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The Role of Pennine Madness and Visionary Elements in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

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INTRODUCTION

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is the partially autobiographical novel written by Jeanette Winterson, a woman originally born in Manchester, northwest England, who was adopted and raised by a Pentecostal Evangelist couple in the much smaller provincial west Pennine town of Accrington, important for producing NORI (iron) bricks, famous international sportsmen, musicians and ultimately the writer Jeanette Winterson. Formally, *Oranges* responds to the *Bildungsroman* pattern, presenting the autodiegetic narrator's story and her process of maturation in the face of other expected social roles. The protagonist is called Jeanette, although the novel is only partially biographical, not for the details given, but for what lies behind the story, such as the harshness of existence and religion, the supernatural, visions and superstition, and the sensation of the imminence of death. This is one point of view, and the interesting thing about this novel is how different the reactions have been to it.

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit was published in 1985 by Pandora Press, competitor to other feminist publishers such as Virago and Women's Press. This fact seemed to condition the critical reaction which considered it as 'a realistic and heavily autobiographical comedy of "coming out"' (Onega, 2012: n. p). Thus, Rebecca O'Rourke considers it a predominantly lesbian novel (1991: 57-70), Lynne Pyket described *Oranges* as 'a portrait of the artist as a young working class lesbian who flees the nets of religion and community [in order to become] an artist / prophet' (Pyket, 1996: 58). Keryn Carter sees the novel in terms of painful events and the non acceptance of female limitation (Carter, 1998: 15-23), and Christine Reynier considers *Oranges* as an example of her art of contestation, aimed, like her other

fictions, at attacking religious and political power (Reynier, 2004: 17). Naturally, all are right, but lack a deeper understanding of the worldview behind Jeanette Winterson's novel. As Onega has pointed out, Winterson herself has rejected the label of 'lesbian writer' and prefers to be considered simply 'a writer', like male writers usually are (Onega, 2005: 229). And the novel surely has more merit than the mere theme of sexual orientation and political contestation. Arguably, it is a novel about making choices, listening to the inner voices, and living life to the full with great bursts of excessiveness, energy and passion. The narrator, Jeanette, is the product of Winterson's geographical and historical location and religious upbringing. Like her creator, she is imaginative, visionary, and superstitious, a young woman who is made to choose at one point in the novel between what she herself describes in Blakean terms as being a 'Priest' or a 'Prophet', that is, abiding by the received dogmas of her community or find her own vital way. Jeanette eventually opts for being a Prophet crying out in the wilderness with a voice that is difficult to understand and that needs to be felt and above all, listened to. The process of individuation we see Jeanette go through is narrated with the help of fantasy stories and involves making full use of the protagonist's imagination in order for her to understand the world she lives in and to decide if another alternative life would be possible. The narrator has to choose her own way to find freedom and her own individual identity and creativity. Being a Priest or a Prophet is a choice between what William Blake famously described as 'The single vision of the materialist or the 'fourfold vision' of the Poet/Prophet.[1] As Jeanette-as-narrator reflects:

[1] As Susana Onega has pointed out, William Blake, drew this distinction for the first time in a ‘Letter to Butts’ (22 November 1802): 'According to Blake, poet/prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Los enjoyed "fourfold

> I could have been a Priest instead of a prophet. The Priest has a book with the words set out. Old words, known words, words of power. Words that are always on the surface. Words for every occasion. The words work. They do what they are supposed to do; comfort and discipline. The Prophet has no book. The Prophet is a voice that cries in the wilderness, full of sounds that do not always set into meaning. The Prophets cry out because they are troubled by demons. (Winterson, 1996: 156)

Jeanette's eventual choice of the Prophet position is what makes *Oranges* such a visionary, dynamic, vital and wholesome read. However, before looking at the critical opinion in more detail, we have to examine what has formed both the fictional Jeanette and the author Jeanette Winterson spiritually and given them the visionary imagination that informs the novel. In *Art Objects* (1995), her literary manifesto, Jeanette Winterson makes explicit her admiration for the Romantic and Modernist traditions. These romantic leanings would explain her admiration for William Blake and the fictional Jeanette's decision to choose the path of the visionary. However, it is my contention that the writer's visionary stance is also the product of a peculiar worldview that is associated to her region.

The Pennines is a hill range, not reaching any greater height than 400 metres above sea level. The northern part of it is known as the 'backbone of England' and stretches along 260 kms of its total 450km length, which tapers into the deep southern Cheviot Hills. The northern Pennines has been home to cave dwellers for 10,000 years and its geography and history have chiselled out a very particular and not easy type of character, which is strongly based on the granite rock, superstition, the supernatural, passion, fear, energy, worrying,

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vision" or enlarged consciousness. Opposed to it is the 'Single vision & Newton's sleep' brought about by the advent of rational materialism' (Onega, 2006, 51n44). He then developed it at length in 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell' (1792). See Onega, 2004: 235-36 on this.

foreboding doom and gloom, and violence, both physical and psychological, which is ingrained into the Pennine people through the family, school, institutionalised religion and the spiritual manifestation of its effects. The effects of the religious vision that people live and are is what I call the 'Pennine madness'.

The Pennine madness is more than a regional peculiarity or an excess of eccentricity among its population, which certainly exists, or the high rate of mental illness that is medically recognised in the Pennine region (see Annex). It is a visionary ability to live doom and gloom and the inevitability of forthcoming death, which although having a part of fear and awe to it, also provides a happy tone to life, a type of joyous feeling of divine justice, especially and nearly exclusively for oneself. Jeanette Winterson's Pennine world would have been full of short conversations where someone might say 'be careful with him, he will cause trouble', to which the answer would be 'not if he dies first'. A typical goodbye may be: 'I will see you tomorrow', and answered with 'Only, God willing'. No one is allowed to be proud or presumptuous. You will live another day if God lets you, so don't conform. To spoil a person's pleasure in your possible death, you might say so yourself: 'I will see you, if the Lord doesn't take me first'. This naturally gives one the self satisfaction of being chosen by Jesus before anyone else. People have a cruel streak and the fictional Jeanette is no exception, terrorising fellow classmates with eternal damnation in the fires of hell (42) and its variation of fire changing to ice cold as hell in harsh winter. The late night pub call is 'drink up! It may be your last'. However, this is not to say the Pennine character is pessimistic, far from it. It wallows in adversity with a passionate energetic invocation of a

deeper visionary power that is both destructive and comforting at the same time.

Visionary power can be seen in Jenny Randles' 2002 book *Supernatural Pennines* and Jeanette Winterson's 2012 novel *The Daylight Gate*, a story about Pendle Hill near Accrington, famous for its seventeenth-century witches that were eventually rounded up and burnt to death, with the notable exception of Mother Shipton, who probably fled the area and lived prophesising in a cave in Knaresborough, north Yorkshire until her death. Sarah Hall in a review published in *The Guardian* says about Winterson's novel:

> Pendle: a place synonymous with Witches and Britain's most notorious diabolism trials […]. You are not asked to believe in magic. Magic exists. A severed head talks. A man is transmogrified into a hare. The story is stretched as tight as a rock, so the reader's disbelief is ruptured rather than suspended. (Hall, 2012: 37)

This is Winterson's world, the same as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and to a lesser extent Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, one of the few permitted books in Jeanette's home, full of spiritual invocations, moral superiority, references to the supernatural and examples of Pennine madness. Mrs Winterson sees ghosts in her kitchen, while Joseph in *Wuthering Heights* is the joyous gloom and happy black cloud that pervades the novel. He is happy to see Hareton swear and behave badly, 'his soul abandoned to perdition', because Heathcliff would have to answer for it in the next life (Brontë, 1979: 232). It is 'a melancholy sweeter than joy' (219), the same we see in Jeanette's mother's song 'Blot them out'. Joseph constantly evokes the Lord to forgive us, to bless us, to help us and to judge *them*. It is he who is happy and nearly dances when Heathcliff dies and the 'devil takes his soul' (365). Winterson also believes the devil exists. It is Biblical. Jeanette in *Oranges* has a crucial conversation with

her own orange demon, (Winterson, 1996: 106-07), and Winterson tells us in her autobiography that this demon is very real, but that she has finally brought it under control (Winterson, 2011: 176-77). In *Wuthering Heights*, unlike *Oranges*, where Jeanette is taught to believe that she can change the world, we suffer Joseph's moral superiority through the repeated use of 'you are nothing' (nowt), 'a nothing' and 'good for nothing' (Brontë, 1979: 127). Nelly even dares to tell her mistress Catherine that she is not fit to go to Heaven. 'All sinners would be miserable in Heaven' (120). Young Jeanette has a more global vision and builds herself an inner world through her books and the words and language she can use to escape from her mother's idea of the world as being an enormous rubbish bin. Brontë's Joseph would have agreed with her: 'All works together for the good to the chosen people who are picked out of the rubbish' (125).

The supernatural is omnipresent in Pennine life. Heathcliff is called a changeling, a piece of wood that goblins use to substitute a baby when they steal it (304). In the autobiography, Mrs Winterson calls her adoptive daughter as much when she says they went to pick up a baby boy, but 'the devil led us to the wrong crib' (Winterson, 2011: 1). For her this is a real fact. A bad action raises a goblin. Imps and demons often possess people and ghosts are seen and felt to walk the earth. The devil and Satan are mentioned and felt to be very much alive and active. For Jeanette's family, the answer is in prayer and the act of praying, with Church services lasting as long as three hours.

Pennine madness is the madness of the visionary, which goes back to the eighteenth century with the growth in the numbers of religious Dissenters (a term from Latin: *dissentire*:

to Disagree), who were not always atheists, but were freethinkers, people like William Blake, Daniel Defoe, J.S. Mills, and which has played an important part of Pennine life through Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers and Methodists. Freethinking is central to *Oranges*, since it is part of young Jeanette's quest for self discovery, satisfying her curiosity, completing her maturation process and demystifying the rigid rules of the Christian faith she had been brought up in. Jeanette is a visionary because she is self informed by her reasoning. As Steven Kreis explains:

> English Dissent was a willingness to demystify the Christian faith by considering its principles in accordance with human reason alone. As such, Dissent signifies the shift from a reliance upon external authority in moral matters, to the internal authority of the self-informed reason [...]. To go against the dictates of reason was to violate God's will. (1984: 7-14)

Pennine madness involves the possibility to transcend or descend far beyond the rational reality of daily life, but is more than mere eccentricity, since the boundaries of objectivity and subjectivity are blurred. Pennine madness is not only about living out in life the terrors and dreams that spring from the head, but also invades the bodies of 'comers in' who were not born in this atmosphere but who move into the area and begin, as shown in fictional characters in *Wuthering Heights* or even perhaps in the real life of Sylvia Plath, to perceive and live out this inner drama. However, this 'inner drama' makes for creativity, resourcefulness, innovation and activity. In *Oranges*, we will see that Jeanette and her mother are all these things and that the minor characters also show these characteristics, from the woman at the funeral parlour who renews the business making new wreaths with fanciful

forms and a better menu, to Mrs Arkwright, a shop-keeper, who has thought of ways and means to get the insurance money to spend the rest of her life in sunny Spain when she burns her own shop down.

