THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ANKARA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE POWERBOOK* AND ALI SMITH'S *HOW TO BE BOTH*

M.A. THESIS

Dilek AYDIN ATEŞ

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TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANA BİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

JEANETTE WINTERSON'UN *THE POWERBOOK* VE ALI SMITH'IN *HOW TO BE BOTH* BAŞLIKLI ESERLERİNDEKİ ANLATI TEKNİKLERİ

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Nisa Harika GÜZEL KÖŞKER

TEZ JÜRİSİ ÜYELERİ

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I hereby declare that in the dissertation "Narrative Techniques in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* and Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (Ankara, 2022)", prepared under the supervision of Assist. Prof. Dr. Nisa Harika Güzel Köşker, all information has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Dilek AYDIN ATEŞ

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To my baby girl İpek and my superman Okan

who are the loves of my life

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

Art & Lies	: *AL*
The PowerBook	: *PB*
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit	: *Oranges*
The Passion	: *Passion*
Sexing the Cherry	: *Cherry*
Written On the Body	: *Written*
Gut Symmetries	: *GS*
How to Be Both	: *HB*

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to provide an analysis on the multiple narratives in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* (2000) and on the dual narratives in Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014) in the light of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Through the use of unconventional narrative strategies, Winterson's multiple stories are presented in different places and times in a virtual reality to lay bare the significance of the construction of a narrator free from societal gender roles in an unrestricted space. On the other hand, Smith's dual narration, separated both in time and place, presents imaginary and unconventional narrators in both stories who seem to merge in the middle of the story. It is this distinctive yet similar way of using the techniques of narration that brings these texts together for a narrative analysis with regard to the construction of gender identity. Thus, this thesis will examine the ways in which these writers challenge the traditional way of narration and how they subvert the constructed gender roles assigned by the patriarchy through their narrators.

Jeanette Winterson and Ali Smith are contemporary feminist writers who try to create a female voice within the patriarchal narrative structure. They avoid following the traditional plot structure, and further employ new and individualistic patterns of narration. With the aim of dismantling the rigid binary gender designations, these writers subvert the traditional patterns to construct a narrator- a voice in/against the patriarchy- whose identity is unexpectedly obscure and who possesses unfixed sexual attributes. The urge to write in opposition to the overwhelmingly male dominant writing style stems from these writers' need to create a voice of their own. Upon the realization that the narratives are based on the male mode of thinking and serve the interests of the patriarchal system, feminist and queer writers have attempted to subvert the traditional narrative styles by creating unfixed and unrestricted narratives with unidentifiable narrators. Therefore, it

can be suggested that the studies in queer narratives have created a fresh and developing field and they have offered new perspectives in critical literary studies.

The problem of identity construction along with the gender construction, which is based on patriarchal parameters, have been discussed in this patriarchal environment for long years. In a similar way, there have been discussions on the subject of *woman* and what it constitutes to be a woman. Although this term is not stable and also troublesome to define in feminist theory, it is often associated with the construction of gender identity. It should also be noted that sex is acquired by birth while gender is culturally constructed ("Sex and Gender" 35). This distinction clarifies that these two different notions are interrelated but not signifying the same thing since "the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders" (Butler 6). As gender is culturally constructed, the male body does not necessarily construct the term man; in a similar way, the female body is insignificant in the constitution of the term woman (Butler 6). Although the term binary sex refers to naturally opposing parts and biologically distinctive physiology, this does not necessitate that gender binarism should also contain opposites since, as Butler indicates, "there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two" (6). This assumption paved the way for a newly constructed idea of gender that is "independent of sex" which turns into "a free-floating artifice, with the consequences that man and masculine might just easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (Butler 6). In Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex,* she famously asserts that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," (de Beauvoir 273) which coincides with the idea of gender construction since she claims that "the 'one' who becomes a woman is [not] necessarily female" (Butler 8). The controversy on binary sex and binary oppositions in gender also include the problem of the body, which is described as "a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed" (Butler 8). Butler proposes that the body functions

as “a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related” (8). Ali Smith constructs a new gender identity through Francescho who is presented as the double of George. Both are mirrors to each other, and at some points they turn out to be the same character and the same narrator in the story. The gender of the characters is intentionally ambiguous and fluid since George represents a young girl/boy in the twentieth century while Francescho seems to be a young woman who lives under a male disguise in the fifteenth century. The problematic case of living in a patriarchal environment brings out questions of their gender. In her *The PowerBook,* Jeanette Winterson employs her narrator Ali or Alix to change identities and gender throughout the novel. The multiplicity of the narrators in her story enables Ali, the e-writer, to emerge as whoever s/he wants. Being a gender-free character and living in a virtual world, Ali is the embodiment of the liberation from fixed gender roles in a patriarchal world. Although Ali and his/her counterparts seem to be the representatives of the gender roles assigned by the patriarchy, they function as the subversive power to the constructed gender identities in the virtual reality.

Winterson is well-known for her writings in gender issues and she had already created a genderless narrator before she wrote *The PowerBook*, which disappointed some readers because she was thought to repeat herself. However, Winterson does not think she has repeated herself; on the contrary, she believes to have introduced a new type of storytelling through her narrator who switches gender identities continuously.

Among Winterson’s novels, *Written on the Body* (1992) is a text about a narrator unspecified in gender and name who has different relationships with characters of both genders but is madly in love with Louise, a married woman. The withholding of the gender and name is rather captivating in the story, and the reader is challenged to make assumptions of the possible gender based on the actions of the narrator and the characters. The reader is judgmental in their decisions and makes decisions on their own merits rather

than through the lens of expected gender roles. Because of the unspecified gender of the narrator, the reader is expected to deconstruct the preconceived gender roles. It is reasonable to say that Winterson undermines the binary conceptualization of gender and avoids the labelling of any gender in order to prove that gender is constructed on other aspects, which can be determined in performance. What is distinctive about this novel is that other characters are described in detail whereas the narrator remains unspecified throughout. In *The PowerBook*, however, the narrator's gender is fluid and transgresses the boundaries of gender from one story to another. Although the unconventional representation of gender can be regarded as a common point of these novels, it is distinguishable in terms of the treatment of the narrator. Winterson's narrator in *The PowerBook* is presented in an endless space of virtual reality where s/he can be anyone s/he wants; thus, s/he is freed from the expected gender roles of the patriarchy.

Winterson's *The PowerBook*, is discussed from a posthumanist point of view in Seda Fikriye Yılmaz's "The Search for Origins Stop Here: Representing Jeanette Winterson's Posthumanist World in *The PowerBook".* She analyzes the sexed and gendered bodies, the use of space and time, and the tulip symbolism in relation to Donna Haraway's cyborg. Ali is regarded as a cyborg since s/he is an "illegitimate offspring" that has no past to be faithful to and thus does not constrain itself to a genealogy" (176). In a similar fashion, Yılmaz states that Winterson's cyberspace is a posthumanist world where Ali is depicted as a posthuman "whose body becomes a plane of immanence, by being in a state of flux" (171). The article studies the narrator through the lens of posthumanism. In another study, Melina Pereira Savi firstly examines the "role of the author", then the "power of writing" and concludes with Butler's ideas of gender performativity (87-8). She contends that "language has been given too much power over matter" (88). The text has overpowered the author, which once has been thought to be a "slave to the author's intended meaning" (88). Irene O'Leary examines *The PowerBook*

in terms of stylistics, of which she particularly focuses on the interaction between the text and the reader. She offers a stylistic analysis that affects the interpretation and reading of the novel. Annabel Margaret van Baren examines *Sexing the Cherry* and *The PowerBook* in various aspects in her article. She claims that Winterson's novels have already been analyzed in terms of lesbian and postmodern angles; thus, proposing a close reading on "the intersecting themes of embodiment and storytelling [that] propose innovative ways to represent bodies and narrate stories" (5). In *The PowerBook*, she elaborates on time how it "is displayed and displaced" and how it "disrupt[s] the linearity of time" (8). She further explores "the effects of new technologies on the narrative structure of the novel" (8). Lastly, she investigates how the characters' gender is represented and how they present an alternative way for gender categories (8).

On the other hand, Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* is examined on the basis of ekphrastic tradition. Adel Cheong elaborates on the close "relationship between the visual and the verbal" in *How to Be Both* (1). She examines the paintings and their effect on the descriptive language: "The ekphrastic descriptions of artworks problematize the boundaries between fictive worlds and external reality" (1). In other words, the duality of the real and fiction has been explored with the help of the artworks. In Mikaela Wretman Lundgren's article, "the relationship between gender and art through history" is studied. She compares Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* in terms of "their shared qualities of being gender-bending, century-travelling artists" (1) The character Orlando has been thought to be the inspiration for Smith, although Smith does not mention it.

Tory Young in his "Futures for Feminist and Queer Narratology", discusses Ali Smith's *How to be Both* in terms of its "visibility and power in the digital age" (919-20). Young is captivated by the formal experimentation of Smith in the novel and he discusses, "Smith's spatial presentation makes us see what is absent in her texts, and that blank

spaces in particular can be seen as ways of staging questions of gender and invisibility" (919-20). He puts forth that "[m]uch of Ali Smith's novel can be seen (like its two interchangeable sections) as a refusal of sequence or a spatialisation of time, such as the fresco at the novel's centre, which renders the cycle of the months in a single moment" (919-20).

The ekphrastic tradition has been widely known in poetry before it has been adjusted to the novel genre. The recent interest in reanimating artworks in popular novels has created various reading experiences. Renate Brosch elaborates on ekphrasis in recent popular novels in her article. Among these novels, *How to Be Both* is studied as a novel that benefits from ekphrasis in order to strengthen the effect of the reading experience. She puts forth that *How to Be Both* "present[s] the artwork through the subjective and highly affective gaze of a fictional character; [it] problematize[s] the status and role of the artist, particularly in terms of gender" (403). She explains that ekphrastic writing "is a common strategy to remove art objects from their familiar settings in order to open surprising new perspectives and to make startling departures from the reader's expectations" (406). Ali Smith reanimates the historical figure Francesco del Cossa in the body of the fictional Francescho in the imaginary setting of Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara. Smith provides the reader with the duality that it offers: "to actively share "real" historical knowledge, on the one hand, but also [are] hoodwinked into entering an alternative universe on the other" (406). Additionally, "ekphrasis involves focalization, defamiliarization, and dramatization. These techniques conspire to unleash surprising and violent reactions in the fictional characters confronted with artworks" (407). For the readers, ekphrasis has been "an intensifier, enriching the reading experience visually and in an embodied way. Preferring to look at "serious" artworks, popular novels use them to offer readers a contemplative mental space. This imaginative enhancement works best when ekphrastic reading and making the fictional experience available to them" (419). It

can be regarded that ekphrasis offers a new medium for literary interpretation and reading experience. Brosch, in this sense, states that "[t]he novels are rewritings of images with new meanings in which different reading frames and world pictures are correlated. In this way, ekphrasis makes use of images to stimulate the reader's imagination and creative participation in the construction of new meanings" (420-1).

Winterson and Smith's novels are studied in this thesis mainly because feminist narratology is a promising field of research and because of the parallelism between them. Both novels draw attention to the limitations of gender identity through queer narrators who strive for their basic rights in a patriarchal world. The novels have not been analyzed in terms of their unconventional narration so far. Although both novels have been explored in terms of gender roles, what this thesis offers is a different perspective that incorporates the narrative aspect into the interpretation. Creating a queer voice in a male dominant society has been a challenge; however, the narrators prove to have constructed their gender identities regardless of the societal roles. While *The PowerBook* and *How to Be Both* share various aspects in terms of constructing the gender identities, they differ in their storytelling. They present narrators of fluid identities who subvert the constructed gender roles through unconventional narrative techniques.

In the first chapter, the theoretical framework of this thesis provides an essential background for the argument of this study, and elaborates on Judith Butler's theory of gender identity, along with the structural analysis of narratology. Since this thesis analyzes the narrative techniques of both novels, prominent critics in the field of narratology are referred to set a safe ground for the narrative analysis. In this chapter, narratology is defined in relation to the ideas of the leading theorists and many related terms are explained. The narrators are analyzed in relation to the narrator classification of Mieke Bal and Gerard Genette. After the structural background has been introduced,

the chapter continues with the historical and literary background. Feminist narratology has emerged as a new field of research, a territory that is rarely touched upon. Thus, this field has recently attracted the attention of feminist critics and offers new studies to conduct. Still a young branch of feminist narratology, queer narratology attracts the attention of queer writers who feel neglected and silenced and who feel responsible for the fluid voices in literature.

As neglected critical territories, feminist and queer narratology enable writers to make experiments, not only in narration but also in genre. As Bakhtin also suggests, novel is an ever-developing genre that constantly improves; he further states that novel is more promising than any other genres because it provides a better basis for the new patterns of writing (3). Moreover, the structural patterns of narratives have been constructed on the traditional linear plot structure, which is discussed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. He suggests that the storyline must be linear and the plot structure must be a whole, underlining the significance of the natural time of flow and dramatic unity. However, in queer narratives, cyclic and fragmented plot structures are preferred to oppose the constructed narrative traditions. Instead of fixed and conventional narrators, queer narratives create fluid and unconventional narrators to subvert the patriarchal voices in their literary works. This Chapter also discusses the three phases of feminism that Elaine Showalter explains in her *A Literature of Their Own*. These phases describe the evolution of the feminist thought. She explains the feminine, feminist and female phases and concludes that the last phase is interested in finding their own voice among the patriarchal voices. At this point, Susan Lanser has pointed out that narratology lacks the issues of gender and because of this lack this field should be regarded as incomplete and insufficient ("Toward" 346). Thus, she claims that the inclusion of gender issues provides not only a better narrative for women, but also a better narrative for men's texts (346).

The second chapter analyzes the multiple narratives in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* in the light of Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity to create a narrator who is not affiliated with fixed sexual attributes in a heteronormative world. The chapter first introduces the narrator, who is ambiguously gendered in a virtual world, and discusses his/her journey in the construction of gender identity. Since the narrator is unidentified in the beginning, it is not surprising that Winterson creates an unconventional storyteller to subvert the gender boundaries through ground breaking narrative techniques. The fluidity of gender enables the narrator to tell stories that are unbound to the restrictive societal norms. It puts forth the idea that gender is constructed as independent of sex, namely "gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice" (*Gender Trouble* 9). The chapter briefly introduces the cycle of Winterson's last seven novels in relation to the reoccurring themes, characters and narrative styles and clearly lays bare the distinctive narration of *The PowerBook.* The chapter continues with the structural analysis of the narration where the chapter names are explained in detail. Then, the chapter moves on with the journey of the narrator in different embodiments in the virtually created world "the cyberspace" (Lazar 153). Through these various embodiments of the narrator, the novel challenges the traditional narrator to show how easily these conventions can be subverted. The narrator and his/her lover influence each other's construction of gender identity. It is explained how this identity is constructed with multiple representations of the narrator in the cyberspace.

The third chapter analyzes the dual narratives in Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* in the light of Judith Butler's theory of gender identity and gender performativity. Both narrators in the novel transgress the gender boundaries to dislodge themselves from the rigid patriarchal norms in different times and places through distinctive narrative techniques. The novel is based on several dualities that contribute to the construction of narrators' gender identities which are present and past times, imaginary and real places

and binary gender roles of the narrators. The chapter starts with the structural duality of the novel; that is, the novel is published in two different editions. Ali Smith's captivating style of narration is based on her interests in art and history, which are combined in her novel. The chapter informs about Smith's inspiration to write an unconventional novel that is a unification of various parallelisms and dualities. The chapter continues by explaining what fresco painting is because the narrative style is inspired from the structure of the frescoes. The layered structure of the frescoes contributes to the construction of the narrators' gender identities. It is not surprising that the dual narrative style sets a safe ground for the gender polarities of the narrators, which enables them to create an unrestricted identity in a heteronormative world. The chapter focuses on the storyline of the novel and introduces the narrators and their relevant storyline. In the beginning of the novel, it becomes clear that the narrator is in search of her gender identity since she is challenged by the assigned patriarchal norms. She aims to construct her own identity that is fluid and ambiguous and not necessarily belongs to any gender identification. The chapter concludes with the merging of both narrators in an unconventional space and time. In the end of the novel, the traditional plot structure is challenged by Smith's unique style of dual storytelling which subverts the assigned patriarchal norms and creates a fluid and ambiguous gender identity that is not affiliated with binary sexual traits.

Winterson's *The PowerBook* consists of fragmented stories of an e-story writer in a "virtual world" (*PB* 61) who names the chapters in accordance with the tools of the computer menu: "OPEN HARD DRIVE, NEW DOCUMENT, SEARCH, VIEW, EMPTY TRASH, QUIT, REALLY QUIT?, RESTART, SAVE" (*PB* 7, 29, 65, 85, 135, 211, 219, 225, 233). These uppercase chapters are the main stories created by the e-story writer Ali in cyberspace[1], and the other lowercase chapters are break stories which are in-

[1] "Cyberspace is the internet, which is considered as an imaginary area without limits where you can meet people and discover information about any subject" ("cyberspace").

between the main stories. These stories deal with Ali's and her lover's relationship in meatspace[2] (*PB* 159). From a general viewpoint, both upper and lowercase stories might seem to be unrelated at first, some of these stories even seem to be irrelevant to the whole entity. However, this fragmented storytelling creates a holistic image in the end of the novel, unifying time, place and character. The narrative is unconventional since it subverts the traditional linear plot structure and defies any sexual fixities of the narrator.

