Chapter Four

‘THE PASSION’ and ‘SEXING THE CHERRY’ AS

THE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

The present chapter deals with two of Jeanette Winterson’s novels namely ‘The Passion’ (1987) and ‘Sexing the Cherry’ (1989). Both the novels are small in terms of the size of the novels but at the same time they contain the ‘history’ and ‘time’ as the important themes respectively in ‘The Passion’ and ‘Sexing the Cherry’

Winterson has devoted herself to writing full-time since publishing The Passion (1987), a novel set during the Napoleonic Wars. Through the medium of magic realism, the author presents the narrative of Henri, a young man of ambivalent sexuality conscripted as a cook into Napoleon's army, crossed with that of the androgynous bisexual Villanelle, the web-footed daughter of a Venetian boatman. The Passion won the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for best writer under thirty-five years of age and firmly established Winterson's literary reputation.

In the present novel there are four sections: The Emperor, The Queen of Spades, The Zero Winter, and The Rock. The story is told in the first-person, the Emperor is Henri's narrative, while The Queen of Spades belongs to Villanelle. The pair meets in Russia in The Zero Winter. From then the
narratives switch and intertwine. It can be called about the novel that it is not an historical novel. It uses history as invented space. The Passion is set in a world where the miraculous and the everyday collide. Villanelle can walk on water. The woman she loves steals her heart and hides it in a jar. This is the city of mazes. We may meet an old woman in a doorway who can tell anyone’s fortune depending on the face. The Passion is about war, and the private acts that stand against war. It's about survival and broken-heartedness, and cruelty and madness. Asking about her specific use of history on the novel Jeanette Winterson replies that,

“All of my work, including Oranges, manipulates history. The past is not sacred. The past is not static. There are a few facts we can rely on - dates, places, people, but the rest is interpretation and imagination. I like that freedom. I liked the idea of setting an intensely personal story against a brutal impersonal background. Anyway, Napoleon has always fascinated me, probably because he was short. The real answer to why is not a fact it's a fiction. It wasn't an objective choice, it was a hunch. I hadn't been to Venice when I wrote about it - which is perfect because Venice doesn't really exist.”

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The novel has the historical context of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. It is an outstanding example of postmodernist historical fiction. It is also profoundly self-reflexive and it merges the historical materialism with the fantastic as a means to point out the contradictory nature of the postmodernism. Like historographic metafiction, postmodernist historical novels become overtly self-reflexive by turning “epistemological questions concerning the nature and intelligible of history into a literary theme” (E. Wessling 1991: 2) Winterson’s this novel is an overtly metafictional novel that rewrites the story of the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte from the point of view of two representatives of traditionally inarticulate classes and equally silenced groups: a French soldier-cook, Henry, and a Venetian bisexual woman, Villanelle, who gambles away her freedom and is sold to army as a prostitute. The passion has dialogic use of two apparently opposed narratives modes, historiography and fantasy. Winterson chooses a very precise and utterly meaningful historical period as contextualizing frame for the progress of the story. Her characters stories in the novel reveals the problemtized established ideas from within: firstly, through Henri’s revelation of history as a totalizing discourse and, secondly, through the creation of a peculiarly fantastic area that guarantees the fulfillment of Villanelle’s abnormal desires.
The action referred to in the fibula of the novel expands for about half a century and deals with a highly emotionally intense historical moment. It commences in roughly 1769 and ends at some indefinite time well after 1821. This is very significant phase in the history of France, first, and of the whole of Europe, later, not only in social and political terms but also in terms of cultural manifestations. However, traditionally the Napoleonic wars have been portrayed as the story of the military success of a great man whose deeds expanded the French Empire in the last decades of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Winterson offers a different version of the same events in the present novel by resorting to the point of view of a disillusioned young man, who at first shares in the general climate of passionate enthusiasm, and decides to become a soldier, but who is physically and spiritually destroyed by Napoleon’s unappeasable thirst for power. Behind this story Winterson’s idea of exposing patriarchal forces and universal history is clearly seen here. Winterson chooses Henri, the male hero of the novel to undermine patriarchy and claims to universal history. He not only rejects the drab future that awaits him, if he sides with the patriarchal standards established by Napoleon, but is also capable of showing in practice that history is but a narrative of the past events that is subject to political and ideological treatment. Henry is a narrator. He first
takes notes of his experiences in the army in war journal and then rewrites his story from a retrospective point of view. This means that his narrated recollections no longer correspond to the events he focuses on as direct witness. On asking about The Passion in an interview Winterson has replied,

“I wanted to use the past as an invented country. So I knew I was going to land on some moment of history and rediscover it. And I also wanted to play with a double narrative. Having had a single voice in Oranges, I wanted to use two voices—again both in the first person—but contrasting and playing one off against the other. So it was a formal challenge for me, and it was one that I thought would work well with the material because I wanted to have two people in there who were of different sensibilities whom we could get to know through their, initially separate, journeys which would then some together.”

Winterson as per her plan handled the theme of history and time efficiently in the novel. TP presents the two distinct voices, that of the optimistic young man who believes in the promising career of his Emperor and the subsequent flourishing of his country, and that of the grown-up man who has experienced all the abominations of war and becomes profoundly
disappointed with Napoleon and history. His memories are narrated from a distance by an adult Henri, who is already imprisoned in the madhouse of San Servelo and who can review his experience in Napoleon’s service from a critical perspective. The ironic distance that the adult narrator-author maintains concerning his past adventures as a young character, as he rewrites them, is one of the keys of achievement in his reduction to mere discourse of the monolithic categories of religion, masculinity and nationalism. Henri’s undermining process implies the rejection of a set of principles he had been taught to take for granted. His memories of childhood and early youth presents the reader with Henry who not only inhabits and defends his patriarchal world but also learn to be in close spiritual contact with its two representative Father figures: Napoleon and God. Henri grows up surrounded by nature and partaking in its innocence. He inevitably associates his memories of childhood with the natural space of his village and with the memory of his mother. When the nostalgia of a happier past assaults him in the army, he always resorts to striking poetic descriptions of the natural environment that surrounded him as a child:

“I was homesick from the start. I missed my mother .i had hated.

In spring at home the dandelions streak the fields and the river runs idle again after month of the rain” (TP, 6).³
Nonetheless, he gets in touch with religion and politics very early, through the odd influence of a rather unorthodox priest, who is in charge of his education:

“Thanks to my mother’s effort and the rusty scholarliness of our priest I learned to read in my own language, Latin and English and I learned arithmetic, the rudiments of first aid and because the priest also supplemented his meager income by betting and gambling I learned every card game and a few trick”.

(TP, 12).

The priest unorthodoxly talks about Napoleon as if he were a new messiah sent by God and wickedly affirms that his choice of the priesthood amounts to:

“If you have to work for anybody an absentee boss is best” (TP, 12).

His manifest skepticism concerning his job contrasts with the romanticized version of the world he feeds Henri with. When Henri arrives at the camp at Boulogne, he cannot help comparing what the priest has told him with what he actually sees. Two examples could be mentioned in this respect. The first would be Henry’s forced visit to brothel, an explicit critique of what
certain theories of masculinity understand as a necessary rite of passage from childhood and innocence to adulthood and experience for boys:

“I had expected red velvet the way the priest had described these seats of temporary pleasure, but there was no softness here, nothing to disguise our business. When the women came in they were older than I has imagined, not at all like the pictures in the priest’s book, of sinful things. Not snake-like, Eve-like with breast like apples, but round and resigned, hair thrown into hasty bundles or draped around their shoulders. (TP, 14).

The second example exposes the harshness of military life. Henri has been taught that,

“Soldiering is a fine life for a boy” (TP, 8)

But his very first impression appears to be otherwise when he visits Napoleon’s storeroom for the first time:

“The space from the ground to the dome of the canvas was racked with rough wooden cages about a foot square with tiny corridors running in between, hardly the width of a man. In each cage there were two of three birds, break and claws cut off,
starting through the slats with dumb identical eyes. I am no
coward and I’ve seen plenty of convenient mutilation on our
farms but I was not prepared for the silence. Not even a rustle.

They could have been dead, should have been dead, but for the
eyes. (TP, 5-6)8

Silence, mutilation, dumbness, and the choking sensation of being a prisoner in a wooden cage are metaphorical images for the way in which Napoleon, as Henri will soon learn, will treat his soldiers. Like his chickens, soldiers become objects in the hands of the Emperor, military toys with dumb identical eyes. July 20th, 1804. Two thousand men were drowned today” (24) Henri sadly notes in his war journal:

“In the morning, 2000 new recruits marched into Boulogne “ (TP, 25).9

More important still for the argument, Henri eventually realize that the romanticized image of Napoleon that the priest had drawn for him is but a construct, when he says:” I invented as much as he invented himself”. Only when Henry is deprived of his imbued idealized frame of mind- the logical outcome of a human longing for greatness that explains and perpetuates patriarchy and its values- does he see his own mistake is the question
remained. The novelist consciously constructs the character of Villanelle. The heroine Villanelle is one of the strong characters of Winterson showing staunch fighting spirit in the novel. Villanelle believes in the truth revealing power of the storytelling. She relies on fantasy and the fairy tale to offer an alternative space to the historical background of the novel: a feminine fantastic that has its origins at the margins of patriarchy and heterosexuality. Her task as a woman, in Judith Butler’s words, “is to assume the position of the authoritative, speaking subject—which is, in some sense right. Villanelle, a bisexual woman, takes side of the marginalized by society and made invisible and silent by the standards of patriarchy and heterosexuality. Since patriarchy has already been exposed as a linguistic construct by Henri’s narrative, Villanelle is allowed to explore a different narrative mode, the fairy tale, as an alternative for the textual representative of feminine desire. Her discourse is a conventional fairy tale, but both the language and the ideology that Winterson manages to rewrite the fairy tale as a mechanism for the exposure of patriarchy rather than exclusively using it as a literary form.

Villanelle is not conventional fairy-tale heroine. Physically, she is born with webbed feet, a genetic mistake of the utmost socio-political significance, because only men or boatmen have webbed feet in Villanelle’s patriarchal
society. Webbed feet’s therefore are the symbol of phallus. Villanelle is also in possession of the distinctively masculine trait in the novel:

“My feet were webbed. There never was a girl whose feet were webbed in the entire history of the boatmen” (TP, 51)

According to ‘Maria Warner’ this short novel by Winterson's it is not as simple as its plot suggests. Henri, a Frenchman who has dedicated his young life to Bonaparte falls in love with Villanelle, a Venetian woman who cannot love him because her heart belongs to another woman. In her clear but poetic language Winterson investigates deeper into the issues of the soul and the heart, of knowing when to cast aside passion and when to embrace it, of the heartless of both war and love. In the novel passion, the web-footed Villanelle can walk across water and a prophet with green slime in her hair speaks the reality. A defrocked priest, able to see across miles and into houses, is destroyed by ‘the spirits’ (of alcohol) and in his death gives Henri a miracle. Bonaparte becomes the people's ‘little Lord in his simple uniform’ who convinces thousands of men to follow him to their deaths. The question arises, what is evil and what is saintly? Where is the salvation in all the cold-bloodedness? That these characters can find any tranquility at all in the midst of disorder is the novel's final miracle. Despite the full of symbolism
and religious references, Winterson's grasp of language, imagery, and rhythm gives this a lighter touch than might be expected. After all, both Henri and Villanelle readily confess to ‘telling stories’. And how can one take seriously a fat cook who, after passing out in a drunken state of unconsciousness just before Napoleon arrives to inspect the kitchen, is rigged to an upright position by Henri and a friend? Who cannot laugh at Villanelle donning a codpiece (a flap in front of the dress in 15th century) to protect herself from lascivious men? But Winterson also adds the mysterious stranger who asks a rich Venetian man to gamble not only his life but the manner of this death is the most chilling scene in the book. After all, Winterson writes, "Venice, the city of Satan," and we discover how easily it can be to become lost in its mess. The story highlights unequal characters during Napoleon's invasion of Moscow. The first is Henri, a soldier who's almost overwhelming passion for Napoleon and what he stands for has lead him to the cold regions of Russia. Tired of serving as Napoleon's personal servant and of the senseless battles, Henry finally decides to desert the army. The other is Villanelle, the daughter of a Venetian boatman. After her passion for a rich woman of the city dissipates, she loses her freedom in a gambling game and finds herself being bartered to the men of the city. She escapes and makes her way to the cold Russian lands where she meets
Henri. Together, they set off on the journey home. Along the way, Henri learns what price passion exacts from people as his feelings for Villanelle lead him down a treacherous path.

About ‘The Passion’ Jeanette Winterson, says, “*Perhaps all romance is like that; not a contract between equal parties but an explosion of dreams and desires that can find no outlet in everyday life. Only a drama will do and while the fireworks last the sky is a different colour*. 12

**WEBFOOTED WOMAN: The Heroine**

Henri, a poor country boy joins the French military to follow his passion: Bonaparte. His tour of duty takes him on Napoleon's marches, and one is treated to an inside of look at being a soldier in Bonaparte's army. Napoleon's passion for fighting has him take his armies into Moscow. Concurrently, a woman gives birth to a child in Venice. The child's father is a Boatman, and those children, according to legend, can walk on water. The child turns out to be a girl, but is nonetheless a Boatman's Daughter. She has a passion for gambling, and meets the love of her life and finds another passion, in the process losing her heart. After her heart has been broken, she marries a cruel, fat Frenchman and exults in his passion for debasing her. Her destiny takes her to Moscow, where she meets Henri. Henri's passion for
the Boatman's daughter proves to be no small thing in his own destiny. The novelist has deliberately used magical setting, eternal cities, encompassing a time which captivates the imagination, and beautiful prose, this work is eminently readable, and entirely riveting. There are striking heart-stopping phrases worth quoting on every page words which, by their beauty, make this spellbinding tale a lyrical journey of discovery. There are many kinds of passions in this piece, and following each to its end, and savoring each as it comes, is a bittersweet and very poignant experience.