The visionary can be seen in *Wuthering Heights*, where, after hours listening to Jabes Branderley's sermon, Mr Lockwood dreams that he verbally insults the preacher and after is brutally attacked by the other listeners (Brontë, 1979: 65-66). Nelly, the maid, is superstitious of dreams, holding that they are the door that lets the terrible future in (120). It is this Blake-like visionary madness that Winterson talks about in her autobiography: 'I began to go mad' (Winterson, 2011: 161), she reflects, but mad not only because she decides to keep and talk to her own orange demon (107), which is a physical manifestation, but because, like her fictional alter ego, she has a difficult choice to make between staying at home to be a Priest, and leaving home to become a Prophet, speaking with her own voice. In the novel, Jeanette's madness also involves the fight between the real and unreal, her imaginative world of perfect love and the reality that perfection does not exist (Winterson, 1996: 60), and the contradictions she has to face up to in her maturation process, where her discoveries destroy the world she has imagined for herself. These contradictions range from finding out that she is adopted, to her mother's change of the ending of *Jane Eyre* or, more importantly, that her mother can decant and denounce the prominent role of women in the Church (131). Mad is a word used throughout *Oranges*, and is also in the author's autobiography significantly entitled *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*? No one uses more polite synonyms for mad, like 'crazy', 'cuckoo', 'loony', 'loopy', 'a screw loose', 'short of a penny', 'twisted', 'scant'

or 'potty'. It is the exact word to describe people — mad. This Pennine madness that leads to Jeanette's choice of a visionary life could therefore be said to stem from the madness of childhood, family trauma, or the violent passion and wild mental and physical energy that is both self destructive and destroys all around you. It all may come down to the water supply or the influence of the bad weather, but what is perhaps worse is that everyone accepts these traits as normal. Jeanette's family have it; the father saying nothing about a two-day exorcism in his front room (Winterson, 1996: 80). The mother kept a gun in a drawer and the bullets in a metal tin of polish (49) and Miss Jewsbury, a member of their religious community, thinks she is mad (104). Emily Brontë showed it in *Wuthering Heights*, and, in real life, The Accrington Pals, the military regiment that all died walking over the top at the battle of the Somme had it too. As Tennyson put it in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade': 'Ours is not to reason why, / Ours is but to do and die' (Tennyson,1898: 222). The Moors murderers of six children in the 1960s, The Yorkshire Ripper in the 1970s-80s, the poems of Ted Hughes, perhaps even the suicide of Sylvia Plath, although she was American born, the family portrayed in the film *Spring and Port Wine* (Peter Hammond,1970), or shown in the Alan Sillitoe story/film 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner' (1959/1962), about a juvenile delinquent who through his pride and Non-conformist nature, destroys the only possibility of living a better life in borstal. This behaviour may be interpreted as an example of Pennine madness, going against the grain just to make a point or to show you are better and stronger than everyone else. In reality the loser is you. It was in this environment and Accrington of the late 1950s/early 1960s, that Jeanette grew up. Of course, I have to say that

Sillitoe's short story is also an example of writing in the tradition of the Angry Young Men generation of the late 1950s, not necessarily restricted to the Pennines, which, as in most of England, has to do with postwar disillusionment and the Welfare State.

If we are to understand the visionary Winterson and the Blakean vision of *Jerusalem* among the dark Satanic mills of places like Accrington, then we have to look at the town itself. Accrington is located on the western edge of the Pennines within a bowl and largely encircled by surrounding hills. Originally the coal and lead mining industries were important, which may be the reason why the town has an exceptionally low life expectancy and a high rate of mental illness. It also has to be said that the results of the 1991 census declared 28% of houses in Accrington to be 'unfit' to live in (see Annex). The population may be 81,000 today, but 200 years ago, in 1811, it was 3,266, reaching 45,029 in 1911, a dramatic increase in the Industrial Revolution. This fast population growth and slow response of the Church of England allowed Non-conformism to flourish — Wesleyan, Primitive Methodists, United Free Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Swedenborgian, Unitarian, Roman Catholic and Catholic Apostolic Churches all catered for the local people's needs with a harsh message for hard people with dangerous and low paid jobs and who had a high mortality rate and low life expectancy. These religious Churches provided education, and even today, there are still the Church of England and Roman Catholic Secondary schools. The religious influence also lent its name to one of the villages that forms Accrington: Church; and although it is an area that has attracted witches, warlocks, mediums, psychics (Anon, 2012: 70), and had a famous resident in 'Mystic Meg', a local psychic and medium, this Pennine area has a strong

Methodist, Baptist and Quaker tradition on the barren tops which continues to serve moorland farms and small communities at Scar Top Sunday School, Stanbury and Heptonstall's octagonal Methodist chapel, all of which were visited by John Wesley in and around 1764.

The Pentecostal Church that Jeanette Winterson was brought up in, historically comes from the Wesleyan Methodist line of theology and is based on four fundamental truths: Jesus Christ is the Saviour, healer, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and is the coming king. The Church believes the Bible is divinely inspired, there are three in one Godhead, The virginity of Mary, bodily resurrection, the Second Coming of Jesus, the universal sinfulness of mankind, the Holy Spirit in conviction, repentance, regeneration and sanctification, baptism by the Holy Spirit, followed by corresponding signs to prove it. Salvation is received by faith alone and is evidenced by fruits of the Spirit, baptism of believers by immersion and the communion are held to be ordinances.

All of these are maintained by Louie, Jeanette's mother in *Oranges*, and perhaps just as important is the fact that the Pentecostal Church has an international mission board operating hospitals, orphanages and schools in 35 countries, which was Louie's opportunity to live a life outside Accrington through her daughter, by creating a special person dedicated to Jesus that could change the world (10). Her vision was to convert Jeanette into a missionary.

Having drawn a detailed picture of the deeper backdrop to Winterson's and her fictional alter ego's lives, we can examine critical points of view to see up to what point they agree with the influence of the Blakean religious vision that Winterson offers us in *Oranges*.

12 *Pennine Madness and Visionary Elements in* Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

From a media and critics' point of view, it has always been necessary to pigeon-hole writers by the simplest definition, often overlooking the writers' intention, interests or background. Peter Ackroyd, for example, is usually considered a biographer and 'London' novelist, and Jeanette Winterson a feminist lesbian writer. This simplicity ignores the rich complexity of a writer's personality, cultural, regional and family history, education and influences and use of intertextuality, narrative forms and language.

Keryn Carter argues that the narrator of *Oranges* experienced two painful events in her childhood: that her mother lied about the ending of *Jane Eyre*, and the discovery of her adoption papers (1996: 15). But also painful were her attempts to save souls at school, having her mother's visionary outlook on life, feeling special because you have been taught and told that you are, and trying to fit into a school system that does not recognise or feel comfortable with you. There is no denying that finding your adoption papers and realising you know nothing about your biological family must be painful, and it is also true, as Carter argues, that *Oranges* is a novel about women. Indeed, in the novel, men are either non-existent or are idealised and distant role models. In this sense, we may say it is a book about what Carter calls 'the Church's strong women' (1998: 19) and the role of being a female. However, I hold that the novel is not primarily about 'coming out', lesbianism or feminism as such, but it shows 'strong women' who have a vision of how to carry out the Lord's work, irrespective of supposed patriarchal laws. Jeanette's mother behaves according to strict patriarchal schemes and even gives up her dream of transforming Jeanette into a Priest when she is told that Jeanette's sexual orientation is the result of the assumption of a male role. The Church has

lesbian members and has had homosexual visitors to services, which Louie does not accept, but the vision of the 'chosen one' as special and going to give meaning and value to the family and Church is sacred. These women have no limits. They preach, organise beach tent campaigns, play instruments and sing, pamphleteer and reach out to people via CB radio, and as Carter says, they 'have faith in the power of their femaleness' (19). The women in the Church have real power and Jeanette is not expelled from the Church for having power and/or using it, but for her openly declared love for another young woman, which has nothing to do with her or her adoptive mother's visioned future religious life, but with her badly thought through and her self-imposed act of wrongful interpretation of acceptance of the limitations of her sex. According to Carter, 'young Jeanette has not understood the significance of their limitations' (5), but in reality there are no limitations in the Church, except not to have a lesbian relationship that could destroy her mother's vision for Jeanette. The limitation of sex with the same sex is Biblical and is Biblically unacceptable. Also in Jeanette's head there are no limitations to her inner world.

Rebecca O'Rourke, on her part, argues that *Oranges* represents a feminist position and she reads the novel as a lesbian book. She sees the novel as tackling lesbian issues, lives and writing, which superficially could be argued, but the question is surely deeper. Perhaps we could say it is a novel about self discovery and the pushing back of the physical limits imposed by patriarchal society and religious bigotry, so that the mind and the imagination can take over our lives and allow us to escape. The use of the imagination, through sleep, dreams, the Pennine Hills, working in different jobs, books, discovering her sexuality

through new friends and the magical meanings of words and language allow the young Jeanette to fly, to escape her small two up two down physical world. O'Rourke is correct, however, to accept that 'being a lesbian be just one part of a more complex whole, as it is for most of us' (1991: 65). She also echoes a group comment 'that a lesbian book is defined by who writes it and not who it is written for' (65), which is true for any book, and which is very applicable here, since the novel is an example of the *Bildungsroman* pattern which shows us the growing process experienced by young Jeanette, a visionary figure, ill defined and open to all possibilities of life. She can combine studies with work, all kinds of jobs, be disciplined to read literature from A-Z, without leaving anybody out, and imagine a different life away from home. Jeanette is passionate in an energetic violent way and can see beyond the hard small town she has grown up in. Equally as important to note is that, as a deeply religious person, she does not condemn or reproach others, her inner world is where she lives. There is an acceptance by Jeanette of what there is and how people are, and only you can be saved or condemned, but everything is down to the inner self and what people want to do with their lives. In her autobiography, Jeanette Winterson says of her adoptive mother, that 'Mrs Winterson was her own secret society, and she longed to have me there […]. It is of course the basis of romantic love—you and me against the world. A world where there are only two of us' (2011: 119). Similarly, the fictional Jeanette was her mother's visionary future and personal achievement and goal to be a missionary and leave a mark on the world for both of them. After succeeding in finding her biological mother, Jeanette Winterson finds herself unexpectedly defending her adoptive mother: 'I hate Ann [her biological mother] criticising

Mrs Winterson. She was a monster but she was my monster' (229). Pennine madness, for all its powerful Non-conformity, also involves being non-judgmental, which the Pastor in *Oranges* as a 'comer-inner' does not understand, but this is where Louie fails her daughter, making sexuality a personal issue. Pennine people can violently disagree but accept and not make an issue a personal one. It is a question of making decisions and accepting the consequences, which we see in Jeanette's reaction to the last meeting with her beloved Melanie, now married and studying to be a missionary.

O'Rourke also brings up the point of humour in the novel, and how it had provoked laughter, but slips into the easy analysis of seeing it as a way to make sense of the world and a way of coping with a type of childhood drama. Comedy is the most serious art form, comical and ridiculous at the same time. We cannot talk about humour, laughter and funny incidents in William Blake or *Oranges*, because what Winterson offers us is the 'droll' dryness of the Pennines, that is full of pathos, an all-knowing philosophy of how to treat life in order to survive its black, bleak harshness. It is not black humour because it lacks cruelty, but Winterson's droll humour, which is being able to laugh at people but with affection and here is her vision of love, which is her constant quest in the stories she writes. Love is her absolute goal of achievement, the ultimate sacrifice. We see this at the end of Winterson's third novel, *The Passion* and in Jeanette's choosing to let go of the familial in order to find love. There are plenty of droll examples in Pennine madness, such as the couple who are celebrating thirty years of married life and are asked the secret of their success. The wife says: 'He promised never to hit me, and I promised never to poison him'. An elderly couple,

both around 93 years old, are at the funeral of one of their sons who has died at 75. The husband says to the wife: 'I always knew we would have problems bringing up that boy'. A final story about love is the woman who over her life has had a hysterectomy, a hip replacement operation, is blind in one eye, has false teeth and is recovering from a mastectomy after breast cancer. She meets a neighbour who asks how she is. She replies: 'Well, I am still here, but the Lord is taking me one piece at a time'. Pennine madness as reflected in Winterson's humour, is resilient, not resigned to accepting 'one's lot' in life and it is this vision that makes her express herself as a Prophet and not a Priest, something we will look at in detail later in this essay. Winterson here is taking a stand against the rigidity and absoluteness of institutionalised religion and its message about the acceptance of the necessity of suffering in life. She has a different vision, but is fighting against her childhood environment and character, which means withdrawing into her inner imaginative self.

I have decided to focus on Pennine madness and visionary elements in *Oranges*, because I feel that it casts a new perspective on the novel, which has been studied and commented on by many critics, but from a number of critical viewpoints that ignored the socio-cultural and ideological factors that contributed to its writing. In this sense, it would be useful to look at the author Jeanette Winterson's autobiography, where she says:

> Where you are born—what you are born into, the place, the history of the place how that history mates with your own-stamps who you are […]. We were working class. We were the mass at the factory gates […]. I didn't want to disappear. I didn't want to live and die in the same place […]. I dreamed of escape.[...] I just wanted to get out. (2011: 16-17)

Therefore, after having explored Winterson's background in order to understand her

better, and having looked at some critical stances regarding the novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, I would like to narrow down the focus of this essay to the role of Pennine madness in young Jeanette's maturation process and how this influences the visionary elements that form part of her quest to be a Prophet, which in Blakean terms would mean to build her own Jerusalem and Heaven amongst the dark Satanic mills. Drawing on Onega, I will situate Jeanette in the position of William Blake's Poet/Prophet Los, in his poem *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804-18?), when he tells his own spectre 'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's / I will not reason & compare; my business is to Create' (Onega, 2004: 237). My contention is that author and eponymous character share this visionary goal in life. They will be the voice of the Prophet that cries in the wilderness and, as we will see, *Oranges* takes us along the trail of that search for individuation.