The novel starts with the preliminary information of the setting and the narrator, preparing the reader for a journey into cyberspace with the first chapter "language costumier" (*PB* 1) in which the lover and the narrator meet. The letters X and Y above the chapter title suggest the ambiguous gender of the narrator. While the narrator Ali(x)[3] is in search for her gender identity, she offers a new identity "for one night the freedom to be somebody else" (4) for her lover in cyberspace as well. Thus, the novel can be considered to be a collection of e-mail exchanges between Ali and her lover. Ali sits on her computer in the shop VERDE and "unwrap[s]" (3) her e-mail, metaphorically describing it like a traditional letter, which can be regarded as a transgression to the conventional narrative technique. Winterson's deliberate preference of the unconventional storytelling constructs a basis for the transformation of the narrators so that they can free themselves from the burden of their identity for one night. In other words, the shop VERDE is the space where Ali(x) and her lover can "be transformed" into "an invented world" (4). The desire "to be transformed" is the trigger for the story writer who will write "a strange story of [her] and [her lover]" (4). The authorial power of the narrator is asserted at the beginning; Ali says, "I can change the story. I am the story" (5).

[2] Meatspace is the opposite term of cyberspace. It represents "the real physical world" outside the internet. So, the virtual is replaced with flesh and blood in the real world ("meatspace").
[3] The name of the narrator is unstable. In "language costumier" (*PB* 1) it is Ali, in "EMPTY TRASH" (*PB* 135) it is Alix, x as suggesting the female gender. It is a hint of the fluidity of the narrator's gender.

The novel is like a puzzle of fragmented stories, each story conveys a similar yet different message, which serve as tools for the construction of the narrator's gender identity in a distinctive storytelling. The narrator can establish a narrative on her own in which she can find her identity: "I am looking for something, it's true. I am looking for the meaning inside the data." (*PB* 64).

In Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014), the reading of the stories depends on the edition which the reader gets since the perception of the story will be shaped accordingly. The novel is published in two editions; one of which starts with George's story, the other with that of Francescho. Both stories are entitled as *one* so that the reader will not be guided beforehand with the order of stories. Of those editions; one starts with *one* with the surveillance camera icon for George's story, and the other *one* with the flower with eyes for the petals[4] for Francescho's story. It is necessary to read the novel at least twice to combine the threads in either chapter. The version that this thesis includes starts with the chapter entitled *one* with a surveillance camera icon that corresponds to George's story, a slender teenage girl in London in contemporary England. Her story starts in medias res: "Consider this moral conundrum for a moment, George's mother says to George who is sitting in the front passenger seat" (Smith 3). It does not give an explicit idea of what that moral conundrum is but after having read the book at least twice it becomes clear that this moral conundrum is about a historical figure, the Italian fresco painter Francesco del Cossa[5]. Smith's distinctive use of the narrative techniques is evident with the particular division of the chapters since the reader is obliged to read one chapter twice to catch the hints in either chapter. Smith also experiments with the traditional narration in embedding different layers of narratives which she gets inspired by the

[4] The flower with the eyes for its petals is the exact image taken from the original painting of *Saint Lucy* by Francesco del Cossa in 1472.
[5] Smith added the 'h' letter to the name of Francesc(h)o del Cossa to make it fictional. Since there is not much known about the real Italian painter, it enabled Smith to create a story on her own.

different layers of frescoes and employs different narrators in both chapters. In this way, she plays with the traditional plot structure and chronological order by creating a circular plot structure and binding different time zones in a unique way. The narrator in George's chapter is mainly third-person though George presents her perspective by using different focalizors. The shifting between the present and past tense also shifts the narration, thus it becomes challenging for the reader to follow the time pattern.

George, under the influence of her mother, develops a gender identity that is ambiguous at first. However, as the story unfolds, it is revealed that her real name is "Georgia". George's gender identity and her characterization are heavily influenced by her mother, which can be explained with the reproduction of mothering, the pivotal idea of Nancy J. Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* that "analyzes the reproduction of mothering as a central idea and constituting element in the social organization and reproduction of gender" (7). Her mother has been so influential that when she dies George has to see the psychiatrist of the school, Mrs. Rock. George's struggle to move on after her mother's death is similar to Francescho's diligent style of working with her father after her mother's death. Both narrators come together in George's Chapter where Franchesco looks through the painting to George in the Palazza Schifanoia[6]. This is described as a medium where Francescho is in a place of *purgatory*, that is "an intermediate state after death for expiatory purification" ("purgatory"). The medium changes when Francescho's perspective is similar to George's perspective while wandering in the palace, which blurs the ontological boundaries of Francescho. It can be suggested that Francescho and George become unified in perspective and share the same voice but possess different bodies. This intermediate state of Francescho signals the duality in perspective and the coexistence with George. There is no proper conclusion to

[6] Palazza Schifanoia is a palace in Ferrara that hosts frescoes designed by Italian painters in Ferrara, especially Francesco del Cossa. It is famous for its Hall of Months, where each month is depicted with an Olympian god.

the novel since it is a cyclic plot structure. However, the novel offers different perceptions due to the dual editions and accepts different interpretations as final remarks. It can be stated that both narrators share the same joys and sorrows in different time and places, a state that is reflective of their cyclic and repetitive lives.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Since the birth of humanity women have been rendered as “the other”, “the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential” (Beauvoir 16). They have been considered to be secondary and inferior. They have been “defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her” (16). Hence, they have been engaged in a rightful struggle against the male dominant society. In literature, male writers see women as the “other, as objects, of interest only insofar as they serve or detract from the goals of the male protagonist” (Donovan “Beyond” 212) and categorize women as “good” when they “serve the interests of the hero” and as “bad” when they are “deviants who reject or do not properly serve man or his interests” (214). In very simple terms, “such literature is alien from a female point of view because it denies her essential selfhood” (212). Unsurprisingly for many years, gender has become an issue of discussion and it seems that gender issues will continue to be studied in many fields. “The subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new. Enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism, and perhaps we should say no more about it” (Beauvoir 13). Therefore, women saw it essential for long years to take action and to speak and write for their basic rights.

The literary realm has undergone various cultural, historical and literary changes since the 1960s. One of these changes comes out of the oppression of women in society. The restrictions in social, economic and political life have caused women to fight for equal rights. Elaine Showalter, an American literary critic and feminist writer, describes in her *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), the three phases of feminism, saying that there are no clear boundaries between the phases. In other words, these phases have influenced each other so that in-between them there are traces of the former or the latter feminist thought. The first phase of feminism, called feminine phase, is defined as an attempt to

imitate “the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition” and shows that women tend to internalize the prescribed and assigned social roles together with the patriarchal style of writing (13). In this phase women still lack authenticity since they start to use male-pseudonyms instead of revealing their own identity. The second phase, called feminist phase, is defined as a struggle to gain equal rights with men, especially in voting with the Suffragette Movement[7]. In other words, it is a “protest against […] standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy” (13). The last phase, called female phase, is described as “a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity” (13). This phase started in the 1920s and is still continuing today, giving women writers the chance of self-awareness and encouraging the development of the self in their narratives. The contemporary writers Jeanette Winterson and Ali Smith still strive for such a search for identity in their novels written in the twenty first century. It is evident in *The PowerBook* that the protagonist is a representation of a human being who constructs his/her identity through fluid gender, virtual time and place. Likewise, in *How to be Both*, the protagonists in both stories are females in disguise and they create an identity out of a male dominated society in parallel places and times. Whether it is the feminine, feminist or female phase, women are prone to certain rules in society and “women’s novel has always had to struggle against the cultural and historical forces that relegated women’s experience to the second rank” (Showalter 36).

Elaine Showalter, asserts that in general, feminist criticism has been primarily concerned with “women as readers” who are “consumer[s] of male produced literature” and recently with “women as writers” who are “producer[s] of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women” (“Towards” 216). She points out that no word suffices to express the need for the latter in literature and thus

[7] Suffragette Movement was a movement in the early 20th century that fought for the right of women to vote.

adapts the French term “la gynocritique” (gynocritics) (216). According to her, gynocritics aims,

> to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories. Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the nearly visible world of female culture. (217)

From this viewpoint, it can be argued that gynocritics is concerned about “to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our skepticism and our vision” (219). From a similar viewpoint, Josephine Donovan in her “Toward a Women’s Poetics” claims, “to understand women’s art one must have a knowledge of women’s experience and practice. A women’s poetics will be constructed from comprehensive studies of women’s stylistics and thematics, but those studies must be informed by an understanding of women’s way of seeing, a women’s epistemology” (99). In her article, other prominent critics such as Susan Sniader Lanser and Evelyn Torton Beck advocate that “an autonomous woman centered epistemology” must be formed to get rid of the “masculinization of women’s minds” (qtd. in Donovan 99). Donovan shares “six structural conditions… that shape[s] traditional women’s experience… and their world-views” and aims to show how “a knowledge of this epistemology may help us to interpret women’s art… to establish some foundation for a women’s poetics” (101). Among these conditions, the first one appears to be the most striking of all: “women, whether in community or in isolation, share a condition of oppression, or otherness, that is imposed by governing patriarchal or androcentric ideologies. Women as a group, therefore, share certain awareness that are

common to oppressed groups" (101). This common knowledge is not the cause of the world's being "irretrievably phallic", "but because the social construction of reality has been done by males, and that construction has cast women in the role of other and seen their experience as deviant" which "caused women to withdraw… to be silent" (102). Donovan interprets this silence as an act "to internalize Otherness" that is "almost definitionally to be unable to speak in the language of self" (102) and suggests the solution for this problem as such: "For the silenced Other to begin to speak, to create art, she must be in communication with others of her group in order that a collective social construction of reality be articulated" (102).

One of the attempts of feminist criticism is structural, that is, the traditional plot structure of literary works is changed and subverted by female writers. For example, Donovan proposes that Jewett's work *The Country of Pointed Firs* (1896) is rather complicated in terms of plot and genre to fit the Aristotelian plot structure and adds that this work has come out of a women's epistemology and culture ("Toward" 106). The attempts to incorporate feminine experience into the narrative is supported by Carol Gilligan, who on the other hand, points out that "women's mode of thinking… is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract" (19). The idea that the feminine mode of narration is cyclic rather than linear is asserted by Donovan and Elizabeth Ammons who uses Gilligan's idea of a webbed narration: "unlike the traditional masculine or Aristotelian narrative structure which is linear and progressive, the structure of *Pointed Firs* is" ("Toward" 106) "webbed, net-worked. Instead of being linear, it is nuclear: the narrative moves out from one base to a given point and back again, out to another point, and back again, out again, back again, and so forth, like arteries on a spider's web" (Ammons 85).

It is apparent that the different waves of feminism emerged out of different needs of women that are based on social, cultural, historical, economic, and political reasons. A similar need of the feminist experience has appeared in narratology and it has become clear that narratology has been dominantly male oriented and thus, has neglected the female thought, experience and writing. In this regard, it is clear that narratology does not include "gender" as Susan S. Lanser points out in her essay "Toward a Feminist Narratology" (1986). Lanser argues that "the narratives which have provided the foundation for narratology have been either men's texts or texts treated as men's texts" (343). Lanser also states that "narratology has avoided questions of gender almost entirely" and she concludes that it seems impossible to know the shortcomings of narratology "until women's writings, questions of gender, and feminist issues" are taken into account (343-4). Though narratology avoided questions of gender, critics have accomplished to see the need to revise its structure since it is crucial for the already existing works. As Lanser puts it: "a narratology that cannot adequately account for women's narratives is an inadequate narratology for men's texts as well" (346). Upon the realization that narratology lacked certain features of gender issues, Lanser suggests that this realization "lead[s] to a rewriting of narratology that takes into account the contribution of women as both producers and interpreters of texts" (343), which is also an attempt to "the rereading of individual texts [and] rewriting of literary history" (343).

The term *story* originates from the Latin word *historia* meaning "an account of events and incidents" and telling these events is called "storytelling" that is the very beginning of literature ("story"). Maria Gertrudis Mieke Bal, one of the theorists of narratology, provides a definition of narratology in her work *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985): "*Narratology* is the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that tell a *story*. Such a theory helps to understand, analyze, and evaluate narratives." (3). Bal puts forth that a story is a

composition of many different processes, which include the events, the amount of time allocated in the story, the characters, the locations and point of view with other relationships. These processes that are used in their unconventional ways make the story distinctive among other stories.

Lanser, in her "Queering Narratology", argues that "the inclusion of sex, gender and sexuality [are] important, intersecting elements of narrative poetics" although the narrator's sex and gender are not preferred to be taken into account in narrative analysis because they have been driven into the realm of "interpretation" (250). She states that the sex of the narrator "is differently constituted in *homodiegetic* and *heterodiegetic* narratives … in European language texts" (253). She claims that "a narrator's sex is normatively unmarked in *heterodiegetic* narratives and normatively marked in *autodiegetic* texts" (253). To clarify these different styles of narrative, Mieke Bal explains them as follows:

> The narrator who is present in the story he tells is "homodiegetic"; the narrator who is absent (invisible) or who tells at a higher level a narrative from which he himself is absent is "heterodiegetic". Among homodiegetic narrators, we can distinguish in terms of the degree of presence: some homodiegetic narrators tell a story in which they are the main character (in which case they are "autodiegetic"), while other homodiegetic narrators are merely witnesses. ("The Narrating" 238)

In other words, it can be said that "this absence of sex marking does not mean that sex and gender fail to signify in heterodiegetic texts" ("Queering" 253). Lanser concludes that the reader also constructs the gender of the narrator in its own terms based on the gender designators because of the lack of information of gender (253). She exemplifies this in her analysis of *Written on the Body*:

> My reading of *Written on the Body* suggests that a considerable degree of information has to be omitted from an autodiegetic narrative for both sex and gender to remain unmarked. Such information—including, of course, the primary omission of sex itself—would seem to constitute what Genette has called a *paralepsis*: the underreporting of information that would conventionally be provided by a particular narrator or focalizer. Paralipsis (or ellipsis in general) then becomes, along with narrative person, another narratological category that interacts with sex, gender, and sexuality. (254)

It is apparent from the extract above that paralipsis is as significant in narrative structure as is the narrative person that is in close relationship with sex and gender. In the following extract, Lanser posits that the unrevealing of gender offers alternatives of reading, which in the end, becomes queer:

> the nonmarking of sex yields somewhat in importance to a new category, sexuality, that had been hitherto unmarked. How does the insertion of this new formal element—undeniable queerness—affect the signification of the narrator's unmarked sex and gender? Little, perhaps, if the narrator had been read originally as lesbian; more, perhaps, if the narrator had been read as a straight man. For the new information erases the possibility that *Written on the Body* is the story of a strictly heterosexual male in love with a married woman and hence erases one standard age old scenario of Western literature. *Written on the Body*, whatever the sex of its narrator, is a queer novel with a queer plot. (255)

As it is suggested above, the sex of the narrator is indeterminate and thus creates a suspense in the novel. Although the sex and the name of the narrator is never revealed, and the physical appearance is not known, we learn “the names and sexes of the lovers, their physical appearances, and physical details about how he/she makes love to them” (Lanser “Sexing” 88). Lanser’s graduate professor David Hayman once said, “narrative is the art of not telling a story. And if the story won’t tell then the art of narrative is also decidedly queer” (“Toward a Queerer” 23). She has suggested “in the 1980s and 1990s … the narrative studies to be queerer and more feminist”, while now she insists on “feminist and queer studies to be more narratological” (24). Since the narrator is in-between sexes, Lanser describes this queering the narrative as follows:

> For some of the most interesting elements of narrative are indeed as maddeningly difficult to pin down as Winterson's narrator's sex. Perhaps, then, to embrace questions of sex, gender, and sexuality is to end up "queering" narratology in another sense: to let it deviate from the straight and narrow path of structuralism's binaries into a more dauntingly indeterminate terrain. Indeed, if, as some postmodern theorists contend, sex has been the binary on which all other binaries have been constituted, then the dismantling of this binary through the recognition of queerness—a queerness that, I have suggested, is already implicated in the grammars of apparently binary languages—threatens all other binaries and with it other structural certainties. (259)

It can be inferred that sex and gender “constitute narratologically significant elements” (“Sexing” 90), and when they are especially absent, “sex … is a technical feature” which “can lead to the construction of meaning” (Prince 78).

It has been challenging even for the Oxford English Dictionary to pinpoint the meaning of the word *queer* that is "of uncertain origin, and shifting syntax" and is described as "the strange and the suspect, the criminally counterfeit, the ill and the inebriate, the disconcerting, the interfering, the merely puzzling, or ridiculous" (Lanser "Queering" 1). Although the OED identifies the *adjective queer* now as "a sexual or gender identity that does not correspond to established ideas of sexuality and gender, especially heterosexual norms" it does not accept any of the following verb uses in academic field: "[first,] to make a claim for the non-heteronormative sex, gender, or sexuality of someone or something; [second,] to disrupt or deconstruct binary categories of sex, gender, and/or sexuality; and [third,] to disrupt or deconstruct any entity by rejecting its categories, binaries, or norms" (2). As an oppositional act, Lanser acknowledges "the three meanings of the verb to queer- to transgress normative sexualities, to dismantle sexual fixities, and to dismantle all fixities" (2). Lanser also defines the queer narrator of the text as a "voice belonging to a textual speaker who can be identified as a queer subject by virtue of sex, gender, or sexuality" and "a voice that is textually ambiguous or subverts the conventions of sex, gender or sexuality" (4). She concludes that "In short, we might want to characterize not only homodiegetic but heterodiegetic narrators in relation to signs of heteronormativity which, like signs of masculinity and femininity, are of course cultural variables and not fixed norms" (7).

