Literary Art versus Technological Performance: The Case of Jeanette Winterson

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> If prose-fiction is to survive it will have to do more than to tell a story.
> Fiction that is printed television is redundant fiction.
> Fiction that is a modern copy of a nineteenth-century novel is no better than any other kind of reproduction furniture. ...
> In so much as television and film have largely occupied the narrative function of the novel, just as the novel annexed the narrative function of epic poetry, fiction will have to move on, and find new territory of its own.
>
> Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects*

THE AIM of this paper is to point out the significant transformations in the nature of literary writing that have been brought about by recent developments in science and technology, especially in the fields of communication technologies, information and computer studies. Given that at least since the beginning of the twentieth century the term "literature" has come to mean primarily "fiction" my analysis dwells on the intricate relation between the technological boom and the evolution of the novel, as mirrored in the work of Jeanette Winterson. As Daniel Lea, editor of the *Contemporary British Novelists* series, states in his foreword to Susana Onega's well-documented book entitled *Jeanette Winterson*,[1] the contemporary British novel "defies easy categorization" because to "conceptualize, isolate and define the mutability of the contemporary" is an extremely challenging task. Consequently, Lea wonders whether the novel form is able to "adequately represent reading communities increasingly dependent upon digitalized communication." This is my attempt to provide an answer to Lea's question, by performing an analysis on seven Wintersonian novels.

Although it may lack factuality, fictional narrative can define, contradict, mediate and even create new understandings of reality, being both an instrument of social change, and a product of social-historical conditions. Since technology is, undoubtedly, one of these social conditions that may strongly influence the evolution of literary genres, it, therefore, must be taken into consideration if we are to understand the development of the novel.[2] As Cecelia Tichi explains,

> *to discuss the relation of technology to the novel is to understand that in any given era there exists a dominant technology which defines or redefines the human role in relation to the environment, that within the span of some three centuries technological orientation has shifted from a technology of visible moving parts, which is to say the technology that Pound understood as one of gears and girders, to an electrical technology of broadcast radio … and thence to the micro circuitry in which the cathode-ray screen has instigated fictional innovation.*[3]

In 1878 Friedrich Nietzsche presented his unique views on modern technology, views confined to that grey area located somewhere between expectations and apprehension. The renowned nineteenth-century philosopher and socio-cultural critic stated that "the press, the machine, the railway, the telegraph are premises whose thousand-year conclusion no one has yet dared to draw."[4] Now, more than one hundred years later, to paraphrase Nietzsche, one could safely postulate the same idea regarding the radio, the television, the cinema, the computer and the Internet. For many centuries human beings have employed various technologies to record and manage data, be they Incan knots, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Buddhist relief carvings on wood blocks, etc. But the hallmarks of print technology are, doubtlessly, the year 868 AD, when the Diamond Sutra, the earliest dated printed book was produced in China; the fifteenth century, when Gutenberg used the movable metal type hand press to print the Bible; the nineteenth century, more precisely the year 1814, when *The Times* used the first steam press to inaugurate the age of mass-media; the invention of the linotype machine, which was first used commercially by *The New York Tribune* in 1886, and later developed into the intertype machine (1914); the year 1969, when Gary Starkweather invented the laser printer, and the 1990s, when thermal printing technology started to spread. And this is how the Western world of The Printing Age became, as Jacques Derrida put it, "the civilization of the book."[5]

The invention of the kinetoscope marked the beginning of The Cinematic Age as Norman K. Denzin calls it, when literature was abandoned by many, who found that movies could easily cater to their immediate anxieties or enthusiasms, to their need for an escape route from their everyday problems, to their insatiable curiosity to find out what is going on in the lives of others and in the world at large.[6] With the advent of television, at the end of the 1940s, with facilities such as Cable TV and the VCR, cinema suffered a drastic drop in attendance: "television turned the cinematic society inward, making the home a new version of the movie theatre."[7] *The book* shared the same fate, as the number of people with an interest in literature continued to decrease. These new mediums of representation, namely the cinema, video and television, together with the more recent invasion of information technology into our lives, have continually eroded interest in the printed text, causing the literate reading public to shrink back to a limited segment of population, covering mainly college or university students and graduates.

