

Degree Project

Level: Master´s

“No Emotion Is the Final One”

Constructing and Performing Gender Identity Through Storytelling in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* - A Queer Reading.

Author: Alexandra Mattsson
Supervisor: Dr. David Gray
Examiner: Dr. Billy Gray
Subject/main field of study: English (Literature)
Course code: EN3061
Credits: 15 ECTS
Date of examination: 8 Jan 2018

At Dalarna University it is possible to publish the student thesis in full text in DiVA. The publishing is open access, which means the work will be freely accessible to read and download on the internet. This will significantly increase the dissemination and visibility of the student thesis.

Open access is becoming the standard route for spreading scientific and academic information on the internet. Dalarna University recommends that both researchers as well as students publish their work open access.

I give my/we give our consent for full text publishing (freely accessible on the internet, open access):

Yes

No

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Queer Theory, Judith Butler's Theory of Gender as Performative, and Storytelling	7
The Beginning of Jeanette's Journey of Constructing and Performing Her Gender Identity Through Storytelling: <i>The Mother, the Pink Mackintosh and Elsie Norris</i>	13
Constructing Jeanette's Gender Identity Through Storytelling: <i>The Prince and the Holy Mystery of Perfection</i> and <i>Winnet Stonejar</i>	24
Conclusion	32
Works cited	35

Introduction

The novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, written by the British author Jeanette Winterson and published in 1985, fits within the genre of *Bildungsroman*. Here, the heroine's growth and quest for individuation is deployed during the 1960's in a strict and hostile religious environment in Northern England. The protagonist of the novel is Jeanette, who lives in a rather small, unnamed village with her adoptive mother and father. The mother, Louie, is a fundamentalist Christian who dominates Jeanette's life in every aspect. She believes in literal translations of the Bible and freely uses religious rhetoric to accommodate her strict black and white views of the world. Jeanette describes her mother's binary view of the world early in the novel: [her mother] "had never heard of mixed feelings. There were friends and there were enemies" (Winterson 3). Although Jeanette feels greatly connected to the church and the teachings of the church - in this sense she is closely aligned with her mother - this fidelity towards the binarism of the church is further challenged as she realizes that she is romantically and sexually drawn towards women. By now, she has begun her process of development and maturation. Thus, rather than resorting to donning her mother's narrow perspective of the world, viewing things and people as either good or bad, Jeanette must learn to challenge herself to explore the areas of ambiguity and uncertainty that are not always conformable with the notions of right or wrong, good or bad.

Throughout the novel, there are changes in the narrative perspective used to tell the story. As she is recounting her own life, the narrator speaks in the first person. When telling mythic stories and fables, there is a third person narrating them and when the reader on occasion is directly addressed, the second person point of view is employed. Many different themes are presented in this complex, thought-

provoking novel. Comprised of eight chapters, each bearing the title of one of the eight books of the Old Testament, the novel articulates archetypal themes related to family, religion, love, the construction of identity and the conflicts between the individual and the community. Unquestionably, there is a clear connection between the themes of the Bible and Jeanette's own experiences throughout the novel. First and foremost, however, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* merges the experience of discovering one's sexuality while, at the same time, struggling to reconstruct individual identity. Although the novel is fictional, the story of the protagonist, Jeanette, unquestionably contains several similarities with Jeanette Winterson's own life, including the protagonist's name, growing up with adoptive parents, being a lesbian and the experience of a strict, religious upbringing. In terms of structure, the novel follows the postmodern tradition of experimentation, constantly interweaving stories like fables and dream sequences in the linear and chronological narrative of Jeanette. Thus, the novel may be considered as metafiction, which is a fictional novel that aims to question the nature of fiction and truth as opposed to the expressly fictional linear plot associated with realistic fiction. Winterson's placement of these stories in her novel has most likely the intention to make the reader question the nature of storytelling and fiction as well as objective reality. In the novel's preface, Winterson emphasizes the anti-linear quality of her novel and the reading of it by resorting to the image of a spiral: "You can read in spirals. As a shape, the spiral is fluid and allows for infinite movement. ...I really don't see the point of reading in straight lines. We don't think like that and we don't live like that" (Winterson xiii). Consequently, the text encourages many different interpretations, especially concerning its fairy-tale elements and non-linear structure. Hence, Winterson advocates alternative views and ways of understanding themes like stories versus

the truth and subjectivity versus reality. In addition, she presents an untraditional approach to sexual and gender identity. Thus, the stories interwoven throughout the novel appear to alert the reader to the role of construction in relation to sexual and gender identity by presenting new perspectives on this matter.

Traditionally, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* has mainly been viewed as a work primarily dealing with a young woman's coming out as a lesbian in a truly binary and strict religious community and has been described by Susan Onega in her work *Contemporary British Novelists*, as "a realistic and heavily autobiographical comedy of 'coming out'" (18). This novel is keen, however, to question and scrutinize distinctions between fact and fiction. As Winterson comments in the preface of the novel: "Is *Oranges* an autobiographical novel? No not at all and yes of course" (13). Nevertheless, the focal point among some critics and in a number of previous research papers has been on the autobiographical nature of the novel.

The action of the story takes place between the 1950's and 1970's, a period in which a profound transformation took place in the consciousness of people in Britain as well as the West in general. Francesca Mendez states in her scholarly paper *The Limitless Self: Desire and Transgression in Jeanette Winterson's Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit and Written on the Body* that: "The cultural consequences of this social transformations as well as the socio-political and economic atmosphere of the period must be kept in mind if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the characters in Winterson's novel" (10). Nick Bentley confirms this further when he comments on Winterson's novel in *Contemporary British Fiction*; "[*Oranges*] interrogates the articulation of sexual identities in British society through the experiences of a character recognizing her lesbian identity

within a closed society that rejects same-sex relationships” (96). Ultimately, as a result when the novel was published during the 1980’s, sociological readings were subordinated to readings in the light of the emerging lesbian and queer theory.

Unquestionably, there has been a common understanding of the novel as a work seeking to deconstruct the nature of gender as it is perceived in the Western world: [...] “Thus, the text is fundamentally concerned with deconstructing the sexuality and gender binaries that permeate the story” (Crawford 1). Mendez too argues that this is a common aspect in most of Winterson’s works, for example in *Written on the Body* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*:

These works disrupt the models that define the patriarchal order such as our self in a binary/gendered constructed system and its restrictive heterosexual model of love, thus defying the discursive concepts of fixity within the totalizing binary patterns of Western thought. Winterson advocates alternative ways to understand the sexual, emotional, and intellectual self (2).