According to Lanser;

> The homodiegetic narrator who is gender ambiguous is easy to identify but also relatively uncommon in most language cultures for two potentially related reasons: not only do nearly all cultures operate on gender binaries, but even more importantly, most languages require at

> least some binary (he/she) or trinary (he/she/it) grammatical gender.[8] I have in mind here those narrative situations in which we have no way to know the sex, gender and/or sexuality of the narrating voice. I have already mentioned Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992), which figured prominently in my 1995 work and which exploits the relative gender neutrality of the English first-person pronoun to create an entire novel whose narrator-protagonist cannot be pinned down in either gender or sexuality. ("Queering" 8)

It is common that the readers of a text "attribute the gender of the author, by default, to the narrating voice" when there are no implications about the gender of the narrator, a case which is regarded by many critics as "Lanser's rule" (10). However, Lanser also criticizes that it is unnecessary to "assign gender to a narrator on the basis of an author's identity"; instead, she suggests that "we might explore how normative sexual indeterminacy opens heterodiegetic narration to the breadth, fluidity and instability of voice, to its potential to be everywhere or nowhere, aligned through focalization with a single textual body or with myriad bodies in turn" (11).

According to Lanser, in case of withholding of the narrator's gender, the author and the narrator is suspected to be the same, appointing to the narrator queer identity when the author is suspected or known to be queer:

> Leaving voice unmarked in this manner also exposes the potential fallacy of making any conventional linkage between author and narrator and thus transferring identities across ontological boundaries instead of

[8] All Indo-European languages are gendered grammatically. For example, in English the third-person pronoun; in French the third-person plural pronoun and adjectives; in Hebrew and Arabic, pronouns, adjectives and verbs are gendered. Languages such as Finnish, Turkish, Chinese and Japanese are not grammatically gendered ("Queering" 15).

> relying on textual indices of gender as of other social indices. I mentioned earlier that most of the narrators that scholars claim to be queer happen to be narrators whose authors are known for or suspected of homosexuality: Byron and James, Melville and Jewett, Duffy and Winterson. ("Queering" 11)

Josephine Donovan proposes in her article "Sarah Orne Jewett's Critical Theory: Notes toward a Feminine Literary Mode" that "the feminine mode is one of waiting; it involves a kind of passive responsiveness to the environment" ("Sarah"). In her article she also mentions the ideas of Kathyrn Allen Rabuzzi, who in her *The Sacred and the Feminine: Towards a Theology of Housework* (1982) has proposed that "out of their housebound experience women have developed a "mode of being" that is quite different from the masculine mode of questing, conquering, and imposing one's will" ("Sarah"). Rabuzzi puts forth that the "traditional literary modes" have been developed to reflect the masculine way of thinking and are not "appropriate to express traditional feminine experience" ("Sarah"). This has "rendered women largely invisible not just to men, but to themselves" ("Sarah"). Rabuzzi claims a relationship between feminine experience and narration that is "being confined to the domestic sphere and charged with the repetitive labor of housework [which] created a sense of time that was markedly different than the characteristically Western (and masculine) linear, historical time of the quest – the basis for traditional story" ("Sarah"). Unlike the progressive masculine linear time, the feminine mode can be defined as static, lingering, creating cyclic patterns ("Sarah"). Donovan concludes that Jewett's works are examples of "an escape from the masculine time of history into transcending feminine space" ("Sarah").

Aristotle's *Poetics* is long believed to comprise all forms of poetry is regarded as the base of the narrative theory. His argument of "the structure of the plot as requisite to

a good poem" (9) is best exhibited in tragedy. For him, the best form of poetry is tragedy which he defines as "an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of certain magnitude" and adds that "a whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end" (18). He argues that, "plot is the first principle" and "character holds the second place" (17), prioritizing the sequence of events and actions over the personas. Aristotle contends that "of all plots and actions, the episodic are the worst" which he describes as "acts [that] succeed one another without a probable or necessary sequence" and "are forced to break the natural continuity" (21). Thus, he disfavors the unnatural flow of time in narrative. The characters are chosen based on four things. One of them is the goodness of character which is the most intended; the character will be good if the [moral] purpose is good (27). Aristotle adds that "[t]his rule is relative to each class"; that "[e]ven a woman may be good, and also a slave; though the woman may be said to be an inferior being, and the slave quite worthless" (27). He positions women and slaves in the same place of the social ladder, which is under men with no exceptions.

Of the four things aimed for the characters, the second is propriety; "there is a type of manly valour; but valour in a woman, or unscrupulous cleverness, is inappropriate" (Aristotle 27). One can easily argue that Aristotelian plot structure does not incorporate women into its narrative world and excludes the women characters as immorally and inappropriately clever. "From Aristotle to Northrop Frye, women are assumed to be a subspecies of men" mentions Lawrence Lipking in his article "Aristotle's Sister: A Poetics of Abandonment", where he disappointedly states that "If Arimneste read the *Poetics*, … her one chance for self recognition would have come in chapter fifteen, with the description of good and appropriate characters" (62). For Arimneste, in the representation of all women, "a classic woman's poetics has yet to be written" (62-3). She attempts to change the definition of tragedy of his brother: "Poetry is the expression of a life, personal, incomplete, and proportioned to the self; employing whatever language

and conventions one has been allowed to acquire; presented in fragments" (78). How is she expected to challenge the tradition of her brother when "Nature and Aristotle are the same", "not because the Poetics captured the whole truth about literature but because it established those critical conventions whose adaptations and transformations are identical with the history of theory itself at least in the West" (77-8). Nor can Arimneste fulfil the expectations of all women: "Insofar as it accurately represents the strategies of female authors within and against the dominant culture, it stands for a history of subordination and reaction that many women oppose more strenuously than they do the patriarchs themselves" (77-8). What is more, "the thought of a woman's poetics can help to create that sense of community that so many women have looked for and have not found" (78). There have been many women in the "the history of poetry" and as their embodiment "Arimneste is learning to speak; it is our turn to listen. Perhaps she has started now. I know that she has not finished" (78-9).

To begin with the analysis of the narratives, it is imperative to know about the elements that narratives are composed of. According to Bal, there are three main components of a narrative which set the ground for a useful analysis (6). Among these components, *story* will be the main focus of this thesis since in both novels the most striking element is their stories; through storytelling they construct their gender identity.

In a narrative text, the story is conveyed through "an agent who relates, who 'utters' the signs", who is "technically known as the narrator" (Bal 9). Storytelling, in other words the act of narrating, may not be assigned to the narrator only, it may shift to other actors in a text. There might be paragraphs that reflect opinions, ideas or feelings. On the other hand, there might be paragraphs of event and action or description. To specify the role of the narrator and to provide a study of analysis of the narrators it is

significant at this point to highlight the function of the narrator. The focus will be on the *character* in the study of these stories.

Bal describes the narrator as "a storyteller, a visible, fictive 'I' who interferes in his/her account as much as s/he likes, or even participates as a character in the action" (17). At this point, it is crucial to refer to the focalizor, namely the point of view, which is another aspect closely associated with the narrator. This aspect depends on the way the narrator sees, it is "the holder of point of view" (18). Lanser, in a similar way, defines the narrator as an inseparable part of the text and underlines "the interdependence" between the narrator and the text as "the narrator has no existence "outside" the text yet brings the text into existence" (*Fictions* 4). Bal provides a schema of the relationship between the story and the narrator as follows:

> Each agent affects the transition from one plane to another: the actor, using the acting as his material, creates the story; the focalizer, who selects the actions and chooses the angle from which to present them, with those actions creates the narrative; while the narrator puts the narrative into words: with the narrative he created the narrative text. Theoretically, each agent adresses a receiver located on the same plane: the actor adresses another actor, the focalizer addresses a "spectator"- the indirect object of the focalizing- and the narrator addresses a hypothetical reader. ("The Narrating" 244-5)

As this schema shows, there is a close connection and interlinked relationship between the agents of narrative. To tell a story might not be as simple as it seems, as Gerard Genette puts it "in the most unobtrusive narrative, someone is speaking to me, is telling me a story, is inviting me to listen to it as he tells it" (101). Behind this storytelling is an ideological uprising of the othered voice; these voices are "skeptical of the authoritative

aura of the male pen and often critical of male dominance in general" and they "often call into question the very authority they endorse or conversely, endorse the authority they seem to be questioning" that in the very end may come out as "reestablishing the authority" (*Fictions* 8).

The PowerBook is a story within a story and has a complex unity in terms of plot structure. The stories include different places, times and characters with events told in a nonlinear way. Similarly, *How to Be Both* is composed of two separate chapters that prevent a chronological order since both stories are entitled as the first chapter. These chapters are entitled as *one* and the reader can start to read from either chapter; it is possible to read in both orders. As feminist narratology is a new field that seems to have been developing, it becomes evident that the traditional narration is subverted and turned into a cyclic and discontinuous narration from a flat and continuous one. These radical changes in the narration of the story have been performed in the novel genre in its best way since this genre provides a good basis for change and novelty.

The experimental styles of both writers show that the novel genre is still developing and is still in progress. In his essay "Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of Novel", Mikhail Bakhtin defines the novel genre "as a genre at work" and puts forth that it is the best genre among the others since its development is still at work and "[t]he generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened […]" (3). On the other hand, among the other genres, epic has been taken in comparison with the novel. It is clear that, unlike the novel genre, the epic genre has fully accomplished its progress and is "already antiquated" (3). From a historical point of view, the novel genre emerged in the 18th century to fulfill the demand of the rising middle class as a new genre that reflects their life. However, it has been conceived that the novel genre has been developed and changed since then. Bakhtin suggests that the novel does not get along

with the other genres and has acquired "an unofficial existence, outside the 'high' literature" (4). Bakhtin distinguishes the novel from the other genres in terms of its structure and the unclear generic characteristics and how it is open to change:

> The novel is the only developing genre and therefore it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding. Only that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process. The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. (7)

It can be deduced that the novel genre sets the ground for the change of the plot, character and setting in contemporary writing and enables the writer to experiment with the form and narration.

Just like Ali Smith, Jeanette Winterson experiments with narrative techniques in *The PowerBook* and challenges the traditions of patriarchal writing. She puts the protagonist in a journey that starts from the Ottoman Empire, to the Capri Island, to Paris and to modern England. Winterson creates a narration that is not sequential, but fragmented in place and time. When she has been asked what her novel is about, Winterson replies, "Boundaries. Desires" (Winterson 35). She experiments with the boundaries and puts forth that desire and love are the key for challenging those boundaries. Even if there are boundaries, these are changing in time as Bakhtin expresses in his essay: "And the growth of literature is not merely development and change within the fixed boundaries of any given definition; the boundaries themselves are constantly changing" (33). Ali Smith, in *How to be Both*, tries a new way of publishing by creating

two editions of her novel; one which starts with the narration of George and the other which starts with the narration of Franchesco del Cossa. Smith introduces two narrators who narrate the story from different points of view so as to create a distance between the real and the imaginary, the present and the past and, the male and the female.

The narrator, as the storyteller, has been assigned different roles such as the leader, the guide and the voice of the story. However, in postmodern novels this traditional way of narrating has been challenged and given the role of subverting the conventional and the traditional. It is not surprising that Jeanette Winterson uses unconventional strategies of narration to challenge the assigned roles of the narrator, of the setting and of the plot structure along with the character types but it is necessary to unearth the messages that are conveyed through this narrative style. Winterson is known as an unconventional contemporary feminist writer and she subverts the traditional chronological order of narration using multiple narrations. She uses a fragmented narration challenging the narrative agents of space, time and plot to reflect on her fluidity in the construction of gender identity. The withholding of the gender of Winterson's characters prevents the reader to judge the actions of the character through a lens of gender expectations. Her other novel *Written on the Body* (1992) also uses a genderless narrator and avoids any reference to reveal the gender of the narrator. Winterson enounces narrators who are not bound to binary gender expectations and subverts the sexual manifestation by deconstructing the socially constructed gender roles. Deconstructing the preconceived assumptions about gender will pave the way for the reader not to be biased and judgmental in the reading of the stories.

On the other hand, Ali Smith uses the dual narration in her novel, which is composed of two stories with two narrators. A common trait with Winterson, Smith presents her narrators as a medium to overthrow the preconceived assumptions of gender

and to deconstruct the assigned gender roles to prevent the reader from any prejudgment of the character. Though she uses a dual narration, her aim is similar to Winterson's in her presentation of the narrator as a force that overthrows the values of the patriarchy. Although Smith seems to use a chronologically ordered plot structure, the novel does not have a regular beginning and an end since the novel is divided into two chapters which can be read in both orders. This irregularity of plot structure strengthens the unconventionality of narration and provides a basis for the different locations in sixteenth century Italy and twentieth century England. Her narrators are female figures obliged to be in male disguise from very early ages who are in search of their real identity that is oppressed by the patriarchy. George, intentionally named with the male equivalent, is a young teenager in contemporary England who is under the influence of her mother and who loses her self-confidence when her mother dies. The intentional choice of this naming suggests the fluidity of the gender identity through which the narrator tries to gain a place in the society while taking the role of her mother in the house. The other narrator Francescho bears the name of a real historical figure but the additive 'h' letter turns it into a fictional character who was similarly forced to take the male cover to achieve a status in the society, especially to be accepted in the craftmanship of painting frescoes. This parallelism between the two seemingly different stories is united at one place where Franchesco sees George in the museum through the painting and evokes the idea of a united and same narrator. At this rather ambiguous and indeterminant state of encounter George is unaware of the existence of Francescho. Francescho, seemingly enjoying this state of purgatory, tries to uncover the sexuality of George and tries to deconstruct the traditional social expectations. It is this distinctive choice of narration that distinguishes it from the traditional ones. To conclude, this chapter has provided the theoretical framework of this thesis that will be used in the following two chapters. As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, in the study of narration, the narrator plays a significant role

in terms of storytelling. To conclude, having been a neglected territory in the realm of literature, feminist narratology attracts feminist and queer writers' attention to incorporate their female voice into the patriarchal narratives. It has been highlighted that the traditional storytelling is overwhelmingly male dominant and this needs to be changed with the unconventional narrative techniques which subvert the Aristotelian thought of place, time and plot. Conventions such as sequentiality, causality, chronology, and spatiality are subverted through fragmentated time and place, cyclic plots, discontinuity and narrators with unfixed gender attributes.

CHAPTER II

THE MULTIPLE NARRATIVE VOICES: GENDER IDENTITIES IN CYBERSPACE IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE POWERBOOK*

This chapter aims to analyze Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* with a specific focus on the narrator and his/her[9] relationship with his/her lover in a virtual world that provides an insight into the subversive and destructive nature of societal gender roles in a patriarchal world. Winterson skillfully exhibits the intersection of both female and male properties in her novel by putting the emphasis on the dysfunctional nature of sexual fixities and on the playfulness of the transcending gender boundaries. She applies unconventional narrative techniques and subverts the traditional narrative structure. Winterson's dazzling style of narration enables the readers to dislodge the narrator from sexual fixities and to affiliate with an ambiguous gendered narrator in an alternative non-restrictive virtual world, where they can embrace freedom.

This chapter centers on the multiple narrations of the narrator in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook*, whose narrative functions as a tool for the construction of an identity free from presupposed gender attributions. Winterson's work challenges the heteronormative gender expectations by creating a narrator who is unidentified at the beginning of the novel and who continues to subvert the boundaries of traditional gender roles. This chapter first attempts to examine the journey of an ambiguous gendered narrator in a virtual world that is created via computer technology. This journey is about "Boundaries. Desires" (*PB* 35). It is repetitive of Winterson to use a narrator whose gender is purposefully unmarked as in *Written on the Body,* in which the narrator is often marked with both pronouns (his/her) to prevent the reader from any gendered preconceptions. Likewise, in *The PowerBook* Winterson's aim is to dismantle all the

[9] His/her: Both pronouns will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis for the narrator since the gender is not fixed.

binary perceptions and to show that there is a thin line between both genders which can be easily transgressed either linguistically, by using the personal pronouns his/her interchangeably; or performatively, by assigning both gender roles into the narrator. Her aim is to set the narrator free from constructed gender roles and give her/him freedom in a world of heteronormativity.