Technological development has indeed put a certain pressure on the narrative and has questioned its power of organizing the world. In an attempt to regain its audience, literature is changing its form, so as to give the public what it needs, what it desires. Thus, since an innovative model for fiction was needed, at the beginning of the 21st century, under the reign of information technology, the fundamentals of novelistic design seem to have changed, as the concept of fictional narrative has begun to yield to the values of high-tech development. Emphasis has shifted from narration to construction, from story to functional design and, thus, the novel is becoming a designed construction. Some writers have begun to recognize opportunities for a new kind of fiction and to acknowledge the computer's presence as part of the material culture, as an instrument that can assist them in furnishing the fictional world and in establishing new shared assumptions between text and the reader.

The structure of Winterson's novels offers a non-linear alternative to chronological linear plot: a spiral structure that unfolds to reveal the self-organizing dynamics of a plot shaped by the language. Winterson's novels have been deemed inconsistent and pulpy not only because they always seem to be subject to frequent intrusions from the author's self-reflexive commentary, but also due to the fragmentary nature of her discourse. Although for Winterson fragmentation is a technique meant to engender complexity, the critics seem reluctant to acknowledge its beneficial implications and unable to perceive its instrumental role in the development of the novel. Their insistence on the simplification of this complexity mirrors a nostalgic desire for a return to the framework of realistic novels and constitutes, in our post-modern times, what Katherine Hayles, resorting to a term used in the history of archaeology, calls a "skeuomorph"—an ornamental element which retains old design features no longer required by the new structure, solely for their comfortable familiarity.[8]

In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Winterson's first novel,[9] for instance, the story of Jeanette's growing up in an enclosed religious community blends with narrative strands imbued with mythical overtones, with fables and tales inspired by folklore, resulting in a combination of disparate narrative fragments which, notes Dominic Head, deeply upsets the readers' hold "on normative social reality" as it calls upon "a higher kind of psychological truth."[10] Winterson's narrative philosophy, shows Kim Middleton Meyer, "insists on a poetics of uncertainty:"[11]

> *That is the way with stories; we make them what we will. It's a way of explaining the universe while leaving the universe unexplained, it's a way of keeping it all alive, not boxing it into time. Everyone who tells a story tells it differently, just to remind us that everybody sees it differently. Some people say there are true things to be found, some people say all kinds of things can be proved. I don't believe them. The only thing for certain is how complicated it all is, like a string full of knots. It's all there but hard to find the beginning and impossible to fathom the end.*[12]