Thus, it can be suggested that Winterson uses her authorship to encourage her readers to question the Western tradition of perceiving gender and sexuality in a binary and insular manner. In addition, the importance of integrating fantasy and stories in Winterson’s works has been emphasized by previous research papers. In her work *“I’m telling you stories... Trust me”*: *Gender, Desire, and Identity in Jeanette Winterson’s Historical Fantasies*, Jana L. French points out that Winterson’s usage of the fantastic has figured prominently in six of her seven novels. By combining these fantasies and storytelling with specific historical

references, Winterson challenges the notion of cultural authority of rationalism and the natural laws governing the historical world. As French puts it: “Winterson implies that human reason is both limited and, in excess, potentially harmful in that it can produce rigid ways of thinking. Imagination, with its more fluid conceptualizations of world and self, is a necessary counter force to the dehumanizing effects of hyper-rationality” (231).

One aspect of constructing and performing identity that has not yet been fully examined by previous research, however, is the importance and function of storytelling, dreams and fables in the deconstruction and performance of Jeanette’s gender identity. In fact, as she is brought up by a dominant mother in such a strict and binary religious community, these elements of storytelling and fables may be crucial in breaking free from the predetermined identity in favor of establishing a gender identity of her own. Throughout the novel, traditional Western societal notions of gender and sexual identity are challenged through the depicted actions and personal traits of the characters as well as through storytelling and dreaming. By telling stories and adapting the contents of these stories to her own life, the protagonist creates a performative space, an opportunity to look and act beyond the strict religious community she grows up in. As a consequence of this use of storytelling, the protagonist eventually manages to deconstruct and perform a gender and sexual identity outside the norms and binary patterns of her social setting. The aim of this thesis is thus to analyze the ways in which traditional gender identity is constructed and performed, initially through the behavior of characters in Jeanette’s ambient environment, but eventually through narratives and storytelling in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, ultimately resulting in a transformation of the protagonist’s gender identity. In order to analyze this area, this thesis provide a close

reading of the novel, focusing on the role of two key characters, where the first one is Jeanette's mother, Louie, who is a very dominant, narrow-minded and judgmental woman. The second character who has a great impact on Jeanette is Elsie Norris, a loving and wise elderly woman who is a member of the same church as Jeanette. Additionally, focus will be on story-passages and their roles in the construction and performance of the protagonist's identity. As the aspect of a uniform and universal pattern of gender identity is put into question in favor of a performative and fluid understanding of gender and sexuality, this thesis will mainly employ features of Queer Theory and the work of gender theorist Judith Butler, particularly her seminal piece *Gender Trouble*. Throughout the analysis, Steph Lawler's work *Identity – Sociological Perspectives* will be employed with regard to the analysis of gender identity, in particular the relationship between storytelling and identity. In addition, the thesis will continuously turn to Susan Onega's analysis of Winterson's novels in *Contemporary British Novelists* as this work highlights the aspects at focal point in this thesis. Additionally, previous scholarly research papers on *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* will be referred to.

Firstly, this thesis will provide a theoretical framework-chapter based on Queer theory and Butler's theory of gender as performative called *Queer Theory, Judith Butler and the Theory of Gender as Performative*. In relation to this performative aspect on identity, the relation between storytelling and identity will also be generally surveyed, as the role of storytelling in the construction of Jeanette's identity is of great importance. Furthermore, Jeanette's encounter with some traditional narratives is presented and analyzed in this chapter. In the second chapter, called *The Beginning of Jeanette's Journey of Finding Her Gender Identity: The Mother, the Pink Mackintosh and Elsie Norris*, the behavior of these two characters,

their perception of the world, and how they affect Jeanette's construction of her own identity will be analyzed. In the third chapter, *Deconstructing Jeanette's Gender Identity Through Storytelling: The Prince and His Search for Perfection, and Winnet Stonejar* it will be shown how Jeanette, by telling stories and adapting them to the story of her own life, is able to deconstruct the gender identity that is largely forced upon her in favor of constructing an identity of her own.

Queer Theory, Judith Butler's Theory of Gender as Performative, and Storytelling

Traditionally, queer theory questions the permanent norms and identities in favor of deconstructing them. In *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theory*, Berthold Schoene defines queer as a designation of "new democratic virtues of nonconformity, civil obedience, and political defiance" (285). Furthermore, he states that queer politics does not exist to singularly seek tolerance or equality, but rather seek to generally "challenge mainstream institutions and accounts" generally (286). Thus, queer serves as a less restrictive and specific platform, and a platform for defiance of ruling societal norms and encompassing a broader group of people. Unlike those identity categories labelled lesbian or gay, queer has developed out of the theorizing of often unexamined constraints in traditional identity politics. Consequently, queer has been produced largely outside the registers of recognition, truthfulness and self-identity. Therefore, queer is an identity category that has no interest in consolidating or even stabilizing itself. Judith Butler suggests that identity, out of the perspective of queer theory, may in fact be performative. If the body "[...] is a field of interpretative possibilities" and "if gender is a kind of doing,

an incessant activity performed” (Butler 1), the notion of a fixed approach to identity is inevitably questioned. (However, as she states, this is a complex phenomenon which is hard to define precisely). Furthermore, according to Butler, “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through the naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (2).

In his work *Identity – Sociological Perspectives*, Stephen Lawler comments on the earliest performative aspect of gender: “At birth (or *in utero*), the very expression of the sex of a child: (‘It’s a girl!’) is performative; it positions the child on one side or the other of a gendered divide. From this moment, Butler argues, the child is ‘girded’ (or ‘boyed’)” (131). Thus, the child’s sex or gender is not inherent in its body: rather it is brought about by this initial speech act at the birth. The view that gender is performative seeks to show that what has traditionally been thought of as an internal essence of gender is actually manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. As Lawler puts it: “Sex and gender are just not internalized (taken on as an identity) but materialized (produced within the material body) (128). Furthermore, both femininity and masculinity are, according to Butler, repeatedly, continually, and performatively constituted. Consequently, identity is something that is done and achieved rather than innate. As a result, we become what we continually, repeatedly and compulsorily perform. In order to emphasize this view on gender as performative, Butler refers to the French writer, modern feminist and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir who suggests in *The Second Sex* that “one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one” (Butler 11). In other words, for Beauvoir as well as for Butler, gender

is not fixed, but rather something determined by culture and its laws. In addition, Butler argues that what makes queer so efficient is the way in which it understands the effects of its interventions are not predictable and binary and therefore cannot be anticipated in advance.