This chapter continues with the analysis of Winterson's narrative techniques and her unique style, which include not only computer terminology but also an e-writer who creates her/his stories online. The narrator in *The PowerBook* uses computer technology in his/her storytelling and entitles the chapters accordingly. There are two groups of stories; *main stories*[10] that are in uppercase titles, and *break stories* that are in lowercase titles, connecting the main stories. These breaks create a bridge between the real and the fiction and complement the main stories. The narrator uses the menu of a computer in the uppercase stories such as "OPEN HARD DRIVE, NEW DOCUMENT, SEARCH, VIEW, QUIT, RESTART, SAVE" (*PB* 7, 29, 65, 85, 211, 225, 233). These uppercase stories, from the beginning to the end, show the narrator's relationship with the lover in a sequential narrative order as if Ali, the storyteller in different embodiments, documents his/her story and saves it at the end. Hence, the name of the novel *The PowerBook* depicts a powerful narrator in a heteronormative society within a textual world. Although representing a sequential order, the multiple stories take place in different times and places under the concept of love, a unifying theme embodied by different figures. All of these figures signify the narrator's internal need to embrace freedom and pursue love in a gender-free world with different representations in the virtual reality. On the other hand, the break stories are transitions from the virtual world to the real world. These stories are in-between the main stories. They break the narrative to make the novel fragmented rather than sequential. Some of the titles of these break stories are "terrible thing to do to a

[10] Throughout the thesis, story and narrative is used interchangeably.

flower," "virtual world," "great and ruinous lovers," "open it," "night screen," "blame my parents," and "meatspace" (*PB* 23, 61, 75, 81, 117, 131, 159). These narratives not only mirror Ali's inner thoughts but also include the chat between the lovers and the remarks on fictionality. Both the narrator and the lover are self aware that they are invented characters and that the stories develop according to their desires and wishes. The act of storytelling is developed throughout the novel and the narrative techniques are challenged to break the conventions. These breaks are intentionally applied to break the narrative and form a fragmented narration. From this viewpoint, this chapter examines the narrator's construction of gender identity in diverse embodiments through the narrative techniques and shows how the thin line between gender identities is easily transgressed. Throughout the analysis, several points of the idea of gender construction will be discussed in the light of Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity by referring to her theory of gender identity that she discusses in her influential work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* (1990).

In an interview with Margaret Reynolds in 2002, Jeanette Winterson describes her last seven novels as a cycle and personal journey and adds that "it's the journey of my imagination, it's the journey of my soul in those books" (Noakes and Reynolds 23). She was born in Manchester into a poor family but was adopted by Constance and John Winterson, who had both left school and were extremely religious. The only book at home was the Bible, which Mrs. Winterson read every day, starting from Genesis to the Revelations. They wanted Jeanette to be a missionary. Having no attachments to her adoptive family, Jeanette left home at sixteen, choosing her real love for another girl over her family. It was an essential decision Jeanette had made for herself and this opened the way for her career. Releasing her first novel at the age of twenty-six, she received a furious note from her mother since *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) is a semi-autobiographical novel in which a young girl named Jeanette is raised with the religious

doctrines of her fundamentalist mother and is subjected to exorcism because of her feelings for another girl. The novel ends with Jeanette's leaving her home, her friends and the church. Winterson mentions that "I was trying to explain where I'd come from. I was trying to make sense of a bizarre childhood and an unusual personal history. And I was trying to forgive" (Noakes and Reynolds 14). It is also noteworthy to mention that the narration of the chapters coincides with the books of the Old Testament, which reflects her childhood. From this point, one can easily infer that Winterson puts her feelings into fiction to find herself, i.e., the quest for self. In this sense, her seven-book cycle, from *Oranges* (1985) to *The PowerBook* (2000), holds a mirror to her dramatic yet colorful life. It is a reflection of how she constructs her gender identity within a period of more than a decade. Having realized that her experiences and feelings during her writing process make her the person who she claims to be, Winterson says that "[b]eing able to write a story around the chaos of your own narrative allows you to see yourself as fiction, which is rather comforting because, of course, fictions can change. It's only the facts that trap us. I've always thought that if people could read themselves as fictions, they would be much happier" (Noakes and Reynolds 14).

Winterson continued her personal journey with *The Passion* (1987), *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), *Written on the Body* (1992), *Art & Lies* (1994), *Gut Symmetries* (1997) and completes it with *The PowerBook* (2000), the last of her seven-book cycle. The three early novels of her cycle "employ diverse intertexts such as fairy tales, Grail legends and biblical stories, and a variety of chronotopes including the Napoleonic wars, carnival Venice and seventeenth-century London" (Andermahr 108). In *The Passion,* a French soldier Henri and a woman named Vilanelle are destined to marry. Before that, Vilanelle, as a bisexual cross dresser, falls in love with the Queen of Spades in the disguise of a young man. Then, as a young woman, she falls in love with Henri. Winterson explains her reason for playing with the double narrative after she had a single voice in *Oranges*:

"I wanted to use two voices (…) but contrasting and playing one off against the other. (…) I wanted to have two people in there who were of very different sensibilities whom we could get to know through their, initially separate, journeys which would then come together" (Noakes and Reynolds 18). In *Cherry,* the Dog Woman and Jordan travel through a time-flux for a journey of self. Winterson uses The Twelve Dancing Princesses to demonstrate the impairing patriarchal values. While Jordan seeks for a model to fit into the expected gender role, her mother takes on a masculine character in a male dominated society. In *Written*, an unnamed and ambiguously gendered narrator has an affair with a married woman called Louise. Having further affairs with a single woman Jacqueline or the boss Gail, the narrator cannot find the excitement that s/he finds in Louise. Winterson explains the reason for the anonymous narrator in that she "wanted [the] narrator to be a kind of Everyman" (Noakes and Reynolds 17) while she clarifies the naming in *Oranges* as "the narrator has my name, because I wanted to invent myself as a fictional character" (17).

In *AL*, there is Handel the priest, Picasso the young artist and Sappho the lesbian poet who assemble in a place that is possibly England. The prevailing themes in the novel are sex, religion, social repression and the norms of patriarchy. In *GS*, there is a love triangle between Alice, Jove and Stella, Jove's wife. Alice has an affair with both of them. In the last novel of the cycle, *The PowerBook*, "Winterson extends her exploration of the familiar motifs of storytelling, travel and time travel, discovery and self discovery and the reinvention of bodies and selves, through a move into cyberspace" (Andermahr 108). She claims that the novels in this cycle influence each other "and they interact and themes do occur and return, disappear, come back amplified or modified, changed in some way, because it's been my journey, it's the journey of my imagination, it's the journey of my soul in those books" (Reynolds and Noakes 23). It is evident from this cycle that

Winterson explores the themes of self, gender polarities and social repression with triangle love affairs and proclaims her novels to deal with "Boundaries. Desires" (*PB* 35).

The reoccurring themes have clearly contributed to the term Wintersonian: "highly self conscious and self reflexive first-person narratives; radical temporal shifts and narrative frame breaks; linguistic game playing; intertextuality and allusion to myths, fairy stories, the Bible and other books; a preoccupation with questions of identity and selfhood; and her central theme – the transcendent nature of love" (Andermahr 108). Winterson uses unconventional narrative techniques in her cycle and creates unusual gender identities with the help of fluid gendered narrators, shifts in time and place, and fragmented storytelling. Winterson uses only one narrator in *Oranges;* she uses two in *Passion*, and increases the number of her narrators in *The PowerBook*, creating polyphonic voices within narration. This polyphony presents a multiple narrative embedded within the narrator as a whole. Judith Butler, in her article "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," claims that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time- an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (519).

Winterson's writing has become repetitive in technique and themes, and her oeuvre consists of examples of *mise en abyme*[11] which can be interpreted as story within a story in the case of *The PowerBook*. However, the "cyberspace" is a territory of virtual reality, where "gender is ambiguous, because it is unnecessary" (Lazar 153), and in which Winterson can employ infinite possibilities with multiple selves via e-mail exchanges, "[o]ne of the exciting- and dangerous- things about e-mail is that we have no way of discerning gender, and that upsets a lot of our notions about innate masculine and

[11] Mise en abyme: In literary theory, this term "refers to the technique of inserting a story within a story". It is "a play of signifiers within a text, of sub-texts mirroring each other. This mirroring can get to the point where meaning may be rendered unstable and, in this respect, may be seen as part of the process of deconstruction.
In literary criticism, mise en abyme is a type of frame story, in which the core narrative may be used to illuminate some aspect of the framing story" ("Mise en abyme").

feminine traits" (qtd. in Lazar 152). Winterson does not end her cycle conventionally; she breaks the grand narrative by presenting multiple selves and realities of herself in an alternative world of infinite possibilities. At this point she concludes that "[a]ll texts work off other texts. It's a continual rewriting and rereading of what has gone before, and you hope that you can add something new" (Noakes and Reynolds 18). It can be argued that her works are built upon intertextuality, a term defined by Julia Kristeva as follows: "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity" (Kristeva, qtd. in Moi 37). In other words, it is through intertextuality that texts transform into other new texts; thus, *The PowerBook* is a novel of the accumulation of texts. Winterson does not put an end to her personal journey with this cycle; instead, she frees her mind from boundaries and creates transgressive characters in her stories. *The PowerBook*, in this sense, is the last piece of a puzzle. It consists of diverse fragments and multiple texts which create a holistic image of the narrator when united.

In *The PowerBook,* the narrator Ali or Alix[12] writes stories for her lover and takes on different disguises to free herself from the limitations of identity. The narrator is mostly in first-person since Winterson thinks that "it's direct" and "it sets up an intimacy" (Noakes and Reynolds 15). She also adds that the third-person narrator is no longer used since "[it] seems rather omnipotent and remote and better left in the nineteenth century […]" and she does not prefer to use it, but when she does, "[she] usually do[es] so for the purposes of distance, to get away from the kind of intimacy [she's] usually aiming for" (16). Throughout the novel, the reader takes on an active reading role because of the constant shifts from first to third-person narration, and continual breaks from the main

[12] Ali or Alix (or Ali(x)): The naming of the narrator is unstable. In the first chapter the narrator is called Ali. In "terrible thing to do a flower" (*PB* 23), after having asked if the name matters, the narrator wants her lover to call her Ali. In "EMPTY TRASH" (*PB* 135) the narrator is called Alix since "x marks the spot" (138) on the map and suggests the female gender XX. In "QUIT" (*PB* 211), the storyteller Ali and the Turk Ali merge. Winterson's deliberate choice of an unfixed name for the narrator comes from the need of a fluid gender since she does not want her narrator to have fixed sexual attributes.

narrative. The novel consists of fourteen main stories and eleven break stories. The order of the stories might seem linear considering the titles that show the menu of Macintosh PowerBook[13]. However, the narration is not organized chronologically, the stories are fragmented in their peculiar order. Winterson deliberately breaks her narratives since she does not favor a single page without any breaks or pauses in it. She asserts that "I like the spaces and the pauses that you can make. I think it's also important to offer these forceful interruptions to people's concentration, because the problem with a running narrative is that people skip. We all do. You're looking for the story" (Noakes and Reynolds 16). In this aspect, *The PowerBook* invites the reader to be an active participant in the perception of the novel and demands their concentration on the fragmented stories. Although this novel does not offer different aspects from her previous novels, she makes use of time and place in fragmented ways in the new realm cyberspace, offering multiple realities. The critic Ute Kauer asserts that "Winterson's virtual universe is based on the assumption that '[o]ne life is not enough'" and adds that "[d]ifferent lives, different images of self constitute identity" (98). In other words, in parallel with Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity, it is clear that the narrator's construction of gender identity depends on the different embodiments within the fragmented time and space.

The novel tells the story of an e-writer who writes online stories in the "cyberspace" (Lazar 153), in its broadest sense. The stories are from different time zones in different places with different characters. In "OPEN HARD DRIVE" (*PB* 7), the first main story, the narrator Ali is a tulip smuggler who becomes a spy for Sulyman the Magnificent in 1591 and tries to bring a bulb of tulip to his Dutch friend in Leiden, Holland on a ship. In disguise, he protects his "treasure" (*PB* 18, 20) in the place of "a priceless pair of balls" (*PB* 10) when the ship is swarmed by the pirates. Taken as a prisoner, Ali becomes the sex teacher of a princess who has never seen a man before and

[13] Macintosh PowerBook is designed by Apple Computer Incorporation between 1991- 2006.

who does not know about the art of love. The story ends with the sexual intercourse of Ali and the princess via a "horticultural grafting" (*PB* 12) which is defined as implanting a part of a flower or plant to another plant's root, stem or branch so that this conjoint part can grow together with the help of tissue regeneration ("graft"). The following story "NEW DOCUMENT" (*PB* 29) tells the story of Ali and her lover in Paris. The narration starts in medias res, with their walking on the banks of the river Seine, as if they already know each other. Then, it continues with their meeting in the lobby of a hotel while their husbands are already acquainted with each other. It is a story of two lovers newly met in a romantic city, leaving behind all the restrictions and discovering their desires and boundaries. In the next story "SEARCH" (*PB* 65), Winterson retells the legendary story of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere from Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485). Ali, in the disguise of Lancelot, yearns for the love of Guinevere even though she is married to King Arthur. There are time shifts in the story; for instance, after the death of Guinevere, Lancelot recalls the marriage day in May, the day he took Guinevere through the forest to his king to marry. It is a story of a desperate lover, Lancelot, who searches for his love knowing that his love is forbidden.

The following story "VIEW" (*PB* 85) is about Ali's reencounter with her lover in Capri, Naples, Italy. Having walked along the marine, the square and the streets, Ali finds her lover in a famous hotel, Quisisana, where they have a small talk and agree to meet secretly in Anacapri. With the excitement of reunion, they make love, which is followed by the lover's storming off the hotel and Ali's running after her in vain. The following story "VIEW AS ICON" (*PB* 121) tells the great love story of Francesca and Paolo who lived in the thirteenth century Italy, a grand narrative in Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* (1320). This story is a similar love triangle to the previous stories. Francesca is the daughter of Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna who is in war with Malatesta de Verucchio, Lord of Rimini. Two families make peace through the marriage of Francesca

and Gianciotto, who is the crippled elder brother of Paolo. Although Paolo is already married, they have had an affair with Francesca until the wedding day, since Paolo has been used as a proxy to the wedding. Unaware of having married the wrong man, Francesca continues to have an affair with Paolo until Gianciotto catches them making love. Gianciotto kills them both. The story ends in revenge. In "EMPTY TRASH" (*PB* 135), Alix tells the story of a young girl who has been adopted by Mr. and Mrs. M. in the Muck House, where nobody is allowed to read and write; yet Mrs. M is literate and Mr. M uses formulaic letters in secret. They teach Alix to search for the treasure love, which they have been not able to find their whole life. The following story "SPECIAL" (*PB* 147), is about an English mountaineer George Mallory and his climbing partner Andrew Irvine who managed to climb to the top of Mount Everest in 1924. After reaching the summit, George's watch stopped working. Then slowly, they were covered with snow as they could not breathe. In the story "QUIT" (*PB* 211) the narrator recalls the first story of Ali and asks what happened to him. Ali resembles the painter Rembrandt whose portraits come out shifting boundaries in many lives. In the last story of the novel, "SAVE" (*PB* 233), the narrator is in his shop, where he starts his storytelling in the beginning. Then, the narrator takes his coat and goes to the river Thames where he looks into the water and drops his watch, articulating "[l]iquid time" and "love is keeper of the clocks" (*PB* 243-4).

In the beginning of the novel, the narrator is introduced as an e-writer who sits in front of the screen of the computer in his/her costume shop *Verde* where "… everyone knows that something strange goes inside" (*PB* 3) and where "[p]eople arrive as themselves and leave as someone else" (3). S/he remains unidentified till the first story s/he tells. As the first subtitle of the story implies, the narrator is a "language costumier" (*PB* 1) who creates online stories for customers and fulfills their wishes: "Freedom, just for one night" (3). The icons of X-Y chromosomes on the title page refers to the unmarked

sexuality of the narrator which will be revealed in the forthcoming story "OPEN HARD DRIVE" (7). The icons also refer to the idea of fluidity of gender since the narrator switches from female to male, and from male to female, and sometimes is both, leaving the reader in-between. According to Susan Lanser, "European languages permit considerably greater sexual ambiguity in the construction of narrators than of represented characters because the first person is less sex-specific than the third" (257). Therefore, in English language, the pronouns I and you do not have any gender implications while the third-person pronouns he or she are gender-based. The reason why gender is not fixed throughout the novel is that the narrator subverts the boundaries of gender and challenges the established gender norms. In this way, Winterson's narrator attempts to present the problem behind one's identity. Judith Butler asserts that "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (*Gender Trouble* 34). She contends that identity is not the result of gender but performance that is conducted in different time and places. Consequently, a person is free in the construction of gender identity depending on the repetitive acts he or she does.

Having lived in a heteronormative society and loveless stepfamily and having been marginalized by the opposite sex, the narrator's opening sentence is: "To avoid discovery I stay on the run. To discover things for myself I stay on the run" (*PB* 3) which shows her objection to follow the societal codes and her desire to defy the binary system of gender. Similarly, living in a patriarchal society, Winterson "seeks to decenter these axes of signification in a bid to relocate new modes of subjective positioning" (McCulloch 57). With this in mind, the narrator delves into the cyberspace creating an alternative reality where one can easily be transformed. Striving "… to be transformed" (*PB* 4), the customer triggers the strange narrative of the e-writer and his/her lover in the cyberspace. At this point, one can easily assume that "[s]tory and art are means of

reaching other selves, re-inventing the self that is already there, and thus having the ability to spiral between different levels of reality and opening the window to a parallel universe" (Herhaldt Jørgensen 100). Ali proposes a new self on condition that the lover abandons her prior identity:

> This is where the story starts. Here, in these long lines of laptop DNA. Here we take your chromosomes, twenty-three pairs, and alter your height, eyes, teeth, sex. This is an invented world. You can be free just for one night. Undress. Take off your clothes. Take off your body. Hang them up behind the door. Tonight we can go deeper than disguise. (*PB* 4)

It is a transformation that the lover seeks for; and she gets this transformation through a metamorphosis into a different being with altered chromosomes, height, eyes, teeth and sex. It offers various disguises that can be easily created within multiple realities. In this novel, Ali undergoes a profound change and shows that the self is constructed through various performances a person does.