Jeanette, however, is not the only character with a visionary perspective and a background of Pennine madness. I will examine Jeanette's mother, Louie and other minor characters in the novel, the influence of William Blake as a visionary prophet or, in Peter Ackroyd's terms, as a 'London Luminary and Cockney Visionary' (Onega, 1999: 98). And finally, I will look at examples of Pennine madness and the visionary parallelisms in each chapter of the novel.

CHAPTER I

THE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

In this part of the essay, I would like to focus on the actual characters, their personalities and motivations presented in *Oranges*: Jeanette's mother, Louie, Jeanette, Elsie Norris and other minor characters that illustrate and demonstrate Pennine madness and how this behaviour influences young Jeanette's decisions and contribute to shape the visionary elements in her maturation process.

At the beginning of *Oranges*, Jeanette Winterson lays out the scene of small town life versus a more worldly life, mediocrity and conformity against the goal allotted to Jeanette by her mother to 'change the world' (1996: 10). In the introduction to the Vintage edition of the novel, the writer says that: 'Oranges deals absolutely with emotions and confrontations that none of us can avoid. First love, loss, grief, rage and above all courage' (xiv). These are all necessary parts of young Jeanette's individuation and maturation process. It is Pennine madness that forces people 'to do something large and do it well' (xi). As Winterson further comments: 'Everyone, at some time in their life, must choose whether to stay with a ready-made world that may be safe but which is also limiting, or to push forward, often past the frontiers of commonsense, into a personal place, unknown and untried' (xiv). The 'ready-made world' (xiv) mentioned by the author is the safety of home and following the already mapped out life that the fictional Jeanette's mother has planned for her, to become a missionary. This is the visionary life of the Priest that Louie had imagined for her daughter,

Jeanette. However, pushing forward into the great wide unknown, implies making your own decisions and discovering things for yourself, which is the other option available to Jeanette and which would convert her into a Prophet, an independent freethinker, who has chosen to be who and where she wants to be.

However, this is only one part of the visionary elements presented in the novel. Behind young Jeanette's and her mother's decisions is a strong imagination and imaginary world of superstition and deep spiritual connection with their surroundings that calls to them, and the weight of the history of regional Dissent and Non-conformity which stems from the social unrest that happened over the last three hundred and fifty years, from the Coiners, who forged money, in the eighteenth-century, the Luddites, who destroyed the factory machines in the early nineteenth-century, to the origins of the Trade Union Movement. This created strong people and, on the domestic front, women were no exception. Men work and the women are in complete control over their homes, each independent but also interdependent on the other. Jeanette is going to break this bond and is the antithesis of her mother in the sense here, that her mother as a 'strong woman' (1996: 131) represents the patriarchal scheme of things, controlling the money and never talking about it (76), maintaining the home and family without disturbing the husband, and is aware of her responsibility, knowing that the future of her family and the shame or acclaim of the neighbours depends on how she runs her home.

Jeanette's mother is a clear example of Dissenting Non-conformity. She is a battler and argumentative, wanting Mormons to knock on her door so she can pick a fight with them and voting Tory in a Labour town (3), because this is what Pennine madness entails, a constant

fight, not only against other people, but against themselves and their inner nature to conform with little, and against the smallness and physical discomforts of physical life. The characters are physically confined to small spaces and have to fight against each other's will in relationships which are little more than power struggles, that in turn, are little more than cries to escape what Winterson describes in the Introduction as the 'dinginess' (xi) of all around them. The author has had, 'filth, discomfort, hunger, cold, trauma and drama' (xi) and has clear what she wants and what will happen if she cannot achieve her goal: 'dinginess, the damp small confines of the mediocre and the gradual corrosion of beauty and light, the compromising and the settling; these things make good work impossible' (xi). Good work needs radical, extreme and uncompromising response, and it is this explosive desire in the novel's characters to reach their own ideal place of 'beauty and light' (xi) that leads them into extreme positions, each set against the other. The use of the word 'settling' is important in the novel, since it means 'conformity', and neither Jeanette nor her mother are disposed to settle or conform with what they have. Their visions are universal, without limits and contrast with Jeanette's father, who does not exist as a character in the novel, because, as his wife reflects, he was 'not one to push himself' (8).

Jeanette's mother is definitely the prototype Pennine person, energetic, passionate, superstitious, Non-conformist, distant if not aloof, desperately seeking to better herself, categorically black and white. She has an inferiority complex, because she was raised in a middle-class family but married and became working class with a lot less money to spend, so she needs to demonstrate her worth, especially since she could speak French, play the piano

well and has been abroad for a time. She is both visionary and hard working, as well as contradictory: a loyal friend but a ferocious enemy. All these topped up with self-righteousness and an excess of character. Typically, she hated being a nobody and tried to live her life through Jeanette, thinking that she had adopted her to have a friend and as a way to say that she had existed and been in this world (1). The years pass and Louie wanted to leave her mark on the world, not only through herself, but through young Jeanette.

Jeanette's mother uses religion, the Church and her image of religious fervour to mask her inabilities and short-comings. She imagined, formulated and fabulated her own image. In *Oranges*, we see Louie inventing theology, especially since she thinks she is right (5); playing out a role as what young Jeanette describes as an apocalyptic Old Testament prophet: 'vengeance is mine' (4); and standing on equal footing with God by not kneeling to pray (4). Pennine madness has no mental limits of size or grandeur as Jeanette drolly comments in comparing her mother with Napoleon giving orders from his horse (4). In her own words:

> I do think that the relationship my mother enjoyed with God had a lot to do with positioning. She was Old Testament through and through. Not for her the meek and paschal Lamb, she was out there, up front with the prophets, and much given to sulking under trees when the appropriate destruction did not materialise. Quite often it did, her will or the God's I can't say. (4)

Jeanette's mother had an equal standing with God. If God is the law giver, she would be His wrath wielding representative on earth. Consequently, she expected total obedience and acquiescence from all around her. Louie is the figure of a supremely 'strong woman', who has been used to 'wielding power' (131). She feels at one with God through a close union that

excludes those people around her, including her husband and daughter, and has her walking hand in hand with God when she sang 'We have an anchor' and how 'the cables passed from His heart to mine […] Our eyes behold […] The city of gold' (115). As these hymns suggest, Jeanette's mother was singing of both her and God being together in Heaven and the rest was irrelevant.

Louie's main visionary goal was to create a Christ figure of her daughter Jeanette. This aim is made explicit by the adult narrator when she describes her mother's decision to adopt her. 'And so it was that on a particular day, some time later, she followed a star until it came to settle above an orphanage, and in that place was a crib, a child' (10). Jeanette imagines her mother dreaming a dream and sustaining it in daylight: 'She would get a child, train it, build it, dedicate it to the Lord' (10). As Susana Onega suggests, the terms in which this adoption is narrated, situate Jeanette on a par with the birth of Jesus Christ' (2006: 29). By extension and reinforced by religious prejudices, Louie does not have sexual relations with her husband. As Jeanette remarks at the beginning of the novel, her mother 'had a mysterious attitude towards the begetting of children: it wasn't that she couldn't do it, more that she didn't want to do it. She was very bitter about the Virgin Mary getting there first' (3).

Louie has created a special person in Jeanette and together they 'are called to be apart' (42), even though it means that neither have many friends and people in general do not understand the way they think. Mrs Arkwright, the vermin killer, says Louie is mad (58) and Miss Jewsbury, a member of their religious community, agrees (104). The other women in the street have problems with their husbands (73-74) and the women Jeanette and her mother

have tea with on market day are not of her social background (80). The people mix and disagree with droll affection, but where mixing was especially difficult was in Jeanette's adaptation to school life. Her mother hated being a nobody and tried to live her life through Jeanette, thinking that she had adopted her in order to have a friend and as a way to say that she had existed in the world (1). However, Jeanette 'loved her because she always knew exactly why things happened' (46). Her mother's single mindedness and clear-cut black and white thinking is precisely what Jeanette needs in order to understand how the world works. Louie has a practical clarity of mind although contradictory. She hates Maxi Balls shop, but has bought there (6) and criticises the work of the women in the Church, when it is precisely her that, with her visionary drive, has made the Church successful (131). This is one of the points which Jeanette does not understand about her mother and eventually makes her draw away from her to begin to live her own life by working and being with other girls. The Priest life envisaged by Louie for Jeanette and up to now endorsed by Jeanette is beginning to seem unviable.

In a way, young Jeanette and her mother are very similar, in that they are characterised by an obsessive 'single-mindedness' of purpose to achieve 'full possession of a reality less partial than the reality apprehended by most people' (Onega, 2005: 234). Significantly, in *Art Objects*, Winterson defines this task in mythical terms as 'an elusive chase after perfection' which, according to Onega, is comparable to the search for a Holy Grail' (234). Jeanette's response to this demand for perfection was so successful that Church members considered young Jeanette as having been 'chosen' and being 'special' and gave her

a privileged status at a tremendously young age. Jeanette's mother's vision of her daughter as a future missionary is confirmed by Jeanette herself: 'some of us could preach and quite plainly, in my case, the Church was full because of it […] so there I was, my success in the pulpit being the reason for my downfall' (Winterson, 1996: 132). No modesty here. Jeanette knows she has the power of the Word and that the words have power (156).

One thing is the power of the word, but another is to live words with the intensity we see in *Oranges*, or in other Pennine writers like Phyllis Bentley, J. B. Priestley or Ted Hughes. The words evoke images and stimulate the imagination. The power of conviction and the use of the word to convince are an integral part of Pennine life and the visionary. Religion is biblical, hard and direct and children are encouraged to debate at school. That *Oranges* perfectly reflects this worldview may be gauged from the fact that it won the local Pennine beer company's literary prize, the Whitbread Prize, and that both the ex-Prime Minister Harold Wilson and the present Member of Parliament for Accrington and Hyndburn, the ex-Cabinet Minister for the Home Office, Jack Straw were brought up in this oratory tradition. Therefore, it is not surprising that Jeanette was given the opportunity to preach at such a young age and was successful at it, and no more so than at school, where Jeanette terrorises the other children with stories of Hell and damnation (42), living life to the full and nearly strangling another child at school, Susan Hunt, who possibly wet herself with fright (42). In these acts Jeanette is acting out her imagination, as she had when she imagined Daniel being eaten by the lions (12).

In the case of Jeanette's mother, the intensity of the images which occurs with Pennine

madness is lived through her hymn singing. The visionary power of the word especially affects Jeanette's mother, who is transformed by and truly lives the images that are presented to her in her imagination by the hymns, carols and songs that she sings. Louie can see Heaven and angels and knows what Heaven will look like. This vision of the glory of the coming world was envisaged through the favourite hymns she played on the piano. Jeanette's mother was an illuminated visionary with more ideas than the bleak religion of Joseph in *Wuthering Heights*, who declares some Christmas carols to be mere 'songs' (Brontë, 1979: 95). The hymns and carols that Louie sang permitted her to imagine what Heaven would be like or to speculate about what the 'rapture' of the Second Coming would entail.

Hymn singing is a widespread tradition among Non-conformists. So we can imagine Louie singing popular hymns and Christmas carols, like 'Hark! The herald angels sing, Heaven and earth shall flee away […]. Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air'; 'Guide us to thy perfect light […]. Prayer and praising, voices raising, worshipping God on high'. With their help she could imagine a 'Zion, city of our God' with 'salvation's walls' and 'round each habitation hovering, see the cloud and fire appear for a glory and a covering, showing that the Lord is near'. This raises the point of what Heaven looks like and what people do when they get there. Surely, Louie could see that: 'Soon in glory bright unclouded there will be no need for prayer. Rapture, / praise and endless worship will be our sweet portion there'. Why? Because 'if you follow Me […] I will give you rest', which Louie might have felt applied to both God and herself. These images and visions elevated Jeanette's mother out of what the author describes as the

mundane daily 'dinginess' (Winterson 2011: xi) and into a world where she could create and dream dreams of greatness.