As for the notions of 'identity' and 'gender', they have traditionally been attached to one another. There has been an ongoing attempt in Western society and culture to establish fixed attitudes in individuals based on gender. Thus, individuals have historically adopted certain expected behaviors according to their sex and gender. Consequently, from the time we are born, we are immediately categorized as male or female. However, as Alvaro Valladar states in *The Construction of the Homosexual identity in Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, "this clearly biological assumption may be challenged or disrupted in many occasions as we grow older when 'gender identity' and 'gender roles' come to play their crucial part" (15). Gender is generally viewed as a set of cultural practices associated to biological sex. As for gender identity, it alludes to the identity an individual develops throughout life, which traditionally coincides with the official features of sex. Concerning this view of gender identity, however, Valladar extends it as "something far more than biological sex, it is the output of a set of cultural values we take in, it is actually the result of our behavior, attitude and performance in life" (16). Thus, he agrees with Butler in that gender identity is performative and culturally constructed. In addition, as for the construction of gender identity, Butler argues that certain political practices enforce traditional gender identities and questions to what extent identity is a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience (23).

Furthermore, Butler states that the regulatory structures governing

gender also govern culturally intelligible notions of identity. Hence, the “[...] “coherence” and “continuity” of “the person” are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility” (23). Butler also argues that gender and sexual identities not following the norms risk being excluded:

The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of “identities” cannot “exist” – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not “follow” from either sex or gender. “Follow” in this context is a political relation of entailment instituted by the cultural laws that establish and regulate the shape and meaning of sexuality. Indeed, precisely because certain kinds of “gender identities” fail to conform to those norms of cultural intelligibility, they appear only as developmental failures or logical impossibilities from within that domain (24).

These passages suggest that gender identity is fluid and complex but, simultaneously, strictly regulated by cultural norms and expectations. As it will be shown, this becomes evident in the novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* as the protagonist, Jeanette, admits to being a lesbian.

As mentioned earlier, queer theory encompasses a broader group of people and serves as a platform for defiance of societal norms. In the case of *Oranges*, these societal norms are epitomized by the rules and rock-solid beliefs set

by Jeannette's mother, the members of their community, and the pastor governing the religious community which Jeannette and her mother are a part of. These societal norms are eventually rejected by Jeanette, which results in her being an outcast in the society. This experience of exclusion when stepping outside the societal norms and expectations is not new to her, however. As a matter of fact, Jeanette's feeling of being an outsider begins earlier on in the novel: In *Oranges*, what Judith Butler calls "A field of ethical enmeshment with others and a sense of disorientation for the first-person" (25) is present. This sense of "disorientation" of the first-person narrator is inscribed in the very first words of the first line of the novel: "*Like most people I lived a long time with my mother and father*" (Winterson 3). While pointing to the majority of the people forming the community the narrator refers her readers to, the determiner "most", which implicitly points to the differential units challenging the ideal of a perfect community: Jeannette is exactly one such exception to the norm, and writing the story of this "disorientated" subject will outline a new trajectory for the self, not *within* her community, but *without* it. Thus, already at this stage in the novel, the narrator rejects the notion of a normative, binary society where everyone behaves and lives their lives according to the dominant, traditional gender and sexual norms of men and women. The performative aspect of queer theory, and the perspective on storytelling and history as subjective and flexible, applies to the purpose of this essay: To show how the protagonist, by using storytelling and narratives as a platform of performance, ultimately constructs an identity of her own.

As previously stated, the importance of storytelling in constructing the protagonist's identity is essential. Stephen Lawler emphasizes this as he states in the chapter "Stories, Memories, Identities" that identities are closely linked to narratives

and that identities can be understood as being made through narratives. Furthermore, he considers identities “[...] as ‘made up’ through making a *story* out of *life*” (24). That is, identities are constructed by the stories we are telling ourselves and others throughout life. As it will be shown, the protagonist in *Oranges*, Jeanette, is engaged in such processes as she produces an identity through assembling various experiences and memories from different narratives. The role of storytelling and narratives in the production of identity are thus significant. Furthermore, according to Lawler, narratives “[...] can be seen as a basic to Western culture, as to many – perhaps all - cultures, although of course what counts as a good or reasonable story varies historically and cross-culturally” (25). Lawler states that we could hardly live without telling stories: “We endlessly tell stories about our lives, both to ourselves and to others; and it is through such stories that we make sense of the world, of our relationship to that world and of the relationship between ourselves and other selves” (Lawler 25). Consequently, the very constitution of identity is constructed over time and through narrative, that is, identity is profoundly social and is continually interpreted and reinterpreted. As Lawler puts it: “So identity is not something foundational and essential, but something produced through the narratives people use to explain and understand their lives” (30).

The identification with others through storytelling is another process affecting the construction of identity. When people put themselves into someone else’s story and rework the story, this reworking process results in a story of their own. Here, there is a difference between factual and fictional narratives. Although there is no moral obligation on fictional narratives to have any relationships to real events in order to affect the construction of identity, factual narratives, on the other hand, are expected to do so. In addition, their narrators often demand that we read

them that way. By dedicating herself to fictional stories only, the protagonist Jeanette is not obliged to consider any real events or narrators when constructing her identity, which allows her to dream and narrate freely in her identity constructing process. Concerning storytelling and truth, Judith Butler maintains that “The story of origins is...a strategic tactic within a narrative that, by telling a single, authoritative account about an irrecoverable past makes the constitution of the law appear as a historical inevitability” (46). Similarly, Campulova comments on the notion of the truth of origins as something performative rather than static: “By refuting the myth of origin, and thus, problematizing categories, performativity theory attracts the attention to performative nature of subjects/hierarchies” (76) This perspective on fluid and changeable identity, regardless of previous history, is applicable to the notion that storytelling is an aspect of performance, which is something that is of great importance in the protagonist’s construction of her identity in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. As Susan Onega puts it: “Like a fairytale heroine, the only weapon Jeanette has to console herself is the power of her imagination” (20).