An artist of narrativity, Winterson "employs the post-Einsteinian conception of the plasticity of time"[13] and thus departs from the temporal and causal sequence of narrative convention, combining shards of personal history and fragments of individual experience with fabulous stories and myth, in an attempt to activate a sense of mystery in the mundane. The spiral, a form that "is fluid and allows infinite movement" is the "alternative visual metaphor" used by Winterson, and the story of Winnet, featured in *Oranges*, claims Head, shows exactly how this new narrative technique functions: "Winnet, adopted by a sorcerer who subsequently banishes her ... chooses to find a different way of utilizing her powers, and sets out on a journey towards a 'beautiful city,' determining that it will be 'a place where truth mattered.' Winnet's quest thus becomes a metaphor for the writer's search for a style with access to a heightened psychological truth."[14] It is precisely Winnet's quest (the name being a blend of the author's surname and first name —*Win*terson Jea*net*te), that "defines the limits of the writer's detachment," since it is obvious that "the quest of Jeanette the narrator is linked to Winterson's search for her identity as a writer."[15] Winterson, explains Head "constructs her fictions as quests for self-knowledge, specifically concerning the way in which the desire of the individual resists given patterns of behavior or understanding."[16] Jeanette's task, argues Head is "both to resist the repression that she encounters," which "has been suffered by the preceding generation" and "to establish the grounds for a co-operative sense of sisterhood, beyond the judgmental antagonism of the society she knows."[17] The first eight books of the Bible, *Genesis* to *Ruth*, lend their titles to this novel's chapters and the *Book of Ruth* resonates deeply in the final chapter, with Jeanette's "return to the foster-mother who had denounced and betrayed her." This yearning to return, shows Head, "provisioned in Jeanette's adoption and completion of Winnet's quest, suggests also that the foster-mother may have something of the sorcerer about her after all, inspiring/bestowing Jeanette's gift of imagination."[18] Although Winterson employs magic realism in order to oppose "the reductive culture of postmodernism, as she sees it,"[19] her technique of mixing various strands of narrative (both realistic and fantastic) which, in *Oranges*, either intersect with or, at times, supervene upon the guiding principle of each biblical chapter that Winterson uses as a title in the book's Table of Contents, is characteristic of postmodernism, as it "calls into question any hierarchy of text that might provide for the occlusion of others."[20] While seeming to reflect acceptance of biblical authority, this choice of titles functions as a framework that expands to allow the intrusion of numerous other narrative strands, ranging from stories deemed "unholy" by Jeanette's mother, to escapist tales of mythical or folkloric influence. Meyer notices that "biblical thematics give way to vignettes that parallel Jeanette's disenchantment with the church"[21] and point to the Evangelist Church as a confining and oppressive institution. But Winterson's use of the Bible is by no means one-sided, as Head's final considerations, ending his analysis of *Oranges*, clearly show: "In a breathtaking maneuver Winterson subverts a text from the Bible, the seminal patriarchal text for some feminists, discovering within it a lesson of sisterhood or female loyalty that might acknowledge the lesbian within the fold, not as an outsider, but as the *instigator* of a non-antagonistic feminist ethos."[22] Accordingly, Meyer also adds that: "For Jeanette and for Winterson, the paradox of *Oranges* consists of multiple, heterogeneous stories intersecting to empower a young woman to shape her own identity. Whatever the separation between the character and the author, on this point, the two would themselves surely converge."[23] The narrator's clear, individual voice and Winterson's fine writing give the story an uplifting, energized and even highly erotic quality, as *Oranges* includes several moments of beautifully-rendered mild eroticism. *Oranges*, whose depth of emotion is astonishing, should be savored for the process of self-discovery, for the journey and, last but not least, for the language.

A momentous instance of historiographic metafiction, Winterson's second novel, *The Passion*,[24] turns HISTORY into a "playground adventure" and "a mine for fragments and anecdotes."[25] Thus, "central figures of the *grand recit* are pushed into the margins or at least seen from a marginal perspective."[26] As Meyer points out, "History and fiction, horror and fantasy—the grotesque formations that *The Passion* enacts allow for the improbable narrative unions that hold out the promise of multiple interiorities to be explored, but at the same time reassert their inability to impact a world governed by realist notions."[27] It is Winterson's "fascination with the power of heterogeneity and narrative" that informs *The Passion*'s "oft-quoted refrain:"[28] "I'm telling you stories. Trust me." The guiding principle of the narrative lines is no longer of religious import, as the Bible of *Oranges*, but historical—the Napoleonic Wars. Labeled by Jan Rosemergy "a cat's cradle of history and fiction … impossible to unknot,"[29] *The Passion* proves the force of magic realism, which welds together two seemingly oppositional types of discourse, story and history,[30] in an "ultimately more trustworthy … representation of the human condition" than either of them could have provided alone: "Here, two forms often considered oppositional work together to imagine the ways that traditionally neglected historical voices could add depth and texture to flat factual accounts."[31]

With *Sexing the Cherry*, her third novel,[32] Winterson "begins to map out a theory of multiplicity specific to subjectivity, one that simultaneously seeks to more fully integrate fantasy into the real, even while erasing the distinction between the two."[33] The set of narratives that begin the novel and the one ending it, entitled "Sometime Later" work in wondrous ways, so as to prevent any attempts of assigning to either of them the label REAL at the expense of the other.[34] This "ontological hesitancy," explains Meyer,[35] "not only erases the division between fantasy and the real, but also between Jordan and Nicholas Jordan." This accounts for what Rosi Braidotti called "nomadic subjectivity," a feature displayed by most of Winterson's main characters: "nomadic consciousness consists in not taking any kind of identity as permanent. The nomad is only passing through; s/he makes those necessarily situated connections that can help her/him survive, but s/he never takes on full the limits of one … fixed identity."[36]