Jeanette's mother is not the only visionary character in the novel. *Oranges* is a story that represents the maturation process of the young Jeanette narrated retrospectively by her adult self and pinpointed by a number of parable-like imagined stories, that act as comments on the various stages of her quest and the physical and mental changes she has undergone during her individuation process: the physical, through sexual discovery, moving out and travelling; and the mental through books, studying and assimilating the degree of truth that she has been receiving over her life. Jeanette's imagination provides her with the visionary insight to understand the situations she finds herself in and offers the scenarios that will allow her to be able to choose and decide what is best for her. The first story is about a Prince who is searching for the perfect wife (Winterson, 1996: 59-65) and it arises because Jeanette is beginning to discover that her mother is not fair or infallible. She has to learn to accept her family as they are because they are not perfect, and also to realise that Jesus offers peace but not tranquillity, and that perfection is different from flawlessness. The religious lesson she must learn is that she has to simply love her neighbour, for the simple fact that it is your neighbour; accepting differences and not making distinctions. However, Jeanette's next visionary apparition is the orange demon who sows the seeds of doubt about the convenience of being part of her family and member of a false spiritually corrupt Church (106), and encourages her to be a Non-conformist and to make her own decisions. Realistically, the demon offers a difficult but at least different life (106). As if not fully convinced, Jeanette

dreams of ending up in the bookshop of Lost Chances and missed opportunities (108-09), which is a way of pushing her to try and do something different. At this stage, her visionary world is one of being trapped by the socio-cultural structures that surround her and feeling the need to break out of them, in a way that, as Susana Onega suggests, is reminiscent of Stephen Dedalus' words in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: 'I will not serve that in which I no longer believe: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can (2005: 237). Young Jeanette seems to have decided to be her own Prophet and not be the Priest of anyone else, but the narrator gives Jeanette the image of the walled garden (Winterson, 1996: 120), a protected *hortus conclusus* with its ordered garden and plants, which can be abandoned, but has no door to return through. Thus, Jeanette is confronted with the possibility of leaving but without the right to return. This dilemma is metaphorically exposed by the adult narrator through the story of the quest and plight of Perceval, the youngest member of King Arthur's Round Table, who undertakes a quest for the Holy Grail which entails multiple difficulties and adventures, but which finally sees Perceval wishing he were at home sitting in his garden (161). The tale of Winnet Stonejar and the Wizard (138) is the most developed allegorical story that the adult narrator tells us about the difficulty of leaving everything behind us and starting from scratch somewhere different. Young Jeanette's search for her own voice, as highlighted by the six interpolated stories, shows the high degree of mental anguish she has to suffer, climaxing in Jeanette's creation of an inner world with her orange demon which cohabits with her ordinary outer public face (107). The point being made is that she no longer accepts everything on

face value, and we can feel the narrative intensity and extremes of Pennine madness in her refusal of compromise. The materialisation of the orange demon creates a counter-face to Louie's vision of Jeanette's future life, loving Melanie or God, being in the walled garden or out of it, and Jeanette physically spitting in Melanie's boyfriend's face (121) or accepting Melanie's decision about her own life.

Once Jeanette has decided to keep her orange demon, she has a critical visionary clarity about the people around her. The demon turned up after Pastor Finch's botched exorcism and when describing the Pastors that lead the Church, Jeanette shows her most scathingly critical side towards the Pastors' vision of their role in the Church, and is Blakean in her ridicule of the Priest figures. Pastor Finch is a pantomime, circus figure of fun, catapulting a cheese sandwich into the collection bag (11), talking about how women and children can suddenly be filled with evil (12), his sweaty hands (12) and playing earnestly with the Fuzzy Felt (13). He is a man who is obviously too literal to have a sense of humour and compassion. Finch has acted his way into a role that means that anything outside his written biblical field of experience makes him hard, unattractive and lost when faced with the unknown. Thus, Jeanette reflects: 'Hopeless, I thought [...] and I left him to it' (13). Pastor Finch and the other Church leaders have no real vision for the future and does not represent anything good, as the orange demon says: 'They talk a lot but they don't see nothing' (107). Pastor Finch's vision is through the power of the word of the Bible, which speaks for itself through as his name suggests: a beautiful voice but with a bird brain and tunnel vision. Finch lacks the depth of knowledge and sentiment to tackle real problems, which is why Jeanette

decides to keep her orange demon (107). Pastor Finch is narrow-minded in his Priestly single vision as Blake would call it, of the love of Christ, forgetting marital or neighbourly love, as this conversation with Jeanette suggests:

> 'I love her.'
> 'Then you do not love the Lord. '
> 'Yes, I love both of them. '
> 'You cannot. '
> 'I do, I do, let me go' (103).

Jeanette is attacked because she loves, but she has a very clear idea of what is right and wrong: 'To the pure all things are pure' (103). The religious black and white version of what love is, is twisted by the Pastor. After all, did not, David love Jonathan? Is not love praised in the psalms? And 'love thy neighbour' is a commandment. And what is more, Pastor Finch's vision of the scope of Christ's love is limited to the chosen few.

The other Pastor who has a great influence on Jeanette's mother is Pastor Spratt. Like his name, he is a small fish or a small inconsequential person. He has only one vision, to convert as many people as possible, and he has no qualms about how he does it. Before becoming a Pastor, he was a marketing manager in a company; he was good looking and knew all about 'bait' to attract new believers (8). Jeanette compares him to Errol Flynn, and it is an accurate description as he behaves like an actor representing a role and manipulating people with his sales pitch. His characterisation responds to the false Priest that William Blake would denounce for not having God within. Jeanette is critical of him because of the way he works, the manipulation of people's emotions and the lack of humane or Christian

interest in the new converts, speeding off in his van to another town to keep on the crusade. Spratt is only interested in numbers and not the following up on new converts that usually come from the squalor of the industrial towns. His tunnel vision, which is his selfish way of looking at his job, is not based on love or helping people, but is based on the fame he can create for himself as a charismatic speaker, obsessed about being 'commanded to be Fishers of Men' (8).

Finch, Spratt, the local townswomen and Mrs Arkwright, the vermin killer, are the characters that represent the lower base types of Pennine madness and ignore the high visionary elements that people should aspire to. They have the 'dinginess' (xi) of spirit that the author Jeanette Winterson denounces in the introduction to the novel or, in Blake's terms, the materialistic single vision of the Priest. All these characters are only thinking about themselves and getting some benefit out of other people's problems. None have a social consciousness of community and are critical and selfish. The townswomen pass their tea time criticising other women, which makes Louie uncomfortable (80); female neighbours criticise their husbands (73); singers argue in the street about who can sing carols and where (119); and Mrs Arkwright has no qualms to burn her shop to get the insurance money to set up a tourist shop on the coast in Spain (163). On a higher social level, nothing changes, with the Pastors and the school teachers acting blinded by the system they work for. The adult narrator is critical about their lack of vision or sense of fairness, especially when talking about children and the freedom they should have to express their imagination (44), as she says: 'This tendency towards the exotic has brought me many problems, just as it did for William

Blake' (41). Young Jeanette has the visionary ability to be creative at school with tracts and biblical scenes, but the ironically and aptly named teachers, Miss Virtue and Mrs Vole, really cannot see anything beyond the obvious and act accordingly with self-righteousness.

The notable exception in the fictional congregation is Elsie Norris, the visionary religious element of Winterson's imagination. She is the epitome of love. As the author explains in her autobiography:

> I wrote her in because I couldn't bear to leave her out. I wrote her in because I really wished it had been that way. When you are a solitary child you find an imaginary friend. There was no Elsie. There was no one like Elsie. Things were much lonelier than that'. (Winterson, 2011: 6-7)

As these words suggest, Jeanette Winterson felt the need to create a character that represents the essence of love, something which would be lacking if Elsie was not in the novel. As the author further explains, it is Elsie who 'acts as a soft wall against the hurt(ling) force of mother' (6) and protects and comforts little Jeanette when she has problems with her mother: 'suffer little children to come unto me' (39). Of course, we see the Pennine madness in Elsie. She is rather eccentric, can see further and understands how people are, a lot better than anyone else in the novel, and she likes esoteric practices, like numerology. Elsie is endearing because of her oddity, her bad ear and her positive reaction to the apocalyptic black and white sampler she sews for her at school. We may well smile at her behaviour but we learn from her wisdom when she tells Jeanette that if she wants a balanced relationship with God, then she has to listen to both the head and the heart (32). We can recognise that she is full of well-meaning and see she is the angel mentioned in *Lead Kindly Light*, the famous hymn

with words written in 1833 by Cardinal Newman as a poem entitled 'the Pillar of Cloud':

> So long Thy power hast blest me, sure it still will lead me on.
> Over Moor and fen, over Crag and torrent, till the night is gone.
> And with the morn those angel faces smile, which I have loved long since, and lost awhile [...]
> Lead, Saviour, lead me home in chidlike faith,
> Home to my God. (Newman, 2007: n. p.)

The strength to face her mother comes from Elsie, who is Jeanette's guiding light and advisor and who is everything that the other characters in *Oranges* are not. Elsie represents and embodies the vision of selfless and unbounded love that Jeanette wants to achieve.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF WILLIAM BLAKE

Jeanette first mentions William Blake in a direct comparison with her mother: 'My mother is very like William Blake; she has visions and dreams and she cannot always distinguish a flea's head from a King. Luckily she can't paint' (Winterson, 1996: 9). Evidently, Jeanette has a poor opinion about Blake's abilities to distinguish the material and the symbolic. Clearly, Jeanette is being ironic here commenting on the problems her mother may have in differentiating between objective reality and her subjective point of view. Why does Jeanette make this comparison between her mother, Louie and William Blake? Perhaps she is drawing together two ideas that people have of Blake, one of the mystic, and the other of his madness, of which there is no shortage of either in young Jeanette's family, school and other characters in the novel, especially if we look at the characters in relation to Pennine madness and Blake's own particular perspective. In this part of the thesis I will be examining the role and manifestation of Pennine madness as shown in the main characters of *Oranges* and the influence William Blake has on them.

From early childhood, Blake spoke of having visions, God putting his head to the window, or seeing trees filled with angels. His parents recognised a difference in him, absent from other children, so they did not send him to school, but educated him at home. According to Peter Ackroyd, Blake had a strongly visual sensibility that allowed him to create what psychologists call 'eidetic imagery' (in Onega, 1999: 97), that is, hallucinatory images that

are always seen in the literal sense. They are sensory perceptions and not just memories or dreams. Children like this seem to have problems distinguishing the subjective world from the objective one. Does Jeanette share the language of madness, of hidden truth, of eidetic images with Blake? The visions give an extra vigour and energy and substance to the written word. How much of Jeanette and Blake is mysticism and madness, which, put together, do not necessarily indicate a degeneration of the faculties of the mind, but rather a passionate commitment to the imagination and the spiritual? Both Jeanette and Blake lay out the necessity of the human, rather than the mystical, the visceral rather than the reasonable. As Blake writes in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 'the tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction' ('Proverbs of Hell': plate 9). The visceral is certainly applicable to Jeanette and her mother, although they are, like Blake, complicated to classify with certainty. Robert Southey, in a letter to Caroline Boules (1830), said about Blake: 'His madness was too evident, too fearful. It gave his eyes an expression such as you would expect to see in one who was possessed' (in Tucker, 2006: n. p.). However, Edward Calvert disagreed: 'I saw nothing but sanity. Saw nothing mad in his conduct, actions or character' (2006: n. p.). However, it is Elsie that, by implication, says that it is a pity that nobody takes any notice of people who have another type of sensibility that ordinary people ignore. Elsie categorises Blake as being an oppressed eccentric and '[n]o one listens to eccentrics' (Winterson, 1996; 29). Jeanette's mother could also be said to fit into the category of being misunderstood and classified as different to everyone else in the town: 'she was not so young these days and people were not kind. She liked to play the piano, but what do these things mean?'. What it

means in Blakean terms, is that Louie was living in her own created existence and felt dynamic, successful and useful within the order of things that were important for her.

Still, it is not Jeanette or her mother who is the most Blakean character in the novel, but Elsie who is the most visionary and similarly Christ-like figure, yet is also the most mentally and stable one in *Oranges*. She lacks the psychological violence of Pennine madness and firmly believes in the four divine characteristics of God and man of mercy, pity, peace and love that we find in Blake's poem 'The Divine Image' (1789). These virtues are in God as reflections of what God finds in man (whom He has created), rather than vice versa. Blake's religious philosophy in 'The Divine Image' is one of innocence, forgiveness, love and a call for each individual to recognise the potential of their own creativity and imagination. Both Jeanette and her mother have their own creativity and imagination, as Jeanette is always inventing stories and her mother also is a great story teller, and loves drawing and converting people by adapting to the times, going electric or using CB radio. Young Jeanette is also innocent in love, but neither knows how to forgive or love the other. When she falls in love with Melanie, Jeanette is turned out of her home and her mother reneges on her by saying: 'She's no daughter of mine' (153). As already pointed out in the earlier chapter, Jeanette Winterson later admitted in her autobiography, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*? that Elsie is the only character in *Oranges* that she completely imagined. She is the person that the author would have loved to have existed in her childhood but unfortunately never did. Elsie shares with Blake the same intense inner life and, although her health is bad and her mind drifts away into a distant world, she makes a clear distinction between the physical

body and the world of the spirit: 'I've been doing a bit of decorating [...] but when I'm with the Lord, I haven't time for anything' (31). Young Jeanette is sceptical that her mother would agree with Elsie's ideas about the power of the mind to make things happen and that 'God is in everything' (30), but in fact, Jeanette's mother believed in the power of prayer to make things happen, and she believed in the possibility of contacting with God in our inner selves and allowing this God within us to act for us and to see the world meaning through His eyes. Jeanette's mother acts and thinks she is god-like, which highlights Blake's vision of God living inside us and which Elsie confirms when she tells Jeanette that: 'God is in everything', and that if one wishes something strongly 'that thing will happen [...]. It's all in the mind' (30).