The beginning of Jeanette’s Journey of Constructing and Performing Her Gender Identity through storytelling: *The Mother, the Pink Macintosh and Elsie Norris*

Butler’s theory of gender as performative emphasizes that identities are not expressions of some inner nature; rather they are performed in that they are constantly and repeatedly done. Furthermore, “they are done within a matrix of

social relations that authorizes their being done” (Lawler 129). This approach to identity will be of importance when Jeanette begins the construction of her identity.

Throughout her upbringing, Jeanette is exposed to her mother’s religious indoctrination which disregards Jeanette’s own beliefs and needs in favor of raising her daughter as a missionary for the Lord. In other words, Jeanette is regarded by her mother as the perfect instrument for the Lord rather than as a human being with desires of her own. Thus, Louie forces on her daughter the gender roles she is supposed to perform according to her version of Christianity. As the religion has a determined theology of sexual ethics which states that there should be one kind of sexuality only, that is heterosexuality, the fluidity and multiplicity of sexual domain is restricted. Hence, this heterosexual configuration of sexuality rejects the possibility of other sexualities. Despite her mother’s harsh and non-affectionate treatment, Jeanette still loves and admires her, however: “Jeanette feels for her mother the type of unquestioning love associated with fairytale heroines, and she is treated by her with the harshness and cruelty of a fairytale stepmother” (Onega 20). Jeanette spends her childhood years studying the Bible and reading the Book of Deuteronomy in order to become a missionary. Louie, interpreting the Bible according to her restrictive perception, offers Jeanette a mechanical reading of it. According to Bentley, the mother uses religion as a guide on how to live: “For her [Jeanette’s] mother, religion orders the world (and how to behave in it) in a fixed way with clear demarcations between right and wrong” (116). Nevertheless, Louie is wavering between her religious fanaticism and her urge to shape people and things around her according to her strict doctrines. For example, when Louie cannot make sense of the verses in the Bible or when things are not as she wants them to be, she changes the reality according to her needs. Jeanette remarks upon her mother’s

flexibility when interpreting the biblical contents: “sometimes my mother invented theology” (Winterson 5). Louie’s single-mindedness and delight in the binary frame is also reflected in her insistence of the fruit orange, which she repeatedly claims to be “the only fruit” (Winterson 29). Mendez refers to this statement and to the orange as a means “[...] to symbolize the all-pervasive repression Louie represents in her daughter’s life, and to epitomize the restrictiveness of the concept of love within the compulsory heterosexual model dictated by patriarchal and religious ideology” (19). Here, instead of the biblical fruit “apple” which led to Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden and eventually their fall, Louie makes use of another fruit, the “orange”. Ultimately, the orange can be conceived as a metaphor for oneness, heteronormativity and a gender assignment given to Jeanette by her mother. Jeanette does not respond according to Louie’s expectations, however. Özge Yakut comments on this unwillingness: “Jeanette is not aware of the gender role assigned to her, and she is like passive medium/a blank sheet on which formalistic inscriptions are written” (48). Nevertheless, this shows that despite Louie’s supposedly strict interpretation of the Bible, she reproduces and changes its contents whenever she finds it necessary. By blurring the line between fact and fiction and by drawing on biblical lexicon, Louie continuously uses religious stories to cast normative sexual/gender roles on Jeanette. For example, after forbidding Jeanette to visit a paper shop run by a lesbian couple, Louie tells her a story “about a brave person who despised the fruits of the flesh and worked for the Lord itself” (Winterson 7). Here, she sets an example for Jeanette by exalting the strong person who rejects “the fruit of the flesh”, that is, the sexual desire hidden within the body.

However, as Jeanette eventually grows to understand her mother’s own adaptations and convenient interpretations of the Bible, she starts questioning the

Biblical contents. Besides biblical stories, Louie changes other narratives too. When Jeanette asks her mother about how and why she had decided to marry her father, Louise refers to the story of *Jane Eyre* but secretly changes the end of it: she rewrites the story by making Jane marry St John Rivers in the end. It does not take long for Jeanette to discover the true ending: “I found out, that dreadful day in a back corner of the library, that Jane doesn’t marry St. John at all, that she goes back to Mr. Rochester” (Winterson 73). On discovering her mother’s insincerity regarding readings of the Bible, *Jane Eyre* and, as it turns out, her adoption, Jeanette starts questioning her own life and identity, and she comes to realize that she has been living in a world that is founded on lies and delusions, all handed to her through storytelling. As she realizes that her mother does not have all of the answers, and neither does the church, Jeanette begins her process of maturation and development. Thus, rather than resorting to living after her mother’s ideological perspective of the world and viewing things and people as either good or bad, Jeanette must now learn to challenge herself to explore areas of ambiguity and contradiction that do not always conform with the notions of right or wrong. As a result, Jeanette’s realistic narrative begins to interweave with fairytale elements to underscore that separating fact from fiction is impossible. Ultimately, her mother’s conscious reproductions of the biblical ideas, as well as other stories, opens up a possibility for Jeanette to start adapting narratives to the events of her own life. One of Jeanette’s first reactions against the repressive authority of the church can be seen in her early rebellion against its narrative: As a seven-year-old, she rewrites the ending of Bible stories pictographically, using felt figures of characters such as Daniel, whom she allows to be eaten by lions (Winterson 13). Eventually, “this urge to fabulate on sacred texts extends to the secular narratives that would regulate her

sexuality and gendered identity” (French 233).

