

## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to describe the employment of narrative strategies in the novels of Jeanette Winterson with the focus on their development over time. The specific novels to be addressed are: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *The Passion*, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Written on the Body*, *Art & Lies*, *Gut Symmetries* and *The PowerBook*. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* serves as the thematic source for all the other texts, thus determining the sustained concentration on the issues of storytelling, time history. It also contains first narratological experiments, most notably the embedded narratives that are arguably the most crucial of the strategies Winterson utilizes, for they appear in some form in all of her novels. A significant contribution of *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* is their historical setting, which accentuates the clash between fantasy (storytelling) and facts (history). Moreover, they introduce a second narrator in order to enrich the texts with an additional perspective and they use the ensuing duality of the narrators to problematize gender. In the last four novels, Winterson reaches the peak of her experimentation, since they take the themes of the previous novels even further, as if exploring what are the limits of storytelling. The complexity of the narrative structures has deepened, the narrators are now often unreliable and with obfuscated identities, all the features together evoking a general feeling of blur and uncertainty.

The thesis is not meant as a mere listing of the strategies provided with examples, but it endeavors to show the path that has lead Winterson to this final stage by drawing connections between the strategies of the individual novels, eventually linking most of the ideas back to *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. What is required to accomplish this goal, is not only the analysis of what new features each subsequent novel introduces, but also looking back at the features of the already discussed novels and deliberating how their ideas are translated to the next novel – whether they are reiterated, possibly with some nuances, or whether they are discarded, as the focus shifts elsewhere. The thesis demonstrates that the latter option is not very common in Winterson, because her novels have a tendency of building on the ones that came before them, thus echoing many of the already familiar ideas, to which they attach ideas of their own. This could be likened to a snowball gathering more mass as it rolls, while retaining the same core. In the same way, at the heart of every Winterson's novel the reader can sense the presence of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, for she has never abandoned its contentions, even though she

did acquire numerous fresh perspectives and new ways of telling the story as she explored in depth the implications of her first text.