative tells a story of an activist woman in the first-person narrative. She is a chemist, who begins a campaign to stop the pollution in the rivers and lakes of England. Her body is described as having similarities with that of Dogwoman's. The next quotations from the Activist narrative are examples of these similarities. In them the Activist describes her hallucinations which start to affect her at the time she begins her one-woman campaign against the high levels of mercury in the lakes and rivers:

> I am a woman going mad. I am a woman hallucinating. I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant. When I am a giant I go out with my sleeves rolled up and my skirts swirling round me like a whirlpool. I have a sack such as kittens are drowned in and I stop off all over the world filling it up. Men shoot at me, but I take the bullets out of my cleavage and I chew them up. Then I laugh and laugh and break their guns between my fingers the way you would a fishbone. (121–122)

> When the weight had gone I found out something strange: that the weight persisted in my mind. I had an alter ego who was huge and powerful, a woman whose only morality was her own and whose loyalties were fierce and few. She was my patron saint, the one I called on when I felt myself dwindling away through cracks in the floor or slowly fading in the street. Whenever I called on her I felt my muscles swell and laughter fill up my throat. Of course it was only a fantasy, at least at the beginning . . . (125, author's full stops)

In these examples, the Activist's hallucinations resemble Dogwoman's body and behaviour from the Dogwoman narrative which I examined in the third chapter. Indeed, in the first quotation she imagines herself as "giant" who wears skirts and carries a sack like Dogwoman does. She is also impervious to harm as she defies

bullets just like Dogwoman does while fighting against the Puritan guards in the Dogwoman narrative:

> The other five came at me and when I dispatched two for an early judgment another took his musket and fired straight in the chest. I fell over, killing the man who was poised behind me, and plucked the musket ball out of my cleavage. (66)

At this point the influence of the Dogwoman narrative on the Activist narrative, and consequently on the mind and body of the Activist, is represented as being hallucinations. In the latter quotation, "the giant woman" has transformed into "an alter ego" or a "patron saint" for the Activist. No longer is the giant only the workings of pure imagination or "fantasy", as it is put at the end of the second quotation. As a matter of fact, in the second quotation Dogwoman's presence does not only resemble but affects the Activist's body. In fact, when she calls on Dogwoman she now feels her "muscles swell" and she has actually begun to laugh like the imaginary giant in the first quotation.

This reconstruction of the monstrous body of the Dogwoman in fusion with the Activist's body is significant because it further queers the traditional understandings of monstrosity. Monstrosity becomes contagious through time and place in the dialogue of the bodies of Dogwoman and the Activist, and also in the dialectics and fusions of their respective narratives. The Dogwoman narrative is preoccupied with the present and with immediacy of time and place. Despite the earlier discussion on the apparent stability of temporal and spatial construction in the Dogwoman narrative, however, it is the excess of her monstrous body that seems to defy the restrictions of time and place. Dogwoman's monstrously excessive features and behaviour shift through time and place and narratives, and incorporate into the Activist's body in the Activist narrative.

In fact, it should be noted that in the Activist narrative there are three references on monstrosity regarding the Activist. The first one occurs after the Activist has explained how alienated and lonely she has felt at home. She has not been the daughter her parents expected her to be:

> I imagined my parents' house as a shell to contain me. An environment suitable for a fantastic creature who needed to suck in the warmth and nourishment until it was ready to shrug off the shell and burst out. At night, in bed, I felt the whole house breathing in and out as I did. The roof tiles, the bricks, the lagging, the plumbing, all were subject to my rhythm. I was a monster in a carpeted egg. (124)

In the first quotation, the activist describes herself as a "fantastic creature", "a monster" being born from "a carpeted egg". This origin story of a newborn monster echoes my earlier discussion on the origin stories of Dogwoman and Jordan in the previous chapter. However, the Activist is not represented as a foundling like Dogwoman and Jordan. Instead, she imagines and narrates her own origin story, her monster-becoming, which is not temporally linked to childhood at all, but instead it coincides with her leaving home to become a chemist. I see this origin story of the Activist as a continuation of the criticism of the subject being connected to originality, coherence, and wholeness which I discussed in the previous chapter in relation to Dogwoman and Jordan's origin stories. The monster-becoming of the Activist and the other origin stories in *Sexing the Cherry* could be read queerly because they problematise the originality of the subject and the identity formation and envision alternative ways of becomings to the world.