Noting that, as Paulina Palmer argued, "a fluid interaction between self and Other"[37] distinctively marks Winterson's treatment of subjectivity, Meyer explains how *Written on the Body*, the fourth novel in the cycle[38] articulates a new type of relationship, "one that posits a system of desire between two subjects, each whole but connected to the other, neither subordinated or constructed by the other. In effect, neither is Other."[39] Moreover, the reciprocity between Louise and the narrator, who is identified neither as male nor as female, neither exclusively loving subject nor solely loved object, adds Meyer, "represents Winterson's imagining of the consequences of deployment of a nomadic subjectivity within a love relationship:" "Empowered with the kind of subjective mobility that allowed the activist in *Sexing the Cherry* to activate the most powerful parts of herself, the narrator too can be read as a nomadic subject who inhabits none of these positions to the exclusion of the others. By holding open numerous subject positions, the narrator invokes a new ethics of love that allows him/her to reunite with Louise in a fantastic, but not immaterial, ending."[40]

In *GUT Symmetries*,[41] argues Meyer, "re-evaluations of space and time lend a scientific basis to Winterson's nomadism, previously demarcated by the fantastic."[42] The "traditional" love triangle employed in earlier Wintersonian novels is here replaced by a triangular model that "fails to stay within two-dimensional space."[43] Moreover, any hesitation that this author's characters previously manifested towards "the principle of nomadism" is, in *GUT Symmetries*, "eradicated." Here, Alice and Stella never question their sanity and insist that "the crazy ones are those who doubt that multiple possibilities for a subject exist," bringing to light arguments that "work to explain the mechanics behind what previously appeared to be fantasy."[44]

Meyer's ambitious attempt to assess Winterson's works in a coherent manner by proposing "a unitary approach" based on allowing Winterson's novels to evince her developing theory of "contradiction in identity," a theory illustrated in varied ways throughout Winterson's fiction, ends with the following conclusions: "Winterson incorporates what seem to be irreducible binary oppositions. Searching for an aesthetics of synthesis that preserves the difference between distinct terms, she passes through intertextuality in favour of the grotesque, and abandons the grotesque for the freedom of a theory of nomadism. Truly, then, Winterson aspires to the articulation of subjectivity's paradoxes: 'What is unwritten draws me on, the difficulty, the dream.'"[45]

Winterson's aim is to open the readers' eyes onto a new perspective, to defamiliarize well-known myths, themes, ideas and symbols, by employing a style "in which realism is infused with fantasy," a narrative mode which implies a great degree of self-consciousness: the branch of experimental writing called magic realism, "in which realistic codes are confounded yet still retained."[46] While such a style might appear "pretentious or artificial," it has the advantage of being able to "lend itself to the kind of social connection that it might seem devised to avoid." Therefore, in *Art and Lies*,[47] Winterson resorts to magic realism so as to show the superiority of the novel form over its visual competitors. Here, Head points out, by means of an "emotionally charged use of language" combined with a deft handling of fantasy, Winterson manages to revitalize the channels of social connection: "Winterson is explicitly critical of the desensitizing effects of a mass media implicated in a crisis of social disconnection. In response to a world where 'reportage is violence ... to the spirit,' packaged for consumption in such a way as to juxtapose the latest international catastrophe with a quiz show, Winterson seeks an alternative form of nourishment for people still longing 'to feel.'"[48] Winterson's brand of magic realism, shows Head, proves that, at its best, "an extravagant departure from the real may be the best way to retrieve it" and, in the particular case of *Art and Lies*, this technique seems to be the most efficient way "to combat the violence done to the spirit in the media age."[49] By naming her three main characters after three historical artistic figures, Handel, Sappho and Picasso, Winterson brings "historical artistic resonance into a contemporary context from which aesthetic value is felt to have been expelled."[50] The use of A. C. Bradley's words[51]—which convey the importance of preserving art's independence from the real world—as an epigraph to *Art and Lies* suggests that Winterson's hybrid mode of magic realism, "even in its more metafictional or frame-breaking moments," argues in favor of respecting the integrity of art, respect that does not imply severing "the connections between the literary text and its context."[52] *Art and Lies* is also a diatribe against the technological world, seen as alien to the spirit and alienated from people's real needs. The feeling transmitted is that only "the nourishment of art" can preserve "health," seen here as "a spiritual dimension," while technology offers solely "an illusory salvation," therefore any faith "in scientific progress is misplaced."[53]