The novel is set in the years between Napoleon's aborted attempt at crossing the Channel in 1805 and the disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, Winterson's 'The Passion' reads more like a fairy tale than a war story. Napoleon himself is behind the scenes for most of this short novel; instead the narrative switches between Henri, a cook who satisfies the emperor's excessive appetite for chicken, and Villanelle, a web-footed daughter of a boatman who works above and beneath the law in Venice’s casinos. Villanelle loses her heart to a married woman, both figuratively and literally; the latter aspect underscores the book's imaginary nature. The fates of the two characters interlink and they eventually cross the continent together in a journey whose abridged horrors rival "Doctor Zhivago." Henri soon worships the inaccessible Villanelle, yet his love, too, necessarily remains
unreciprocated. Both the characters in the novel are storytellers; both know their stories may not be believed

"I'm telling you stories. Trust me" is the refrain. (TP, 41)

Indeed, Winterson pushes the notion of the unreliable narrator to its limit. But the ‘truth’ is largely irrelevant to their stories; as Henri says,

"I was learning not to ask her too many questions; truth or lie, they were usually unsatisfactory." (TP, 58)

**Lyrical Quality of the Novel:**

Winterson's prose is elegantly lyrical, but she often employs it abrupt, inaccurate, recurring phrases to emphasize her themes. Just when the repetition threatens to become monotonous, the horrible cruelty of the war and of urban violence era interrupts the story's romanticism. It's a strange, disturbing blend of realism and fabulism. It has wonderfully drawn characters, vivid descriptions, a captivating story, and even a touch of the magic. The Passion is one of Jeanette Winterson's most acclaimed works. It is a slim volume, its cover intersperses with great compliment and glowing reviews. Words like "magical," "fairy tale," and "ecstasy" are the most common in these literary tributes. Winterson’s artful mastery of prose and
her ability to deftly express the inner workings of the heart and mind is fantastic. The story and its characters are inconsistent, unsophisticated, occasionally weak, and even at times cliché.

**Criticism:**
The novel is set during Napoleon's reign, and the narrative alternates between the perspectives of Henri, a country-boy-turned-soldier in the French army, and Villanelle, a Venetian boatman's daughter and a worker in a casino. The novel begins very strongly in Henri's voice, but when the transition is made to Villanelle, the prose become much weaker and the narrator's voice is less distinct. The two characters Henri and Villanelle’s union in Russia during the failed Napoleonic invasion is anticlimactic and disappointing in its forced nature. Winterson's quest myth-like tale is severely undermined by the rushed nature of the book’s progression, and the characters seem underdeveloped as a consequence. Even the narrative voices of Henri and Villanelle are too similar; they are not distinct enough to carry through Villanelle's segments. It appears as if much importance has been given to Villanelle than Henry. But Winterson’s in her writing is gorgeous and is sometimes flawed by irregularity. Wintrson has a great ability to portray emotion, passion, and philosophy of her characters' heart. Much of what she writes about Napoleon and war are very strong and powerful, and
one cannot help but wish that she had focused more on Henri's character for that reason. Her treatment of Villanelle's could have been stronger, and it is in these passages that her prose includes the most awkward or cliche phrasing. The addition of Villanelle's female lover weakens her eventual union with Henri. In all, it is Winterson’s combination of historical fiction and magical realism. The plot and the occasional eye-rolling at certain choices of language "there is no pawn-shop of the heart" come to mind. Her excellent writing and musings on the nature of desire, madness, the archetypal home, and both figurative and literal gambling are on par with any of the great modern writers. The novel has thought-provoking passages and often extremely gorgeous prose. Winterson sets her story in a fantastical version of early 19th century Europe, but this book has little to do with Europe per se, and other to launch one character's infatuation with Napoleon, the setting really serves no real purpose to the story. Furthermore, because the story is told from the first person, and because the characters always dwell on their introspective passion problems, little is lent to the setting of the story; they are simply places with names and a few lines of beautiful, overwrought description.

‘TP’ follows the lives of two very different young people as the travel across Europe during the height of the Napoleonic wars. Henri is an idealistic
young soldier who spends the better part of the war killing chickens for his Emperor's table. He becomes intrigued with Bonaparte and would willingly give his heart and soul to him if he requested it. Villanelle is the daughter of a Venetian boatman who has the ill luck of being born with webbed feet. When she grows up her luck changes and when she becomes employed in a gambling house and looses her heart to one of the patrons there. How these two come together is told through a split narrative in which the two characters alternate their experiences of love, loss, and, ultimately, freedom from all who have power over their passions. Its plot is intriguing. This comes from the fact that normally we are not sympathetic to Napoleon, and as Henry's hero worship is a clear plot element in the first half of the novel. Villanelle's narratives particularly that of her love affair with the Venetian noblewoman who manage to steal her heart, literally. This may not have been the best introduction to Winterson's work, but the setting provides more space to explore the novel further.

‘THE PASSION’ and ‘SEXING THE CHERRY’ are the vital works of Winterson. Both of them are highly original, very meaningful and insightful and wonderfully different. While ‘Sexing the Cherry’ dealt with the theme of time and its boundaries, The Passion’ deals with passion, of course and how it can affect our lives for good or ill. The story of Henri, a man who
began life as a poor farm boy but who rose to become a soldier in Napoleon's army, though not quite the soldier he anticipated to be. Henri, is a chef, and his specialty is killing and cooking chickens (Napoleon's own passion), not fighting the enemy. 'TP' is also the story of Villanelle, a web-footed gondolier's daughter from Venice. Villanelle also has a passion of her own, a passion for another woman, whom she meets when indulging her passion for gambling, but, like Henri, Villanelle's passion doesn't quite work out as she'd hoped, especially not after her husband becomes involved. It is only when Henri and Villanelle join forces that they learn how destructive rampant passion can be and the vast differences between true passion and hero worship. Winterson has wisely and boldly refused to end her book on a "feel good" note.

Winterson has packed plethora of the themes in this slim novel. Not only are Henri and Villanelle unique and interesting characters, there are many other unique and interesting characters. Winterson's prose is as gorgeous in 'TP' as it is in 'Sexing the Cherry' and she does a wonderful job of combining history with fantasy, the real with the imagined, and the ordinary with the lyrical. At times, the book reads like a historical account and, at other times, it reads like the most gorgeous and poetic of fairy tales. Winterson has used her plot to present and explore a theme without sounding in the least bit
heavy. There is much imagery and symbolism in ‘TP’, even more than in ‘Sexing The Cherry’ but in her early novels, at least, Winterson always manages to explore her deep subject matter with a light touch. ‘TP’ is a magical, mesmerizing, hypnotic tale, but one that is slightly less accessible than ‘Sexing the Cherry’. It is a highly original, exquisite novel. It also has highly literary or experimental fiction in it. The novel ‘TP’ a treatise on war, a portrait of a small-minded, big-headed megalomaniac, a testimony to survival, and an introduction on the historical politics of sex. The novel reveals the story about a young French soldier who was Napoleon's chicken-man and a flame-haired Venetian gambler with webbed feet? It has a compelling message on the distinction between sex, love, and passion. ‘TP’ is the literary equivalent of a chocolate truffle: it not only read and forgotten but it leaves behind its memory, and its bittersweet fragrance. Winterson's prose:

"Perhaps all romance is like that; not a contract between equal parties but an explosion of dreams and desires that can find no outlet in everyday life. Only a drama will do and while the fireworks last the sky is a different color." (TP, 72)\(^{15}\)
Life is full of paradox; love (for those who can separate the two) often more-so. That we humans are such gamblers, for the sake of love, is an assumption of the existence of will in these matters, and the courage to exercise it. That we are as helplessly caught in the intoxicating drift of love's sweet release as moths before a flame, is perhaps more true. Winterson's writing in ‘TP’ exemplifies importance of its title. The novel also has intertwining the fantasies of a French peasant and the tale of a Venetian woman. As far as language is concerned the novel has polyrhythmic structure. One will not bore of the prose, either, or of Winterson's tight, matter-of-fact style of describing even the most violent and bizarre moments of her characters' lives. It resembles a poem as well. Many "lines" appear throughout the text. Among them:

"I'm telling you stories. Trust me." and "You play, you win, you play, you lose. You play." Storytelling and gambling....what more do we need? (TP, 23) 16

Winterson writes delicious fiction for the consumer of words. She writes about dark and light moments as well. But her peculiar comic and poetic grace is not found anywhere else. Unlike many contemporary writers, Winterson pushes against conventions to tell lasting tales. The major topic
of this novel is of course passion, which Winterson presents to the reader in its many forms. There is the French people’s passion for Napoleon, Napoleon’s passion for chicken, Henri’s passion for Napoleon and later Villanelle. We are also told of Villanelle’s passion for gambling and the woman who steals her heart and so on. Jeanette Winterson's ‘TP’ has abundance of postmodernism in it. The captivating plot and thought provoking subplot are salient aspects of the novel. Henri, a Frenchman in search of passion, joins Napoleon's army to kill the enemy, but he finds himself reduced to killing only chickens for Napoleon's meals. Villanelle, a Venetian boatman's daughter, succumbs to the passionate embrace of another woman only to find her reduced to a prostitute in Napoleon's camp. When Henri and Villanelle come together, the two begin a journey in search of rectified passion that will satisfy them both. But will their fulfillment come from their connection to each other or from their separation is answered most interestingly. Indeed, Winterson's resolution involves an unexpected twist, which proves refreshing in a novel. It is a story told from both Henri and Villanelle's perspective and offers a unique style. Henri’s journal is his historical account of the war, and he writes continuously to ensure the journal's accuracy. So the mermaids in the English Channel are no longer fantasy but part of historic record. And Villanelle's perspective is
justification of her eccentricities. This girl, with her ability to walk on water, explains her feelings of seclusion and her reasons for dressing as a boy.

On their journey they both learn from the experiences of people they meet. Henri benefits from the advice of Patrick, a defrocked priest with superpower vision and a liquor dependency. He also gains wisdom from Domino, a midget stable hand to Napoleon's horses. Villanelle draws value from a horrific game of chance that leads to the casino displaying two human hands on the wall and from her relationship with the woman of aristocracy who now inhabits the shadows, wearing a crown of rats. It is Henri and Villanelle's experiences that lead them to fulfillment and truth. It is through their stories that Winterson is able to pose the interesting question: What about our own life defines our sense of truth and if it was recorded for others to examine how ridiculous would it all seem?

The novel seems to have a problem of sameness of the two voices - Henri and Villanelle. The two sound exactly the same in their respective first-person narrations, and there are times when it is obviously Winterson penetrating the text through her characters, and often ineptly. For example, Henri is a boy from the French countryside whose only access to a church is a cleared out barn. There is no mention of him ever being schooled, yet he
makes stylish allusions to Odysseus (Ulysses in Latin) and Orpheus. These are sophisticated classical allusions that Henri is not capable of formulating. Furthermore, the book, up until a certain section involving hearts, is a fairy-tale of sorts, but, being set contextually in the Napoleonic Wars, gives it a very strong sense of heightened realism. The ability for Venetian boatmen to walk on water is never demonstrated and, in the stories context, such as when Villanelle is shown unable to swim, undermines the idea that it is a fairy-tale, bring about an effective dialectic between fairy-tale style and tone and realistic action. This, however, is turned around awkwardly at the books end with a strange cord of segments that are nothing short of magic realism, however Winterson denies it. This is particularly inept and detracted from the novels internal unity. ‘TP’ is more a poetic with its romantic themes. Winterson’s ability to weave sentences together is unparalleled. It also has an amazing story, with its razor-sharp insights, poetic prose, and intricate story brought me to life again. Each word revealed things about the characters, and about the human race. The novel is fully filled with philosophical ponderings. Its story narrates of two separate characters. Each character lives in a world that is beautifully realized by Winterson and she further manages to express the magic found in everyday life, the good things and the bad things. The theme deals with love, and passion, and to what
lengths people will go for love. In the universe of TP, a true test of courage is how much you can love. It's truly enchanting and seductive, entertaining narrative voice, something Winterson’s other novels often lack. It is like magic-carpet-of-the-imagination in the story, and its language was impossibly beautiful. Winterson provides a believable and very human explanation for why men have gone to war throughout the ages, without her reader being aware that she is trying to accomplish this. Her characters are described in a very rich and vivid manner, yet somehow without the reader being necessarily aware of the act of description. This is perhaps a tribute to Winterson's poetic use of language. The Passion is about, well, passion... and not much else. Winterson's main characters examine their passions in beautiful, perhaps overdone, language.

This work affirms the tensions and complexities of ‘romance vs. reason’, the ‘losses’ of ‘choosing’ the one over the other. And those who meet this beast late in life are offered only devilish choices. Will they say goodbye to what they know and set sail on an unknown sea with no certainty of land again? Will they dismiss those everyday things that have made life tolerable and put aside the feelings of old friends, a lover even? Jeanette Winterson about her own creation ‘The Passion’ says,
“Well, there it is. When I begin on one writer I can’t stop. Which is why I get less reading done? There is considerably less variety in such single-minded avidness and therefore, I would surely do very badly in all sorts of literary quizzes. I have no range, only intense long term commitments. Pity me. Heh.” (TP, 37)

But for crying out loud, I am HAPPY when I find this on the covers of The Passion and do not regret at all my obsessive searching for peculiar pearls in the same places. She says:

“I wrote The Passion in 1986, boom-time of the Thatcher years, clock-race of yuppies and City-boys, rich-quick, never count the cost. My own cities were invented; a city of language, cities of connection, words as gangways and bridges to the cities of the interior where coin was not money, where it was emotion.” (TP, 53)
Winterson wanted to write a separate world, not as an escape, a mirror, a secret looking glass that would sharpen and multiply the possibilities of the actual world. TP is not history, except in so much as all our lives are history. It is not romance, except in so much as all our lives are marked by the men and women with whom one may fell in love.