Another way of illustrating the temporal interconnectedness of the Dogwoman and the Activist and their narratives is to consider them both as agents of change. At the Nicolas narrative, Nicolas is impressed by the Activist's accomplishments and principles and finds her camp by the polluted river. In the end of the Nicolas narrative, the Activist's last words to Nicolas are: "'Let's burn it,' she said. 'Let's burn down

the factory'" (142). This echoes, of course, Dogwoman's solution to burn down London in order to cleanse it from the rot of the Plague and the corrupted legacy of the Puritan rule: "'This city should be burned down,' I whispered to myself. 'It should burn and burn until there is nothing left but the cooling wind'" (141–142). Therefore, in accordance to my previous discussion on Dogwoman and London, she, too, could be considered a royalist activist and her monstrous body a tool of creating change: namely murdering the Puritans and setting London on fire. Furthermore, Angela Marie Smith claims that this confluence of the "two moments of anger at political and environmental corruption" questions "linear history upholding the interest of the powerful" (Smith, 2005, 22).

To further explain the links between temporalities and monstrosity in *Sexing the Cherry* I will introduce Halberstam's concept of queer time. Halberstam critiques the canonised theorists of postmodern geography, such as Harvey,[11] for ignoring the naturalised heterosexual premise in their formulations of time (Halberstam, 2005, 5–8). Halberstam links the emergence of queer time at the end of the 20th century and the AIDS epidemic and "the constantly diminishing future [that] creates a new emphasis on the here, the present, the now" (*ibid.*, 2). She sees queer time as a concept that can be used to describe the models of temporality that appear within postmodernism when "paradigmatic markers of life experience—namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death" are discarded (*ibid.*). By deconstructing the naturalised and normative order of human temporalities, the "markers of life experience", she makes room for queer understandings of time.

This concept of queer time can be applied to the representation of the Activist. The second time monstrosity is mentioned in the Activist narrative it occurs in a context in

[11] On Harvey's theories on postmodern geography, and the concept of space –time compression, see Harvey (1989).

which the Activist contemplates what kind of future she is expected to want as a woman:

> When I'm dreaming I want a home and a lover and some children, but it won't work. Who'd want to live with a monster? I may not look like a monster any more but I couldn't hide it for long. I'd break out, splitting my dress, throwing the dishes at the milkman if he leered at me and said, 'Hello, darling.' The truth is I've lost patience with this hypocritical stinking world. (127)

It seems that the heterosexual nuclear family ideal of "a home, a lover, and some children" has become an issue to be dreamed about, whereas the monstrous identity of the Activist has ceased to be a construction of "mere" imagination and hallucination and, indeed, has become "real". It is as if the tables have been turned and the normative heterosexuality identity has become "a dream" that cannot be realised and the monstrous identity is something that cannot be hidden. In other words, as I noted in the subchapter on monstrosity and sexuality, monstrosity is again employed here to point out the constructedness of heterosexuality and to question its naturalised status. What makes this criticism even more emphatic is the fact that the monstrosity constructed in the Activist narrative enables the Activist to imagine a queer temporality of her own, or that of in fusion with Dogwoman's, without having to adapt to normative temporal course of coherent gender identity, marriage, and heterosexual reproduction. That is to say, the fusion of the two characters challenges the relationship between bodies and time and produces an understanding of identities as fragmented instead of stable. Indeed, the "paradigmatic markers of life experience" can be seen in a queer light as the Activist cannot fit the naturalised temporal progress of heterosexual identity, the birth, the marriage, and the reproduction and, indeed, "breaks out" of them.

The novel's postmodern narrative and its temporal fusions have, nevertheless, been criticised, too. In Lynne Pearce's opinion, this "reincarnating time travel" is

represented as a liberatory, easy, and unproblematic experience and she questions “the apparent amaterialism of the text” (Pearce, 1994, 184–185). However, “the apparent amaterialism” is not the whole truth about the time shifts and “journeys” in the novel. Even though bodies are unconstrained by time and place in certain parts of the novel, the bodies face material consequences. The next passage and quotation are from the Jordan narrative. The first is one of the specifically named passages of Jordan’s “notes” on time and its nature and the second one is the scene where Jordan and Fortunata, the love of his life, depart from each other:

> *Memory 1* : The scene I have just described to you may lie in the future or in the past. Either I have found Fortunata or I will find her. I cannot be sure. Either I am remembering her or I am still imagining her. But she is somewhere in the grid of time, a co-ordinate, as I am. (93, author’s italics)

> Then she turns away and I watch her walk back across the sand and up over the rocks. I begin to row, using her body as a marker.
> I always will. (103)

In the first passage named *Memory 1*, Jordan is, again, represented as defying the dichotomous relationship between the past and the future and what is reality and true. It could be argued in the spirit of this passage that the body is “a co-ordinate”, a mark, which does not disappear or dissolve altogether “in the grid of time”. In other words, despite their constructedness in time and place, bodies remain material to Jordan and other characters of *Sexing the Cherry*, as well. For how else could, for example, the excessive monstrosity seeping from narrative and character to another be explained but reinstating that the body as an important “marker” in the postmodern novel? Indeed, Fortunata’s body is a co-ordinate with the help of which Jordan continues his temporal journeys.