Elsie shares Blake's wisdom that the easy would not be interesting (30) and has Blake's ability to mix the natural with the visionary, thus, she makes and keeps at home a wooden angel, a painted box with painted orange flames and three white mice that she feeds cheese to and that, she says, represent Nebucanezzar's victims ‘Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace' (31). It is Elsie, like Blake, that can see the spirit of a person and what human beings are like inside, and it astonishes Jeanette that Elsie knew about her sexual orientation, because 'she'd just been able to see it' (130). Like Blake, Elsie is not judgemental about errors, the only restrictions being in our minds, and neither Elsie nor Jeanette 'talked about *it*, not the rights or wrongs or anything; she looked after me by giving me what I needed, an ordinary time with a friend' (130, emphasis in the original).

An important part of the psychological violence used by Pennine madness is expressed

through language. Pennine madness is transmitted via a minimum of words, and a maximum of meaning. A young sixteen year old girl who tells her parents she is pregnant may receive the comment 'silly bugger' from them. There is nothing else to say. Jeanette's father does not speak and if young Jeanette sees her mother as Blakean, it could well be because of Blake's inflaming language going down well here with her mother's Pennine madness and love of single damning words and short phrases: 'Annihilate', 'souls disease', 'darkened vision', 'run with blood', 'withered', 'swallowed up', 'fury', 'desolate', 'rushing fires', 'devour in rage and hunger' and 'Vegetative world', are all words from Blake's visionary poem, *Jerusalem*. This is the language from the King James Bible and it is used to express the wrath of God. However, young Jeanette and her mother rarely use harsh words with each other. They hardly speak:

> She was mysterious and wouldn't tell me anymore. We spoke for a while of what I was doing and why. No detail, just enough to make both of us feel like we were making an effort. (160)

As Greville MacDonald commented: 'The sane majority find the language provided for them by their country's traditions vastly in excess of their needs, while the insane minority are forever discontent with their native tongue because of its total insufficiency to express what they feel or know, the visions they see and believe in' (MacDonald, 1920: n. p.). Young Jeanette feels the necessity to express herself, as seen through the tale of Winnet Stonejar, her imagined alter ego, but she cannot find the words: 'If she talked about it [her old world], good or bad, they would think her mad, and then she would have no one. She had to pretend she was just like them' (149). As the narrator of the tale explains, 'Winnet learned the words but not the language. Certain constructions baffled her' (148). Words are a created system of

sounds that communicate a given meaning, but not everybody speaks the same language and not everybody that does speak the same language understands what other people are saying. Jeanette, like Winnet, feels this lack of power to communicate her inner self, which is why she spits at Melanie's future husband or makes the comment: 'I don't know how to answer. I know what I think, but the words in the head are like voices under water. They are distorted' (156).

Jeanette's language comes from her inner self and she would agree with Blake, who privileged imagination over reason in the creation of both his poetry and drawings, asserting that ideal form should be constructed not from observations of nature, but from their own inner visions. As already suggested, her position at this stage is comparable both to that of Stephen Dedalus trying to escape from the nets of family, religion and nation (see Chapter I), and to that of the Titan Los in *Jerusalem* when he tells his weeping Spectre: 'I must create a system or be enslav'd by another Man's' (see Introduction). This is also Jeanette's goal to escape from home and find her own voice. She knows the power of language and how people can react negatively to it. Jeanette's teacher at school does not like the tract she has written (38); Jeanette knows her mother had changed the ending to *Jane Eyre* (73) and that the Church was full because of her ability to preach God's word well (131). Jeanette has the makings of a Priest, but like Blake, is a Non-conformist and seeks to escape through her inner power and imagination and transform herself into a Prophet and not the Priest she had been designated to be. As Greville MacDonald explains:

Priests devote their lives to the exposition and classification of facts. To this end they

> rightly seek to simplify language and eliminate from it all metaphor, idiom, or symbol that might distract the mind from the rigid importance of its words. This makes language as near the mathematical as possible and employs formula in place to appeal to instinct, so as to render their conclusions self-evident, thus giving weight to factual generalisations. (1920: n. p.)

This is the scenario that Jeanette knows would have been her future, reduced to uttering mathematical redundancies if she had not escaped, if she had decided to be a Priest instead of a Prophet (Winterson, 1996: 156). Jeanette does not have visionary or imaginative problems when she has to preach, but the words do not flow when dealing with her own emotional condition within her maturation process. She sees herself as a Prophet without a book, and 'the Prophet is a voice that cries in the wilderness, full of sounds that do not always set into meaning. The Prophets cry out because they are troubled by demons' (156).

According to MacDonald Blake's power of scorn and his potent pity had not developed the gentle boy into the adorable man, because Blake had never left his childhood behind him (1920: n. p.) and the same could be said of the people that Jeanette knows. This is particularly true for Jeanette's mother, who had no Wise Men in the nativity, 'because she didn't believe there were any wise men' (4); and she could not wait to open her Christmas present, but ripped the paper off it to reveal a catapult she could fire dried peas with, especially at the neighbours' cat (170). However, Louie does have a childlike optimism and enthusiasm in taking on the Herculean task of converting all the heathen in the world to Christianity, which is neither a reasonable nor a measured goal, but is Blakean and heroic in the sheer belief in what she is doing and the logistics involved in trying to achieve her goal.

As already suggested, Jeanette's school teachers are also childish, punishing young

Jeanette for her creativity and imagination. They do not see the effort behind Jeanette's work and simply ignore and exclude her from winning any prizes for the best effort (44). Jeanette's Non-conformity brings her problems even though we see the heroic effort that Jeanette makes to try and please Mrs Virtue, the unvirtuous teacher who, as the adult narrator reflects, 'should have had the imagination to commend […] or the far-sightedness […] to have given little Jeanette the benefit of the doubt' (44).

The teachers are not the only infantile adults exposed by young Jeanette. Pastor Finch is rightly ridiculed as a religious leader for playing with the Fuzzy Felt (13). Jeanette is seven years old at the time and in full use of her psychological violence, feeding Daniel to the three lions (12) and no one, can believe Jeanette when she tells the adults what the Pastor is doing: 'Don't be fanciful Jeanette said Miss Jewsbury' (13). Like Blake, Jeanette hates Church dogma, especially when she sees Pastor Finch trying to correct her Daniel story (13). As we saw in the earlier chapter, Pastor Finch helps turn Jeanette against institutionalised religion. Just as Blake hated Church dogma, so he hated scepticism, doubt and experimentalism. He did not believe in sin, only in intellectual error and loathed the oppositional conception of good and evil, the belief that any human being could be punished, here or elsewhere for following his energies. However, Blake did think that unbelief was wicked. He came to see every hindrance to man's imaginative self liberation as a function bred by the division in man himself. He was against society, its prisons, Churches, money, morals, but he did not think the faults of society stemmed from the faulty organisation of society, but were only restrictions made in people's own minds, as if the mind forged its own manacles. Pennine

madness is precisely of the same mould, one of having no limits, that there is more to life than a little black hole called Accrington and people can forge their own reality out of their surroundings, if only they dare to do so. Jeanette uses the word 'Hopeless' (13) when she realises that Pastor Finch has no ability to see anything beyond the obvious. He neither sees nor has created an imaginary world. When his brother, Robert, died, Blake saw his spirit rise up through the ceiling and believed that Robert's spirit continued to visit him and in dreams taught him how to use the printing method that he used in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and other 'illuminated' works. Jeanette's mother may have believed in spirits, but had far less Blakean traits than Jeanette imagines, although she does compare her own adoption by her mother in terms of the grotesque violent visions we see in Blake's paintings:

> The mother sang to the child, and stabbed the demons. She understood how jealous the Spirit is of flesh.
> […]. Her flesh now, sprung from her head.
> Her vision.
> Not the jolt beneath the hip bone, but water and the word. (10).

Jeanette does not see spirits, but she does see her own orange demon, who confirms the hopelessness of Pastor Finch and the other Church leaders: 'They talk a lot but they don't see nothing' (107). It is my contention that it is the active decision to keep her orange demon that pushes Jeanette into the world of Pennine madness, a world where the supernatural exists and where people can live in their created worlds.

Pushed by her misery, Jeanette invents stories with an allegorical meaning applicable to her situation to face up to and live with the memories of the harshness of her home life,

while her mother, uses her visionary capacity to change the endings of stories to fit into her dogmatic priestly world. Louie blithely did this with *Jane Eyre* and she also expurgated Jeanette's Bible and missed out parts of her own Bible reading she did not particularly like. Charles Baudelaire (later taken over and used by Oscar Wilde) famously said: 'Reality is a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't like to live there', and Jeanette and Blake would have probably agreed, preferring the inner self to imposed political or religious ideology.

Blake was obsessed with ancient mythology and esoteric forms of occultism. He believed that Britain was Atlantis and that Jerusalem would be built in England at the Second Coming of Christ. Young Jeanette does not go as far as to say that, but she evokes the imaginary court of King Arthur and Perceval's quest for the Holy Grail, the search for perfection of a Prince, the story of the maturation process of Winnet Stonejar, the walled garden and the City of Lost Chances. Jeanette's imagination allows her to escape from and put meaning to her particular reality, to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of her actions and omissions, something which William Blake would have understood since we have to contact God within ourselves and allow this God to act for us through our bodies. Neither Jeanette nor Blake see a battle between the spirit and the flesh, but primed the spirit over reason. Perceval has to discover where he wants to be in life, perfection is not equal to flawlessness; Winnet has to find a way to escape and form a new life in a new place. The walled garden symbolises that going away perhaps means not being able to come back, and the City of Lost Chances is the result of never doing anything, of never taking risks and decisions. These are the visionary elements that illustrate Jeanette's personal maturation

process that, as Blake saw it, does not involve 'sin', but only human errors.

Pennine madness is not about making mistakes, but is about living your own life, being different, and being recognised as such. Young Jeanette does not make mistakes. She reacts to the circumstances, which is why while she is being submitted to the exorcism, Jeanette thinks: 'They're looking in the wrong place […] if they want to get my demon they'll have to get at me. I thought about William Blake' (106). And when she feels the strain her tormentors are putting on her is too much, she accepts her fall into madness: 'I've gone mad […]. That may well be so […] so make the most of it' (106). Her acceptance of madness is a renunciation of the easy road prescribed to her by the Church and the acceptance of the difficult and solitary life of the visionary Poet/Prophet. After leaving home, Jeanette learns from those around her and by working in diversely strange jobs, that she is now behaving as an eccentric by living from within herself, something very Blakean. The influence of William Blake as a visionary prophet on Jeanette Winterson is undeniable, since we see a lot of Blake, especially from T*he Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, reflected in *Oranges*. Winterson is a mirrored image to Blake. According to D. W. Harding, a commonplace theme in Blake which is arguably also common in Winterson is 'the human mind, as the focus of sharp psychological conflict [...] and of unending theological and philosophical discussion' (1979: 59). Similarly, Harding's assertions that in Blake we can 'contemplate the facts in their emotional intensity and conflict' (69) could also be applied to Winterson's work, as emotional intensity and conflict form a necessary part of Jeanette's visionary growth.