“Travelers at least have a choice. Those who set sail know that things will not be the same as at home. Explorers are prepared. But for others, who travel along the blood vessels, who come to the cities of the interior by chance, there is no preparation. I'm telling you stories. Trust me. Who can resist this? What, indeed, can Amis do...staring sadly as he does from mundane covers?”

“Desire: yes: the sudden knowledge, like coming out of ‘flu, that the body is sexual. Walking in the streets with that knowledge. That evening in the plane from Pittsburgh, fantasizing going to meet you. Walking through the airport blazing with energy and joy. But knowing all along you were not the source of that energy and joy; this desire was mine, this
energy my energy; it could be used in a hundred ways and going to meet you could be one of them. The body’s pain and pain on the street are not the same but you can learn from the edges that blur on you who love clear the edges” (TP, 18)\textsuperscript{19}.

The reconfiguration of history is, then, the central focus in The Passion. It is largely about Napoleon Bonaparte. The historical figures resurface repeatedly in the novel, and he occasionally come into direct contact with the novels' characters, he remain for the most part in the background. Napoleon is not in the novel to provide biographical or traditional historical interest, but rather to place the novels' actions in a re-imagined historical context which is in the process of revision. Winterson is not trying to encapsulate the past by writing in the style of the time rather is attempting to restore to the present memory those important pieces of the past which are being stored in the public and generic repository of history. This new approach to history overtly acknowledges and even embraces imprecision, in order to view less rational aspects of the past as equally important as the ever-present historical descriptions of battles. Winterson's character Henri, for instance, accounts for the reason that he has been
willing to follow Napoleon for so long and through so many hardships by expressing his strong emotions for his leader:

“He stretched his hand towards the Channel and made England sound as though she already belonged to us. To each of us. That was his gift. He became the focus of our lives. He made sense out of dullness” (TP, 20)

and later, we also come across

"I should admit that I wept when I heard him speak. Even when I hated him, he could still make me cry. And not through fear. He was great. Greatness like his is hard to be sensible about" (TP,30).  

Henri does briefly describe Napoleon's fiascos in Boulogne and his campaign against the Third Coalition, but only to explain how Napoleon's hold over his men continued through unbelievable hardship:

"We fought at Ulm and Austerlitz. Eylau and Friedland. We fought on no rations, our boots fell apart, and we slept two or three hours a night
and died in thousands every day. We believed him. We always did" (TP, 79).  

Only such an overwhelming love for a leader could have driven these soldiers to tolerate such extremes of adversity. This is the type of emotion which is neglected in traditional history. Even though Winterson's character Henri serves in Napoleon's army for eight years, he provides us with precious little in the way of typical historical detail. Instead, he discusses at great length Napoleon's passion for chicken, and what it was like to kill the birds for him and to put on his boots in a hurry to serve the Emperor his chicken. Henri describes twice in the novel how the cook keeps the parsley for garnishing the poultry in a dead man's helmet. These artifacts from the past are important to Henri and establish the importance, therefore, of seemingly irrelevant detail in recreating the past in its entirety: its feel, its textures, its tastes, its smells. Henri emphasizes, in fact, that he does not care to be an accurate historian, but that he wants to represent emotions. When defending his intention to keep a diary to his fellow soldier, Henri explains,

"I don't care about the facts Domino; I care about how I feel. How I feel will change, I want to remember that" (TP, 29)
In contrast to the words of the diary are the words of the historian, words which deflect the true punishment experienced by the participants; as Henri says,

"Words like devastation, rape, slaughter, carnage, starvation are lock and key words to keep the pain at bay. Words about war that are easy on the eye" (TP,5).  

Through the voice of Henri, Winterson wants us to relive the misery of Napoleon's wars, rather than merely to know about them from the distance of emotionless history. This diary, as a tool for reconstituting history, contains more than just the minor details of Henri's life or a standard record of battles. He also writes down what Napoleon says. When Henri is in Napoleon's presence, everything he says sounds

"Like a great thought." But when Henri rereads his diary he "only later realized how bizarre most of [Napoleon's aphorisms] were" (TP, 30).  

What this indicates is that Henri was a reporter of his time, someone who met Napoleon and listened to him. What it also indicates, however, is that Napoleon sounded wonderful when he was speaking but was not really saying anything of importance. It required personal contact to fall under the
spell of his charisma. What is important about this diary, therefore, is that it explains not just what happens in Henri’s life in terms of factual events, but what happens to him and his fellow soldiers in terms of their fervent regard for Napoleon. Henri admits the power of any historian, fictionally motivated or otherwise, over his subject:

"I invented Bonaparte as much as he invented himself" (TP, 158). This type of history encourages the interference and incorporation of fiction into a form that had been attempting to be accurate and objective. Winterson emphasizes the intentionally illogical state of this type of history by repeating four times in the course of the novel, including in its last line,

"I’m telling you stories. Trust me." Though history is a story of the past, it claims not to be fiction. By saying that this narrator is "telling stories," (TP, 160)

However, Winterson makes us suspect him or her as a historian, so that even though the "trust me" tries to establish reliability, we are sent into an endless oscillation between faith in and distrust of the narrator. We can no longer merely take what history says as the truth, but must treat it as if it is our own memory and filter through its convolutions for traces of the real past, and we must acknowledge the relativity of that past. Jack Zipes reinforces this mistrust of history, of the eyewitness, of the diary, by having
Lucienne Crozier says, "Collective memory is an unstable element, and to rely on it is to rely on something whose longevity is questionable. I could be accused of writing fiction. It will be said she wrote what she claimed was true but the history books fail to provide corroboration" (138). Also, the apparent inaccuracy of the translation of Crozier's diary sets up mistrust for anything that she writes, for any events that she recounts. According to Linda Anderson in her fiction, Winterson seeks to challenge conventional thinking, to transgress gender boundaries; all her narrators are androgynous, usually involved in turbulent lesbian love affairs. Sexual politics is one is of her work: the other is sexual passion, in all its dilemmas and even cruelty. She is among the most lyrically rhapsodic of contemporary writers about love and the female body and uses allegorical fairytales, feminist myths and romance. By the most recent books her writing has become habitually digressive: and her Bible perspectives on Creation and love have been coloured by science theory on time, space, and matter. It is impossible to imagine Jeanette Winterson writing without Angela Carter's revolutionary permissiveness ahead of her. Winterson's two beautiful early novels, The Passion and Sexing the Cherry, seem inspired by Carter, and particularly by Carter's own invention of fantastical-historical forms. Where Carter mocks religion, though, Winterson sometimes emerges as a born-again prophet.
Alongside Carter we find other women writers engaged in similar enterprises to her own: Marina Warner, Sara Maitland, A S Byatt and Emma Tennant have all gone on experimenting with fairy tale and the re-telling of myth. We cannot celebrate Carter's achievement without putting her in context and celebrating the achievement of her contemporaries too.

‘I'm telling you stories. Trust me’ is the sentence in ‘TP’ fully lives up to its rotating and fabulous series of incidents concerning 'Henri', a woman dressed as a soldier who becomes Napoleon's personal cook during the Russian campaign. As his/her passion for Napoleon wanes, so passion for 'Villanelle', the web-footed daughter of a Venetian boatman, increases. Before love can find a way, however, he/she has to search for Villanelle's heart.

**THE USE OF FAIRY TALES IN ‘PASSION’**:

It is a commonly known that Winterson’s sexuality is the golden key to her public persona. Although Winterson correctly states that

“This is a writer who happens to like women, and not a lesbian who happens to write’ most critics are only too willing to interpret her writing in an autobiographical way and restrict her to the literary persona of a lesbian writer only”.

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However, this whole obsession about her sexuality is not the only myth surrounding her. Furthermore, critical opinion likes to describe her as a novelist who feels the constant need to defend her writing against the critics. As a result Jeanette Winterson is perceived as one of those arrogant writers who want to place their work in the tradition of English literature by pretending that none of her contemporaries will ever be able to be on the same level of writing capability than her.

Although, according to the author herself, these fairy tales surrounding her public and literary persona `are assumed to be worth more than they are', there is no doubt concerning a certain value of fairy tales in her novel TP. The numerous fairy tales, the mythical elements, their value for the novel as a whole and their effect in the entire story deserve more attention. Jeanette Winterson has deliberately included the vast amount of fairy tales and proved that the use of this device succeeded in giving her work a special flair, a memorable achievement to distinguish her from most of her contemporaries. Even though the story of ‘TP’ greatly relies on mythical elements, it is not correct to categorize this novel simply as an example of magic realism. When taking a closer look at her use of fairy tales, it is soon clear that there is much more to ‘The Passion’ than can be seen at first sight. Jeanette Winterson does not simply include fairy tale
elements into her novel, but she makes the readers to see this book as a fairy tale itself. Contrary to the tendency of magic realism to `draw upon the energies of fable, folktale and myth while retaining a strong contemporary relevance', Winterson succeeds in spreading the fairy tale elements all over her novel, and thus leaves hardly space for a connection to a realistic story. Consequently, there simply is no realism in this book. Although the novel seems to be entirely historical, and thus rather realistic, when considering its setting during the time of Napoleon and its complete lack of connecting the plot to the present, there are hardly any elements to be found in the story. As a result, we can conclude that Jeanette Winterson is simply not interested in realism, but she wants to play with the convention of fairy tales. For her the representation of the story of this novel as a fairy tale is the most imperative thing.

Therefore, the device of history is only used in order to fulfill that goal and it can be said that Winterson is at least concerned with history, as her novel does not give any kind of reliable historical insight. This means that the historical background of this novel only seems to be arranged in order to meet the requirements of the story. That is to say, the readers of The Passion get the impression that, Napoleon's invasion of Russia only takes place in order to give Henri and Villanelle the opportunity to meet. For Jeanette
Winterson, history as used in this novel is only an imaginary space, which is required in order to narrate this fairy tale.

As mentioned above Winterson’s ‘TP’ comprises a great deal of fairy tale elements and myths in her story instead of relying on historical facts and dates. By choosing the city of Venice as a setting, Winterson has found the perfect ambiance for a modern fairy tale like this. It is not perceived as a realistic place, but as an imaginary and invented city. Venice, an enchanted city, the city of mazes, is the place where everything is possible, ‘where the astounding and the everyday life collide’. Nowhere else would people believe that it is possible for boatmen to be born with webbed feet than in this transition place of land and water? Who knows, maybe in Venice there once really existed this certain girl who liked to cross-dress and was able to walk on water. Consequently, it is understood why the author decided to let a great deal of her story take place in this city. Although realism is undoubtedly not a part of her novel, Winterson wanted the readers to believe that in Venice these myths may really happen. She wanted her fairy tale to seem realistic. In Venice a woman may have her heart literally stolen by another woman. This heart can then be stored in a glass jar, and, after being found by a young man in love, put back into the chest of its owner. In Venice you might turn around a corner and encounter a untidy old woman...
who tells the future. Streets change, and so do people. After all, it is the city of disguise, a place where people can easily adopt another identity. Villanelle does so by sometimes dressing as a young man. In addition, for Henri Venice becomes a place where he can undergo a certain change. After all, he goes there together with Villanelle in order to leave his old self behind. Just like he did when he was a young boy by inventing the past of his family, he now tries again to shift into another personality and forget his experiences at war. Only the fairy tale setting of The Passion enables the different characters to explore the wide range of possibilities of their existence.

In addition to the setting, Jeanette Winterson applies many other fairy tale elements in this novel, one of which can be found in her account of Napoleon. Instead of representing him as the important historical person he was, she lets the readers see him as a mythical figure. This means that in her novel this individual is reduced to a fairy tale character. By exploiting many of the myths surrounding Napoleon, she makes him appear like someone who is part of a fairy tale rather than a person who once really existed. Not only does she put an extreme emphasis on the well-known story of his never-ending or even obsessive craving for chicken, but she also manages to play with the clichés concerning his height. For example, she includes the
story that in order to compensate for this obvious deficit, Napoleon only agreed on riding enormously huge horses. Furthermore, his desire for world domination is another myth frequently made use of in this novel. At the very beginning of the book, for instance, she makes this small man play with a globe which he is caressing like the body of a woman, which shows that for him taking over the whole world is a challenge comparable to making love to a woman. Moreover, there are several instances in the novel dealing with his coronation, during which he took the crown out of the pope's hand in order to put it on his head himself. By using all of these myths Jeanette Winterson want to represent Napoleon in a very stereotypical way. Like in her description of the city of Venice, we only get the cliché version of Napoleon's character. Thus, it is hard to believe that this person once really existed. Character of Napoleon is rather a character of a fairy tale.

Generally, one can say that the author likes to make use of the typical fairy tale stereotypes. Let us have a look at a concrete example in order to exemplify this point. The bad guy in The Passion, that is to say Villanelle's husband who is at the same time the drunk cook Henri met during war, can be seen as a stereotypical fairy tale villain. Jeanette Winterson represents him as the incarnation of evil and leaves out any possible good character traits. By making use of this extremely reductive view, she applies another
typical fairy tale device to her novel. Like the villains (i.e. bad stepmothers, witches, evil wizards, etc.) in most known fairy tales, this character simply does not have anything positive to surprise the readers with. Furthermore, the amazing coincidence of Henri's enemy being also the man Villanelle fears most is yet another element being very typical of fairy tales.