In the first story "OPEN HARD DRIVE" (*PB* 7), Winterson introduces Ali as a crossdressed young woman who wears men's clothes and is grafted a tulip in the place of a male genital and thus becomes a gender bender, in other words, "a person who expresses themselves in ways other than the traditional norms associated with being a man or woman" ("gender"). It is noteworthy to mention that the tulip icon on the title page shows a tulip not having opened its petals yet, which symbolizes the chastity of the narrator, not having been deflowered. This tulip icon is significant in the narrative structure since the same icon with its petals having opened reappears on the title page "QUIT" (*PB* 211). The blossomed tulip stands for the end of the narrator's journey of subverting the patriarchal norms, and also signifies her accomplishment of constructing an independent gender identity rather than a symbol of defloration. Winterson subverts the boundaries of

constructed gender norms by adding the tulip to Ali and making it work as a male genital organ and adds that "[t]here are many legends of men being turned into beasts and women into trees, but none I think, till now, of a woman who becomes a man by means of a little horticultural grafting" (*PB* 12). She offers her character to be a new species by freeing her from the fixed sexual attributes and liberating her from the heterosexual matrix. At this point, this idea recalls Donna Haraway's cyborg, an in-between organism (human or animal) and machine that refuses fixities. In Haraway's words, "[a] cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (5). In line with this, the critic Michaela-Christina Lazar asserts that even though this organism is a plant and not a machine, "it becomes a variant of a cyborg" because "[her] body merges with the alien object that is the tulip, erasing the boundary between human and animal, and between disguise and reality" (154). Though Ali is not a machine, he is a character in a virtual world created with the help of the keyboard and the internet. In reference to the alien tulip, Papatya Alkan Genca puts forth that "grafting becomes a symbolic alternative to dichotomies of man and woman, masculine and feminine, male and female", suggesting that it offers a third kind of being, an alternative to the rigid gender identities by creating a hybrid one (24).

This hermaphroditic image of possessing both male and female reproductive organs creates a physical conundrum for Ali who awaits the Princess: "As a woman, what would be my fate? Mercy or death? As a boy, I had nothing to look forward to, except perhaps… 'Sexual congress', said the Princess" (*PB* 19). This fantastic and realistic grafting becomes the tool of making out with the Princess, who has not yet had a sexual intercourse and has never seen a man before. Not knowing the male genital organ and the arts of love, the Princess learns the tulip as the "Key of Pleasure" (*PB* 21) and "Lover's Dream" (*PB* 21) and thinks that Ali "is like a flower" (*PB* 21). Ali describes her situation as another disguise and admits that this is the only way to survive in a world full of

predators: “I know about disguise. I disguise myself from predators” (*PB* 15). This internal need to hide from the predators, which in this case is the patriarchy, partly comes from her family, specifically from her father who wanted to drown her when she was born but “[her] mother persuaded him to let [her] live in disguise, to see if [she] could bring any wealth to the household” (*PB* 11). Living in disguise all her life, Ali becomes an expert at taking on different gender roles; hence, the desire to transgress the boundaries becomes her way of survival. Ali is not only challenged to adapt her body but also her mind to the circumstances. His way out depends on the dominant male thinking of predators. Although the in-between state of being a woman and being a harmless boy startles him/her in the first place, Ali enjoys touching the Princess and knows that “… the eagerness of [her] bulbs and stem” pleased the Princess (*PB* 22). Ali, baffled at the sight of his organ, describes his feelings: “I felt my disguise come to life. The tulip began to stand. I looked down. There it was, making a bridge from my body to hers” (22). By giving Ali a masculine sexual property with a simple flower, Winterson ridicules the patriarchy and shows how easily she crossed the lines with their sexual intercourse. As Mine Özyurt Kılıç puts forth:

> Through this fantastic image Winterson suggests that what Freudian theory sees as women’s deficiency, or as ‘‘penis envy’’, can be replaced by a simple grafting from nature. A tulip can do what a penis can. The metamorphosis of an embalmed tulip into a penis acts as the agent of the collapse of the limit between a horticultural object and a human one. The image of a tulip functioning as a penis can be read as a challenge to the central place given to men in patriarchal culture; it implies the possibility of a woman’s having sexual pleasure without a penis. (298)

The tulip was a priceless commodity in the Dutch Golden Era that started the period of tulipomania in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, during which "one collector exchanged a thousand pounds of cheese, four oxen, eight pigs, twelve sheep, a bed and a suit of clothes for a single bulb" (*PB* 9). It is not surprising that the tulip resembles Ali in nature. Being a wild flower, the tulip refuses taming and avoids classification by constantly evolving, and is regarded as a "queer little flower" (Pelle 35) since it "freely hybridiz[es]" and is "subject to mutations that produce[s] spontaneous and wondrous changes in form and color" (Pollan 137). Likewise, Ali refuses to be categorized by asking "Does it matter?" (*PB* 26) upon the question "Male or female?" (*PB* 26), resisting any gender identification and asks, "Why do you need to label me?" (*PB* 55), avoiding a coordination of identity. He is in constant change, defying fixities of sex and gender, and embodies a queer person by freeing his body from the constraints of the norms of patriarchy.

As the botanist Michael Pollan states: "Without flowers, the reptiles, which had gotten along fine in a leafy, fruitless world, would probably still rule. Without flowers, we would not be" (177). Million years ago, there were plants which multiplied either asexually by cloning themselves or "by releasing pollen onto the wind or water; by sheer chance some of it would find its way to other members of the species, and a tiny, primitive seed would result" (174). Thousand years ago, before it was understood how pollination works, the multiplying of flowers was a sexual relationship with the help of the bees. Although the bee is considered to choose the mate for the flower, "[i]t's the healthiest flowers that can afford the most extravagant display and sweetest nectar, thereby ensuring the most visits from bees—and therefore the most sex and most offspring. In a sense, the flowers do choose their mates on the basis of health, using the bees as their proxies" (130). Winterson's specific choice of the tulip is related to the reproductive nature of the flower since it signifies multiplicity, variation, passion and beauty along with sexual power.

However, Winterson uses the tulip ironically by describing the act of ejaculation in their love-making as "a delicate green-tinted sap [that] dribbled down her brown thighs" (*PB* 22). The green fluid implies the male sperm which is deprived of the reproductive function but still suggests the sexual power. By doing so, Winterson ridicules the faculty of sperm and defies the dominance of sexual power of the patriarchy proudly uttering his last words: "All afternoon I fucked her" (22).

From the narrative perspective, Winterson uses both personal pronouns (his/her) for Ali to "blur the dichotomy of male and female sexes and gender roles" (Özyurt Kılıç 301). After the artful process of horticultural grafting with the help of the mother, Ali is transformed from a young woman into a young man that is overtly marked by the masculine personal pronoun: "How could Ali barter philosophies when *his bulbs* were itching?" (*PB* 18- *emphasis mine*). Winterson's use of binary pronouns supports the idea that gender is dissolved in narration. Through the interchanging use of pronouns, the reader is perplexed and thus scrutinizes the novel to look for hints of gender: "The narrator or protagonist does not care about the sexual identity, whereas the reader wants to find about it – if only to be able to speak about her or him" (Schabert 86). While it is possible to appoint gender traits to *him* and *her,* "the gender-neutral pronouns serve to validate the identities of nonconforming individuals" (Khuman 276). Winterson skillfully avoids the fixed use of gender pronouns and promotes nonbinary language since she "encourage[s] social acceptance of nonbinary persons" (Khuman 277). As Luce Irigaray states, "no sexual liberation can come about without a change in the linguistic laws relating to gender" (qtd. in Livia, "Pronoun Envy" 33). In a similar fashion, Zimmermann argues that "language both shape[s] and reflect[s] social norms; therefore, if we change the ways in which we speak and write, we can change society itself" (xxiii).

With reference to the first chapter, the story "QUIT" (*PB* 211) opens with a rhetoric question of "Poor Ali. What happened to *him*?" (213- *emphasis mine*). However, the narrative continues with the feminine pronoun: "When Ali unstrapped *her bulbs* and planted them in the good earth, *she* was obeying the command of the scriptures to go forth and multiply- multiply *she* did" (213-4- *emphasis mine*). It is not a random choice for Winterson to use the pronouns interchangeably; on the contrary, she uses the pronouns to insert the idea of the gender performance into her narrative. In other words, a masculine pronoun (his) is used in the act of ejaculation during their sexual intercourse because of the semen that dribbled down on the Princess while a feminine pronoun (her) is used when Ali planted the seeds of the tulip into the earth. The former is resembled to the sperm of a male, while the latter is like a seed inserted into the fertile soil, as in a womb of a woman. Therefore, Ali's gender identity depends on the performance rather than the sex according to the Butlerian concept of performativity. Butler comments on the constitution of gender identity as follows:

> Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished. Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis. ("Performative Acts" 522)

In other words, there is no original nature of gender that a person can regularly perform in a society. Gender is not fixed but fluid at its core and is constituted through the diverse

performances in a culture. In this respect, Ali's gender identity is not stable but fluid because of the hermaphroditic image in the story. As Susan Pelle highlights, "Ali's newly grafted body disrupts any equivalence among flowers, female bodies, and a normative femininity and instead illuminates the fluidity and instability of identity" (34).

The following story is "terrible thing to do to a flower" where Ali and the lover exchange ideas on the love-making, the storytelling and how the narration should evolve in their hands. It is a significant point in narration that Ali and the lover are highly conscious of their self reflexivity and agree on telling the story together. The quoted dialogue below includes direct questions to the narrator's gender identity; however, Ali responds rather dubiously and leaves the questions unanswered:

> You said, 'Who are you?'
>
> 'Call me Ali.'
>
> 'Is that your real name?'
>
> 'Real enough.'
>
> 'Male or female?'
>
> 'Does it matter?'
>
> 'It's a co-ordinate.'
>
> 'This is a virtual world.'
>
> 'OK, OK—but just for the record—male or female?'
>
> 'Ask the Princess.' (*PB* 26)

It can be clearly inferred from their dialogue that Ali is not as interested in the identification of people as the lover. S/he suggests that in the virtual world one is relieved from the burdens of gender and identity. The revelation of gender does not have any significance for Ali; s/he is so self-confident that s/he claims to have both genders while making out with the Princess. Ali is aware of their fictionality and points out the real and

the imaginary behind the stories: “This is just a story”, “I call this a true story” (*PB* 27). For Ali, the stories are disguises since she can mold herself into any gender or character. After the first story of Ali and the Princess, s/he further calms down the lover: “Don’t panic. This is another disguise” (27). The lover wants from Ali to write the story but Ali responds that the story is hers: “You’re the writer.”, “It’s your story” (27). The issue of authority in storytelling is discussed by Emily Hall as follows: “The author is artistically superior, yet stifled and limited by a culture that is incapable of understanding how art can ameliorate their own social ills” (28). When the lover asks “[w]hat happened to the omniscient author,” Ali answers that the author has “[g]one interactive” (*PB* 27). Hereby, the position and the role of the author has changed from the omniscient author to the interactive one. Ali unwillingly shares the responsibility of being the storyteller with the lover. Throughout the novel there are shifts between Ali and the lover in the narration, from the omniscient narrator to the interactive one. Emily Hall argues that Winterson displays the difficulties of an author with the desires of its reader in the digital world (24). Hall asserts that the reader is implied to be in the position of the lover, who is leading the narrative as they wish: “Ali realizes that she cannot stand the feeling of powerlessness. She cannot bring herself to collaborate on their relationships’ narrative, in the same way that she cannot share power with her reader” (31). Not surprisingly, Ali authorizes his narratives and shares the responsibility partly by allowing the reader to interfere in the story. In Hall’s words, “Ali repeatedly positions herself as the protagonist of each story that she writes for the reader. By empowering herself through these stories, Ali emboldens her own position as an author and leaches agency and desire from her reader” (25). Eventually, the novel comes out as “an equal, collaborative product” (25).

The icon on the title page “terrible thing to do to a flower” (*PB* 23) is the Eiffel Tower, the symbol of love and romance, providing a basis for the following story “NEW DOCUMENT” (*PB* 29). It is also suggestive of the phallus, which is indicative of the

patriarchy that exercises power over the female. Ali asks her lover where they should start their story and both agree on the city of love: Paris. In other words, this city is the start for their love where they will discover their desires and boundaries together. Paris is widely known as a touristic city which provides a unique atmosphere for the lovers with its awe-inspiring Eiffel Tower. The chapter provides a detailed descriptive scenery of the river Seine where they walk along the banks, and the city center where they have supper at a restaurant, run through the streets, pass the shops in the old meat market, and sleep together in a hotel. The chapter tells the story of two lovers and how they fall in love and discover their desires.

There is no fixed narrator in the story "NEW DOCUMENT" (*PB* 29) since it starts with Ali, shifts into the lover, then shifts back to Ali. Moreover, a third-person narrates the story from a distant point to create an objective perspective for the reader. Upon the realization that the storyteller is not fixed, Ali retakes his position of the storyteller. S/he moves on with the storytelling breaking the narrative in the middle:

> 'We hardly spoke six sentences to each other.'
>
> 'That's the best way. Before the complications start.'
>
> 'Don't worry. No start. No complications.'
>
> …
>
> 'You can doorstep me any night.'
>
> 'Will you stop it?'
>
> 'As you say, we haven't started yet.'
>
> 'After supper we go back to the hotel and say goodnight.'
>
> 'And tomorrow you will catch the Eurostar to London.'
>
> 'And the day after you'll fly Air France to New York.' (*PB* 49-50)

This dialogue shows the interactive role of telling the stories together. Ali, as the protagonist of the stories, reveals her reluctance in sharing the responsibility as a narrator

with the lover since, in Emily Hall's terms, the lover is the reader whose "input is shallow" (27) and Ali "obviously will not allow the reader to be a collaborative writer of the hypertextual novel that she creates, so the composing process here refers to the literal process of Ali crafting the stories" (30). In this way, Ali can control her narrative although it seems collaborative with the lover in the background. With this story-within-story, Ali tries to reveal that she can portray herself as she wants, and rather boldly utters that "I was happy with the lightness of being in a foreign city and the relief from identity it brings" (*PB* 45). As the transformation begins, they are both happy to celebrate that moment and drink to "[m]ore life into a time without boundaries" (45). Towards the end of the story, the lover is thought to have returned to her husband because of the abrupt disappearance in the morning although there is no overt hint of it. At this point, the authorial voice of the novel interrupts Ali and says:

> 'You lost her?'
> 'Of course I did.'
> 'Have you got over it?'
> 'It was a love affair not an assault course.'
> 'Love is an assault course.'
> 'Some wounds never heal.'
> 'I'm sorry.' (*PB* 51)

This authorial intrusion clearly shows that the narrator Ali switches into the authorial voice, who claims to be in charge of the narration. This interruption blurs the duality of author and narrator and challenges the authority of Ali as the storyteller. This authorial intrusion also seems to be a power struggle as the narrative turns into who tells the truth in the fourth and fifth lines above. The comment on the nature of love itself gains significance as it challenges the heteronormative perception of love affairs that legitimize the superiority of patriarchy. Ali is doubtful in her position and says, "I felt as if I had blundered into someone else's life by chance, discovered I wanted to stay, then blundered back into my own, without a clue, a hint, or a way of finishing the story. Who was I last

night? Who was she?" (*PB* 58-9). These questions contribute to Ali's self-transformation and reveal that Ali is in the process of creating an identity for herself through the stories.

In a parallel way, the story "open it" (*PB* 81) questions the existence and the authority of the storyteller Ali in the novel. Ali sits in front of the screen, e-mailing her lover, but receives no response. On the computer screen, there appears a plane ticket to Naples, Italy. This ticket is an invitation to the following story "VIEW" in Capri, Naples, Italy (*PB* 85). Ali is lured into this story that has already started without his authority. Ali thinks that the lover is in charge of the storytelling and feels his position threatened. Similar to the structure of story-within-story, Ali writes on the laptop on the island of Capri: "I was typing on my laptop, trying to move this story on, trying to avoid endings, trying to collide the real and the imaginary worlds, trying to be sure which is which" (*PB* 93). In other words, Ali reassures her position of being the storyteller of "VIEW" (*PB* 85) during her writing on the laptop when she is on the island. The island Capri, Italy becomes a setting for a fusion of real and imaginary. As a result, the island proves Ali to be in charge of storytelling.