CHAPTER III

FROM *GENESIS* TO *RUTH*

Given the thematic of the novel, Winterson's choice of the first eight books of the Bible for the chapter headings seems especially appropriate; besides being a relevant cultural referent, it is a personal one as well in the maturation process Jeanette goes through in the novel. *Genesis* is where everything begins. *Exodus* sees Jeanette having to face up to the outside world of school, radically different to the comfortable but narrow home life. *Leviticus* and *Numbers* form the outline of how to live by the law and Jeanette's initiation in the quest for perfection, trying to be perfect in the eyes of God. *Numbers* covers the wandering in the wilderness which corresponds to Jeanette's wandering from the strictness of the Church and disagreements with her mother over her love affair with Melanie. *Deuteronomy* sees the narrator advocating the checking of facts for herself. It is a question of having, keeping or developing intellectual integrity. In *Joshua*, Jeanette asserts that 'walls should fall as the consequence of blowing your own trumpet' (Winterson, 1996: 112). The auto-affirmation is important for Jeanette as she begins to envisage another life, similar perhaps, but her own. Jeanette is judged in *Judges* by people who ironically are men and women acting as men in her community, but who are male in the Bible and, in contrast, in the *Ruth* chapter, we see female loyalty and examples of profound female solidarity, similar to the women close to Christ before and after the crucifixion. *Oranges* is not a lesbian text, but expresses the

important biblical concept of *Hesed* which, although difficult to translate, includes the idea of loyalty, duty, mercy, goodness and kindness (Bollinger, 1994: 370), positive attributes that are curiously absent or minimal in people's behaviour towards Jeanette, but are important to Jeanette and which form a part of her quest to find them. Interestingly, the biblical Ruth conforms to traditional female roles in a strict patriarchal society, but demands her rights from her brother-in-law, Boaz. Ruth symbolises adulthood and independence without abandoning her family ties, something necessary for Jeanette, but seemingly impossible to achieve. According to Laurel Bollinger, in the novel, it is suggested that 'maturation consists in the return to, not the flight from family or maternal ties. Just as her mother had initially selected her, now Jeanette deliberately selects her mother, like Ruth, who freely selected Naomi, her mother-in-law' (1994: 374).

In his reading of the novel, Bollinger insists that *Oranges* is 'the coming-of-age story of a young woman who grapples with her lesbianism' (364), and 'enables Winterson to address the two major conflicts in Jeanette's life: her sexual orientation and her connection to her mother' (364). And he sees the novel as containing a strong theme about female loyalty and female solidarity (365), something which I think young Jeanette can only find in Elsie, Katy, Jeanette's second lover and a little in Miss Jewsbury, for the obvious reason that she is a lesbian. The rest of the characters in the novel suffer from the characteristic Pennine selfishness and are uninterested in, ignore or lack solidarity and loyalty towards Jeanette. This fact could be the denouncing force of the narrator against Louie and the Church, but that argument does ignore the role and often violent reaction of Jeanette as she grows up and

makes decisions that also affect how other people are going to react to her. As Miss Jewsbury asks: 'Why haven't you been a bit more careful?' (103). Although her lack of care to hide her lesbian relation stems from her innocence, Jeanette's behaviour creates the situation where people are forced to react, so it can also be said that the theme of sexual orientation and Jeanette's relationship with her mother are really key aspects of Jeanette's private battle against the rest of the world. A lot of times young Jeanette is taken over by a rabid outburst of uncontrolled Pennine madness, strangling (70) or kicking the dog (75), or spitting in someone's face, as she says: 'with rage' (121). This battle to control herself is part of her maturation process, necessary perhaps, but one which is not only created by her mother. In this sense Keryn Carter's reading of the text's representation of its central mother-daughter relationship (15), based on Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection (16), seriously limits the human and natural scope of the novel, especially since the process of expelling the boundaries that threaten the self are accepted ones that Jeanette needs because they offer security and happiness, not only in the home, but at Church (40) and among the people they know in the town (80). In a way, Carter debases the roles of the other characters in *Oranges*. Marianne Novy (2004) and Rebecca O'Rourke (1991), however, limit the novel even further by treating it, the first one, from a position of the theme of adoption and the other from an angle exclusively about Jeanette's lesbianism, two subjects which in terms of the whole novel of 171 pages are not mentioned until we have read nearly half the book. In order to gather a comprehensive understanding of the novel, it is necessary to take into consideration the socio-cultural and ideological factors that contributed to its writing. In this sense, it might be

useful to look at the author Jeanette Winterson's autobiography, where she says:

> Where you are born — what you are born into, the place, the history of the place how that history mates with your own — stamps who you are […]. We were working class. We were the mass at the factory gates […] I didn't want to disappear I didn't want to live and die in the same place […] I dreamed of escape. […] I just wanted to get out. (Winterson, 2011: 16-17)

This remark justifies my attempt to analyse the novel taking into consideration the deeper qualities and necessities below the superficial relationships the characters have or their sexual orientation. The comment Winterson makes points to the strictness of her working-class background and her dreams of a different life, if not world, that Jeanette the character, shares with the flesh and blood author, and which includes the Pennine madness that we have already looked at. In this final part of the essay, I am going to look in more detail chapter by chapter at the role and influence of Pennine madness and the visionary stance that Jeanette and other characters display in the novel.

In the introduction to the Vintage edition of *Oranges*, Jeanette Winterson writes: 'It is the duty of every generation of writers and artists to find fresh ways of expressing the habitual circumstances of the human condition' (1996: xv). I propose to take these words literally, to examine how Pennine madness helps people to face the crude and harsh reality of life, with droll humour, rage and dignity in the face of adversity. In this Preface Winterson gives some telling examples of pointless but necessary 'mad' behaviour, such as 'dressing for dinner in the jungle' or soldiers cleaning their boots before jumping into the sea (xi), and she may be said to describe Pennine madness perfectly when, talking about how she wrote *Oranges*, she describes the process in the following terms: 'it was a downstream force by a

high wind […] such was the speed and certainty of its being' (xii).

The chapter *Genesis* shows the adult characters and Jeanette displaying utterly polarised black or white attitudes because of the hard life young Jeanette experiences. This is Emily Brontë, J. B. Priestley or Ted Hughes country, not the gentle rolling slopes of Jane Austen's more benign region. As we have seen, Jeanette's mother displays Pennine madness picking a fight when there is no need to, wanting to argue with Mormons, the neighbours, about politics (3) or criticise her husband (74). And the extremes extend into the domestic front, because men are supposed to work and the women maintain the patriarchal scheme of things by dominating the realm of the home, where men have little if any say and the women collect and distribute the money the man brings in. Men do not cook and clean, as we see with Jeanette's father, who could cook but was not allowed to, a ridiculous situation which 'depressed him' (5), although it is obvious to anyone that men cannot tell the difference between a pan and a piano (5).

From a visionary stance, the Missionary Map that takes over the family home routine on Sunday mornings becomes an all important means of escape into darkest Africa, a fabulous land where extravagant tribes get headaches or go mad if a mouse nests in their hair (4). Other equally fantastic elaborations seriously entertained by Jeanette's mother are, for example, that twenty years after the Second World War, there were still old tanks on the hillside, or that heathen places are dry because there are no tall buildings (15). Narrated by Louie, these stories seem quite believable and reasonably logical, nicely fitting into the mental framework of Pennine madness. Jeanette's mother is quite a visionary, behaving like a

biblical Prophet, standing on the hillside, expounding the 'folly of its peoples, and the wrath of God', which she considers 'inevitable' (7). Jeanette next to her imagines her mother as Napoleon pouring over the map of the world (4), or extemporising on the evil nature of drink (5). However, in *Genesis*, the visionary is perverted by Pastor Spratt, an ex-advertising manager turned missionary, who knows how to manipulate people's emotions by using pot plants as bait to catch new converts. Being a visionary is not being condemned to doing the mundane as happens to the Princess in the interpolated tale, who lived in a village (9), and all she has to do is be with the villagers, milking goats and teaching people (9). The danger of this sort of life is ending up at the eve of your death thinking about what might have been and what you have not done and what you could have turned into but did not, because you stayed (9). This is Jeanette's biggest fear and is precisely what she does not want to happen to her. Jeanette has to rebel against her mother's prescriptive dream for her daughter's future as an Evangelical Priest. The adult Jeanette describes her mother's decision to adopt her and dedicate her to the Lord in visionary terms as an effort of her creative imagination. Thus, Jeanette's conception is described by the adult narrator as the product of Louie's creative imagination:

> Such warm tender flesh.
> Her flesh now, sprung from her head.
> Her vision.
> Not the jolt beneath the hip bone, but water and the word. She had a way out now, for years and years to come. (10)

As Onega has pointed out, in this description, the conception of the child is presented

in terms that combine the asexuality of Jesus' conception with the mythical birth of Pallas Athena out of Zeus' head (2006: 29). This is Pennine madness in all its melodramatic form, as absurd as the image we have of Pastor Finch, the earnest Church leader who is ridiculously pompous and dogmatically and comically mad for example, when he catapults a cheese sandwich into the collection bag (11), or wiping his sweaty hands on his trousers (12). The chapter *Exodus* introduces us to young Jeanette fantasising and inventing imaginative stories which often provide benign alternatives to Louie's apocalyptic outlook on things. Thus, for example, when Louie remarks that a radio programme on the sexual life of snails is an abomination, Jeanette contradicts her: 'No mum […] it's not like that at all' (22) and she invents a story about a family of snails. Jeanette's mother is having a bout of Pennine madness at this moment: from the programme on snail family life, she moves onto the idea that humans come from the monkey (21) and then that the Devil could be in her house at any one moment (22). Characteristically, Louie puts an end to her mad association of ideas with a hymn singing session as a type of exorcism, which leaves Jeanette open mouthed: 'Well, that's that then' (22).

Jeanette is not surprised by visionary activity. As she reflects: 'States of rapture were not uncommon in our Church' (23), so when she becomes deaf with an inflammation of her adenoid glands, her deafness was considered to be the Lord working in mysterious ways (23). Added to this, the symbolism in numerology of Jeanette being seven years old and local superstition made that no one spoke to her (23), which did not surprise Jeanette either. Supernatural things happen and everybody in the religious community accepts them as

normal (23), but her illness makes her realise that physical complaints can be mistaken for visionary experiences and, for the first time, Jeanette realises that 'even the Church was sometimes confused' (27) over her being deaf and not filled with the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that young Jeanette is not without her own madness, especially when she gets emotionally involved in the bloody stories she invents about lions eating Daniel or the story of 'How Eskimo got eaten' (27). Jeanette's high emotional involvement and imagination make her feel miserable (27), thinking about her death and the funeral and living the happy moment of after death: 'I *knew* it, I'd died and the angels were giving me jelly' (28). Jelly is very different to Louie's obsession with oranges, which she carries around with her in her handbag. Jeanette's mother thinks that Elsie working with numerology 'was too close to madness' (29), without realising that she herself suffers from a similar flaw. The constant bombardment of oranges as the only fruit is drolly close to the same thing; but the sort of madness she displays, like oranges, does not excite the imagination and eccentricity that Elsie's handicraft does. Elsie has the vision to make a biblical scene with three white mice and representing the three victims of Nebuchadnezzar (31), and young Jeanette has the visionary versatility to convert the scene into Pentecost. As already pointed out, Jeanette has also become adept at terrorising children at school with truculent stories about the horrors of death by total immersion for the girls and, for the boys, anything to do with their willies (32). However, young Jeanette is typically droll in her account of her summer holidays, jumping wildly but logically from one topic to another, but always having good intention to help and be useful. And, as Elsie had told Jeanette about William Blake's problems with being

understood and oppressed (29), so Jeanette realises that she suffers from the spiritual blindness, lack of Christian charity and educational vision of her teachers. Pennine madness might be unnerving and frightening, but it does not have the cruelty shown by the teachers at the school, where 'there was only confusion' (40) within the rigid education system, in comparison to the creativity Jeanette can offer in Sunday school, which made her happy (40).

There is no shortage of examples of slapstick Pennine madness in the chapter *Leviticus*, where the neighbours' love making sees Mrs White, a family friend, listen to them with her ear glued to a wine glass against the wall, while Louie begins playing and singing hymns and sends Jeanette to buy ice-cream (52). Everything ends in chaos, with the dog barking, the neighbours shouting and banging on the wall and Louie shouting out hymns and Bible tracts wildly (53). Then suddenly, it is all over and everyone is calm again: 'Now then, who's for a bit of dinner?' (53), Louie says. This manic behaviour, however, in part helps create the imaginative visionary response that springs up, such as the creative way in which Jeanette's mother directs the Society for the Lost in Morecambe, doubling its membership (54) by making tempting offers, free gifts, giving away a Christmas record and guest house discounts. We see a similar reaction of innovation in Jeanette's attempts to win a prize in the sewing class at school, and in the woman who makes flower arrangements for funerals, diversifying from flower crosses to flower violins and tennis rackets, as well as joining a funeral parlour to be able to give better business deals (57). These examples are a prelude to a more serious disagreement between Jeanette and her mother: 'my first theological disagreement', says Jeanette (58), about the existence of perfection. Jeanette, by means of the

tale she invents about the Prince in search of a perfect wife, demonstrates that perfection is not the same as flawlessness (62) and the visionary message given to us is that the goose in the tale and Dissenters or Non-conformists in real life, who ask difficult questions and are anti-monarchy, have to be killed (63).