Although the husband-cook character seems to be a typical fairy tale villain, there are some others which show a great deal of departure from the traditional fixed fairy tale roles. The heroine Villanelle, for example, is anything but a shy and timid princess waiting to be rescued by her charming prince. And Henri, the male protagonist of the story may be in love with this story's "princess" but - although he kills the villain in the end - he is not really the courageous fairy tale hero we might expect him to be. However, there are some more aspects and characters in the story which furnish the novel with the typical fairy tale flair, some of which have already been mentioned. For example, there is Villanelle's friend, the witch-like woman, who Henri meets during their first journey through the mazes of Venice. Furthermore, the whole character of Villanelle is surrounded by magical elements. Not only can this girl walk on water, but also is she able to keep a gold-chain frozen into ice for a long time in her pocket, without the ice melting. Moreover, she is able to survive with her heart being stored in a jar
in the house of the woman she loves. Consequently, we can say that almost all of the fairy tale aspects of ‘TP’ centers around the female protagonist. Although there are some unrealistic elements also in Henri’s part of the story (such as his friend Patrick’s magical eye which has telescopic powers), for him the major fairy tale adventure only starts after he got to know Villanelle. As the couple makes their way through Russia together, the mythical incidents start to thicken, and they reach their climax when the two of them finally arrive in Venice.

The final device which makes TP accomplish a fairy tale like status can be found in the use of story telling. The sentence ‘I'm telling you stories. Trust me.’ is like a recurring mantra which can be traced through the entire novel. By informing the readers that the whole plot is more or less only made up of different stories being told, the narrator succeeds in making the readers experience the novel in a fairy tale manner. However, this constant reference to the act of story telling itself makes the readers wonder who exactly is narrating this fairy tale. For the first two parts of the novel this question does not arise, but when it comes to the third and fourth chapter of the book, the point of view out of which the story may not be distinguished that easily. Unlike traditional fairy tales, which make use of one single
narrator only, this novel is characterized by a constant shifting of perspectives. Disregarding this minor source of confusion, it is still clear that the obvious reference to the act of story telling is adding another valuable fairy tale element to this novel.

As mentioned above, a great deal of fairy tale and mythical characteristics can be found in TP. Consequently, it can be said that the use of these elements contribute to the novel's appeal to the readership. Therefore, it is justified to say that the worth of fairy tale in this novel is a very high one. After all, the fairy tale aspects are spread all over the story of TP and as a result this novel can be described as being something like a fairy tale itself.

**NARRATIVE AND FEMININE IDENTITY IN ‘THE PASSION’:-**

In ‘The Passion; Jeanette Winterson, uses two characters as narrators to weave crossover stories of love, violence, grandeur, and loss. In many ways the two acts as characters Henri and Villanelle, giving a partial context but also implanting within them troubled fears about the future and the past. They militate against the notion that each has only the present, and once that has gone, it has vanished permanently. For Villanelle, the future is the throw of a die; for Henri it is a story yet unrecorded. Both characters delight in the idea of a deep passion pushing them forward, but they also share a
permanent anxiety over the flow of time. Henri tries eternally to tell stories that either discover or validate his past, stories that prove either to himself or to his readers that he really exists. His passionate commitment to his diary, his constant chronicling of events, indicates a feeble sense of self, in that he uses his stories to create an individual identity, but also attaches himself to the passion of Villanelle. Villanelle also engages in story telling, but much less self-consciously. Her stories of Venice seem as natural and uncontrived to her as her webbed feet. Her city and her stories knot and change without warning or will, as though they were telling her story, and not the other way around. Villanelle knows a passion that does not require the same validation as Henri’s. When Henri feels something, he must record and narrate it. His passion is story-telling. Villanelle’s passion explains itself, without analysis or deliberation. These two passions are irreconcilable despite Henri’s desperate attempts to the contrary, since one unavoidably will live in the present, the other in the past. Myth-making, then, becomes for Henri the foremost means of comprehending himself.

*Stories,” he says, “were all we had” (TP,107).*

Winterson from the novel’s beginning makes it obvious to the reader the significance of words and stories to Henri. It is a ordinary logic that Henri, a character in a novel, would understand his reality as a series of tales, tales
that can be transcribed and passed on to other readers. For Henri, ‘TP’ anthologizes the prevailing stories of his life and he offers this to an audience who can create his identity at the same time he does. Each fact and sensation about Henri contributes to the image of him as much as it does to his understanding of himself. Henri opens his story in the midst of the Napoleonic wars. We discover of Henri’s sensitivity and his confusion over being a soldier. He serves as a go-between who takes the gamut of experiences from the war and translates them to an eager audience. Henri measures his words in describing the war, as if to ensure the reader that he is a messenger, not a warrior. Interestingly, he refers to the words as though they were visible, written on a page, a subtle hint early on that he keeps a diary of his experiences. He also seems to play on the failure of words to truly signify the signified. ‘Fire’ is merely four letters printed on a page, not real-life pain, heat, and remains. It is significant from many points of views,

“Words like devastation, rape, slaughter, carnage, starvation, are lock and key words to keep the pain at bay. Words about war that are easy on the eye” (TP, 5).²²

Henri clearly is conscious of his character as a story teller, but possibly a little uncomfortable with the impotence of words to transmit the full strength of passion because as it is indicated in the novel itself,
“Words and ideas will always slip between [him] and feeling”

(26). “Words like passion and ecstasy, we learn them but they stay flat on the page” (TP,155).33

Henri also gives the impression of being worried that since he serves as the most important and initial narrator in the novel, he is subject to distrust. Perhaps his reliance in his own narrative abilities is weak enough that listeners and readers have no good grounds to trust him. Napoleon trusted him and he had never given the Emperor reason not to, but the reader cannot have a record or a memory of Henri’s praiseworthy behavior or trustworthiness. A real-world audience cannot experience Henri, so he is left combating the divide between his audience and himself. His refrain “I’m telling stories, trust me”.

It suggests both innocence and a slight terror that the audience will not see the importance of his stories and, by extension, the value of himself. He seems to hope that the energy he puts into his narrative will convince the reader of its worth. This seems to be the method by which he gauges the value of other peoples’ stories.

“Do it from the heart or not at all” (TP,5),34
Henry this statement implies that his efforts contain all of his heart. To find likewise intense stories, Henri turns to the church. He does not take into account the various philosophical debates swirling around him in early-19th century France, advising

“Never talk happiness with a philosopher” (26). Priests, he says, are “more intense than ordinary people” (TP, 30)35

According to Henry even the better story tellers, are unable to aggravate his spirit into the kind of fever he desires. All of Henri’s stories may have jaded him to the intensity to a good story. Like a story addict, he needs a longer, more concentrated each time he listens. He enjoys the companionship of his local priest, though he complains “he was a good man but lukewarm” and Henri

“Would have preferred a burning Jesuit, perhaps then I might have found the ecstasy I need to believe” (TP,12).36

The stories of such a priest would add to his sense of self. Henri appears to want to dig out ‘Ecstasy’ as much as faith from his communications with the
clergy. That the stories are told is more important to him than the actual content of the tales. He says of Patrick, a defrocked Irish priest,

“**He was always seeing things and it didn’t matter how or what, it mattered that he saw and that he told us stories**” *(TP, 107)*.\(^{37}\)

Henry has increasing interest in priests; one might suggest that Henri has a passion, that he could match ecstasy with story telling from the altar. Henri’s passion for narration and his mounting aspiration to create dialogue, rather than simple monologue contribute to his denunciation of the priesthood. He tries confession, a time for trading stories with priests, but

“**There’s no fervor there**” *(TP,5)*.\(^{38}\)

The priest barely reacts, and does not connect himself in the stories being told. He simply meets meaningless punishments as an alleged intermediary of God. Henri might reason that if the priest does not have a rapturous substitution with the confessor, perhaps he has one with God. He soon dismisses this idea as well.

“**I can’t be a priest because although my heart is loud…I can pretend no answering riot. I have shouted to God and the Virgin, but they have not shouted back, and I’m not interested in the still small voice**” *(TP, 9)*.\(^{39}\)
Foreshadowing his appeal to Villanelle and revealing what he may desire most, he adds, “Surely a god can meet passion with passion.” When he discovers that this might not be true, he looks elsewhere for a passion to match his own. He finds, eventually, Villanelle. In some sense, Henri is a priest, but his parish differs from the majority. His parishioners seek narrative, not religious guidance, through lives that need explanation and confirmation.

“I was treated with kindness, fed and cared for, even given the pick of the harvest. In return, I told stories. I embroidered, invented, even lied. Why not? It made them happy” (TP, 03).

The people who share Henri’s passion for storytelling are readers and writers, those who exchange cash for stories, or vice versa. Henri exposes himself as both a character in search of a text, and an author in search of stories. Henri is so fascinated in obtaining more stories; he turns in a straight line to his reader to gather them. Concerned that the breadth of his understanding, experience, even though it includes serving Napoleon, walking from Moscow to Venice, and killing a fat man, will not quench his appetite for stories, Henri asks his audience somewhat more suited to books-of-questions than contemporary novels:
“What would you do if you were Emperor?” And then, more darkly: “Would soldiers become numbers? Would battles become diagrams? Would intellectuals become a threat? Would you end your days on an island where the food is salty and the company bland?” (TP, 13).

Afterward, it seems that having learned nothing from the unspoken response to his last question, Henri asks,

“Do you ever think of your childhood?” (TP, 25).

Books, like televisions, are speakers, not microphones. As hard as he tries, Henri cannot escape his island to interact with his readers. He leaves the reader with the impression that he could take stories and internalize them, weaving them into the expansive fabric of his narrative and identity. He does precisely this with Villanelle. The first two sections of the novel split between Henri and Villanelle, and third begins with Henri’s narrative until he meets the Venetian and disrupts his story to give way to hers. Henri develops good manners of narrative.

“We were silent, either out of respect for her customs or sheer exhaustion, but it was she who offered to tell us her story if we chose to listen….This was her story” (TP, 89).
In merging Villanelle’s story into his own, Henri expands his uneven ego to encompass hers. This troubles Villanelle, who cannot understand that kind of commitment, since her passion differs from Henri’s. Looking for role models in the story telling world, with priests and readers having failed him, Henri turns to Napoleon for guidance. From the start, Henri is amazed by Napoleon’s supremacy and attendance. The novel’s first section is titled “the Emperor,” and “Napoleon” is Henri’s third word. Napoleon, like Henri, was just a little man, but the force of his words, his passion for success, overcame a continent. Henri, to some extent, mirrors Napoleon’s advancement by walking from Moscow to Venice, and ends up on the Rock with the former Emperor, and Henri could no doubt see reflections of himself in Napoleon. The gift for language, above all other attributes, is what Henri seems to be envious of most.

“I should admit I wept when I heard him speak,” (TP, 30)”

Henri says, revealing his appreciation for his superior’s narrative talents. Napoleon spoke in aphorisms, each with at least the force of any of Henri’s stories. Napoleon takes on the role as the tremendously dominant wordsmith, almost a stand-in for God who, unlike Napoleon, refuses to respond to Henri. Napoleon’s words rouse the dreamer in everyone, more than any woman, priest, or god Henri had encountered.
“No more coalitions, no more marches. Hot bread and the fields of France. We believed him. We always did” (TP, 79).45

Napoleon by no means had to say, “I’m telling you stories. Trust me.” People just did. Henri best expresses both the national and personal love of Napoleon when he answers the question,

“Why would a people who love the grape and the sun die in the zero winter for one man? Why did I? Because I loved him. He was my passion and when we go to war we feel we are not a lukewarm people anymore” (TP, 108).46

Napoleon’s authority was sufficient to give not only Henri and identity, but all of France. But when Henri abandons Napoleon with Villanelle, there is a gaping hole in his ego where an emperor used to be. It takes little time for Henri to fill that gap with Villanelle. She transcends the need to legalize passion with language. Henri never ceases to examine his desires and fears and turn them into a story, but Villanelle lived without being self-scrutinizing. He first tries to soak up her and then becomes absorbed in her:
“I say I’m in love with her. What does that mean? It means I review my future and my past in light of this feeling. It is as though I wrote in a foreign language that I am suddenly able to read. Wordlessly, she explains me to myself. Like genius, she is ignorant of what she does”. (TP, 122)\textsuperscript{47}

It is specifically this response that keeps the two apart. Villanelle cannot love Henri because her passion is wordless, and his passion is words. Like Josephine, she resists his attempts to be encapsulated in a story. About Josephine, Henri says,

“She eluded me the way the tarts in Boulogne had eluded me. I decided to write about Napoleon instead” (TP, 36).\textsuperscript{48}

Napoleon is the inescapable subject for Henri, because the Emperor’s force, or at least Henri’s perception and of the force, looms over virtually every word Henri writes, even after the death of Napoleon. Finding it impossible to write about his own Josephine, Henri decides to write about himself. On the Rock, Henri is haunted by the ghosts of his past, the deeds of whom are firmly embedded in his diary. He decides the dead are still with him, telling him stories, perhaps trying desperately to retain their identities.
“They say the dead don’t talk. It is not true. The dead are talking all the time…. [Napoleon, for example] talks obsessively about his past because the dead have no future and their present is recollection” (TP, 133-4).49

By Henri’s own definition of the dead storytellers, Henri is himself dead. Asking him what he is interested in, he answers.

“Passion, Obsession” (TP, 153)50

and it can create a problem about the identity of Henri. There is no doubt that Henri talks about his past — so much so that his present, obscured for quite a while in the novel, is entirely recollection. His future does not seem to exist, either, since he refuses to leave the island, embroiled in morbid self-attention. Henri cares only for the past, and by novel’s end (despite his insistence to the contrary) seems unable to distinguish between reality and mythology, event and story. His identity, then, has been subsumed in his story of his past.

Thus ‘The Passion’ and ‘Sexing the Cherry’ are the novels in which Jeanette Winterson reveals historical discourse and time as the foremost themes discussed intensely. Villanelle, the heroine of The Passion is best creation of Winterson. The ‘Queen of the Spade’ is a section delineated by Villanelle. She is the strong character with a strong fighting spirit and
feminine balance. The female characters though appear to be strong; mentally and physically have subtle unavoidable feminine characteristics impressively present in them.