With regard to the constitution of gender identity in the novel, time plays a significant role. The time of the narration may seem sequential as in a conventional plot structure if one looks at the titles of the stories; however, Winterson mingles the past and the present by using characters from the period of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, literary figures from the times of Middle Ages, or historical figures from the modern times of England in the early twentieth century to disrupt the natural sequence of time. As Winterson suggests in her novel *Art & Lies,* it is a lie that "[t]ime is a straight line" (*AL* 90). Winterson breaks the straight line of the main narrative and presents her story through the help of multiple fragmented stories so as to avoid the restrictions of time and place. She denaturalizes the use of time in her novel and gives voice to Ali towards the end of her narrative: "I wanted to make a slot in time. To use time fully I use

it vertically. One life is not enough" (*PB* 209). In this way, Winterson liberates her characters from the weight of time: "Seeing time not as a straight line but as layers piled vertically on top of each other means that the self is not stuck in a fixed point in time, but able to drift between past, present and future" (Herholdt Jørgensen 103). The constant switches between times are demonstrated with the different storytellings as Ali states in the story "night screen" (*PB* 117):

> Night. Screen. Tap tap tap. Tap tap. Tap.
>
> The coded message that anyone can read.
>
> I keep telling this story—different people, different places, different times—but always you, always me, always this story, because a story is a tightrope between two worlds. (*PB* 119)

It can be inferred that the story is a bridge between the real and the fictional; thus, an alternative space for their existence. Winterson keeps telling the same story in her cycle, with love as the unifying theme. In this respect, Marie Herholdt Jørgensen asserts, "[i]f the self is open to time, it may be able to leap between different times, as it may be able to leap between different layers of reality and parallel universes" (103). With the act of storytelling, Winterson offers a free space and time to her characters because she believes that "it is a mistake to try and lock yourself into any one place or time, because it's simply not how the mind works. The mind always travels, and it travels dimensionally" (Noakes and Reynolds 19). At this point, another lie in *Art & Lies* is that "[w]e can only be in one place at a time" (*AL* 90), which nullifies the possibility of parallel universes. However, "storytelling is a means of extending the mind to reach other spaces than that of immediate reality" (Herholdt Jørgensen 81). Storytelling transgresses the boundaries of the mind and offers infinite possibilities. The narrator, in this sense, constructs a fluid gender identity in a fragmented time and space where "[n]othing is solid. Nothing is fixed. These are images that time changes and that changes time" (*PB* 44).

In “SPECIAL” (*PB* 147), the use of time is denaturalized and, in many parts, time has lost its essence. Winterson uses a real life story of an English mountaineer, George Mallory, who climbed the Everest in 1924 with his climbing partner Andrew Irvine. Ignoring the warning of their colleagues, Mallory and Irvine manage to climb on the top of Everest where Mallory breaks his watch: “He started to laugh and then he couldn’t stop laughing, because it was so silly really, his watch going tick, tick, tick, when time had stopped long since and there was no time. Not here. They were outside time, he knew that” (*PB* 151-2). Time is not naturally ticking, it stops when they have a moment of epiphany, realizing the meaninglessness of time in another seemingly world. The place is described in Susan Onega’s words: “[t]his place between ‘[w]hat exists and what might exist’ (*PB* 110) is the *axis mundi*[14] Mallory found at the top of Everest, the point of confluence between time and eternity” (189-190). When they reached the top, they were quiet, since they reached eternity. Then, “[t]hey began their descent” into the snow (*PB* 152). They were gone, covered in the snow, Mallory with a broken watch in his pocket: “There was no more time” (152).

Throughout the novel, the places used as setting also play significant roles in parallel with time. These places are as fragmented as time, ranging from Camelot to Paris, from the island of Capri to the top of Mount Everest, from meatspace to cyberspace presenting a diverse and unrelated series of locations in a holistic approach. Similar to the scattered range of time, the places in the novel serve to the idea of love: the ship where the art of love is taught, the medieval castle where the forbidden love between Lancelot and Guinevere is issued, the city of love where the lovers discover their desires, the Muck House where a family without love lives. In the construction of gender identity love plays an essential role which is provided by the fragmented use of time and place. The narrator experiences every form of love in various performances in the virtual world.

[14] Axis mundi is the Latin of the “line or stem through the earth's center connecting its surface to the underworld and the heavens and around which the universe revolves”. (“Axis mundi”)

The ship in the first story "OPEN HARD DRIVE" (*PB* 7) is used as a means of transportation and it signifies narrator's long journey in the search of self. Being isolated from her family, the narrator Ali becomes a spy for Sulyman the Magnificent and travels to Leiden with a tulip bulb in her trousers in a ship, isolated from the outer world. In "SEARCH" (*PB* 65), Ali is in the castle in Camelot in the legend of King Arthur where he takes on Lancelot's disguise and searches for his real love Guinevere. Using the concept of forbidden love that results in tragedy, Winterson describes how Ali desperately looks for her lover in a fictional place through a fictional character. Since Ali is unable to find love in meatspace, s/he intends to search for it in the cyberspace. In doing so, Ali puts her queer love in the cyberspace into the same position of the traditional love in the meatspace. In the story "VIEW AS ICON" (*PB* 121), the two lovers Francesca and Paolo have read the famous story of Lancelot and Guinevere before they have been caught while making love. Similarly, Francesca is in her father's castle built of stone, which is symbolic of isolation from the outer world. This love story ends with bloodshed since Gianciotto, Francesca's husband and Paolo's brother, catches them while making love and kills them both in vengeance. The love story ends in revenge. The narrator Ali puts her own love story among the grand narratives to find a similar place for herself by adjusting their queer love to the conventional ones.

The last but not least, the cyberspace that is created via computer technology provides an imaginary realm for the storyteller and the lover. The virtual world is an inventory world, the characters are fictional, the narrative style is experimental, all of which are supplementary to the fragmented style of storytelling. To create such a fragmented narrative style, Winterson creates a duality between the real and imaginary, between the meatspace and the cyberspace. The blurred boundary between the real and fictional is manifested in the dialogue of Ali and the lover in "meatspace" (*PB* 159) chapter. When the lover asks for Ali's address, she says, "[y]ou've got my Website" (*PB*

161). She further asks: “Meatspace not cyberspace”, upon which Ali responds as “Spitalfields” (*PB* 161). The cyberspace is a new platform for Ali and the lover to develop their characters according to their desires. The virtual world gives infinite alternatives to them and allows them to love each other in a non-restricted realm. They have the chance to discover themselves and to search for their selves.

As mentioned before, in the story “VIEW” (*PB* 85), Ali visits the island of Capri, “an imaginary island and a real one” (*PB* 87), an island far off from the coast of Naples in Italy, where she is in search of her lover. The story is structured in fragments and mingled with the past and the present. The island is mountainous; so, the layers in altitude change the perspective of the narration. It begins at the sea level with Ali’s description of the open boat, and the funicular that connects The Marina Grande with Capri. The funicular takes the narration from the low coast to the high square, Piazzetta di Capri, creating an atmosphere of layers of space. Ali creates the duality of the real and the imaginary by providing descriptions of the picturesque charm and natural beauty of the island and by presenting the shops, hotels and squares vividly with an invented storyline of the lovers’ meeting once again. Describing her search for her lover in the funicular, Ali uses the curves of the railway that looks like a vulva:

> As I stand in the front car, holding on to the rail, and feeling the train move down through the sunlight towards the tunnel, I feel like I am being born…[the track] divides into a curved diamond, a vulva, a dark mouth- one of the many caves on the island where a rite of passage is observed. Then we are out again, into the sunshine… (*PB* 89)

This passage is narrated as if there is an act of penetration through the use of the funicular. In Susan Onega’s words, “she describes her entrance into the city as a ritual penetration into womb of the island” (Onega 189). This island serves as a place for fulfillment of their desires which is observed from different angles on the island. The multiple layers of

storytelling are strengthened with the multiple layers of altitude of the island. The climax of the story takes place at the top of Anacapri. In this sense, Winterson uses the layering of the height in her narration to create an effective climax on the top of the island.

In the story "QUIT" (*PB* 211), Ali the storyteller from the meatspace and Ali the Turk tulip smuggler from the cyberspace merge into one another. One can infer that the two worlds are combined as the novel comes to an end. The rhetoric question of "[w]hat happened to [Ali]" (*PB* 213) is raised to refer to the first story which was not properly finished. Here, Winterson does not offer a clear end to the story of the tulip smuggler; instead, she proposes different alternatives to the reader. First, the narrator tells that "[h]e never did deliver his bulbs to the Botanic Garden at Leiden. He bought a piece of land by the river and planted a pleasure garden for the ladies of Holland" (213). As the narration continues, Ali is described to "obey[…] the command of the scriptures to go forth and multiply (…)" in a pleasure garden "where she could experience for herself those exquisite attributes of variation that humans and tulips share" (214), which implies their multiplicity. This notion of variety is strengthened with the painter Rembrandt whose self-portraits "are a record, not of one life, but of many lives" as a consequence of "shifting his own boundaries" and "inching into other selves" (214). Another possible ending presented to the reader is that Ali might have returned to Turkey: "Was he back in Turkey, tending his mother's eggplants and tomatoes?" (215). Winterson does not stick to the traditional plot structure and leaves the ending open-ended since she subverts the linear plot structure which is male dominated and prefers a cyclic plot structure where the beginning and the end of the story follow each other. The novel ends with implications to the beginning; hence creating a sense of cyclic unity. On the other hand, leaving it open-ended provides many possibilities of endings which is another way of subverting the familiar endings of traditional storytelling.

In the following story "CHOOSER" (*PB* 197), towards the end of the novel, the reader is offered two possible endings of the two lovers. Hereby, Winterson puts the reader in a state of a chooser and decision maker. Through this narrative technique she frees the narrative structure from a fixed and ordered ending. The personal pronoun "you" (*PB* 205) refers to the reader directly, depriving the narrator's authority as the storyteller:

> Here are two endings. You choose.
>
> Two minutes to go. I'm holding your hand. The woman reading Hello! magazine is clearly disgusted at the sight of real feeling and gets up to sit elsewhere. The Walkman boy props his feet on her seat. The train is leaving, leaving now, and you won't meet my eyes. I can't come with you. You're not coming with me. The whistle blows. I have to jump up, forcing apart the closing doors. Then I'm outside again, walking down the platform, walking faster and faster, miming at you to pull the emergency cord. Just pull it. The train will stop. You can get off, leave your bag, and come with me. I'm running now. There's still time, still time. Then there's a moment when time is so still it stops and the train moves ahead for ever. (205-6)

> Two minutes to go. I'm holding your hand. The woman reading Hello! magazine smiles at me. She's sorry for me. You're looking at me and there's still a chance. Dear love, risk everything, there is no other way. The whistle blows. I stand up, still holding your hand, and suddenly you're on your feet, and we're both out of the closing door as it shuts on your past, shuts on your suitcase, and the woman is miming desperately that you've left your bag. The train is gathering speed now, taking time with it, and we've found a second where there is no time.

> The second that beats between your life and mine. Then the clock is ticking again, but we're together. The train moves ahead without us. (206)

In these two endings, the narrator and the lover either unite or break up, hence leaving the narrative open-ended. As Susan Onega states, these endings "are a daring and a cowardly one. Only if she dares to risk all can she expect to find the treasure of true love" (193). With the retelling of the grand narratives of Lancelot and Guinevere, Francesca and Paolo, Ali puts her own love story in the same position among these narratives in "great and ruinous lovers" (*PB* 75). She gives a list of lovers of grand narratives such as "Lancelot and Guinevere. Tristan and Isolde… Rome and Juliet… Paolo and Francesca" (77). By referring to her own love, Ali states that "[t]here are many more" and that "[l]ove's script has no end of beginnings. The characters and the scenery change" (77). Referring to the grand narratives, Ali explains that "[t]here are three possible endings [in love stories]: Revenge, tragedy, forgiveness" (78). In other words, Lancelot's story ends in *tragedy* while Francesca's story ends in *revenge*, which leaves Ali's love story to the ending of *forgiveness*. Therefore, the two endings offered to the reader above end in different forms of *forgiveness*. However, with either alternative being chosen, the narrator's passion for love will continue and she will be either with her other half or pursue her other half, depending on the reader's choice. In both endings, time stops for the lovers which devalues the notion of time in the moment of exchange of passionate feelings.

The narration is broken with the dual ending stories just like the duality and plurality in the perception of gender. "Break the narrative. Refuse all the stories that have been told so far … and try to tell the story differently" (*PB* 53) says Ali, suggesting to write from new perspectives and adding new weight to it. He is aware of the possibilities of realities and adds that "in quantum reality, there are millions of possible worlds, unactualized, potential" but insists on a different ending that will come (*PB* 53). Ali talks

about the restrictive nature of time and place and challenges his body and mind to create a free realm for herself through storytelling: “I can’t take my body through place and time, but I can send my mind, and use the stories, written and unwritten, to tumble me out in a place not yet existing- my future” (53).

The idea of pursuit of love, or the quest for the other half is inspired from the ancient philosopher Plato, who presents ideas of different thinkers on the subject of love in his *The Symposium*. In this influential work, Aristophanes delivers his speech on love to Eryximachus. He starts with the origin of sexes and explains that there are three different sexes; male, female and the combination of the two: the androgynous. The last is “distinct in form and name, having physical features from both the male and the female, but only the name exists, and that as a term of insult” (22). He continues with the form of the people and explains that they are round “with back and sides making a circle, and with four arms, the same number of legs, and two faces exactly alike set on a round neck. There is one head for the two faces (which looked in opposite ways), four ears, two sets of genitals” (23). Being the offspring of the Sun and the Earth, the male and female respectively share the nature of their creator. The androgynous is the offspring of the Moon, which shares the features of both the Sun and the Earth. Zeus makes a plan upon the assault of people and their ascent to heaven to attack the gods. He threatens: “I shall split each one of them in half, and that will make them weaker, and at the same time they will be more useful to us by being greater in number” (23). By cutting the people in half, they begin to look for their other halves to embrace and to unite, which ends mostly in death. The survivor of the couple looks for another mate, whether male or female until Zeus changes the place of their genital organs to the front. This solves the problem in their union and embrace of couples, “if a man encounter[s] a woman, he might impregnate her and the race might continue, and if a man encounter[s] another man, at any rate they might achieve satisfaction from the union and after this respite turn to their tasks and get

on with the business life" (24). He further explains that those who are sliced from the wholly female sex are "not interested in men but are attracted towards other women, and female homosexuals come from this original sex" (25). Therefore, "[l]ove of one person for another has been inborn in human beings, and its role is to restore us to our ancient state by trying to make unity out of duality and to heal our human condition… We are all continually searching for our other half" (24). Ali's continuous search for her lover comes from this innate feeling that "our nature was originally like this and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love" (25). Aristophanes' last words describe the happiness of a whole race: "if we were to achieve that perfect love in which each of us meets his own beloved and so returns to his original state, then the human race would be happy" (26). It can be argued that Ali is in search of happiness and his other half. The pursuit for his love is originally natural and inborn in human beings, which makes Ali's love also natural.

In the last chapter "SAVE" (*PB* 233), the same setting in the beginning is mentioned in the end of the novel. It is night at home above the shop Verde. When the narrator switches on the computer, she starts writing as this is what keeps her alive. The apparent plot structure of the whole story unfolds in "the whirlpool structure", in Onega's terms (185). The novel ends with several references to the beginning by creating spirals; hence, evoking the idea of the layered plot structure. At the very ending of the narrative, the narrator goes out to the river Thames where she drops her watch: "Time take it" (*PB* 244). She plans to "[k]eep writing it because one day she will read it. You can change story. You are the story" (243). Ali concludes her story by dignifying love as her leading star since "this is the true history of the world" (244). Her transformation from a fixed identity to an unfixed one has not finished. It has evolved in the hands of the storyteller and will keep changing till her last day since this has become the true nature of living for her.

To conclude, Winterson exhibits an ambiguously gendered narrator who subverts the constructed gender roles through diverse narrative techniques and creates an alternative virtual world where the narrator and her lover can mold their own gender identities without fulfilling the expectations of the society. For Winterson, the interchangeable use of pronouns extends the realm of gender roles since neither action can be appointed to a single gender. Winterson contends, “I no longer care whether somebody is male or female. I just don’t care” (Bilger). In this way she avoids gender segregation and encourages to include non-binary people into a new ungendered narration that will embrace everyone regardless of their gender. Her narrator Ali, courageously embraces transgressive gender forms and normalizes the love of queer people.

CHAPTER III

THE DUAL NARRATIVE VOICES: GENDER IDENTITIES IN ALTERNATIVE SPACE IN ALI SMITH'S *HOW TO BE BOTH*

This chapter aims to analyze the dual narratives in Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* (2014) in the light of Judith Butler's theory on the construction of gender identity. *How to Be Both* can be regarded as a dual narrative with respect to time and space. While one narration presents an imaginary and unconventional narrator, the other presents a more realistic one. Both narratives seem to overlap in the middle of the novel creating dualities of the imaginary and the real, the fictional and the factual, the male and the female. Thus, with a focus on these dualities in the narrative, this chapter examines the ways in which Smith challenges the traditional way of narrative and subverts the constructed gender roles assigned by the patriarchy through her narrators.