The Prince is manipulated by his advisors just as Jeanette's mother is persuaded by Pastor Finch and others to act against all that they feel threatens their own authority. Jeanette feels she is like the goose in the tale that is victim of the Prince's rage, and she is also comparable to the wise woman who tells the tale that challenges the Church's doctrine. Unlike the goose, which loses its head, Jeanette is not killed but is cut off from family and friends by the Church. However, ironically, Jeanette maintains affection and sympathy for her mother, even after she casts her out of the parental home, and her mother does not learn to have as much humility as the Prince, since she can accept many things but never be wrong (Simpson, 2001: 26). The mother, like the Prince, wants to create perfection, but her success would in fact create a monster of Jeanette, as suggested by the goose when it tells the Prince that he should read the story of someone who, led by the same aspiration, ended up creating a monster. This allusion to Frankenstein casts a shadow of horror on the aspirations of Jeanette's mother to mould her daughter according to her own aims. When the Prince asks her to help him find the perfect woman, the wise old woman makes two damning comments: 'What you want does not exist' (Winterson, 1996: 64) and 'What does exist lies in the sphere of your own hands' (64). Applying these comments to the behaviour of her mother, it may be stated that Jeanette is criticising her mother for looking elsewhere for perfection when her

daughter and husband are right next to her. Louie is more concerned about other people, the organisation in Wigan and the greater missionary world than about her husband and daughter abandoned at home. People who are different are not accepted and those who do not fit into an existing pattern of things are expelled. Jeanette has woken up to this realisation that if she wants to be herself, then she can only rely on herself.

Numbers shows nothing but confusion for young Jeanette, plagued by dreams of having to do things she does not want to do, like get married, which, in her nightmares takes the form of marrying a pig (69) or a beast (71). These visions make Jeanette's choices for now very easy. She feels better in the library with words one could trust and would not change, like people can (70). Pennine madness had made Jeanette nearly strangle her dog (70) that day, and she is far from being 'a sweet heart' (70), which ironically puts her on a par with the idea of men being beasts or wolves (71). Young Jeanette does not want to conform and 'get a boy' (72), nor accept her mother's ending to *Jane Eyre*. She does not conform and wants to have the answers to her own questions about her adoption and is wondering where she would go to find out what she wanted to know (73). Jeanette at this time is merely curious and still accepts her mother's plan for her to be a missionary (75), and it is this image that comforts her until the time comes for her to fall in love.

Jeanette's trip to town with her mother is an educational one for her in the sense that she is offered contrasting situations which later, when she is older, will help her to decide what sort of person she wants to be. The vulgarity of talking about money (76), how to buy food well and where not to buy, trying to speak correctly by pronouncing the 'h' (77), the

importance of being able to read and write well, and gossiping, something Louie does not like, are all things to think about later, but all represent a union of laudable aims that join the visionary with the Pennine will to aim high and better yourself. The Pennine madness is later seen at work with Pastor Finch at Church, when he explains how there is an epidemic of demons in Lancashire and Cheshire, and everyone believes him, and the droll tale of Louie's love affair with an 'old flame' called Pierre and how when she thought she was in love, it was really a stomach ulcer (85). The information is stark and matter of fact and it is Jeanette who is in the new visionary world of Blakean free love with her new found love, Melanie.

The chapter entitled *Deuteronomy* constitutes what Susana Onega (1995: 137) has described as an interpolation of the adult narrator's own ideas. Here, the adult narrator inserts her own reflexion on time, space and history. The style reads as a pastiche of T. S. Eliot's musings on time in *Four Quartets* (Onega, 2006: 27), observing how people see things differently, with each person writing his or her version of history. For the narrator, the perspective of an event that you live is very different when you are young than when looking at it back in time. She also makes a clear distinction between what is written in a history book and the perception of the same event by the individuals: 'I am astonished. Perhaps the event has an unassailable truth. God saw it. God knows. But I am not God' (93). The narrator here is indirectly criticising the nature of man to reduce everything to a clear-cut simple, easily understood and easy to explain item (91). She says that disposing of the past has never been a problem, although this contradicts the idea that although the 'dead don't shout', they are idealised (92), which opposes the narrator's comment about it being a sham to treat the

past with objective respect (92). The narrator's own story shows how difficult it is to assimilate our own past and exorcise troublesome ghosts. You might be able to change history, but you cannot escape its long term effects and we can only assume its effects, because 'the past, because it is past, is only malleable where once it was flexible. Once it could change its mind, now it can only undergo change' (93).

In *Oranges*, the chapter called *Joshua* sees the end of young Jeanette's childhood. It finds Jeanette facing up to new facts and destroying old myths in her quest for self knowledge and identity. She has to create a new self as she weighs up the Church's views of what is good and evil against a realisation that a person free from sin is impossible to find. Jeanette is like Joshua, a new leader. They are young and yet chosen from nowhere to be adult leaders with courage and not be afraid of the future. This is how Joshua is described in the Bible:

> The Lord spake unto Joshua […]. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee […]. I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage […] be not afraid, neither dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest. (1: 5-6, 9)

Jeanette can feel angry, betrayed and has a sense of loss when thinking about her adoptive mother, her biological mother, Melanie, and the Church, but she has no desire to give up her religious beliefs. Her dream about the garden, symbolising her fear of leaving home and not being able to return, and the possibility of a return where nothing will be the same, seems to express the separation from her Church, but not from her Christian belief in God. Jeanette does, however, defend the Church when Melanie says she wants to study theology at

university, and Jeanette says it is a bad idea because the place is full of modern heresies (101).

Walls, both physically and metaphorically are fundamental in this chapter. They have a double function of keeping Jeanette in and out. In the Bible, God makes the walls of Jericho fall down because the inhabitants try to keep Joshua out, but God also demands respect for that within, because one thing is to criticise others or your own family, but another is to destroy it. This parallels Jeanette's dilemma of holding on to the current protection and restriction of home and Church life, or recognise her own wishes and taking the risk of leaving and having an uncertain future.

Her dreams are the narrative of her interior feelings. The nursery rhyme of *Humpty Dumpty* falling off the wall (110) represents Jeanette and how she feels, destroyed and in hundreds of pieces, but it cannot help her anymore because she is too old to be comforted by it. The other dream of the City of Lost Chances (109) evokes the idea of the Forbidden City, which offers security for people unwilling to take risks. It brings to mind the parable about the talents and people being afraid to do things differently. This parable tells Jeanette to make her dreams come true, take risks and live her own life. The City of Lost Chances, however, is real and represents the omnipresent fear of never having future happiness and never having fulfilment beyond the life she knows if she denies her sexual orientation. Sexuality is not denied in the Bible, as can be gauged from the fact that God saves Rahab the harlot and her family from Jericho's destruction, a fact that could be said to reinforce Jeanette's newly found sexuality and love for Melanie.

The dogmatic and earthly Church of Pastor Finch and Louie destroys Jeanette's innocence and purity. The Pastor denies the possibility of any other type of love that is not a Priest's love; the love of God above all other things (103). It is he who introduces the idea that Jeanette is possessed and full of demons (102) and has fallen under Satan's spell (102). Since Jeanette cannot counter his arguments just by affirming that: 'To the pure all things are pure' (103) and 'I love both of them' (103), then she has to take refuge in her own world; her secret inner world with her orange demon. The two extremes, Church versus Jeanette, have forced the young woman to finally come out and choose what she wants to do, firstly by adopting her demon (107). Secondly by breaking communication with her mother, because she betrayed the family trust and spoke about Jeanette's feelings towards Melanie to the Pastor. Thirdly, Jeanette is told that her mother is mad (104) and that Louie knows more about women's feelings and is a woman of the world (104), the implication being that Jeanette's mother has had some sexual experience with another woman. Fourthly, that the Lord forgives but her mother did not (109). And fifthly, that when Louie burnt Jeanette's letters, she lost her daughter: queen. Louie died in Jeanette's eyes and the emotional walls went up to 'protect and limit' (110), to keep her mother out of her inner world and imagination.

This is the point when the orange demon makes Jeanette begin to recognise that she has made a decision and that there is no going back to her old life (111). Jeanette's new life will be on her terms, as she shows by leading the prayer meeting in the tent mission in Blackpool (113) and her relationship with her mother is now completely different: 'I used to imagine we

saw things just the same, but all the time we were on different planets' (112). Jeanette even refuses to go with her mother to an exhibition but sets off for 'a walk on the prom' (114). The demon has changed Jeanette's view point, and is the cause behind the visionary tale of the walled garden. If Jeanette abandons the family and Church, then she may never be able to go back to the place she loves (120), and if she does, things will not be the same as when she left them. What we see is the visionary world that offers choices and a different but difficult time (107) versus the old Pennine madness of institutionalised superstition against demons possessing people (105), the skeletons in the cupboard of a secret adoption and Louie's violent slap across Jeanette's face to impose her right to be her mother, and the moral and theological superiority that the Church feels against other Christian Churches like the Salvation Army (116).

Judges begins with a quotation from what could be considered to be one of the finest examples of Pennine madness ever written: *Alice in Wonderland*, where the White Queen's solution to all the problems she cannot solve is to chop off the heads of the dissenters (125), and is appropriate here, evoking the ghastly presence of Jeanette's mother. The enormous impotence of Louie as the great queen contrasts with the image of Jeanette's dog, which represents the underdog madness of never cowering in the face of adversity. It knows no sense of size and although perhaps nervous or frightened, it is plucky and loyal to the last, despite being a little irresponsible if not stupid sometimes. Jeanette is similar to the tiny black dog. She is a visionary reaching up for the unobtainable, without thinking about the consequences and then falling down, but managing to get to her feet again (125). It should be

noted here that the person responsible for teaching Jeanette that size, background and money were not limitations to achievement, was Louie, her mother. Addressing Jeanette, Louie said: You made people and yourself what you wanted. Anyone could be saved and anyone could fall to the Devil, it was their choice (126). Here Jeanette and her mother would agree with the existence of the power of free will to choose your own future. However, free will does not guarantee clarity of thought or reason. Free will is not the automatically right road to go down, and often decisions taken for us are the best options, except for Jeanette, who more than having a visionary ideal purpose in life, seems to live life by eliminating options: 'I had no intention of becoming a missionary' (126), she reflects; and like her mother is both reactionary and enlightened, blurring clear-cut meanings and solutions to the problems. Both have complicated minds (126). Elsie is the most clear-minded of all the characters in the novel, for all her absentminded behaviour and shows that there are no right or wrong positions to be taken (130). Only bad decisions are taken by the members of the Church who hold power on Jeanette, and these are judgmental, which is not a positive characteristic. On the one hand, there is Elsie's and Jeanette's vision that there is no right or wrong (130), that there are, and have been homosexuals in the Church (126); and that it is not up to them to judge. On the other hand, there are the judges who debate about if Jeanette is possessed by demons or is a victim of her own choice, perhaps caused by 'aping men', namely by taking on the prominent role of Preacher, which should be reserved for men. Jeanette is shocked by her mother's acquiesce and agreement with this idea and she renounces the Church (133) because she disagrees with the notion that women's faith and spirituality is inferior to that of men. She

is unable to tolerate the restrictions placed on her expression of faith and leaves home to live in a teacher's house.

For Jeanette, her mother had made bad decisions and she expresses this conviction by comparing the story of King Arthur to her mother's crumbling world as Jeanette, like Genevieve, abandoned the home of Camelot. Unlike Genevieve, who betrayed Arthur's love, Jeanette would like to see her mother thinking about her and begging her not to go, but Jeanette realises that Louie would also have other things to think about and have lots of future plans (127), and that she is not necessarily the centre of her mother's world (127). This is obviously not true, because of Louie's reaction to Jeanette being caught in bed with Katy her second lover, which is ironic in that Jeanette's mother displays all the characteristics of Pennine madness while hating mad people (129). Louie does not break plates, but smashes them (129), calls in the Pastor, who talks about Jeanette being possessed by a demon seven times greater than the first time, and openly discusses with normality the role of Jeanette in her own downfall. Was Jeanette a victim of a demon or was it her own decision to be a wicked person? (129). Louie is in a state of an emotional whirlpool, furious, argumentative, agitated, frightened, incredulous and sobbing (130), all in a short space of time, unlike Elsie, who is sad for not having been around to help and is pragmatic and sympathetic because things are as they are and she is just able to see it like that (130). Elsie is part of the strong women that organised everything in Church and that were very successful at filling the Church. They are visionaries working in a man's world, only to be betrayed by Jeanette's mother who goes completely against the rest of the women present as can be gauged from

their reaction with 'uproar' at her suggestion (130). Louie has gone from the visionary to the reactionary, putting the woman back into the home, and Elsie is the only light to say exactly what deserves to be said: 'That is a load of old twaddle and you know it' (132). After this, Jeanette's vision of the world is so black that, as she reflects: 'I knew I couldn't cope, so I didn't try […] in fact I was scared to death' (134). But she also knows that it is not the end of the world, in winter there is snow, but the sun rises and it melts and tomorrow is 'but another morning' (134).