Sexing the Cherry is a work of post-modern fiction by Jeanette Winterson first published in 1989. Like much postmodern fiction, there are several narrators; chief amongst these are Dog Woman, a colossal woman, but loosely-defined stature and the boy she finds on the banks of a river, Jordan. The book is set in two time periods, first in mid-17th century, and second, in the near-future, 1990. The nature of time is fundamental to the novel. Sexing the Cherry is critical of time and many other modernist absolutes. The book opens: The Hopi, an Indian tribe, have a language as sophisticated as ours, but no tenses for past, present and future. The division does not exist. What does this say about time? Matter, that thing most solid and the well-known, which you are holding in your hands and which makes up your body, is now known to be mostly empty space and points of light and it say much about the reality of the world.

STC occupies the major portion of the novel written somewhat in a stream of consciousness style and reveals the story of an enormous and grotesque woman and her son living in 17th century England. The novel is set in an alternate history and has a lot of elements of magical realism. It alternates
between the first person narratives of the enormous woman and her son, Jordan. The woman’s narrative deals with the way she interacts with and is perceived by her community. Jordan’s narrative is mainly to do with his search - he is a restless character and is always searching for something, and as such often goes on long sea voyages.

The two narratives read like ramblings, and for a long time didn’t particularly lead anywhere. Here are many incidents of ramblings which create difficulty to pull off because obviously what usually drives a novel is a plot. Ramblings can work if the characters are interesting or particularly well-written. Jordan is an oddly absent narrator but he never really make his presence felt stronger in comparison with the Dog-woman.

Sometimes the characters are rather repulsive and quite funny. When the giant woman killed people and stuff, but underlying that is a deep melancholy and something else. She’s a very coarse character but actually sympathetic but the tone of the is very heavy and negative. At one stage we have the plague and then the great fire of London and these aren’t jolly moments. Winterson’s insight on these disasters is very deep, though, and as depressing as it is, her depiction of the great fire is one of the best parts of the book.
In the last part of the novel Jordan on his travelling he meets the Twelve Dancing Princesses and learns of this world where people are flying about (they used to walk around on ropes connecting the houses and then, later, just started flying) he chats to them a bit, but later there is a stretch where each princess tells her story most of them are about escaping their husbands that were enforced upon them.

Suddenly there was linear narrative where each princess has little story. The only story we don’t read is the story of the 12th princess - she is nowhere to be found. Naturally Jordan decides to go and find her, and eventually her story is also made known. Finally something wacky and very cool happens. Suddenly the setting shifts to the modern day and we have two new protagonists. One is a woman who is an environmental protestor, the other is Nicolas Jordan, a boy who has always loved boats and heroes, and dreams of one day being a hero and sailing the seas. Instantly parallel is shown between these two new characters and the ones set in 17th century England. They are more than just similar, however, and are shown to be the different incarnations of the same people. It becomes clear when the protester says that she is going mad and hallucinates that she is a grotesque, gigantic woman living in the past. Nevertheless, the treatment of this dual existence thing is been deftly handeled by Winterson. Though STC is
magical realism, Winterson captures the essence of 17th century London and in the present, she perfectly captures the cynicism of the 80s. The tales of the twelve dancing princesses is actually the free reign of Winterson’s imagination. The future versions of the protagonists makes the novel profound.

A reoccurring theme throughout the novel is the importance of the space between defined, known things. More than just a reiteration of "read between the lines," Winterson unequivocally talks about the nature of "exploration" in this context, and implicitly examines gender, human relationships, and, time. Assisting the reader in keeping track of which character is speaking, are little pictures in the white space between sections. 17th century Dog Woman is represented by a banana, while Jordan is represented by a pineapple, while their future selves are represented by sliced versions of their respective fruit. ‘STC’ also picks up the story of The Twelve Dancing Princesses after "happily ever after." Post-modernism shows its influence here by letting each of the twelve princesses tell her own story of what happened after they were married off. Some people claim that this section is supposed to combat the notion of the fairy tale happy ending, but it can be read as combating the notion of endings in general. The attitudes of late 80's/early 90's feminism and ecology exploded throughout
the book. Winterson is, a liberal feminist lesbian living in the late 80's. Aside from Jordan, and maybe two others, the men in ‘STC’ are stupid, cruel, hypocritical or worse. Women, while not harmful as blatantly, tend to be manipulative: allowing men to believe they are in control because they seem to enjoy the idea. They are being manipulative: allowing men to believe they are in control because they seem to enjoy the idea. They are either indifferent or overjoyed when their men meet premature ends. And the title ‘STC’ does mean something, but need to find out what the meaning is. London based 17th century novel ‘STC’ includes journeys of a mother, known as The Dog Woman, and her son, Jordan.

They journey in a space-time flux: across the seas to find exotic fruits such as bananas and pineapples; and across time, with glimpses of ‘the present’ and references to Charles I of England and Oliver Cromwell. The mother’s physical appearance is somewhat ‘grotesque’. She is a giant, wrapped in a skirt big enough to serve as a ship’s sail and strong enough to fling an elephant. She is also hideous, with smallpox scars in which fleas live, a flat nose and foul teeth. Her son, however, is proud of her, as no other mother can hold a good dozen oranges in her mouth all at once. Ultimately, their journey is a journey in search of The Self. ‘STC’ has strong elements of Magical Realism in it and can be said to contribute to the promotion of the
'Other' in the literary world. It incorporates the fairy tale of the Twelve Dancing Princesses.

The setting of the novel is in early seventeenth century with two major characters: Jordan, a young man in Renaissance England, and the Dog Woman, who is gigantic in size and adopts Jordan in the way Mosses is in Bible. With the author's fantasy, the closure of the novel brings the readers to the late twentieth century. Winterson uses less than two hundred pages of words to tell an amazing story which lasts for over three hundred years. It has different kinds of timeless loves including the passion between a woman and an adopted son, the hidden gay desire between Tradescant and Jordan, the elusive but beautiful heterosexual love between Jordan and Fortunate, and also the lesbianism found in the reconstruction of fairy tale of The Twelve Dancing Princesses. The novel is like a dream told with interruptions. The author alternates the narrative with two different points of views, which exposes the deeper thoughts of the characters while the story also shifts between different times and spaces. STC is more ambitious in representing lesbianism. The reconstruction of The Twelve Dancing Princesses offers a feminist perspective in reading the novel. The dancing princesses are empowered by the author during the process of reconstruction to choose their own fates and rewrite their predetermined heterosexual
endings. Men are no longer the final destination of women's romance. Women can either be independent or seek the same-sex for love. The frequent allusions and to characters in Greek mythologies, like Castor, Pollux and Sappho, strengthens the centrality of homosexuality in the narrative. Winterson breaks down the narrative and brings the ancient Greece lesbianism and gaiety back to her own story, which is set in the early seventeenth century, and the story itself expands and stretches towards modernity. STC is, therefore, a book witnessing the evolution and developments of history of homosexuality that gives us a fictional account on how this 'alternative' passion lives through different times.

Winterson is elegant in presenting different points of view in her novel. In STC, she uses the images of a banana and a pineapple to represent the voices of Dog Woman and Jordan respectively. The images help alert the readers that there will be a shift in narrative voice and they should prepare to read the passages from the perspective of that particular character. When the story reaches the contemporary setting, Winterson presents the voices of modern Jordan and Dog Woman with a split banana and pineapple. So the split signals the transformation of time, and her fictional imagination goes beyond the level of words. The split images also lead the readers to think
whether there is connection between the deformed food with the deformed narrative or characters.

Winterson is a bohemian going against convention in STC. Apart from the heterosexual norm Winterson also challenges other conventions, like truth and lies, and the idea of time and space. "Time has no meaning, and space and place have no meaning". This quote from the novel may self-explain why the story is not fixedly set at a time and why the author brings back Greek homosexual mythologies to her narrative with Britain as the setting. She denies all the institutionalized concepts in our minds. The narrator puts a list of lies in the novel, renouncing that, for example, "time is a straight line" and that "we can only be in one place at a time". These denials fit the style of the novel, which is a fantasy across different times and spaces. Winterson discards all the preoccupied conventions and addresses them in a straight line to the audiences with her power of imagination. Jeanette Winterson is the queen of fantasy and imagination. She associates the impossible together and makes them possible in her books. She rejects the right and makes them seem wrong that demands a second of consideration before taking them for granted. STC is hence one of the most important contemporary works minutely weaving the feminine consciousness and feminine sensitivity along with lesbian or fantasy, throughout the novel. The novel has juxtapositioned
story lines and perhaps even over-lapping personalities. Winterson, herself, has hinted at such a relationship when she wrote in Art Objects,

“I was in a bookshop recently and a young man came up to me and said ‘Is Sexing the Cherry a reading of Four Quartets?’

‘Yes,’ I said, and he kissed me” \(118\).

Rarely giving such straight answers about the “meaning” of her work, Winterson prefers to talk about other works and other writers, allowing readers to extrapolate how these ideas might relate to her work: In “Bending the Arrow of Time: the Continuing Postmodern Present,” Alison Lee looks at the motif of time in Winterson’s next work, ‘STC’ in order to accord it the designation of postmodern text. She cites the Hopi epigraph which explains that their verbs have no tenses as Winterson’s way of indicating that her characters are free to move through time, if need be. Lee finds that the way in which the text is constructed does more than just deconstruct the Newtonian physics conceptions of time and space, but brings a social or political shape to its postmodernism. Just as the past can be separated from its historical “truth”, so, too, can the future. It can be one of many possible futures, hence it can be acted upon; it is not yet written. In STC, Winterson posits a place where time and space exist together. If she is right, Lee asserts, then her readers are present in and able to participate in,
that place as much as they do in the text. Doan finds that STC is Winterson’s most successful example of lesbian postmodernism. Winterson refers to its use of the strategies of both technique and ideology to illustrate its postmodernism. These include disintegration, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, and imitation as methods and the refusal of closure, the questioning of coherence and of “grand narratives,” and the denial of a stable reality. The lesbian ideology she finds in the breaking in of the external world on the relationship of the fairy tale princess and her female love as a critique of lesbians who attempt to replicate heterosexual relationships. Gender lines are indistinct as Jordan cross-dresses, but John Doan states that

“Winterson also realizes that cross-dressing—cultural perversion as cultural subversion—is only a temporary strategy to facilitate a break from imposed restrictions; it cannot enact permanent authentic social change” (151). 53

Doan also reads the grafting of the cherry, with the outcome always being female, as a clear lesbian symbol. This deconstruction of gender which creates an amalgam disrupts the binary of traditional gender roles. For Doan, Winterson “envisions the contours and logic of a lesbian postmodernism that collapses binaries and creates a space not just for lesbians but for productive, dynamic and fluid gender pluralities and sexual positionings” (153). Linda
Anderson in her book "The Re-imagining of History in Contemporary Women's Fiction” declares that Winterson’s fiction has more in common with lesbian feminists than with male postmodernists. She argues that women have a different relationship to the challenging of Western cultural hegemony than men, and also that gay men and lesbians, as members of the marginalized, have an even more particular relation to it. Generally, lesbian texts resist closure as they resist an easy identity. Winterson sees the Dog Woman as a metaphorical lesbian in that her heterosexual encounters are unsuccessful, as her size is uncomfortable and, therefore, she opts her out of a traditional female role and identity. She is also the narrator of her own story, has the agency of a subject rather than an object. This removes her from the heterosexual female object position. Her size makes her able to refuse society’s control over her body. It is by challenging the construction of femininity that she creates a space for lesbian identity. The novel STC has an elaboration of the magic realism, in the digressive tale of Jordan and his giantess mother, the Dog Woman. It has setting in Restoration London against a backdrop of wondrous discoveries from the New World, the narrative follows the travels and travails of its characters as they transcend time, place, and gender, thus questioning the reality of any central, unified truth or, realism itself.
FANTASY IN THE NOVEL:

Reveling in elements of fantasy and grotesquerie and foregrounding a complex intertextual lineage, the fiction of Jeanette Winterson reveals a host of stylistic traits and thematic preoccupations. Winterson emerges with distinct feminist perspectives, particularly regarding historiographic issues. Winterson’s Sexing the Cherry challenges the gender stereotypes often upheld in traditional histories. Winterson sets much of her story against the backdrop of the English Revolution. In telling the stories, novelists historicize the larger patriarchal forces that shapes the lives of the characters, and expose the contingency of supposedly universal values, including the naturalness of heterosexuality and the father’s authority in a patrilineal culture. In doing so, Winterson ultimately develops distinct feminist approaches to history. While Winterson premises her celebration of lesbian desire on the complete rejection of patriarchal history and its linear temporality, Carter suggests her characters can never utterly escape the sway of patrilineal history, though they come to challenge it in practical ways. STC reflect the range of narrative tactics used to destabilize gender categories such as man and woman, hetero and homosexual, and reading the
novels together helps us map an important and ongoing debate in feminist historiography.

The focus of feminist historiographers has steadily shifted from recovering the neglected past experience of women to historicizing the patriarchal values that helped produce such experience. In an early essay on this trend, Linda Gordon suggests that initially,

"Women historians sought to proclaim a truth heretofore denied, disguised, distorted, defamed, and thereby to expose the meretricious lies of earlier mandarins" (1986, 22). 55

Gordon here stresses women's desire to celebrate their presence at, and participation in, past events. In this way, earlier feminist historians promised the recognition denied women in the record of public events and wars traditionally called "history." This emphasis on the recovery of suppressed facts, however, has more recently come under scrutiny by feminists such as Linda Anderson who suspect not only the content, but also the methodology of traditional, linear narratives of the past. In particular, Anderson cautions against "the constant danger that by using categories and genres which are implicated in patriarchal ideology we are simply rewriting our own oppression". In order to avoid such a rewriting, there is need for the
interrogation of categories such as male and female, and emphasizes the need to question; the transparent truth of recovered facts. The stress here on historicizing difference raises questions about what such a history would entail: what tactics would challenge the content, the form and methodology of patriarchal histories?