The first concrete indication that she goes against mainstream society, although subtly, occurs in the chapter “Numbers”. Jeanette, who is now in her teens, and her mother are out on a rainy day and as they are passing a butcher shop, Jeanette’s raincoat snags on a meat hook. The sleeve is torn apart and her mother insists on buying her a new raincoat. The mackintosh her mother chooses for her is too large and the color is bright pink, a stereotypically feminine color often used as a gender identifier from birth. When Jeanette’s mother forces the raincoat over her head, she thinks of the story of *The Man in the Iron Mask*. In this story, the main character is confined in prison with a mask over his face for many years. For Jeanette, the pink raincoat symbolizes the ideological mask that her mother is trying to impose on her, requiring that Jeanette becomes a heterosexual and follows the rules of the church. Thus, the raincoat ultimately symbolizes a final attempt by Jeanette’s mother to force her into something that she is not. Jeanette uses the excuse that the raincoat is too big for her as an attempt to prevent her mother from buying it. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler points at the performative aspect as she states that heterosexuality is constituted by societal norms as the natural sexuality. Hence, what is regarded as normal is conveyed through certain ways of acting, dressing and expressing oneself. In other words, sexuality, to some extent, is based on forms of performativity: “It is performatively enacted through codes which are normalized, for example through specific types of clothes, make-up and hair” (Lawler 132). Here, her aversion to the feminine color pink, can be interpreted as an aversion to stereotypical femaleness and heterosexuality in general, ultimately showing Jeanette’s urge to construct an identity of her own, irrespective of society’s norms and expected behavior of her as a woman. This occasion is the first of several hints

of Jeanette's desire to subvert the ideas her mother has imposed on her through storytelling. She refuses to wear the pink raincoat, and thus, refuses to perform according to a determined gender identity. Additionally, this is also the day Jeanette first spots Melanie, with whom she starts having her first relationship.

Having ascertained that Jeanette's mother uses adjusted version of the stories in the Bible and narratives to convey her own beliefs, there is another person, Elsie Norris, who affects Jeanette's perception of the world in a far more positive way. This elderly, energetic, kind-hearted and quite eccentric church member, who functions as a substitute mother figure for Jeanette, helps her to develop her understanding of reality, and the construction of her gender identity, through narratives. On one occasion, Jeanette is at hospital due to a temporary deafness. As Louie is busy and therefore cannot visit Jeanette very often, Elsie Norris takes it upon herself to provide Jeanette the love and attention she needs. In order to cheer Jeanette up, she uses storytelling: "Elsie came every day, and told me jokes to make me smile and stories to make me feel better. She said stories helped you understand the world" (Winterson 29). By acting as a nurturing and mother-like figure, and by using storytelling as an instrument, Elsie liberates Jeanette from the strict understanding of the church and Louie by showing her that there is not merely one truth, one perception and one world. On one occasion, Elsie denies the conception of oneness as she tells Jeanette: "'There is this world,' she banged the wall graphically, 'and there's this world,' she thumped her chest. 'If you want to make sense of either, you have to take notice of both'" (32). Hence, Elsie defies the notion of one perception of reality only. Instead, she advocates the multiplicity and fluidity of reality. By quoting William Blake, William Yeats and other writers and poets, Elsie acknowledges, unlike Jeanette's mother, that there are a plurality of other texts

than simply the Bible and *Jane Eyre*. Ultimately, by introducing Jeanette to the world of literature and hence, the world of imagination, Elsie exposes Jeanette to a universe she has never known. From this moment, Jeanette's inner realities and needs, the interior knowledge that Elsie represents by thumping on her chest, are worked out in fantasy, storytelling and dreams. Yakut states that "as Elsie broadens Jeanette's vision, she becomes an important figure in Jeanette's quest for subjectivity of her reality, and for her struggle to reject gender roles cast upon her" (52). Elsie's perspective of truth and reality also encourages Jeanette to start looking beyond the binary environment where she has been brought up. While Jeanette's mother uses storytelling as a guise in order to dominate Jeanette, Elsie uses storytelling as a way of understanding the world out of another perspective. Onega points out the difference between the role of the two women in Jeanette's life: While Jeanette's mother has similarities with an evil fairytale stepmother, Elsie resembles a good fairy, helping Jeanette in conjuring her identity (20).

By now, after realizing that her mother has been telling her stories out of her own interest and needs, constantly adapting the contents of the Bible according to her own narrow and convenient reality, Jeanette understands that she can do exactly the same thing. In other words, this is where she starts using fairytales and fables as a means of deconstructing the gender identity imposed on her and, at the same time, begins to construct her own gender identity. Apart from offering an alternative view of the world to Louie's narrow and strict one by presenting the slippery nature of all narratives and biblical allusions, the fairytales also display the crucial moments in Jeanette's life when she has to choose between her own desire and her Evangelist community. In order to solve this confusing and punishing situation, Jeanette creates a space for her innermost desire that the societal rules

expect her to reject, and thus correlates her experiences in real life with her dreams and stories. In other words, the incorporation of biblical stories and fairytales into the narrative not only disrupts the linearity of the novel but also points out Jeanette's effort to escape her mother's essentialism and to rewrite her own narrative. The fantastic tale in chapter two, "Exodus", "The Emperor Tetrahedon", which is based upon two shapes she has learned in mathematics, exemplifies this. In this narrative, there are midgets acting out many tragedies and comedies simultaneously in order to amuse the emperor, and he can see them all because he had five heads: "Round and round he walked, and so learned a very valuable thing: that no emotion is the final one" (Winterson 48). Tetrahedon's final discovery that emotions keep on coming as well as changing, represents a lesson that Jeanette is learning in her own life. That is, the emotions that she felt in the first chapter, safety and sanctity in her beliefs and home, is now beginning to change as new insights and emotions become unveiled. Furthermore, the tragedies and comedies performed by the midgets are just like identities and storytelling: fluid and constantly under construction. Here, the midgets' performance constitutes the theory of gender as performative, which enables Jeanette to continue constructing her identity outside the binary and strictly religious society's expectations on her.

In addition to storytelling, Jeanette eventually discovers another way of finding answers and interpreting the world. In the chapter called *Numbers*, a teenaged Jeanette tries to figure out the nature of relations between women and men. She repeatedly overhears conversations between some of the women belonging to the religious community regarding their unhappy marriages and their worthless husbands. Simultaneously, she has recurring nightmares in which she marries either a pig, a blind man or her mother, something "[...] that reveals Jeanette's awakening

sexuality and her anxieties about becoming a part of a traditional heterosexual relationship” (Bentley 111). These dreams are triggered by Jeanette’s discovery that married women like her aunt do not like their husbands, and call them ‘pigs’. The discovery of the discontent among the married women, in combination with her first experience of falling in love with a girl, Melanie, leaves Jeanette confused and somewhat troubled, something that Mendez comments on as follows: ”Here we see the young girl feeling the first contradictions between desire to love and be loved and her natural antipathy for the men who seem to cause so much grief in the lives of the women she knows” (25).