Tess Coslett sees the chapter called *Ruth* as an exile of the heroine from her mother, home and religion. It is a woman-centred story as Jeanette finally takes charge of her life and is liberated from patriarchal structures, which also means losing her religious faith. The themes are about exile and return, female bonding, mother/daughter relationships, loss and loneliness and female autonomy. This chapter tackles both the separation and subsequent return to the 'adoptive' mother. In the Bible, Ruth similarly makes a break with her past because of her bond with another woman, Naomi, her mother-in-law. The price to be paid by both Ruth and Jeanette is loneliness, exile and separation, while gaining the freedom to reinterpret, to ignore, to appropriate, to construct their own self-identities.

Here, I would argue that the visionary elements of Priest/Prophet are at their greatest, and that the chapter reflects through the narrator's story about Winnet Stonejar and the Wizard, a complete summary of the maturation process that young Jeanette has gone through, from the beginning of the tale when Winnet is found by the sorcerer, who represents Jeanette's mother, to her attempts to be independent, after realising that she had forgotten

how she had arrived at the sorcerer's home. The summary transmitted through the story is essentially an underwriting of the influence of Pennine madness and the increasing force of visionary elements that counter-act and counter-balance the negative staleness of the accepted institutionalised Priest, who sustains and represents the patriarchal social network and the conservatism of accepting a better future afterlife and not tackling present life difficulties. It is a chapter about power: the power of imagination, witchcraft, protection, manipulation, power of others to take over your personal space and identity, incomprehension, power of words, naming and language, making choices and difficult decisions, manipulating time and, most importantly, the power of love. Without imagination you cannot see the positive or negative things to come or prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for the best or the worst. Jeanette is hit from all sides because of her immaturity and innocence, not only in misunderstanding people's interest and attitudes towards her private life, but with regard to the big wide world out there, beyond her physical scope of knowledge. A city like London is imagined with skyscrapers like towers of Babel, guarded by Tigers, and where nobody works, but just sits thinking about the world (149). The way to arrive at the big city is like an imagined gore film, with Jeanette beginning her journey through the eyes and down into the gut along blood and bones (155). The idea of leaving the known for the unknown is painted like William Blake would, and scares her to death.

The power of witchcraft is two-fold, attacking while also protecting. This idea is conveyed through the story of Winnet and the sorcerer. Winnet Stonejar, an anagram of Jeanette Winterson, is terrified of her adoptive father, a powerful Sorcerer, the narrator's

imagined version of her mother, and what he wants to do to her or her to do for him and what he wants from her in the future. The Sorcerer causes resignation in Winnet to the point of her forgetting who she was (141), until a talking Raven, the equivalent of the Prince's goose and Jeanette's orange demon, explains that she has a gift that cannot be taken away from her, but if she stays, she will be destroyed by grief. 'Grief' in northern English means sadness and also connotes having lots of problems. Winnet's danger of self-destruction is because of the power of others to take over one's personal space by extending their own 'chalk circle' to envelop the person they wish to subjugate (139). Jeanette's mother is all-absorbing and nullifies her family's character to the point that they no longer exist. This is what Louie has done to her husband, and this is what Jeanette is not disposed to let happen to her. The Sorcerer also offers protection through the chalk circle but it is this very circle which limits free movement. And this is why Winnet must risk his anger by refusing to enter it. Her refusal is echoed by Jeanette when she says that evil is not knowing yourself or what you want to change in your life (138).

Perhaps the most important for the narrator is the power of language, words and naming things. If she had stayed, it would have been because she cherished the power granted her by the use of language. Thus, she reflects at the end of the novel:

> I could have been a Priest instead of a Prophet. The Priest has a book with the words set out. Old words, known words, words of power. Words that are always on the surface. Words for every occasion. The words work. They do what they are supposed to do; comfort and discipline. The Prophet has no book. The Prophet is a voice that cries in the wilderness, full of sounds that do not always set into meaning. The Prophets cry out because they are troubled by demons. (156)

As these words suggest, God is an 'emotional role model' (165) and the Prophet is full of sounds without meaning. God created the world by using words and Adam also knew that 'naming meant power', as he 'named the animals and the animals came at his call' (138). While Jeanette was acting out the role of a Priest, completely devoted to the Church role where 'Naming is a difficult and time consuming process' (165), she also learnt that it means having power: 'Winnet learned the words but not the language' (148), like a recorded voice knowing what to say, but not knowing the real meaning or reasoning behind the words. Like Britain and the USA, two countries separated by the same language, Jeanette does not speak the same language as her mother. Jeanette wants to talk and question the ways of the world, but she has to pretend to fit in, but even by doing that, they still 'remembered that she was foreign' (149).

Winnet's 'foreignness' allows her to choose to leave because 'a past was precisely that. Past' (155) and 'all the familiar things were getting different meanings'. Jeanette is a split self, 'she can't go back' and yet' I'm always thinking of going back' (155). The visionary dream here is based on the tricks played by time. The Sorcerer talks about the past when he was old and that in the future he will be young and old again. Jeanette lives in two worlds at the same time. She has never been young, as she was responsible at a young age for preaching and converting people, but in the future she will be young, as we see in the role reversal with her mother at the end of the novel with the Christmas presents' scene when Jeanette returns home for Christmas prepared for any kind of reaction from Louie, but never expected to be like a mother looking on, while her mother, like a child, happily rips open her presents. Jeanette

looks on and asks herself: 'Did she remember why I'd left? I have a theory that every time you make an important choice, the part of you left behind continues the other life you could have had' (164). Jeanette goes back to visit her mother, like Ruth stays with Naomi, because a part of her still loves her and this is the power of love that she strives for throughout the novel. As the narrator says in *Deuteronomy*, Time is a deadener and her love is a tormented one at the moment, but her vision is to somehow achieve the unconditional love that Ruth and Naomi have for one another.

> As it is, I can't settle, I want someone who is fierce and will love me until death and know that love is as strong as death, and be on my side for ever and ever. I want someone who will destroy and be destroyed by me. There are many forms of love and affection (165)

This is the visionary objective that Jeanette wants to achieve: Peace, if not tranquillity, and the fruition of love. Her realisation that love is the Holy Grail she wishes to find at the end of her quest is the best proof we can have that the heroine has rounded off at last her individuation process.

CONCLUSIONS

When first reading *Oranges*, it is easy to slip into the attitude of thinking it is a comical easy autobiographical read, about a baby girl adopted by Evangelical parents who wanted to educate her to be a Missionary. The young girl falls in love with a woman and has to leave home. The novel is entertaining but enormously sad and poignant, especially for someone like myself who was brought up around the same time in another Pennine town called Halifax, which is mentioned in *Oranges* and which is only forty kilometres from Accrington, Jeanette Winterson's home town. It has been easy to identify with the behaviour and attitudes shown in the novel, and understand and agree with Winterson in her autobiography *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*? when she says that '*Oranges*, is […] a story I could live with. The other one was too painful. I could not survive it' (Winterson, 2011: 6). Perhaps more investigation should be done later by contrasting *Oranges* with the autobiography and other works like *The Passion*, in order to extract the essence of the pain she is hiding. *Oranges* is about pain and not having, as well as dealing with being on the receiving end and victim of other people's illusion and disillusions.

Winterson says her mother was angry about *Oranges*, because it was not true (6), but what is true? As she says: 'I told my version — faithful and invented, accurate and misremembered, shuffled in time' (6). However, even this comment, in my opinion, lacks the depth of the real gut feeling of young Jeanette growing up and fighting to be an independent person, a separate entity and identity and being able to live in her own right, without the

dominating and castrating figure of her mother. Pennine madness is not only something the others impose on you, it is also within yourself, like a mirror image. The hurt and vengeance not only goes back and forth with action/reaction, but is put onto outsiders. Jeanette suffers psychological abuse from her mother, but Jeanette does the same to the classmates at school. If the novel is a version of Winterson's life she can live with, then she cannot face up to her own part in the family equation and the responsibility she had in the way she grew up. The Pennine madness reflected in the characters in the novel may be too much of a true reflection of herself and her own Pennine madness, which is why young Jeanette may be so loathed in the novel to directly condemn her mother.

Later in her autobiography, Winterson does talk about what I wanted to highlight in this thesis, that 'where you are born – what you are born into, the place, the history of the place, how the history mates with your own – stamps who you are' (16). This is the reality behind *Oranges*, and it is a reality that I have called Pennine madness because the region of the Pennines breeds a particular and peculiar type of person that creates a normality from what objectively speaking is not normal behaviour. The title of the novel, *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, is a good example of what need not be said, and of the seemingly obvious, which is not so logically evident or so obvious, and Pennine madness means needing time and real thought to arrive at such an absolute affirmation. Things are never as clear as they may seem.

Critics have fallen into the same trap as the author of *Oranges*, by skimming over the pain and sadness that means never crying and means hitting everything that blocks your way (Winterson, 2011: 2) and then crying in frustration when the obstacle you love has died (32).

Critics have focused on the mother/daughter relationship, the discovery and development of Jeanette`s sexual orientation that leads to her 'coming out', or read the novel from a feminist perspective, and, of course, these critics are right in their discourse, but it lacks inside knowledge.

Pennine madness as exposed in this essay covers the spectrum of erratic behaviour, unstable mental thought and emotional outbursts. It is the Non-conformity of never accepting life as it is, but thinking 'big' and being imaginatively creative, without limits and constraints of social dogma and institutionalised thought about how to live one's life. It is the creation of one's own inner world and living there. Superstition and active existence of the supernatural is not only important, but is also very real, as is a strong religious and spiritual influence, which we can see through the language and images evoked by the characters of the novel.

As a consequence of all these factors, there is enlightenment. The power of the imagination, and the inner passion, intensity and drive of Pennine madness is what leads to the visionary elements we see in the novel. The visionary as shown here is not only the ability to choose whether to conform and be a Priest or go out on your own and be a Non-conforming Prophet, but it is to incorporate the supernatural and the spiritual into daily life. Young Jeanette chooses to live with her orange demon and lives through her imagination, forming two worlds: the physical and the mental, which allow her to escape when the hurt becomes too much. It is this rare combination of factors that makes *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* an extraordinarily rich and appealing novel.

ANNEX

STATISTICS IN REFERENCE TO ACCRINGTON / HYNDBURN

MENTAL HEALTH

1 There are currently (2012) 12 projects to create mental well being and behavioural change.

2 37 out of every 100,000 people suffer from psychosis. This is second only to South East and North East London.

3 1173 out of every 100,000 people in the North Pennines area are case referrals to psychological therapy services. This is more than double than the second listed in South East and North East London.

4 Suicide remains the most common cause of death in men under the age of 35.

5 In 2010, the West Pennine region had nearly double the national average of suicides.

6 Nationally, in 2010, suicides between the ages 45-74 were 17.7 per 100,000 people for men, and 6 suicides per 100,000 people for women.

7 Accrington / Hyndburn is the 16th area in the list of suicides.

8 Nearby Accrington is Rossendale, the second highest suicide rate with 31.52 suicides per 100,000 population. The national average is 15.56 per 100,000 population. More than double the national average.

9 Burnley is 13th in the list of suicides.

10 Darwen is 19th in the list of suicides.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

11 Life expectancy: Men – 70 years old and Women – 76 years old

12 18.7% of 11 year olds are obese (2009)

13 4,400 children live in poverty (2009)

14 On average, 200 chidren a week were picked up late at night by Police (2009)

15 150 people a year die of smoking-related deaths

16 2.3 out of every 100,000 people die in alcohol related vehicle accidents. This is double the regional average.

17 12.7 out of every 100,000 Women die from chronic liver disease. It is 11.1 nationally (2009)

18 However, all crime rates per 1,000 people (2009): robbery, car theft, robbery from vehicles, sex offences, violence against people and burglary are below the national average

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