Such questions are at the heart of Julia Kristeva's influential essay "Women's Time." In it, Kristeva identifies three waves of feminism, each posing a unique challenge to the progressive, linear temporality of traditional histories written by men. According to Kristeva, first-wave feminists relied on cursive time as they "aspired to gain a place in linear time as the time of project and history". Seeking political and economic equality, this generation embraced the temporality associated with histories written by men, and thus risked identification with the "very power structures previously considered as frustrating and inaccessible". In contrast, second-wave feminists sought to avoid identifying with male power structures. Denying linear temporality, they sought a wholly new sense of narrative time in which to express "intrasubjective and corporeal experiences left mute by culture in the past". This rejection of linear time, however, reflects a disturbing tendency. By suggesting that female identity remains
unrepresentable in historical forms traditionally associated with men, the second wave institutes what Kristeva terms a "kind of inverted sexism".

According to Kristeva the third wave of feminism will combine elements of the first two by embodying both "insertion into history and the radical refusal of the subjective limitations imposed by historical time" (1986, 475). Essentially, these feminists will attempt to remedy the first wave's identification with male power and the second wave's reification of a female countersociety. But most important, the coming generation raises the hope that "the very dichotomy man/woman as an opposition between two rival entities may be understood as belonging to metaphysics" (483). This emerging trend would require thinking beyond the binary distinctions that have proved intractable for earlier feminists, and that in turn would mean developing a concept of temporality that neither simply replicates nor repudiates the diachronic time of patriarchal history.

There is a the tension in Winterson's STC and as it historicize sexual difference rather than assuming it to be an unassailable fact. Specifically, Winterson dismantles the heterosexual-homosexual dichotomy by suggesting alternative ways of imagining sexual identity. Ultimately, Winterson rejects linear temporality and endorses an apocalyptic urge to
escape history and the power structures of a male-dominated society. In this way, STC risks lapsing into the very kind of countersexism. In a meditation on identity in Jeanette Winterson’s STC Jordan, one of the novels narrators, asserts that the inward life tells us we are multiple not single, and that our existence is really countless existences holding hands like those cut-out paper dolls. Similarly, Jim Collins argues that Winterson s denial of basic temporal and spatial categories in the novels epigraphs helps her overcome gender subordination and repression of desire through the complete rejection of historical demarcation in the traditional sense. However, Winterson is not content simply to challenge an older model of historiography or to destabilize traditional categories of gender identity. In fact, in her revisionist account of the Puritan Revolution, Winterson ultimately develops a counter-historical framework that naturalizes lesbian desire. In creating a space for the expression of lesbian desire, Winterson s novel marks a decisive shift from the deconstructive aims of earlier postmodern fiction. STC seeks to center previously marginalized categories of identity, particularly by celebrating the irrational forces that animate history. In her retelling of events surrounding the Puritan Revolution, Winterson presents passion as an instinctual and uncontrollable force that cannot be repressed without harsh consequences. Indicating that this force often leads to happy and healthy
lesbian relationships, Winterson depicts lesbianism as a more natural expression of desire than either heterosexuality or male homosexuality. In so doing, she ultimately risks compromising the feminist currents in the novel, particularly by installing desire itself as a new instinctual foundation for identity. Winterson employs a postmodern critique of binaries as she imagines new possibilities for gender identity: the hybrid here "illuminates the ways in which the dominant culture opts out of creatively and freely exploring boundless gender options and instead becomes mired in weary boundaries and binaries. The metaphor of grafting as a "wholly new genesis of gender" suggests Winterson's resistance to categorizing sexual identity with a simple distinction between hetero- and homosexuality. Winterson continues to rely on rigid notions of gender identity as STC begins "to map an alternative social order, one that positions the lesbian at the center". The novel goes beyond simply challenging existing categories of gender identity. By positioning the lesbian at the center of this alternative social order, the novel inverts the binary logic that posits heterosexuality.

The novel sets up the reinscription of such binary terms mainly in its celebration of imaginative and irrational forces. Although the novel's title alludes to the process of grafting, a more telling figure for Winterson's attempt to transcend traditional gender roles. In the novel Winterson
attempts to map a space for the expression of lesbian desire, particularly in her rewriting of the Puritan Revolution. As part of its challenge to the progressive temporality of traditional histories, STC does not encode the Puritan Revolution in a linear narrative or depict it as a liberating event. Winterson represents the Revolution as a clear battle between King Charles I—the servant of God who goes with dignity to his execution—and the sexually repressed and hypocritical Puritans. Claiming that she would "rather live with sins of excess than sins of denial" (1989, 70), Dogwoman rails against the self-righteous Puritans, who "hated everything that was grand and fine and full of life": they hold their noses when passing the theater, and she hears from her neighbor's wife that he makes love to her "through a hole in the sheet. Moreover, despite their chaste public manner, the Puritans especially their frustrated sexual desires in grotesque form. At one point, Dogwoman visits a brothel where she finds two of her antagonists, Preacher Scroggs and Firebrace, engaging in homosexual sex. In a parody of the King's execution, Dogwoman enters the brothel as executioner and beheads Scroggs and Firebrace. In contrast to the dignity with which Charles met his death, Scroggs must be tied to a block while

"Firebrace waits whimpering in a corner and had soiled his toga with excrement." (STC, 97). 57
As she leaves after killing the pair, she sees other men, presumably Puritans, entering the room to have sex with the corpses: one man was

"I looked back and saw that ine already had scroggs on the remains of the bed. He was mounting him [Scroggs] from behind, all the while kissing his severed head" (STC, 98).58

Typical scenes such as this emphasize the hypocrisy of the Puritans' sanctimonious public manner, and vividly dramatize the perverse consequences of the sins of denial. Condemning such sins and their consequences, Winterson constructs a counter-memory of Charles's execution that challenges traditional histories of the war. There is also a power struggle between the King and the Parliamentarians, the Puritan Revolution marked a crack in the divine right of kings to govern. As such, the war can be read as part of a movement toward a more democratic form of government based on civil law rather than divine authority. In sharp contrast to such an interpretation, Winterson associates the war with the development of oppressive ideals of scientific objectivity and the sovereign individual. STC depicts the Revolution as a move toward ideals of rationality and ideals that helped establish the value of sexual repression and the naturalness of heterosexuality. As a challenge to this rationalist tradition,
the novel celebrates the power of desire, which in Winterson's work is continually linked to homosexual relationships. At one point, Jordan notes that those who want to contain desire do so with the "chains" of marriage and family ties-these are the legal, social, and religious institutions that sanction love between a man and woman. Winterson intimates that those who do not chain desire must accept it as an unpredictable and unruly force that does not necessarily lead to a heterosexual marriage. In "The Story of the Twelve Dancing Princesses," for example, none of the marriages between men and women succeed. The husbands are homosexual or unfaithful, or they treat their wives as possessions. Consequently, most of the princesses either leave or kill their princes. The three princesses who do find brief happiness-before men destroy it-do so with other women (48, 54). Suggesting that the only way to achieve satisfaction is to follow this passion wherever it leads, and according to Winterson heterosexuality, particularly lesbianism, as natural expressions of a basic human quest for love.

The celebration of unfettered desire in Winterson's fiction has led Christy Burns to argue that "Desire is what is real in Winterson, more so than historical events or material objects" (1996, 302). Burns sees this vision of desire as part of the novel's fantasy, which works to "open up a space for alternative lifestyles" (304). This reading, however, downplays Winterson's
use of passion not simply to open a space for, but to naturalize lesbian desire. In fact, the vision of desire can be read as a new kind of instinctualism. According to Waugh desire is not bound by physical limitations, and the body, in fact, becomes an obstacle in the quest for an idealized love. Although she argues that such a vision of desire should have little appeal for feminists because it effaces woman's material existence, the troubling instinctualism she identifies can be seen clearly in Winterson's work. STC exhibits a conflicted relationship between its feminist appeal and its postmodern narrative tactics. In her attempt to naturalize lesbian desire, Winterson explicitly links the politics of the novel to feminism in her depiction of the contemporary Dogwoman: protesting a capitalist culture that pollutes the Thames with mercury, Dogwoman wants men to "line up for compulsory training in feminism and ecology".

However, while Dogwoman here literally endorses a feminist agenda, the novel ultimately celebrates an excessive and ungovernable passion. Far from offering a model of historical continuity or progress, or creating a model of agency, the novel exemplifies postmodernism in its desire mode, particularly in Winterson's rewriting of the Puritan Revolution. By presenting Charles I's execution as a wrong turn in history, Winterson supports a longing for a prelapsarian age when the sins of excess were tolerated. Although this
counter-history presents a challenge to oppressive ideals of gender identity, it also constitutes an idealized vision of love that ultimately allows her both to elide the material existence of her characters, particularly women, and to inscribe desire itself as a new foundation for identity. Many feminist responses to STC have cited the strange materiality of Dogwoman's body as a refusal to be incorporated and objectified in a patriarchal narrative. The Dogwoman's body as destabilizing gender identities because her sex remains indeterminate: though she has the anatomy of a woman, she never consummates a relationship with a man, and so remains essentially ungendered, having no identity conferred in a heterosexual economy. The strange female body as lesbian: she argues that such typical physicality is a construct that refutes the dominant images of woman as body-as beauty, as object of desire, as totally controlled Other. Although Winterson emphasizes Dogwoman's physical presence, her body is not that typically objectified by the male gaze or by the pattern of narration in a romantic quest. Rather, Dogwoman's body becomes a site of resistance and grants her agency as she confronts conventional, puritanical values throughout the novel.

It also seem here that the novel actually denies corporeal existence to many female characters, and repeatedly represents the body as an impediment to
fulfilling an idealized vision of love. For example, Jordan's first imaginative journey results from his desire

"To escape the weight of the world" and "leave his body where it is, in conversation or at the dinner, and walk through a series of winding streets to a house standing back from the road." (STC, 11). 60

STC discards traditional literary form in total. The main storyline is very simple. At the beginning of the book, we are introduced to the Dog Woman, her adopted son Jordan and the life they lead in sixteenth century England. The Dog Woman is a large grotesque giant who has a very direct view on life. Jordan, on the other hand, has a more philosophical view on life. He has a calm personality and is a dreamer. He meets Tradescant, both an adventurer and the king’s gardener. Jordan travels with him, but his most important travels seem to be those in his mind. STC is unlike many novels. The book doesn’t seem to set time in a linear fashion, in it time is flexible. Both Dog Woman and Jordan are characters who have traits opposite to their own. This is a fascinating component in STC, for it allows one to look at the characters in a different perspective. In this novel, Janette Winterson creates stories within the inherent tale.
Jordan seems to be content and yet has mysterious characteristics. Jordan says,

“I had a childhood, but I cannot assume to have had one I remember.” (STC, 101)

Winterson has used this quote for the basic outline of her story. Women have always dreamt about the perfect man. Heartbreak is the main theme of the chapter. The very unusual element to Sexing the Cherry is the fact that there is a whole chapter in which the hero is searching for the perfect woman, yet she does not exist. Her point here is that there is only ambiguity in life.

“Many of them have set upon me for my insolence, and of most those are dead. Out of charity, such as I am famed for, I left one or two to be crippled.” (STC, 91)

The novel avoids this troubling kind of stereotypical gender roles, especially through the metaphor of grafting. As an explorer who brings exotic new fruits to England, Jordan at one point defines grafting as

"The means whereby a plant ... is fused into a hardier member of its strain, and so the two take advantage of each other and produce a third kind, without seed or parent. In this way fruits
have been made resistant to disease and certain plants have learned to grow where previously they could not." (STC, 84).

Later, he laments the plight of those "who while on earth in these suits of lead sense the presence of one we love, not far away but too far to touch" (39). This urge to transcend the limitations of the physical self ultimately finds expression in Fortunata's dance: teaching her pupils to "become points of light," she sets them spinning "until all features are blurred, until the human being most resembles a freed spirit from a darkened jar" (76). This drive to escape the confinement of physical existence is reinforced as the dancing pupils transcend their bodies and Fortunata "hears music escaping from their heads and backs and livers and spleens" (76). The bodily organs undergo a mystical transformation that takes the dancers beyond language, concept, and time.

Along with presenting a consistent urge to escape the confines of the body, the novel ultimately employs Fortunate herself as a metaphorical object of Jordan's spiritual rather than simply physical desire. While his love for Fortunate inspires Jordan's journeys, he finally questions whether she is the object of his quest or a symbol: he asks,
Was I searching for a dancer whose name I did not know or was I searching for the dancing part of myself?" (STC, 39).64

Jordan's quest is important because he never succeeds in capturing Fortunate:

"It is a search that goes for naught because when he finds her, she refuses to go with him. In effect, she refuses to be the closure of his story" (STC, 80).65

In Jordan's story, Farwell seems to suggest that traditional, patriarchal plot lines inevitably ends with resolution—for example, the marriage that typically closes the romantic comedy. But it ends with unrequited love and relies on a spiritual figure such as Beatrice. The postmodern refusal of closure in Jordan's narrative does not undermine the romantic strain in the plot. Throughout, Fortunate is denied a body; as a desirable woman, she stands as a figure for the spiritual quest that Jordan undertakes. In this way, STC exhibits elements of postmodernism in its "desire mode" that conflict with the feminist values upheld in other aspects of the narrative. Fortunate is presented in the novel as a symbol of an irrational, ungovernable passion, the novel actually perpetuates the mythic use of the desirable woman as an Other to masculine rationality. Nonetheless the desire that inspires Jordan’s
quest finally becomes a new foundation for his essential self. In the novel, Winterson challenges the notion of a singular, self-determining individual: she insists that the characters are multiple and not single, and by depicting modern incarnations of Dogwoman and Jordan, refuses to fix their location in space and time. But as Winterson mystifies Jordan's pursuit of Fortunate, she makes clear that what he really seeks is access to an inner, ideal self. Noting that

"The Buddhists say there are 149 ways to God," he claims, "I'm not looking for God, only for myself . ." (STC, 115)."  