To Head, in light of "the admonitory attitude to new technology" expressed by Winterson in *Art and Lies*, "it is surprising to see her conversion to the creative possibilities of the computer." But, explains Head, the use of computer-related terminology in *The.PowerBook*[54] is merely "cosmetic" and does not result in "noteworthy changes of form." Consequently, Head argues that this novel simply "deliberates on the psychological effect of electronic communication, but without allowing its form to be radically altered" and concludes that "Winterson's somewhat mannered engagement with the computer age is representative of how mainstream British fiction has remained impervious to its effects," thus managing to "stave off the threat posed to its identity by the computer."[55] Not all critics, however, viewed Winterson's last novel of the cycle that had begun with *Oranges* as a successful attempt to give her work a technological twist, many accusing her of using IT imagery merely as an advertising gimmick, designed to increase sales, given that the cover or the inside flap of some editions remind the readers of a computer handbook, the chapters are named after recognizable commands from the Macintosh user interface and, last but not least, the very title is coined after a type of laptop. Moreover, respected critics such as Elaine Showalter, blamed Winterson for having failed to make the most of the possibilities offered by computer technology and to clearly exhibit the potential of this new approach to art and writing: "*The.PowerBook* is not a playful postmodern experiment or an investigation of the multiple personalities of email. Instead, Winterson uses the metaphor of email to discuss sexual freedom and power. Sex, like the web, is an 'orderly anarchic space that no one can dictate, although everyone tries.' It is a story that always has a new beginning and never really ends."[56] What the renowned critic fails to notice is that these particular traits are precisely the ones that characterize hyperfiction: no story ever reads the same way twice, in some cases any point may be taken as the beginning, whilst the outcome is different function of the choices the reader makes, depending on what links s/he chooses to follow.[57] Of course, the print medium does not allow for a display similar to the one available on the computer screen or for the freedom of movement granted by cyberspace, so each and every writer must find his or her own way of bypassing this fixity inherent to print texts. Winterson's solution is actually presented on the opening page of *The.PowerBook*: "To avoid discovery I stay on the run. To discover things for myself I stay on the run."[58] Winterson knows that automatisms may lead to the death of narrative, and that closure offered as the only possible ending carries the same threat: "There is always the danger of automatic writing. The danger of writing yourself towards an ending that need never be told. At a certain point the story gathers momentum. It convinces itself, and does its best to convince you, that the end in sight is the only possible outcome. There is a fatefulness and a loss of control that are somehow comforting. This was your script, but now it writes itself."[59] In order to avoid that threat there is one solution: to innovate the language of the novel, by using multiple strands of narrative, cover-versions and re-workings of well-known stories: "Stop. Break the narrative. Refuse all the stories that have been told so far (because that is what the momentum really is), and try to tell the story differently—in a different style, with different weights—and allow some air to those elements choked with centuries of use, and give some substance to the floating world."[60]

Winterson's disregard for chronology forces the readers to engage in a re-mapping of events in a rather topographic manner, by identifying the interstices and trajectories connecting the textual fragments that form each book's chapters. A constellation of themes intersect in each of her novels—the layers of time, space, matter and meaning; the debris of history; the power and the futility of love; the idea of disguise; the treasure, or the Holy Grail; life as a journey, life as a story; intertextuality and story-writing—and her novels are not plot-driven, but rather character-driven and, especially, discourse-driven. As if it were an instance of hypertext literature, the plot is divided into numerous parts, most of them completely independent from the others, but they can be connected by the integrative power of logic. Consequently, the role of a hyperbook reader seems much more important than the promoters of reader response critical theories even dared imagine and, with this novel, Winterson challenges the readers to put their minds to work and perform to the best of their logical abilities.