This chapter centers on the dual storytelling and aims to provide an insight into the subversive nature of gender norms with dualities such as reality and fictionality, present and past, male and female. Through parallelisms, the narrators are presented in a simultaneous time sequence, blurring the boundaries between the present and the past. In other words, although there are different time and space zones, the narrators merge with each other and create a sense of unity in certain overlapping points. As Bilge suggests, the narrators are "subjects in their own sections" but "they become objects in the other's narrative" by which "the structure of the novel is often likened to a DNA spiral, where two different lines intertwine with one another" (114). In this chapter, several examples of dualities are provided to show how the narration is constructed with seemingly different but essentially same intentions, and to lay bare the subversion of the presupposed gender norms in a heteronormative world through unconventional narrative techniques.

Therefore, this chapter analyzes how these narrators construct their gender identities with dual examples from both narratives.

One structural duality of the novel is that it is printed in two editions. The novel consists of two chapters, each entitled as "one"[15] (Smith 1, 187) with different icons below the heading. Ali Smith's use of the same headings for her chapters has been associated with her desire "to problematize and contextualize the novel's (titular) theme of simultaneity vs. sequentiality, singularity vs. doubleness, sameness and difference" (Kusek and Szymański 270). The chapter of young George from contemporary England is characterized with the icon of a "surveillance camera" (Smith 1) while the chapter of Francescho from Renaissance Italy is characterized with the flower that has eyes for its petals, which is the symbol for the painting of *Saint Lucy*[16] of Francesco del Cossa. Which edition the reader receives is a complete chance, a case which gives the reader excitement along with freedom. Thus, the perception of the reader is determined by the order of the stories. As Keller suggests, "the order determines (…) whether one is aware of Francescho spying on George from the beginning or only halfway through the book" (153). In this way, Smith avoids a controlled and prearranged understanding of the novel by further endowing the reader with the ability to be guided by their own perception. This thesis examines the edition that starts with George's chapter, a 16-year-old fragile teenage girl in present-day London. Since both chapters are intertwined with each other, one needs to read the novel at least twice so as to connect the multiple threads in the overlapping narratives. This being the case, the reader "may enrich one's knowledge of the plot, but it will not be the same as encountering the protagonists for the first time" (Keller 153). To exemplify, the story of George starts in medias res: "Consider this moral conundrum

[15] To avoid the confusion of chapters, the chapters are referred as "George's Chapter" for George's narrative, and "Francescho's Chapter" for Francescho's narrative.

[16] The painting *Saint Lucy* (1473-4) by Francesco del Cossa is exhibited in the National Art Gallery. She is the Saint of the blinds and is often pictured as blind with eyes in her palm or other places. Del Cossa prefers to leave her eyes on her face and situate another pair of eyes on a blooming flower that has eyes for its petals.

for a moment, George's mother says to George who is sitting in the front passenger seat" (Smith 3). It does not give an explicit idea of what that moral conundrum is but after having read the book twice it becomes clear that this moral conundrum is about the Italian fresco painter Francesco del Cossa. It is Smith's distinctive use of the narrative techniques that she divides the book into two overlapping chapters. In doing so, the reader is required to read one chapter at least twice to catch the hints in either chapter. Hereby, Smith's style provides a guided narrative structure, in which she reflects her ideological stand. She intends to construct a politically conscious narrative framework, in which she affirms other gender forms apart from the rigid binary gender system imposed by the patriarchy. She supports the fluidity of gender identity by suggesting that there is enough space for other genders, biologically and politically, rather than man and woman, through her narrators. Smith proposes novelties in narration which is not one sided and not shaped by the constructed gender norms.

The Scottish writer Ali Smith was born in Iverness in 1962. She is a dramatist and has written works in fiction and non-fiction. She also has contributed to magazines and newspapers with her plentiful articles. She received an education on English Studies in Abderdeen University and graduated as the most successful student. Then, she got a PhD education in American and Irish modernism but did not finish the program. She was granted the position of CBE, the Commander of the Order of British Empire, which is the highest rank of the order. After she wrote *How to Be Both* in 2014, she received this award in 2015 for her services to literature ("Biography"). She was granted this position after meeting the Italian painter Francesco del Cossa in a magazine. Smith states that her interest in art comes from her childhood, when she visited museums with her father. They used to visit the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and look at specifically Picasso's

painting of *Lee Miller*[17]. Smith and her father had a long conversation about Miller ("Writers & Company").

Having come across the fresco painter Francesco del Cossa in an art magazine called *Frieze*, Ali Smith was inspired to write a novel of layers. In that magazine, she sees Cossa's beautiful March fresco in the Palazza Schifanoia and is captivated by the image of the man on the left situated on the middle panel. She expresses her feelings about this figure who seems to be composed of dualities: "It is simply a man, in rags, who has to be one of the most beautiful men ever, and he's wearing ruined, gorgeous clothes. He looks rich and poor at the same time, like he's been ruined, and yet nothing will ever defeat this man. Nothing. It just looked to me like one of the most powerful images I'd ever seen" (Clark, "Ali"). Upon this artistic encounter, she decides to read more about Renaissance art and Cossa, about whom only little was known. Smith is excited about the figure since "[w]hat we do have is the surfeit of ambiguity and understanding about gender" ("Writers & Company"). As Sonya Andermahr suggests, gender could be represented "as a fluid category allowing women and men, in the realm of art at least, to be both" (249). On the other hand, Smith is bewildered by the fresco's structure and states, "I just loved it, because it's layered. All you can see is the surface – but actually there's something else underneath" ("Writers & Company"). Since there is little information about Cossa, it liberates and limits Smith at the same time; it is hard to stay close to the facts, and simple to create a new character. The dual narrative structure is based on the fresco form that Ali Smith describes as follows:

> You have the very first version of the fresco underneath the skin, as it were, of the real fresco. There's a fresco on the wall: there it is, you and I look at it, we see it right in front of us; underneath that there's another

[17] Lee Miller was a photographer who met Picasso in 1937 in France. She photographed him more than thousand times and in return he painted her several times. The painting is a symbol of their long lasting friendship.

> version of the story and it may or may not be connected to the surface. And they're both in front of our eyes, but you can only see one, or you see one first. So it's about the understory. I have the feeling that all stories travel with an understory. (Clark "Ali")

She has made extensive research about the structure of frescoes and has been fascinated by the two-folded surface of them. The understory, as mentioned in the quote above, seems to be more of vital importance than the surface story. In other words, she believes in the essence of the understory much more than the one that is seen at first sight. Her particular stance can be related to the recovering of the frescoes after the damage by the Florence floods in the 1960s. The frescoes were restored in new ways that included "peeling off the wall layers and underneath […] [were] original underdrawings" ("Writers & Company"). These underdrawings were mended by the authorities and restorers and sometimes, as it is mentioned in the novel, "were significantly different from their surfaces" (Smith 102). George's mother describes the discovery of the underdrawings as "something they'd never have discovered if there hadn't been the damage in the first place" (102). With this in mind, Smith decides to write in accordance with the dual fresco form which "is the perfect gift for a narrative structure", since "everything is layered all the time and you have a surface" and she further describes her astonishment of the layers as "underneath the thing which is happening, it's possibly different and has something that's not being said" ("Writers & Company").

Ali Smith pays a visit to Ferrara, Italy in order to visit the museum in Palazzo Schifanoia since wants to witness Cossa's paintings with naked eyes. Palazzo Schifanoia[18] is a palace in Ferrara, Italy. It was built for the Este family, a rich family who had this palace built for relaxing and enjoyment. In this palace, the Hall of Months

[18] The name of Palazzo Schifanoia stems from the Italian *schivar la noia* meaning literally to escape from boredom. It is a palace in Ferrara that hosts frescoes designed by Italian painters in Ferrara, especially Francesco del Cossa, Cosme Tura and Ercole de' Roberti. It is famous for its *Hall of Months*, where each month of the calendar is depicted with an Olympian god.

(Salone dei Mesi) hosts a cycle of allegorical frescoes which were created during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were originally composed of a calendar of twelve separate mural paintings. Only seven of them have survived. Most of the frescoes created during those times were demolished because of the major earthquake in 1570 in Ferrara. The Este family left Ferrara to Pope Clement VIII (Blair MacDougall 98). When the Este family had to abandon the city around 1589, the end of Ferrara came, which is described in Chłędowski's terms as "finis Ferrariae" (finish Ferrara- the end of Ferrara) (qtd. in Kusek and Szymański 265). The Tassoni family purchased the building in the eighteenth century and brought about a profound renovation. The walls of frescoes were covered with a white paint, and this caused "the images [to disappear] not only from the walls but also from collective memory" (Kusek and Szymański 265). George's mother describes it in the novel as "[t]hey'd been whitewashed over for hundreds of years" (Smith 56). In the following years, the building was transformed into a tobacco factory. Not until the early nineteenth century were the frescoes uncovered and reborn to a second life, to "Nachleben"[19] as in Warburg's terms (qtd. in Kusek and Szymański 265). In a similar fashion, George's mother expresses her feelings about Cossa, the lost painter: "For four hundred years he didn't exist" (Smith 56). She states that the reason why the painter gained such a reputation was "pretty interesting" since "the only reason we know that the painter who did that wall existed, even lived at all, is that he asked for more" upon which George responds, "Like Oliver Twist" (59).

The Hall of Months (Salone dei Mesi) represents a calendar of twelve months, each divided into three parts: on the top division the depiction of Olympian Gods, in the middle part the signs for the zodiac, and at the bottom the portrayal of the daily pastoral life of the court. This is the court of the Duke of Ferrara, Borso d'Este, who wants to

[19] "Nachleben" in German means the life after life, which in this case can be interpreted as the second life on earth, as in Aby Warburg's terms (Kusek and Szymański 265).

leave a mark on history by spreading and maintaining his reputation and fame for the forthcoming generations. The Hall is believed to have been painted by numerous fresco painters. Among these painters, Cosme Tura, Ercole de' Roberti, and Francesco del Cossa[20] take the leading role. It is estimated that the frescoes were painted during the 1460s and the 1470s in the Renaissance period. Although there is not much information about Cossa, he is believed to have finished the East Wall of the Hall, which illustrates the months of March, April and May. One particular figure catches Ali Smith's attention on the right corner of the middle panel of March fresco; the androgynous figure who has a hoop in one hand, and an arrow in the other. Smith builds the characterization of her narrator Francescho upon this androgynous figure. Smith is amazed by Cossa's attention-grabbing mural-making so much that she plans to have a similar structure with her narrative style. She is inspired by the different layers of fresco painting and adjusts it into style and content in her novel; she employs a dual narration that contains seemingly different characters, places and time zones. At one point, this duality in narration overlaps and merges with one another.

It is significant to know and understand the structure of a fresco to comprehend how invaluable the process, the effort of the painter, and the meaning of the layered style are. A fresco is defined as "a picture that is painted on a wall while the plaster is still wet" ("fresco"). The lexical meaning of the word fresco is "fresh" because the "pigments mixed with water [are applied] to freshly spread, damp plaster" (Meiss 14). However, there are also pigments that cannot be applied to the wet plaster because they turn into other pigments; for example, the azurite blue turns into green. In this case, the pigment needs a binder to be applied to a dry plaster, a technique known as *secco*, which means dry in Italian. D'elia describes the fine work behind the pigments of frescoes:

[20] The historical figure Francesco del Cossa is referred as 'Cossa' from now on to prevent any confusion with the fictional character Francescho in the novel.

> Paint was made of rocks, plants, or even dirt ground up into a powder to make a pigment and then mixed with water. This paint was applied to the plaster using brushes. Small brushes made of ermine tail tips glued to a wooden handle were used for fine details. Very large brushes made of hog bristles glued to a handle were used to paint large patches of color or backgrounds with few details. (17)

The fine work of the painters should be taken into consideration before making any evaluations of the paintings. The art of frescoes dates back to the Middle Ages but it proliferated during the Renaissance in Italy. There are three different ways to paint a fresco. Among them the most applied style is *buon fresco* that means true or real fresco. The painter chooses a building wall on which s/he will work. The wall is first covered with a wet plaster that is called *arriccio* and is allowed to dry for a few days. Then, the picture or the design is copied with the help of a cartoon on the plaster to make an outline of the painting beforehand. After this step, a coat of lime that is called *intonaco* is gently applied onto the outlines of the picture. Since it requires a particular operation, the painter needs to apply the pigments in a limited time while the lime is still wet: "when the wet plaster made of slaked lime dries, the carbonation that occurs binds the pigments to a solid crystalline mass. These crystals are reflective and highly durable unless subjected to moisture combined with chemicals in the wall or in the modern polluted air" (Meiss 14). The colors seem brighter than the first application. It is already a piece of art that can resist the weather conditions. The paintings, thanks to their long-lasting durability, can live up for hundreds of years and stay well-preserved. In short, the painting of a fresco is based on a three-coat plaster that is gently and patiently applied on the building wall. To determine the labor and effort on the frescoes, Giorgio Vasari, often regarded as the first art historian, suggests that "nothing can be corrected or erased without chipping off the

plaster and starting again – that makes buon fresco 'masterly and beautiful'. Fresco demands solid preparation, long hours and a bold, confident touch" (Mayernik, par.1).

The study of visual arts in literature, *ekphrasis*, has gained popularity in the twentieth century (Ulu 1). These visual artworks of ekphrasis may be varied as frescoes, urns, cups, statues, sculptures, or paintings. *How to Be Both* makes use of the paintings and frescoes in the fifteenth century and thus can be regarded as a contemporary representation of the Renaissance art. The etymological root of *ekphrasis*, or frequently spelled as ecphrasis, comes from Greek. The critic Jean Hagstrum translates ekphrasis into English as "speaks" (phrazo) "out" (ek) (qtd. in Webb 7). The verb form *ekphrazein* "literally means to speak out, to describe, to tell someone about something, to depict vividly" (Ulu 5). From a literary perspective, ekphrasis is used as "to give voice to a mute art object" and "to offer a rhetorical description of a work of art" (Hagstrum 18). Another critic Heffernan describes ekphrasis as "the verbal representation of visual representation" (3). Regarding this, Heffernan "puts the emphasis on the act of representing, the core of *mimesis*" and puts forth that it "represents representation itself" (qtd. in Ulu 7). In this case, *How to Be Both* verbally represents Cossa's paintings and frescoes, creating a second representation of art. Ali Smith, in this regard, is the second artist; the readers of this novel are the third artists to rework on this ekphrastic novel. In a parallel way, the reworking on art can be resembled to the layered structure of frescoes. They create layers of meaning and thus layers of narration. Hence, it can be inferred that the ekphrastic nature of the novel is simultaneously adapted to the storytelling of the novel. *How to Be Both* practices a dual narration through two narrators based on the artworks of Cossa.

Characterization in the novel is also central to this narrative thread. The narrator George is an ordinary teenage girl who shares many similar traits and dualities with the narrator Francescho. It can be suggested that Smith created George after she created

Francescho, who was her main inspiration although George seems to be the realistic narrator and Francescho the unconventional fictional one. The narrator Francescho[21] is based on the historical figure Francesco del Cossa who was born in Ferrara in about 1436 and was the son of a stone mason. He was talented in fresco painting like his fellows Cosme Tura and Ercole de' Roberti. They were employed by Borso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara to create a calendar for the Este Family, and Cossa is believed to have asked for a higher price than he was offered. He thought of himself of a higher rank than his contemporaries. His request was rejected, which made him leave Ferrara and head to Bologna, where he died. Even after his death, Giorgio Vasari, the art historian, misidentified his works. Not until recently have been his works announced as Cossa's artefacts. Not much is known about Cossa, which leaves many questions unanswered. His most popular artefact is the east wall of the Hall of Months, where March is praised mostly. It can be inferred that he was not praised and appreciated when he was alive but his artefacts were held in high esteem posthumously.

Smith creates a fictional character out of the aforementioned famous March fresco. In the middle panel of it, Cossa portrays an ambiguously gendered figure that has a hoop in one hand and an arrow in the other. George's mother assumes this figure to be a girl, considering the items s/he is holding: "The way he used that figure of the effeminate boy, the boyish girl, to balance the powerful masculine effect of the worker, and how this figure holds both an arrow and a hoop, male and female symbols one in each hand. On this alone I could make a reasonably witty argument for its originator being female, if I had to" (Smith 111). Smith uses androgynous characteristics in her character Francescho who is a young girl under the disguise of a young boy, a case through which she blurs the boundaries of gender and introduces a narrator with fluid identity. Francescho is the

[21] Smith added the 'h' letter to the name of Francesc(h)o del Cossa to make it fictional. Since there is not much known about the real Italian painter it enabled Smith to create a story on her own. The historical figure is male, whereas the fictional character is female under male disguise.

daughter of a stone mason but her father wants her to wear trousers like boys so that she could be an apprentice to fresco masters. As D'elia suggests, the female painters "were usually trained at home by their fathers, since it was not considered proper for young women to move out of their home and join workshops" (11). For Francescho, constructing a gender identity in such an androcentric environment seems to be a challenge but she survives by subverting the patriarchal norms.