In order to get some answers and peace of mind, Jeanette goes to the library: “In the library I felt better, words you could trust and look at till you understood them, they couldn’t change half way through a sentence like people, so it was easier to spot a lie” (Winterson 72). In the library, Jeanette finds a classic book of fairytales and reads *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Beauty and the Beast*. These narratives make her believe that the world might be conspiring to mystify her, because if a beast can be turned into a handsome prince with just a kiss, how can it be that her aunt’s husband, uncle Bill, is still such a horrible man. Jeanette contemplates: “I wondered if the woman had read this story. She must have been awfully disappointed if she had” (Winterson 72). After reading *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Beauty and the Beast*, realizing that a kiss could not turn a repulsive man or beast into a prince, Jeanette concludes that there are three types of people in the world: “There are women in the world. There are men in the world. And there are beasts”. [But] “What do you do if you marry a beast” (Winterson 72). After musing on this, the young girl is unable to come up with a solution and thus concludes that marriage seems to be an unpleasant experience. Once again, she uses stories and

storytelling as a means to comprehend her social milieu.

Furthermore, in the following chapter: “Deuteronomy, the Last Book of the Law”, a short non-narrative section of the novel, a presumably adult and experienced narrator reflects upon the notion of history, stories and storytelling. The narrator explores the ideological, ruling construct which lies behind the founding of binary oppositions. Hence, the distinction between fiction and fact as well as story and history is challenged by the adult voice attending the novel:

People like to separate storytelling which is not fact from history which is fact. They do this so that they know what to believe and what to not believe [...] Knowing what to believe had its advantages. It built an empire and kept people where they belonged, in the bright realm of the wallet... (Winterson 93).

Jeanette comforts herself by thinking that her way of living her life is saving her from marrying: “It was a good thing I was destined to become a missionary” (Winterson 77). This path is something that obviously, to her great relief, will let her escape the traditional married life. Furthermore, by listening to the two women talking negatively about their dominant husbands, Jeanette learns that it is not possible to combine marriage and autonomy, and she refuses to live a life without autonomy. Here, the young woman is feeling a contradiction between the desire to love and be loved in return and her aversion towards the men who only seem to cause women in her ambient environment grief and pain. Hence, being a part of a quite large female community and closely rooted in a relationship with her dominant mother, the heterosexual relationships around Jeanette only function to reassure her

that rejecting the phallogocentric ethos is the correct thing to do.

As for the notion of storytelling and history in general, it has begun to effect Jeanette's own life and the way she tells her own story. History, as Jeanette observes it, is "a way of explaining the universe while leaving the universe unexplained, it's a way of keeping it all alive, not boxing it into time. Everyone who tells a story tells it differently, just to remind us that everybody sees it differently" (Winterson 91). Ultimately, she argues that facts are, or should be, subordinate to narrative:

Some people say there are true things to be found, some people say all kind of things can be proved. I don't believe them. The only thing for certain is how complicated it all is, like a string full of knots. It's all there but hard to find the beginning and impossible to fathom the end... It's an all purpose rainy day pursuit, this reducing of stories called history (Winterson 91).

As a consequence of her mother's recurring changes of the Bible and other narratives, Elsie's encouragement and the paradox between classic love stories and the reality represented by the discontented married women, Jeanette's identity construction emerges. She starts using the source of storytelling and rewriting stories in her own development to justify her choices, and to find answers when she needs them. In other words, to her, stories supply a more complicated and varied way of interpreting the world and is a tool which can be used when trying to comprehend the world and herself and the challenges she faces. Bentley suggest that Jeanette can profit from the religious narratives she has been dedicated to since early childhood

when she starts constructing an identity of her own: “Religion becomes one of a series of valuable narratives that go towards the building of an individual’s identity” (114). However, in denying the relationship between text and referent, she does not have to take responsibility for these stories and her view of historiography is as emancipatory and skeptical as the message is: If history is nothing more than storytelling, we all have the possibility to rewrite our own versions and experiences of the past. Consequently, Jeanette argues that each person is the historian of his/her own world as he/she creates his or her own fiction. Therefore, there is no singularity of truth but rather as many truths as there are individuals. By now, she is determined to start writing her own story and, by extension, constructing her own gender identity. French states, however, that:

This is of no small consequence in the novel. As a teenager whose coming of age is complicated by the struggle to come out as a lesbian within a fundamentalist religious sect in Northern England, Jeanette’s self-identification comes at the cost of alienating her family, friends, and, most importantly, the religious community that has given her life definition up to this point (232).

Constructing Jeanette’s Gender Identity through Storytelling: *The Prince and The Holy Mystery of Perfection and Winnet Stonejar*

As Jeanette grows older, she starts questioning the whole religious community, which the following contemplation shows:

Since I was born I had assumed that the world ran on very simple lines, like a longer version of our church. Now I was finding that even the church was something confused. This was a problem. But not one I chose to deal with for many years more (Winterson 27).

When Jeanette starts questioning the church it has its origin in the chapter called “Leviticus”. Here one of the community’s special conferences takes place, and when the judgmental and idolized Pastor Spratt holds a sermon, Jeanette finds herself dubious to his message: “The sermon was on perfection, and it was in this moment that I began to develop my first theological disagreement” (Winterson 60). Jeanette rejects such a rigid attitude on moral perfection, and to cope with her disagreement, she creates a comical myth about it. Jeanette's tendency to retreat to her imagination when questioning things has already been stated in previous chapters. Jeanette creates these stories to either explain or understand her own existence. Furthermore, “with the juxtaposition of those narrative elements, Jeanette creates a space for her innermost desire that the Law expects her to repress, and correlates her experiences in real life with her dreams in fairyland” (Campulova 79). Thus, the story of a prince seeking for the perfect woman is inserted to the narrative to problematize and question the potency of the Law as well as the concept of perfection: “Once upon a time, in the forest, lived a woman who was so beautiful that the mere sight of her healed the sick and gave a good omen to the crops” (Winterson 61). As the story continues, there is a twist to it: not only is the woman in the story beautiful, but also independent, wise and intelligent. A prince, who is looking for a wife, asks her to spend three days and three nights with him. The maiden agrees to this but as the