Whether readers or critics, those who are still wondering how to put the pieces together experience a sense of frustration at the lack of closure and, not surprisingly, blame it on the writer, known to be resistant to notions such as "what ... the Americans call closure" and to the "old-fashioned plot line" better to be "left to crime writers of the old school."[61] In the exclusive interview conducted by Margaret Reynolds in September 2002 Winterson explains her choice of double- or multiple-strand narrative, and her preference for fragmentary discourse and seemingly plotless fiction by pointing out that pauses, spaces, and breaks in the narrative are necessary "forceful interruptions" which prevent readers from becoming fascinated by the story line and allow them to notice the beauty of the language.[62] Language should not be perceived as merely a meaning-conveying medium, but as "something in its own right," which "needs to be concentrated on, just in the way that poetry does," without looking for "the next bit of excitement," because reading is not supposed to be a "faintly pornographic" experience.[63] Therefore, Winterson tries to make the readers aware of the reading process, demands their concentration, as reading is not like watching television: "It's a dialogue, and it's not a passive act." Winterson knows, of course, that there are people who "find this vastly irritating and simply want to skip along and read a monolithic narrative," and her advice to those who keep whining about how much they need the comforts of closure is to watch television, or choose one of the many books that are, in fact, "just printed television:"[64] "It seems to me that TV and cinema have taken over the narrative function of the novel, in much the same way that the novel once took over the narrative function of poetry. That frees me up for story, for poetry and for language that does more than convey meaning."[65] And, indeed, it is in the poetry of Winterson's language that the power of her novels rests: not in the plot but in the many interwoven stories, not in the story but in the telling. In all of her novels Jeanette Winterson sets a standard for elegance and clarity of exposition, showing a surprising capacity to defamiliarize the literary language.[66] In Winterson's works time seems to be folded and stretched, allowing for the linking of events ostensibly separated in both space and time. The elliptical storytelling, the ambiguous endings and the intentional structural lacunas which break the linearity of the discourse all bring their contribution to the spatial simultaneity of Winterson's narrative. Reductionist reading is utterly discouraged as, molded by language, events and characters emerge and evolve in a surprising demonstration of creative self-organization, arising from the undifferentiated disorder that lurks within each process of creation. The unfolding of the creative process is conditioned by active reading, a process that requires permanent evolutionary adaptations on the part of the reader.

Even though literature has not changed so drastically as to accommodate and to make full use of networking technology, the new information medium will not, in the near future, at least, be able to take over so completely as to marginalize as insignificant all material that does not transfer well into computer language. As Sanda Berce pertinently points out, "fiction conquers the real not only to offer another reality but to magically sustain and drive the actual one and render it meaningful for the individual."[67] And if we take into account all the above-mentioned features that characterize Winterson's work, it becomes clear that her endeavor to "capture the sensibilities of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries"[68] has been a successful one, her novels being able to adequately cater even for the needs of a readership actively addicted to the hollow promises of advanced digital communication offered by our strongly industrialized and technologized consumerist post-capitalist world.

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Notes

1. Susana Onega, *Jeanette Winterson* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), Series Editor: Daniel Lea.
2. For a survey of technology's influence on the development of the novel see Alina Preda, "The Convergence of Literature and Technology," *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Philologia*, 4 (2004): 91–102.
3. Cecelia Tichi, "Technology and the Novel," in Emory Elliott, ed., *The Columbia History of the American Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 456–484.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Reginald John Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 378.
5. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).
6. For a more detailed discussion on The Cinematic Age see Alina Preda, "The Convergence of Literature and Technology," *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Philologia* 4 (2004): 91–102.
7. Norman K. Denzin, *The Cinematic Society. The Voyeur's Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 39.
8. N. Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
9. Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (London: Vintage, 1991 [1985]).
10. Dominic Head, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 100.
11. K. Middleton Meyer, "Jeanette Winterson's Evolving Subject. 'Difficulty into Dream', " in *Contemporary British Fiction*, eds. Richard J. Lane, Rod Mengham and Philip Tew (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, 210–225), 212.
12. Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, 91.
13. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 235.
14. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 100.
15. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 101.
16. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 99.
17. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 99–100.

18. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 101.
19. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 103.
20. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 212.
21. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 212.
22. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 101.
23. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 212.
24. Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1988 [1987]).
25. to use the words of Helga Quadflieg, 1997, quoted by K. Middleton Meyer, 2003, 213.
26. Helga Quadflieg, 1997, quoted in Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 213.
27. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 214.
28. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 212–213.
29. Jan Rosemergy, "Navigating the Interior Journey: The Fiction of Jeanette Winterson," in *British Women Writing Fiction*, ed. Abby H. P. Werlock (Tuscloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000, 248–269), 263.
30. On the ambiguous status of history from the scientific point of view see Iulian Mihai Damian, "La storia ha uno status scientifico molto ambiguo." Intervista con Francesco Guida, *Transylvanian Review* 18, 3 (2004): 123–128; and Ioan Bolovan, "Non esiste 'la storia' ma 'le storie' ." Intervista con Francesco Guida, *Transylvanian Review* 17, 4 (2008): 96–101.
31. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 213.
32. Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry* (London: Vintage, 1990 [1989]).
33. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 217.
34. For an overview of the imaginary and for a discussion on its status see Constantin Mihai, "Le Statut de l'Imaginaire de l'Antiquite au XXe siècle," *Transylvanian Review* 16, 3 (2007): 139–148.
35. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 217.
36. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 33.
37. Paulina Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions*, (London: Cassell, 1999), quoted in Meyer, 219.
38. Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body* (London: Vintage, 1996 [1992]).
39. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 219–220.
40. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 220.
41. Jeanette Winterson, *Gut Symmetries* (London: Granta Books, 1998 [1997]).
42. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 221.
43. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 220.
44. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 221.
45. Meyer, "Winterson's Evolving Subject," 222.
46. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 230.
47. Jeanette Winterson, *Art and Lies* (London: Vintage, 1995 [1994]).
48. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 230.
49. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 231.
50. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 230.
51. "The nature of a work of art is to be not a part, nor yet a copy of the real world (as we commonly understand that phrase), but a world in itself, independent, complete, autonomous; and to possess it fully you must enter that world, conform to its laws, and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims and particular conditions which belong to you in the other world of reality (Professor Bradley's 1901 *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*), quoted in Jeanette Winterson, *Art and Lies* (London: Vintage, 1995 [1994]), the epigraph.

52. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 231.
53. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 234.
54. Jeanette Winterson, *The.PowerBook*, (London: Vintage, 2001 [2000]).
55. Head, *Cambridge Introduction*, 237–238.
56. Elaine Showalter, "Eternal triangles – Jeanette Winterson's *The.PowerBook* is lost in cyberspace," *The Guardian*, Saturday, September 2, 2000, available at: http://books.guardian.co.uk/print/ Accessed July 2004.
57. On the critical reception of Jeanette Winterson's *The.PowerBook* see Alina Preda, "Jeanette Winterson's Internet Hype: The.PowerBook," *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai. Philologia* 2 (2008): 135–150.
58. Winterson, *The.PowerBook*, 3, 157, 210.
59. Winterson, *The.PowerBook*, 53.
60. Winterson, *The.PowerBook*, 53.
61. Interview with Jeanette Winterson. Available at www.jeanettewinterson.com. Accessed July 2010.
62. On the 'specialised' versus 'the everyday' use of language see Adrian Tudurachi, "Beyond the Concept. Observations Concerning Critical Writing," *Transylvanian Review*, 15, 1 (2006): 23–33.
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Abstract

Literary Art versus Technological Performance: The Case of Jeanette Winterson

The advent of the personal computer and the ever more increasing use of the Internet have revolutionized the ways in which literature is written and read in contemporary society. My analysis dwells on the intricate relation between the technological boom and the evolution of the novel, as mirrored in the work of Jeanette Winterson. Her writings aim to show that the novel is not going to become a kind of second-order phenomenon in our highly technologized consumerist post-capitalist world because, through enchanting literary language, this particular literary genre can offer a compelling account of the conflictual dynamics of contemporary self-formation and self-representation.

Keywords

print fiction, modern technology, fragmentation, intertextuality, defamiliarization.