Unable to understand why spiritual seekers would look for God, Jordan explains that

"Some of them have told me that the very point of searching for God is to forget about oneself, to lose oneself forever. But it is not difficult to lose oneself, or is it the ego they are talking about, the hollow screaming cadaver that has no spirit within it" (STC, 116).  

Jordan has undertaken the arduous attempt to find, not lose his essential self which again clear and distinct from his body. By making this ideal self the object of a religious quest, the novel reinforces an essentially Romantic drive to locate a ground of being outside time, space, and material existence.
Ironically, even as it celebrates Jordan's search for his true self, STC records the painful isolation produced by his self-admiration desire. Both Dogwoman and Jordan suffer in their isolated subjectivity as they misinterpret each other's motives and doubt each other's love. Although she continually worries about Jordan's future and the possibility that his heart will be broken, Dogwoman never expresses these concerns to him. For his part, Jordan hopes to do well like Dogwoman, whom he sees as "self-sufficient and without self-doubt" (STC, 114). He does not understand her concern for him or how self-conscious she is. In fact, her reserve leads him to question her love:

"I think she loves me," he says, "but I don't know. She wouldn't say so; perhaps she doesn't know herself. When I left, I think it was relief she felt at being able to continue her old life with the dogs and the dredgers and the whores she likes. Even while Tradescant was busy with her own mind, but I was hurt." (STC, 114).

Winterson's novel here registers the human suffering that results as her characters focus on their internal journeys and turn away from their connection to others. Although the reader sees the pain endured by the
characters, the novel does not suggest that it could be lessened by better, more forthright communication between them. Indeed, the desire that motivates Jordan's quest is never modified in relation to another person. Instead, the novel endorses the solitary quest to slough off the physical self and its miseries and—with Fortunata's dancing students—aspire to the condition of music. STC indicates the romanticized vision of passion and expresses a revolutionary impulse to escape the linear temporality. It also emphasizes the force of a desire that transcends time and space, Winterson attempts to replace history with myth, which constitutes natural sexuality. In so doing, STC replicates the logic of the homophobic discourse that it explicitly critiques: Winterson often simply reverses the terms of the debate by presenting lesbian desire as more natural than either heterosexual or male homosexual desire. STC expresses a drive to escape the vicissitudes of history and locates a transcendent ground for its lesbian-feminist critique of patriarchal culture. The best parts of the novel deal with a giantess in Charles II's England, who narrates from the perspective of an outsider who has never known sexual love. Her son, a foundling, narrates the remainder of the novel. He sails the seven seas and his own imagination, retells fairy tales and recounts his pursuit of a woman who doesn't exist and brings strange fruits back to England. Winterson's meditations on the nature of time might
seem profound to someone who has not read other superior works treating that subject, but her final decision to locate the characters in a modern setting and to toss in some strident feminist and environmentalist arguments derails the fragile narrative and breaks the reader from the fairy tale spell wrought by the previous hundred pages. Winterson’s STC explores corporeal excess through the character of "Dog-Woman," who exploits her bulk to further political activity. All of these representations open ways to think through the paradoxical issues of subjectivity and identity, contested terms between feminist and queer theories. Although these excesses may be read as an onslaught on the notion of the subject, such representations ultimately allow for greater complexity in exploring possibilities of subjectivity. It is interesting to know how these bodies model both feminist and surprising applications of magic realism, and how these and other strategies of metafiction open spaces for readings of spiritual materialism, nomadic bodies, corporeal subjectivity, and other paradoxes useful for moving beyond the limitations of materialist and poststructuralist feminisms.

"How hideous am I?" (STC: 19)

With this question, one of the female protagonists in STC starts an account of her physical appearance. She does not question whether or not
she is hideous, she introduces her hideousness as a granted fact. This startling statement demands a closer examination of the way in which the female protagonists in Jeanette Winterson’s STC construct and represent themselves in the narrative. The serious reading of the novel filters it through the prism of the female self and how it is constructed in the narrative. Thus, activate one way to perceive and understand the novel. Here are contrast identities of the two female protagonists - Dog-Woman and the unnamed female environmentalist - with existing gender-related or mythological concepts. This will clarify to what extent their self-representation corresponds or clashes with those concepts. There is also a bond of stereotyped womanhood, how they present means of resolving conflict and pursue their intentions, and the way in which by narrating their few sexual encounters gender relations are described. It is understood that a first person narrator is merely a face for the author of the narrative made way for an understanding of the first person narrator as a fictional character, independent of the persona of its author (comp. Stanzel 1991:111).

As STC can be understood as the one of three types of first person narratives that offers a short overview of its dominant features. If this kind of narrative is reminiscent of an autobiographic account, it is its literary structure that makes the reader believe that what they read is lived
experience put into words. The participating first person narrator has been attributed a certain set of values and opinions, particular modes of expression and preferred vocabulary. In short, the author has invented a specific pair of spectacles through which the first person narrator perceives and then relates the fictional world around her. It is this "pair of spectacles" and the being situated in this fictional world that make the first person narrator an unreliable narrator. It is clear that whatever it is she narrates is only valid as a subjective account of events and, thus, highly reliant on her limited capability (comp. ibid:122).  

Winterson uses the strategy of first person narration when she lets her female protagonists speak about themselves. From an internal point of view they often objectify themselves, draw comparisons to animals, monsters when they speak about themselves and, in the case of the environmentalist, refer to themselves in the third person. STC story line, if narrated from an external point of view, would have led the reader to perceive the protagonists differently. Certain aspects of Dog-Woman's and the environmentalist's identities can only fully be disclosed when presented from an internal point of view. In STC creates sympathy for the female protagonist is determining how we perceive their identities. Especially in the case of Dog-Woman, the perception of her identity can range from "over-
sized, ruthless female serial killer” to "enviably strong and independent woman" depending on how sympathetic the reader feels toward her. What can be discerned when we view Dog-Woman and the female environmentalist not as unique, independent characters of fiction but as existing in relation to gender expectations and myths of women? Dog-Woman and the environmentalist reduce this still widely valid formula of womanhood to absurdum. By challenging those concepts, Winterson plays with the fact that the general readership is familiar with the idea that there exists something like appropriate looks and behaviour for women. Dog-Woman is presented as having features contrary to those of the stereotypical woman and simply as not meeting any of the gender expectations. The environmentalist’s good looks may not obscure the fact that she too is strong, independent and autonomous. A loathing for subordination had led her to be overweight for as long as she had been living with her parents:

“I wasn’t fat because I was greedy; I hardly ate at all. I was fat because I wanted to be bigger than all the things that were bigger than me. All the things that had power over me. It was a battle I intended to win. (STC: 124)”

[72]
In fact a negligible part of the novel dedicated to the female environmentalist’s story and a larger focus on Dog-Woman. Incomplete as it is, the following table should illustrate that Dog-Woman is in a large number of features the exact opposite of what we understand as appropriate for or would expect of the stereotypical woman. Dog-woman is a stereotypical woman and huge by the size. She is also monstrous, active and solves conflict with violence. The dog-woman is concerned with her appearance and bodily odour. She registers what other people think of her but does not feel the need to act upon it and is unaware of any possibility to be submissive, independent and direct. She finds a son who is slender, curvy and passive on the riverbank but she solves the conflict through communication. She is willing to submit herself to a man, husband, or to a father and hence is dependent but is gentle by nature. Dog Woman is no less a fictitious character than a stereotypical woman but the latter strikes as much less peculiar than the former because of the gender concept behind those features that has been handed down in history. Dog-Woman's name is the first break with gender conventions. It can be argued that by accepting being called "Dog-Woman", firstly, she accepts a name others have given to her and, thus, allows others to impose power on her. Toril Moi defines the act of naming as "an act of power that reveals a desire to regulate and
organize reality according to well-defined categories” (Moi 1985:160).73 Secondly, and as a result of the first, she appears to agree to being described as a "woman" also. Dog-Woman’s name implies that she is considered as being self-sufficient as she is; she is neither somebody’s "better half" nor the "better half-to-be". She does not need a husband or the prospect of one to justify her existence; she has two provinces of her own that characterize her well enough: being female and breeding dogs. To accept the "well-defined category" of "woman" as appropriate is in Dog-Woman’s case merely a sign that she understands herself as being female. It does not mean that she accepts any commitments which the gender category of "woman" accompanies. She is female but she is by no means feminine. Though Dog-Woman apparently knows about them, she is not prepared to come up to any gender expectations. When Dog-Woman remembers an early day’s event, it becomes clear that her mother has enlightened Dog-Woman at least about some of the "obligations" that come along with being gendered as a woman:

“When I was a girl I heard my mother and my father copulating. I heard my father’s steady grunts and my mother’s silence. Later my mother told me that men take pleasure and women give it. (STC: 107)”74
By seemingly ignoring what framework of sufficient behavioural patterns the patriarchal society has allocated to women, Dog-Woman lives outer of the gender boundaries. Her second split with gender expectations is her enormity. Throughout the narrative, Dog-Woman’s gigantic female body is related to the reader. All her features are ultimately female but extremely over-sized; she is attributed with a pair of breasts between which she tries to choke men on several occasions, her vagina is so large that no penis is able to fill it, and her clitoris resembles an orange. What is traditionally considered to exist only for pleasuring men either visually (breasts) or physically (vagina) or to be connected to childbearing and nursing offspring turns into a weapon and into a source for making men feel insufficiently equipped? Susan Bordo \(^75\) views the body "as a metaphor for culture" (Bordo 1993:165) and Pierre Bourdieu considers the body as a result of cultural practice (comp. Bourdieu 1999)\(^76\). These assumptions can be taken to their logical outcome: The currently preferred slender female body is customized to meet present male desires. By being trim a woman does not consume too much space in both its literal and figurative meaning. The fact that men find her attractive will ensure reproduction and, thus, a position in the community; as

"A pretty jade" (STC: 36)\(^77\)
On someone’s arm or a mother. Dog-Woman’s body, however, seems to deny being culturally transformed. According to Schmid, the characters of both Dog-Woman and of the female environmentalist do not fit into any of the archetypical categories traditionally used for woman: the virgin, the lover, the mother, and the sister. With regard to Gilbert and Gubar, she opens a new category: the monster (comp. ibid:94). To declare women who try to find a way to articulate themselves as abnormal and, thus, exclude them from the community means to discourage women from trying for fear of ending up as outcasts. It is a patriarchal strategy aimed at keeping the patriarchal world in the familiar order.

ARCHYTYPES AND THE MYTHS IN THE NOVEL:—

In STC, Winterson uses the archetype of a monster woman; a woman that does not care for other people’s accounts but tries to make sense of the world herself, a woman undaunted of asserting herself powerfully if needed, a woman who chooses whom she wants to be concerned about, a woman of her own.

“The degree of Dog-Woman’s non-conformity finds its expression in her extraordinary body. She can "hold a dozen oranges in her mouth at once" (STC: 26), sweats "enough liquid
to fill a bucket” and is strong enough to hold a man "from the
ground at arm’s length" (STC: 28) by using only one hand.”

If judged from the outside, the environmentalist who is the contemporary
continuation of 17th century Dog-Woman might be in line with the
appearance of a stereotypical woman.

“You are pretty,' said my father, 'any man would want to marry you.”
(STC: 127). However, she thinks differently and describes herself either as being a
monster hidden in a slim and attractive body:

"I may not look like a monster any more but I couldn’t hide it for
long. I’d break out, splitting my dress, (...)."(STC: 127) or as
having a monstrous alter ego living inside of her: "(T)he other
one, lurking inside. She fits, even though she is so big."(STC:
127).

Their enormous bodies, either being openly noticeable or hidden inside,
are simply the symptoms of, not the cause for their monstrosity. That they
are considered to be monsters, i.e. not in line with expectations and,
consequently, considered abnormal, derives rather from their independence,
their strong sense of justice and their keenness to take action to put through what they think is right. None of these features play a role in any of the traditional myths regarding women. On the contrary, especially the liberty would counteract most of them. Susanne Schmid in her book ‘Jungfrau und Monster Frauenmythen im englischen Roman der Gegenwart, describes that Winterson is one of those contemporary female authors who intentionally and frequently deal with the myths to expose and to unveil the potential of myths (comp. Schmid 1996:26). According to the author the myths work on three levels: On an anthropological level, myths are culturally particular interpretations of certain basic events or archetypes. On a socio-political level, myths are valid for a group of people and communicate the group’s conception of it. On a formal level, myths consist of a number of parts (in German: my theme) that can be re-combined to form new versions of a myth that will, consequently, refer to one another. (Comp. ibid: 25).

Archetypes can be understood as "myths brought to life". They are models construed to stand for the essence or the ideal of a group. The archetypical mother, for instance, would incorporate all the characteristics a community would ideally demand from any mother and be stripped of any characteristics that are of no relevance to a mother.
The novel appears like a grown-ups fairy tale - there is dancing princesses, a giant woman, magic, towns dying of love. It is set in England at the time of Cromwell and the tale is told in alternating sections by Dog-Woman, the giant woman, and Jordan. Dog Woman, who is a loner living with her many dogs, discovered Jordan as a child on the bank of the Thames. They meet some amazing experiences. This is a grown-up's fairy tale in that there is a lot of sex and violence. Winterson here in the novel explores the ‘heavy’ topics, such as the construction of identity and reality, and the realities of time. It is beautifully written in places, and could be enjoyed for the prose alone. There are modern day characters as well as the historical characters included in the novel.

It also has a fabulous title and compelling conceit. But the book's sparseness and "drop off" ending are a disappointment. As a feminist tract, the book is more disturbing in its descent into fantasy violence against the characters perceived to be championing the status quo. Rape and physical intimidation have always been the weapons used by the empowered to maintain their domination. Winterson’s celebration of force is not an anti-theatrical "turning of the tables" but just a reaffirmation of violence as a way to get one's point across.
THE DOG-WOMAN AND THE FEMININE EXPRESSION:-

The Dog Woman is one of the two protagonists in the novel. Her character is extremely important in the novel and at many times shows powerful feminine expressions, though is outwardly reflected to be a sturdy, big and a rough woman. She is a huge and monstrous creature with a powerful right hook and an extensive vocabulary. She is perhaps the only woman in English fiction confident enough to use filth as a fashion accessory.