prince asks her to marry him, she rejects his proposal, telling him that marriage does not interest her. The point of the behavior of the woman is to make the prince understand that what he is looking for – unconditional and everlasting love – does not exist and that perfection does not imply flawlessness: “The search for perfection, she had told him, was in fact the search for balance, for harmony” (Winterson 64). By declining the prince’s marriage proposal, and thus, uncovering the flaws in his narrative, the maiden challenges the order of patriarchy. As the tale proceeds, it turns out that the prince is stubborn and reluctant to the wisdom of the woman and hence, he orders her to be executed. The prince carries on with his quest and comes across a salesman who “only does oranges” which heavily infers Louie’s symbolic insistency on oranges as the only fruit (Winterson 67). At the end of the fairy tale the prince’s ongoing struggle for perfection is ridiculed and it becomes clear that such totalistic views of the world and the people living in it only lead to complete error. This story is an obvious reaction against Pastor Spratt’s sermon and a way of dealing with the doubts that Jeanette experiences. The tale also correlates with her mother’s quest for a perfect daughter who abides by patriarchy. Just like the prince, Louie is entrapped in a single-minded perspective, and their narrow perception of the truth causes the destruction of the people around them. Furthermore, in Jeanette’s revised fairytale, the princess denies her beauty as well as the prince’s hand in marriage and thereby refuses to acknowledge herself and her value within the normative, heterosexual community of the fairytale. Thus, this tale functions as a representation of Jeanette’s new-found awareness of the contradictory and unexpected nature of personal freedom and the existing human frailty as well as her realization that one narrative can be challenged by another. This is a crucial insight which triggers Jeanette’s disbelief in the authority of the church as well as her

mother. Here, Jeanette, through her storytelling, constructs for herself a number of shifting, fluid selves. Hence, it becomes clear that she does not represent a single, static identity. Furthermore, the importance of using fantasy and storytelling as a platform in the construction of her gender identity becomes evident.

Jeanette's refusal to repent to the doctrines of her mother and the church eventually results in her being forced to leave the congregation and her family home. By this, she also rejects what Butler calls "[...] a 'compulsory heterosexuality': 'It is a compulsory performance in the sense that acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment, and violence, not to mention the transgressive pleasures produced by those very prohibitions'" (24). Now that Jeanette has been cast out of her home, she is an outcast in two different ways: In addition to her homosexuality, her evangelical background separates her from the rest of the society. The difficulties that Jeanette now faces and her pain at being ostracized lead her to retell her story as myth called Winnet Stonejar. Winnet, an apprentice of a magician, obviously represents Jeanette in a magical world. In this story, the magician becomes the owner of Winnet when he guesses her name correctly as "naming meant power" (Winterson 142). Winnet is taken to the magician's castle and as they arrive she forgets everything about her previous life. From this moment, Winnet becomes the magician's adoptive daughter. His truth becomes her truth, and his world becomes her world. The magician teaches Winnet everything he knows, and everything is fine until one day when Winnet falls in love. The magician asks her to leave the castle: "'Daughter, you have disgraced me' said the sorcerer, 'and I have no more use for you. You must leave'" (Winterson 147). After that, Winnet's journey towards a new city where "truth mattered and no one would betray her" (158) starts. When she is about to leave the castle, the magician

disguises himself into a mouse “twisting an invisible thread around one of her buttons” (148). The magician wants to use the thread in order to make Winnet come back home, but she does not. Here, Campulova states that there are evident parallels between Winnet and Jeanette: They are both adopted, they both fall in love with the wrong person, and desire to follow their own paths, thus defying the authority of their parents who banish them from their homes (82). As in the case of Winnet, Jeanette’s mother also wants her daughter to be a kind of apprentice, although a missionary in this case. Winnet does not return to the castle, but Jeanette comes back to her mother to confront her a last time. Just like Winnet, Jeanette feels like she has invisible threads attached to her and states “there are threads that help you find your way back, and there are threads that intend to bring you back” (Winterson 160). At Jeanette’s return, her mother has become a little bit more open-minded and tolerant as she goes against her earlier device, that oranges are the only fruit, by saying: “After all..., oranges are not the only fruit” (Winterson 172). In the story of Winnet, Louie is represented by the male magician.

This gender displacement can be linked to Butler’s theory of gender identity as performative. Although she has been raised by her mother within a very binary understanding of sex and gender, Jeanette constructs her own identity over time by performing the storytelling and narrating necessary to her identity construction. Onega comments on the resemblance between the fictional and the real protagonist:

In this final version of the tale, Winnet learns the secret wisdom imparted to her by the old wizard who had adopted her, but, unlike Jeanette in Louie’s dream, and unlike the princess in the earlier

tale, she refuses to abide by his rules and to accept his prohibition to marry the young man she loves, choosing instead exile and independence on 'the other side' of the sea, even though she knows that she can't go back (22).

While she is struggling with her homosexuality and the reaction among the people closest to her due to her sexuality, Jeanette urges to find evidence which shows that an identity different from others is not an obstacle to reaching happiness and success. Hence, Winnet is the narrated proof of this approach, ultimately helping Jeanette to find her own identity regardless of Louie's pressure. We have already seen Jeanette's tendency to retreat into her imagination when questioning things in the first chapter, with the story of the princess and the hunchback, and in chapter two with the story of Emperor Tetrahedron. Jeanette creates these stories to either explain or understand her own existence.

Jeanette cannot imagine her own identity as a static and uniform construction, however, but rather as a malleable and alterable part of her life. Thus, Jeanette's identity exists somewhere between past and present and beyond the binary. Furthermore, she rejects performing a gender role created by the dominant discourse and instead, she cherishes her lesbianism as a part of her identity: "By the traditional patriarchal society, Jeanette is regarded as feminine and coded as such: yet, she craves to assume the opposite role by pursuing her desire in her quest to discover her *self*' (Campulova 83). Just like in the case of contents in narrative and stories, identity is changeable and shifting depending on who is the focal point. French comments on this fluid expression of identity in relation to stories and history: "If history is nothing more than storytelling, we can all rewrite our own

versions of the past” (232). Consequently, there is no singularity of truth, which Jeanette contemplates on as follows:

Everyone who tells a story tells it differently, just to remind us that everybody sees it differently. Some people say there are true things to be found, some people say all kinds of things can be proved. I don't believe them. The only thing for certain is how complicated it all is, like string full of knots. It's all there but hard to find the beginning and impossible to fathom the end (Winterson 93).

According to Bentley, this perspective on storytelling and truth suggests a way, not only for Jeanette, but also for the reader to approach the relationship between the main narrative and the various fairy tales and legends in the novel (116).