5. Conclusion

In this pro gradu thesis I have studied various representations of bodies and identities linked with queer, monstrosity, places and temporalities in Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*. My intention has been to examine them from a queer theoretical point of view. I feel that the theoretical tools of Butler have been useful for my analysis for it has offered tools and concepts to unravel the bodies and identities in the novel. The idea of monstrosity as constructed, liminal, binary-challenging has also been an important part of this thesis.

In the third chapter I discovered that Dogwoman's monstrosity disrupts the categories of body and gender identity. Dogwoman's monstrous size, ugliness, and strength challenge the traditional female body. Furthermore, the mixture of masculinity and femininity present in Dogwoman's behaviour makes suspect the Butlerian sex/gender system because the naturalised links between female body and feminine gender identity are problematised. Moreover, the excessive bodily excretion or abjection in relation to Dogwoman parodies the notion of naturalised female body and feminine gender identity.

Sexual identities and sexual acts are also connected to queer and monstrosity in the novel. Dogwoman's experiences of heterosexual relationships and sex acts can be read from a queer perspective because they, too, denaturalise and parody the sex/gender system, for the logic of heteronormative gender identity and desire are questioned. In addition, the Puritans are constructed as monstrous in the Dogwoman narrative. The competing moral values of Puritan "denial" and Dogwoman's "excess" result in the ritual purging of the monstrous, or murder of the "perverse" Puritans. They are punished by Dogwoman because of their sexual hypocrisy and monster-making. Here, in other words, the monstrous Dogwoman constructs the monstrosity of

the Puritans. Therefore, through this overlapping complex monstrosity the Dogwoman narrative effectively works as a technology of monstrosity that draws attention to the constructedness of the monstrosity itself.

The “origin stories” of Dogwoman and Jordan, too, can be read from a queer point of view because they challenge the naturalised route and progress to subjectivity. In fact, the original symbiosis, birth, mothering, and their heterosexual premise are questioned in the novel through the origin stories of Dogwoman and Jordan. In addition, the naturalness of the heterosexual reproduction and fixed gender binaries are challenged through the process of grafting cherries. It is, again, Dogwoman who names the grafted cherry as monstrous and genderless. This further contributes to the complex technology of monstrosity in the novel.

However, the construction of place and temporalities offer another kind of departure for readings in the spirit of queer and monstrosity. In the fourth chapter of this thesis I have demonstrated how cities in *Sexing the Cherry* are constructed through social relations that, at the same time, construct the identities and bodies that occupy them. The contradictory relation that Dogwoman has with London can be described as one of disgust at the foulness of the city and, on the other hand, as nostalgia toward the King’s London. For Dogwoman, the Plague becomes an evidence of Puritans’ corruption and setting the city on fire is another act of ritualistic purging in order to destroy the monstrosity of Puritanism. This interconnectedness between, place, body, and identity of place becomes evident in the case of Dogwoman and London, and in the case of the cities Jordan visits, as well. Jordan’s travels in the City of Words and the City that moves its place dramatise further the idea of place as a dynamic category. Especially through my analysis of the City of words the performative force of sex/gender system can be reworked.

The complex narrative structure of *Sexing the Cherry* and the multiple temporalities in it has provided us another chance to examine the bodies and identities in a queer way. Indeed, Jordan's contemplation on time in the novel inspires various fragmented identities and bodies which challenge the modernist dichotomies of mind/body and public time/personal and enable a postmodern interpretation of these narrative temporalities. Moreover, the fact that the narratives, bodies and political agency of Dogwoman and the Activist fuse in time invites a queer reading. It also confirms that multi-temporal monstrosity as a route to queer temporality in which the heteronormative and naturalised progress of life is questioned through the Activist's character.

In conclusion, in this thesis I have discovered that monstrosity is, indeed, an essential thematic accelerator in *Sexing the Cherry*, not only because of the monstrous Dogwoman but also because the Dogwoman's monster-making extends to other representations, as well. The Puritans' "perverse" sexuality, grafting of a gender confused cherry, and the "foul" London are all constructed as monstrous, by Dogwoman herself. Furthermore, her monstrous body and behaviour reach the Activist in another temporality. Monstrosity in *Sexing the Cherry* is, indeed, a technology of monstrosity category that can be employed to reveal the constructedness of monstrosity itself. It also enables us to study sexual and gender identities and to highlight the constructedness of the sex/gender system with its heteronormative links between, sex, gender, and desire. Indeed, it is the monstrosities that the novel flirts with that would require more examining from different points of views, for my queer reading is only one potential theoretical background for this purpose. In fact, the theories of monsters and monstrosities would offer an interesting starting point to study Winterson's other novels and short stories.

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