"I had a name but I have forgotten it. They call me Dog-Woman and it will do." (STC: 11)\textsuperscript{83}

From the way in which she introduces herself, one could jump to the conclusion that Dog Woman simply does not attach any value to names. However, in the very the similar paragraph, her deliberations about her son’s name make obvious that she not only attributes meaning to names but views them as potentially having influence on someone’s life:

"I should have named him after a stagnant pond and then I could have kept him, but I named him after a river and in the flood-tide he slipped away." (STC: 11)\textsuperscript{84}
The people who chose the quality that was to determine Dog-Woman's name did not even have to get very close; that she was always having dogs around was clearly visible from far off. That Winterson attributed the character of Dog-Woman with a name that is narrated as given to her after she had grown up and claimed a realm that was to support herself seems to reproduce her public identity more suitably than any name given to her before she could start developing any identity of her own.

“I know that people are afraid of me, either for the yapping of my dogs or because I stand taller than any of them.” (STC: 25)\textsuperscript{85}

It is with this frankness that Dog-Woman talks about herself throughout the novel. Her style of verbal communication is matter-of-fact and the only figurative language she indulges in consists of comparisons of her to either animals or mountains. When she tells her story, conveys her view or questions something, it is usually laconically said; as if with a shrug. An example is her catapulting an elephant up into the sky with her weight and then stating:

"What it says of my weight I cannot tell, for an elephant looks big, but how am I to know what it weighs? A balloon looks big and weighs nothing.” (SCT: 25).\textsuperscript{86}
Thus, she questions what appears to be obvious and shows that it is sometimes necessary to find one’s own logic to make sense of the world. She approaches her looks with the same realistic manner she approaches everything else around her:

"How hideous am I? My nose is flat, my eyebrows are heavy. I have only a few teeth and those are a poor show, being black and broken. I had smallpox when I was a girl and the caves in my face are home enough for fleas. But I have fine blue eyes that see in the dark." (STC: 19)\(^7\)

There is no glossing over and no trying to find excuses. The "but" before she mentions her "fine blue eyes" make clear that she is well aware that the popular prejudice does not run in favour of her looks but she is not worried about it. Even the one positive feature she mentions - the fine blue eyes - is in fact only "fine" to her because she can see in the dark with them, a quality that is usually attributed to certain animals.

This way of representing her look makes us aware of her bodily features but we do not view her as a spectacle, a freak in a circus; an impression that an omniscient narrator describing Dog-Woman might have induced. Dog-Woman as a first person narrator uses anecdotes, truthful descriptions and
accounts of events to communicate her hugeness. In a clever remark on corpses she conveys that the body is of no importance to her. When she is asked to help disposing of the murdered Puritans she agrees,

"Because bodies mean nothing to me, dead or alive." (STC: 86).^{88}

The body might not mean everything to Dog-Woman but her body certainly is essential to her independent identity and to her well-built physical existence in the novel. According to Susana Gonzales opinion the foregrounding of Dog-Woman’s body is closely connected to Winterson’s enhancing of the self. (Gonzales 1996:294)^{89} The storyline convinces that the Dog-Woman’s gigantic appearance is crucial to the story itself as most events would not be practicable or believable where she is of less impressive build. But the narrative does not invite pity towards her because of her looks: If presented differently, some pieces of information about Dog-Woman’s past life could have been used as excuses for her appearance and, thus, becomes successful in earning the pity. There simply is nothing to pity Dog-Woman because her gigantic shape helps her to get heard, to be taken seriously. The Dog woman is not concerned about being dirty proves her self-confidence. That she lives on her own by the river shows her independence. The narrative in the novel invites to sympathize with Dog-
Woman; to be on her side and sometimes to even envy her for her seemingly boundless possibilities.

**VIOLENCE IN THE NOVEL:**

Violence is very much a part of Dog-Woman’s identity where she is presented with her violent body. She is conscious of what power she has and knows how to exercise it. Many number of actions carried out by Dog-Woman that would justify condemning her. She is a murderer and it becomes clear that she is aware of it because after narrating the killing of her father she says:

"*This was my first murder.*" (*STC: 107)*

On a day that can only be described as a killing spree, she murders 60 men and keeps their eyeballs and teeth.

"*I had 119 eyeballs, one missing on account of a man who had lost one already, and over 2,000 teeth.*" (*STC: 85)*

But the Dog woman is not criticized as the acts that are being narrated are violent acts but the way in which they are narrated is less striking than comical; even slapstick-like. The playfully overstated presentation of the scenes determines the way in which they are perceived. One may incline to
develop sympathetic feelings for the protagonist when she is presented in a pseudo-autobiographical mode seems to be true.

The first person narrative provides first-hand insight into Dog-Woman’s motivations for every murder or violent act that she commits. Dog-Woman’s violent act is a result of not getting heard or afraid of not getting heard. Dog-Woman always narrates which does not always justify but at least explains her reasons for attempting or carrying out each individual murder. She does not acknowledge any authority except the King and God. She hates the Puritans for misinterpreting the words of God, for overthrowing and beheading the king and for being shamefully hypocritical. The other part of her violent acts results from her tendency to take what is being said at face value. This corresponds with her way of expressing herself: she uses the same direct manner that she obviously expects from others. What I described as a killing spree, for instance, was initiated by a Royalist preacher whose advice Dog-Woman follows dutifully in its literal meaning:

“Then you must go in secret and quiet, and gouge out your enemies' eyes when you see them, and deprive them of their teeth if they have them. This fulfils the Law of God.” (STC: 84)
The environmentalist indulges in her violent fantasies as a desperate attempt to get noticed at least in a fantastic world. The way both female protagonists choose to assert they reflect the way in which the body was treated in the respective eras in which the two protagonists act. As shown above, Dog-Woman does not have any inhibitions to carry out physical sentence when she thinks others or she is being ill-treated.

While Dog-Woman thinks of murder as an apt way to stop people who do wrong from doing so, the environmentalist somewhat tries to discipline and reform those misusing and abusing their authority. In an illusion her alter ego has a sack with which she "stop(s) off all over the world filling it up" (ibid: 121) with everyone who represents power. In this utopian episode her plan works out and "what used to be power is now co-operation" (ibid: 123). Thus, Winterson's depiction of punishment is in line with Foucault: Over the centuries the body gradually ceased to be the focus of punishment and disciplining replaced physical suffering as an accepted way of punishing misdoings.

The Dog-Woman might be unconcerned to her looks but in a number of passages we learn that she is well conscious that society only rewards those who conform to expectations when she says:
"I am too huge for love. No one, male or female, has ever dared to approach me. They are afraid to scale mountains." (STC: 35).  

Though Dog-Woman is autonomous and independent she is not being presented as being past love. As she has been neglected by love her view on it is rather unwelcoming. She describes love as

"That cruelty which takes us to the gates of Paradise only to remind us they are closed for ever." (STC: 35).

When she narrates an anecdote on what it was like when Dog-Woman had been in love, we learns that she knows that love comes with strings attached. The measures she takes in order to be deserving of love, nonetheless are not rather the promising successful:

“I hate to wash, but knowing it to be the symptom of love I was not surprised to find myself creeping toward the pump in the dead of night like a ghoul to a tomb. I had determined to cleanse all of my clothes, my underclothes and myself." (STC: 35).
The reader is not excessively surprised when her attempts to win the love of the one who Dog-Woman stealthily dotes on fail. As a sexual lover, Dog-Woman proves to be dangerous. An invitation to fellatio leads to castration and during the one sexual intercourse she has had, Dog-Woman - as a result of trying to satisfy a wish by literally following instructions - sucks her lover in with her vagina so that he has to be freed "with aid of a crowbar". Brevity and terseness should be the right words to describe Winterson's writing style here in this novel. She aims at presenting the deepest thoughts with the simplest words, which is why she is canonical author in contemporary British literature. Different from any realist novels in the Victorian period whose authors tell as much as they can for fear that they may miss any uninteresting details. Now and then it is stated that she does feel lonely but how Dog-Woman would integrate a lover into her self-regulating life remains unanswered.

**FEMALE ENVIRONMENTALIST:**

"I am a woman going mad. I am a woman hallucinating. I imagine I am huge, raw, a giant." (STC: 121)\(^9\)

The burdensome way of referring to her may have suggested already that the second female protagonist remains nameless throughout the novel. Lidia
Curti suggests that "the absence of a name is the mark of a blurred identity." (Curti 1998:122)\textsuperscript{97}. The environmentalist is in fact presented as consisting of two identities though it can be said that her inner and her public identity put together form a united identity which is more inclusive than the two taken separately would constitute. What the environmentalist says about mercury can also be understood as referring to her different identities:

"It’s one life or countless lives depending on what you want." (STC: 126).\textsuperscript{98}

She appears to be resigned to the fact that her perception of and acting in the world is not met with much sympathy. A re-occurring sign that suggests that she also has lost patience with the people around her is the fact that she does not even openly respond to what is said to her. With reference to her public identity she describes herself

"As a chemist with a good degree, and as an attractive woman whom men like to work with." (STC: 125).\textsuperscript{99}

Her inner identity, the way in which she perceives of herself, resembles Dog-Woman:
"I had an alter ego who was huge and powerful, a woman whose only morality was her own and whose loyalties were fierce and few." (STC: 125).\textsuperscript{100}

In contrast to her, however, the environmentalist is prone to withdraw from the outer world to another one.

"I don’t know if other worlds exist in space or time. Perhaps this is the only one and the rest is rich imaginings. We have to protect both possibilities. They seem to be interdependent." (STC: 128).\textsuperscript{101}

While Dog-Woman can perceive of things and events in an unobstructed way as her thoughts were not directed by education, the environmentalist, by virtue of formal education, has to seek refuge in daydreams and hallucinations in order to escape natural and cultural laws. The environmentalist is clearly a postmodern character; weary of the world around her with its out-of-date but constant structures, diligently pursuing a task that is bound never to be accomplished, and having more questions than answers. In spite of being the tough, and sturdy Dog –woman has same feminine feelings as expressions. She is nowhere less than any normal woman character. She has secretly nurtured her inner wishes which are
explained in the novel - as they appear to her in a dream - sounds rather traditional:

"When I'm dreaming I want a home and a lover and some children" but Winterson is quick at letting her add that "it won’t work. Who'd want to live with a monster?(STC: 78).\(^{102}\)

Before we are presented with an account of the environmentalist’s and only sexual encounter it becomes clear that she has given up expectation that there are men who would appreciate a "monster" - a woman who is not content with meeting expectations but voices her own, a woman who sees through hypocrisy, a woman who claims for herself the conventionally male domain of combating for a universal cause. While Dog-Woman is a cannibal by accident, cannibalism is a real fantasy of the environmentalist:

“Later I said, ‘I'd like to swallow you.' Whole, I meant, every single bit, straight down the throat like an oyster, your feet last, your feet waving in my mouth like flippers. (STC, 84)\(^{103}\)

There is even one more momentous passage here, for the one and only time in the novel, the environmentalist addresses a character by using direct speech. To other questions, directed to her by her one-time-lover she
responds with her characteristic internal answers. With a side blow on heterosexual relationships she says:

"They (men) all want to be heroes and all we (women) want for them is to stay at home and help with the housework and the kids." (STC, 94).

The environmentalist wants more than that for herself. She has sacrificed all kinds of comforts and company to raise awareness for environmental contamination; and not because it is romantic or even remotely sexy but because it is essential:

“*The trouble is that when most people are apathetic ordinary people like me have to go too far, just to get the point across. Did they really think I’d rather be camping by a polluted river than sitting in my own flat with my things about me?*” (STC: 123)

Accordingly, Winterson reverses the established notion that women rather give up their goals and plans in order to turn themselves into a potential lover (read: one who rather supports her lover’s plans than having some of her own), whom men want to settle down with. By stripping the environmentalist’s camping by the river Thames of any desirable
connotations, Winterson does not present as one’s own best way for achieving ultimate independence. The female environmentalist rather criticizes that the existing present patriarchal structures do not facilitate for women who opt their individual path.

Thus in the present novel ‘Sexing the Cherry’ the female stands by itself as a positive, assertive and powerful entity. (Gonzales 1996:285) \(^{106}\). The two female protagonists in STC represent themselves as powerful women who challenge gender norms and expectations. According to Gonzales Dog-Woman also applies to the environmentalist:

"It is precisely, in her rebellion against this social and cultural imposition of "femininity" that we recognize her as a woman."

(Gonzáles 1996:285).\(^{107}\)

Though they live outside gender boundaries, neither the 17\(^{th}\) century woman nor her contemporary counterpart are being presented as living in a utopian atmosphere. Winterson says about her novel:

"Sexing the Cherry was a narrative I could construct around a loosely known set of facts." \(^{108}\)
This "realistic setting" in which the novelist has incorporated a subtle feminine touch which helps to make this fictional world presented in the novel recognizable. And in these recognizable yet fictive world gender obligations, do exist and women like Dog-Woman and the environmentalist have to live with the consequences that are the result of their breaching the rules.

Hence, the way in which the female protagonists present themselves from a first person narrator perspective can be understood as a criticism to the existing patriarchal structures and the feminine world is reveled. In the novel the female protagonists live their lives on their own terms and have to accept the drawbacks that come with such attempts to challenge common social structures. Whether the freedom they gain outweighs the loneliness and seclusion that is the cost for it remains unanswered. The protagonists simply do not have an option or choice; their identities simply reject to accommodate gendered expectations. But the novel is full of feminine expressions and feeing powerfully delineated by the novelist in the most skillful manner.
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