Jeanette's search for, and construction of, identity culminates in the final chapters of the novel. One of the key parts in the final chapter is a monologue, where she contemplates upon her past versus present life, hesitating whether she should go back home to her mother or not: “Pillars hold things up, and salt keeps things clean, but it's a poor exchange for losing yourself. People do go back, but they don't survive, because two realities are claiming them at the same time” (Winterson 160). This monologue has several different points regarding identity and the deconstruction of the heterosexual binary which Jeanette has been brought up in. The two realities refer to her background and her present life, both affecting the construction of her identity.

When Jeannette eventually returns home, after being away for years

since her dissension with her mother and the community, she still appears unsettled by “the part of her, left behind” (164). This emotional mess is interpreted through yet another imaginative inner conversation, as this way of dealing with emotional stress is the only way of expressing the sense of confusion:

There’s a chance that I’m not here at all, that all parts of me, running along the choices I did and didn’t make, for a moment brush against each other. That I’m still evangelist in the North, as well as the person who ran away. Perhaps for a while these two selves have become confused. I have not gone forward or back in time, but across in time, to something I might have been, playing itself out (Winterson 164).

This utterance shows that Jeanette cannot imagine her own identity being a static and uniform construction, but rather as a malleable and alterable part of her life.

Conclusion

The incorporation of fairy tales and biblical stories points to Jeanette's effort to escape her mother's and the congregation's essentialism in order to rewrite and construct her own narrative, thus constructing her own identity. As she discovers her mother's insincerity, Jeanette starts questioning her life and identity and she realizes that she has been living in a world founded on lies, disguised as stories. Furthermore, she starts reconsidering the categories of what reality, history and stories actually are. Jeanette concludes that there is not only one reality, history and story, but rather a multiplicity of realities/histories/stories. In addition, Jeanette argues that each person is the historian of his/her own world as he/she creates his or her own fiction. Apart from offering an alternative view of the world by presenting the slippery nature of all narratives, biblical allusions and fairytales, the narratives also display the crucial moments in Jeanette's life when she has to choose between her own desire and her Evangelist community. In order to solve this confusing and punishing situation, Jeanette creates a space for her innermost desire that her mother and the congregation expect her to reject, and thus correlates her experiences in real life with her dreams and stories. For example, the story of Winnet is concerned with the feeling of alienation, distress, refusal and exile, thus mirroring all along Jeanette's events in real life but in a fantastic and magical way. Through storytelling, Jeanette also learns that she has the power of self-determination and self-definition in this new, free world. In juxtaposing and embedding these fairy-tales in her own story, Jeanette adopts multiple perspectives, definitions and meanings, all the time in the process of constructing her own identity. By replacing the dominant narratives with stories of her own, Jeanette takes charge of and constructs her own story and, ultimately, escapes the pre-destined identity built upon the beliefs and

expectations of her mother and the religious community. If Jeanette were to hold on to her original identity, she would never have experienced the satisfaction of liberation and freedom. Instead, she would only have been further marginalized. While Jeanette eventually may refer to herself as a lesbian, such constraining labels do not do her justice.

The novel grants neither Jeanette, nor the reader any ultimate answer, no absolute truth as to identity and gender construction. The stories, fables and myths interspersed in the novel provide a contrast to Jeanette's life story and expose the constructed nature of all stories and identities. In other words, just like in the case of the contents of storytelling, identity is changeable and shifting depending on who is telling the story or who is constructing an identity. Through the performance of telling her own story, Jeanette is finally able to liberate herself and construct an identity of her own. Jeanette can be regarded as a kind of prophet who still is continuing the mythic quest that she started as a child. Unlike a chosen missionary or a priest, however, Jeanette will not simply retell the law as it is written, but she will rewrite it herself. Through her fables and narratives, the fact that everyone can construct and change their own story and identity becomes evident. It should be remembered that *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is never fully autobiographical, and that false stories, myths and fables are integrated in the narrative to provide a contrast to the author's own life-story as well as expose and question the constructed nature of *all* stories. Even after an entire novel's tribulation, Jeanette still does not fully know how to identify herself. Ultimately, the complication of identity, and all of the defiance of societal norms that comes with it, eventually make the gender identity what it actually is: not straightforward, and not fixed. Stories and history are constantly being performed, changed and evolved, so are identities. Contrary to

the beliefs of her congregation, Jeannette firmly believes that her spiritual and sexual life are able to coexist as a part of her gender identity. Thus, the protagonist's construction of her gender identity through storytelling comes across as a symbol of a queer "resolution": *It's a way of explaining the universe while leaving the universe unexplained* (Winterson 91).

Works Cited

Bentley, Nick. *Contemporary British fiction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Smith, Elder & co. Cornhill, 1847.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.
Routledge, 2007.

De Beauvoir Simone. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Borde, Constance and
Malovany-Chevallier, Sheila. Vintage, 2011

Campulova, Radka. *The Theme and Motifs of Sexual Identity in Selected Novels
by Jeanette Winterson*. Charles University Prague, 2012.

Crawford, Blake. *Literary Criticism: Deconstruction the Lesbian Identity: Oranges
Are Not the Only Fruit*. 2010. blakecrawford.wordpress.com.
Accessed 15th November 2017.

French, Jana L. *“I’m telling you stories. Trust Me”: Gender, Desire and Identity
in Jeanette Winterson’s Historical Fantasies*.
International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, 1999.

Lawler, Stephen. *Identity. Sociological Perspectives*. 2nd ed. Polity Press 2014.

Mendez, Francesca Castano. *The Limitless Self: Desire and Transgression in
Jeanette Winterson’s Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit and Written on
the Body*. Dissertation, Universitat de Barcelona, 2010.

Onega Jaén, Susana. *Contemporary British Novelists. Jeanette Winterson*.
Manchester University Press 2006.

Schoene, Berthold. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Brown
University, 2008.

Valladar, Alvaro Heras. *The Subversive Politics of Intertextuality:
The Construction of the Homosexual Identity in Jeanette Winterson’s*

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit. Dissertation, Universidad de La Rioja, 2014.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*. Vintage 2001.

Özge, Yakut. *Sexuality and Gender in Jeanette Winterson's Two Novels: Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit and Written On the Body*. Dissertation, Middle East Technical University, 2011.