As stated earlier, this novel is based on many dualities and the narration presents a parallelism between different time periods, places and characters. Smith also experiments on the traditional narrative styles by embedding different layers of narratives. In fact, she was inspired by the different layers of frescoes in the art museum in Italy. Influenced by the structure of frescoes, she distorts the traditional perception of narrative by eliminating the linear plot and the notion of regular time. The novel introduces two narrators in a two-layered structure: George lives in twenty-first century England while Francescho lives in fifteenth century Italy. Chronologically, the story of Francescho takes place before George's story, implying that Francescho's narrative is the story underneath the fresco. However, the general framework of the novel implies that Francescho's story takes place only after George's story comes to an end. In line with this, Bilge argues that "Francescho's story comes both before and after that of George" (115). In this way, by creating dualities and parallelisms, Smith plays with the traditional plot structure and chronological order and instead creates a holistic entity that binds different time zones and places in a unique way. This unconventional narrative model provides a suitable groundwork for the characters to develop a gender identity in a more fluid and flexible context of place and time.

Smith creates various instances of artful duality, which seem to be ambivalent but rather appropriate in terms of plot, character and narration. She presents opposite ideas in

harmony and aims to explore their dualities. These dualities demonstrate themselves as how to be both male and female, how to construct an identity and how to subvert it, how to combine the past and present, and how to explore the boundaries of space by using different instruments such as painting. This chapter analyzes the narrators' construction of their gender identity through the narrative techniques based on the dualities of time, place and character in the light of Judith Butler's theory on gender identity.

In the edition that is used in this analysis, the novel starts with George's chapter. George, her mother, and her brother are in a car, travelling to Italy to visit the museum of the famous painter Francescho del Cossa, because her mother seems to be particularly interested in the painter. They have a chat on the painter's biography and how his works have been reanimated with the recent exploration of the frescoes. They question the surface meaning of the frescoes, and the layers of meaning and how they stand for history. The narration is presented in the first and third person with time shifts through the past and the present, both uniting and separating time zones. This dualism between the present and the past paves the way for the parallelisms in the story. The narrative does not reveal George's gender at first, but it portrays George as a young boy. Since the name George is gender-specific for males, the reader may naturally think of a male character without questioning the gender. Therefore, at first glance, the reader does not think of a female character when George is mentioned. However, the grammatical use of the gender-specific pronoun *her* gives hints about the gender ambiguity of the character: "George shrugged and closed *her* eyes" (Smith 15, *emphasis mine*). The reader is informed in the beginning of the chapter that the character is actually a young girl called Georgia, but her name is intentionally used in masculine form, George. In order to avoid the gender stability, both female and male pronouns are used in the narration. Interestingly, George's

father addresses her *Miss*[22], but her mother corrects him with *Ms*.. This scene creates another tension, and the father defends himself: "Pardon my world-stopping act of political incorrectness" (Smith 18). Confidently enough, George states that she prefers "Miss Moan" until she is called "Doctor Moan" (Smith 18). This name issue and addressing are indicative of her struggle with her gender identity. It becomes clear that her parents, especially her mother, influence George socially and psychologically. Thus, her quest for gender identity starts at the beginning of the story. Her gender is constructed in dualities and she avoids any stable signifiers for her gender construction.

From a linguistic aspect, George defends her gender identity by correcting her mother grammatically. George deconstructs the male pseudonym by dividing the syntax of Georgia as "Ia, George" or "George yah" (Smith 17). The mother's calling her George might not conform to the normal gender performance in society; since she is a girl and *should* be called Georgia. However, this can be interpreted as the mother's reaction against the heteronormative values of the society. Likewise, the mother makes another syntactic error: "[to George] You stay at home with Henry, and me and George, I mean George yah, will go" (18). George immediately corrects her mother by saying: "Georgia and I […]. And I am not going" (18). This shows that George is more prescriptive than her mother by trying to enforce her political correctness. However, she is overwhelmed by her mother's mysterious thoughts, and also perplexedly amused by her. As Sonya Andermahr suggests, "George may be seen as a character whose identity is 'in transit', in so far as she is between the states of child and adult, between girl and boy in terms of identification and desire, and between loss and recovery following the death of her mother" (261). Similarly, in Francescho's Chapter, Francescho starts the narration from the perspective of a painting and tries to figure out the gender of the person in front of the

[22] *Ms*. is a title used to address an unmarried girl or a woman under 30. *Miss* is a title used for women whose marital status is unknown or in some cases to indicate a marital-status neutral title ("Ms").

painting. At first glance, Francescho cannot identify George's gender. Based on the clothing, Francescho assumes that George is a boy; however, she finds out that "[t]his boy is a girl" (Smith 251), a girl "whose gender performance goes against convention" (Andermahr 251). It can be inferred that George does not wear gender revealing clothes. This is why Francescho is puzzled at first but then she thinks of the way George apologizes, which is in a "very polite" manner that "can only be a girl" (Smith 251).

George's gender identity is constructed on several layers, the first of which is her name. It is not clear in the text why she takes the male pseudonym in the first place but it becomes clear that she switches between genders and enjoys the fluid identity. In other words, the syntactic use of her name shows how prescriptive George is and how she sticks to the rules of grammar closely. Her language becomes a tool of narration, which she uses to prove her fluid gender and to mock the heteronormative expectations of the society. Butler explains the rearticulation of gender identity in an interview as follows: "My view is that there are norms into which we are born– gendered, racial, national- that decide what kind of subject we can be, but in being those subjects, in occupying and inhabiting those deciding norms, in incorporating and performing them, we make use of local options to rearticulate them in order to revise their power" (Reddy 117). From this aspect, George's syntactic correction can be regarded as a local option that rearticulates the norms in order to revise and undermine the heteronormative values of the patriarchy. Following her mother, she challenges the societal norms of patriarchy by switching gender roles and constituting a fluid gender identity.

After her mother's unexpected death, George finds herself as the mother figure in the house, who looks after her little brother and ignorant, mostly drunk father. She meets a girl in school named Helen, who is intentionally called H. that marks the unnecessary use of gender, and finds herself in a close relationship with her. The intimate friendship

between her mother and her lover Lisa Goliard is parallel to the friendship between George and Helen. Her mother's loss has a deep impact on George; and she unconsciously tries to reach her memories by repeating their past experiences such as visiting the museum in Palazzo Schifanoia, to enjoy the paintings of Francescho with naked eyes. In Freudian terms, her loss can be defined as melancholia, which refers to the sense of loss as an unconscious act of what has been lost in the self. Freud makes a distinction between mourning and melancholia in his essay and states, "[m]ourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person.... In some people the same influences produce melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological disposition" (243). He further explains the pathological feelings as unconscious sentiments in melancholia when someone is not sure what s/he has lost. Unlike melancholia, mourning is a conscious natural response to the pain of loss. In a similar way, George seems to consciously mourn for her mother, but at times she is unable to process the pain. Freud asserts that "[i]n mourning, it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished" (246). George recalls the conversations with her mother, imitates the friendship between her mother and Lisa Goliard, tries to look from the same angle with her mother in the art of frescoes. In other words, George mourns for her mother and tries to overcome her pain by reenacting her mother's actions and by reanimating her mother's relationship. As Freud states, "mourning impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live" (257). On one hand, there is a struggle to continue to live; on the other hand, "each one of the memories and situations of expectancy which demonstrate [the] attachment to the lost object is met by the verdict of reality that the object no longer

exists" (255). George has accepted that her mother has died and tries to continue to live with this reality.

At the beginning of the chapter, there is a dialogue between George and her mother. She asks George to think of the moral conundrum of an artist without revealing that it is Francesco del Cossa:

> You're an artist, her mother says, and you're working on a project with a lot of other artists. And everybody on the project is getting the same amount, salary-wise. But you believe that what you're doing is worth more than everyone on the project, including you, is getting paid. So you write a letter to the man who's commissioned the work and you ask him to give you more money than everyone else is getting. (Smith 6)

The letter that Cossa wrote in the sixteenth century was only recently discovered. It sheds light on this moral conundrum and evinces that Cossa's art was underestimated. He thinks that he should have been praised, appreciated and paid more than his fellows since he is *better*. George is startled at the incident and asks several questions to her mother: "Am I better than the other artists?", "Am I worth more?", "Is it me or is it the work that's worth more?", "Is this real? Is it hypothetical?", "Is it happening now or in the past?", "Is the artist a woman or a man?" (Smith 6-7). Assuming that she is the painter, George asks several questions to decide on the rightful payment for the painter. George's mother answers the last question: "Male, female, both… beautiful all of them" (52). Since George is more bound to fixed traditions, it needs to be an either/or situation for her, regarding the constructed gender binaries. On the contrary, her mother is not so strict about traditions as her daughter. This is reflective of George's inflexibility on gender identity. While for her mother it can be both male and female, which shows her fluidity in the case of gender identity; for George it is either male or female. Andermahr suggests that "in this way, [the mother] confirms the both/and aesthetic that structures the whole novel and

gives George license to experience gender as a fluid construct" (253). From this example, it can be deduced that George might take her mother as a role model for how to be flexible and fluid by displaying androgynous traits. After her mother's death, she tries to follow her path and discovers for herself that survival in a patriarchal society demands an exhibition of dual gender traits to overcome the burden of gender roles.

Francescho's Chapter starts with the visit to the museum. Francescho's ghostlike existence is the most distinctive narrative technique that Smith uses, since its existence is unknown and unidentifiable. Francescho is first introduced in the narrative through the painting of *Saint Vincent Ferrer*[23]. From the painting's perspective, she observes George from her back and tries to identify her gender. In the same setting a few moments later, from the opposite perspective, George scrutinizes the painting standing in front of it for a long time and thinks about her memories with her mother there. Regarding both perspectives, the narration makes use of a dual storytelling that changes the focus of the reader. This narrative technique is specifically used to narrate the same scene from two different perspectives, which can be discussed in relation to what Gerard Genette calls "focalization" in his *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (189). The autodiegetic narrator Francescho narrates the story in the first person. Through this focalized perspective, Francescho reflects the scene, rather than tells it. Because of her limited focal point, she has difficulty in determining the gender of George. Francescho serves as the camera eye since she observes the scene through her eyes. At the same time, "the story is put across to the reader through the filter of the focalizer's thoughts and perceptions" (Fludernik 36). This creates a distance between the narrator and the reader. On the other

[23] A religious painting by Francesco del Cossa made probably in about 1473-5. He was a preacher and a missionary. In the novel, George's father praises his deeds and admires his wonders.

hand, Smith uses the focalized perspective in order to break the narrative and create a dual storytelling based on the two narrators in the same scene.

The ghostlike visit of Franchesco to George in the Palazza Schifanoia through the painting is presented as a medium where Francescho is in a place of purgatory. This indeterminant place is where both George and Francescho can perform their genders regardless of the societal norms. Through the idea of purgatory, Smith creates another duality in the construction of gender identity: Francescho's uncanny eyes and George's physical body. Based on the dual characterization, Francescho's narration is fictional because of the extensive use of fantasy and imagination while George's narration is realistic. The storytelling of Francescho through the painting of *St. Vincent Ferrer*[24] in the gallery is an unusual medium for narration; since this medium mutes her throughout the novel. However, as the storyteller, she has a narrative voice. Francescho is in-between the real and the fictional: "Dear God dear Motherfather did I come the hard way back through the wall of the earth the stratifications the rocks and the soil the worms and the crusts the stars and the gods the vicissitudes and the histories the broke bits of forgettings and rememberings all the long road from gone to here" (Smith 194). In addition to her unknown origin, Francescho cannot call out to George since she does not hear her, as if Francescho is not there. She recalls her childhood memories and has a lot of flashbacks. However, Francescho has difficulty in recalling her own death and comprehending her unusual existence: "But how did I, then? End? I can't recall an end at all, any end I ever, can't, any demise, no – cause maybe- maybe I … never ended" (202). She acknowledges her ghostly existence, like a spirit that follows George: "it is as if a rope attached to the boy is attached to me and has circled me and cannot be unknotted and where the boy goes

[24] Francesco del Cossa's painting *Saint Vincent Ferrer* (1473-5) is exhibited in the National Art Gallery. Vincent Ferrer was a missionary and a preacher. In the novel, he is believed to have caused miracles to people by healing the diseased, opening the eyes of the blinds, resurrecting the dead, Also, the father of Francescho offers the pen name of *Vincenzo* to her as a disguise in the patriarchal society they live in because of his position and approval in society.

I must go whether I want it or don't" (224). Because of this strange state of being, she expresses her feelings as follows: "Please God dear God send me back to oblivion" (195) where her being could rest. From time to time, her perspective changes and becomes physically closer to that of George. Conversely, the perspective becomes observant and creates a vivid distance between her and George's world. Apparently, the focal point switches between them and at certain points overlaps, which makes it difficult to determine which narrative voice speaks. It can be argued that the two narrative voices merge with each other and become a single voice; a duality of real and fictional, past and present, male and female. Hence the construction of gender identity is fluid.

The term focalization[25] is the employment of different perspectives of the narrator. According to the classifications of Gerard Genette, the narrator Francescho is a homodiegetic narrator "who is present in the story" and becomes autodiegetic since she is the first-person narrator and the main character at the same time, which reveals that there are "different degrees of presence" (Bal 237-8). As Fludernik suggests, "the novel offers the additional option of seeing things from the point of view of a particular character. In such cases, the character serves as a focalizer or lens" (36). This narrator functions as a "reflector" in the story, as in Stanzel's terms, just like the functioning of a camera on mind that reflects rather than tells the story (Fludernik 36). Francescho reflects the story from her perspective through the painting as the camera eye, and observes at the beginning of the chapter rather than tells the story. Through the painting, she sees someone young from the back and tries to figure out who she is. Francescho tries to determine the gender of the person. Additionally, a middle-aged woman comes and inspects the painting in such a detailed manner that the young person stares at her for a long time. Francescho tries to understand the relationship between them but fails to do.

[25] See Chapter I for detailed definitions.

Hence, rather than a guide or a leader of the story, Francescho functions as the camera eye to the reader and creates a neutral space for both the characters and the reader for interpretation. The narrator does not impose her ideas but rather reflects what she observes in her own terms. This is indicative of a distant observation of the reader in the novel as well, which serves to the thematic structure of the novel. Both the narrators and the reader are freed from narrative restrictions; what is more, the narrators are offered a space through which they can realize and question their gender identities in this narration. Because of this, Francescho questions George's gender. However, this focal point does not provide a precise reveal of gender, which leads both the narrator and the reader to make an assumption about George. The focalized point creates a distance between the reader and the character and avoids strict assumptions about the gender. The use of *focalization* as a narrative technique in determining George's gender clearly indicates the importance of freeing the character and the reader from societal expectations and norms. In short, the dual perspectives of Francescho and George add a different layer of narration in the story. This unconventional way of narrating the story creates a duality in fact and fiction, past and present, and male and female.

Francescho's chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is from the perspective of the painting. Francescho tries to figure out the person in front of it. The second part starts with the revelation of George's gender. Francescho identifies her gender through the act of apology which is "very polite and in the unbroken undisguised voice of what can only be a girl" (Smith 251). Having realized this, Francescho embraces her own state much more because she was under male disguise like George. The first part includes flashbacks to Francescho's childhood and there are multiple switches between the past and present day. After her childhood memories, the narration continues with the story of how she starts painting, how her mother dies and how her father persuades her to wear male clothes. The story continues with the painting process of the frescoes.

Francescho explains how she devotes herself to craftmanship and how she elegantly paints the female figures of Ginevra, Agnola, and Isotta[26] on the frescoes. Francescho explains the moral conundrum, that is mentioned at the very beginning of the book, and she lists in what ways she is more talented and more genuine than her rivals. Francescho's assistant hesitantly tells that the rumor has spread that she is called Francescha[27] everywhere, and that she will not get paid more. As a girl in disguise, she tries to overcome this unrighteousness by regulating her body performance according to the expectations of the society.

As mentioned above, during her hard labor in the palace, Francescho insists on getting paid more than her fellows because of her mastery, but she does not receive what she wants from the Duke. In the quoted extract below, the Duke's personal advisor Pellegrino Prisciano, the Falcon, undermines the work of Francescho:

> So you're a little less, Francescho, than I believed, the Falcon said now.
>
> A very little thing less only, Mr de Prisciano, I said, and no less at all
>
> when it comes to picturemaking.
>
> No, you are talented, true, all the same, he said.
>
> Exactly the same, I said. No less.
>
> …
>
> I've just understood, he said. Why Cosmo calls you it. (…)
>
> Cosmo calls me what? I said.
>
> You don't know? The Falcon said.
>
> I shook my head.

[26] Ginerva, Agnola and Isotta are prostitutes from the brothel that she calls "the pleasure house" but she is inspired from their heavenly beauty that she paints them in her fresco art. Moreover, Isotta is a colored woman whom Francescho is told to paint her skin in lighter tones.

[27] In Italian, the gender of the word is determined with the last letter. If the word ends with -o, the gender is male, if it ends with -a, the gender is female.

That Cosmo, when he talks of you, calls you Francescha? The Falcon said. (299-300)

The Falcon stresses the letter '-a' implying her disguised femininity. In other words, Francescho's hidden gender identity is uncovered with the suspicions of Cosmo, her rival. She thinks that she is not as appreciated as Cosmo and feels that her position is now threatened. Her biological sex does not allow her to get a place in the mastery; but, her gender performance as a man gets her the necessary training and earns her a reputation of a good master. Consequently, her struggle to protect her public gender identity is the result of her need to keep her good reputation, which depends on the patriarchal perceptions and expectations.

Francescho's gender construction has been a struggle since her childhood because her father wants her to wear male clothes to hide her gender in order to be a good apprentice to masters of frescoes. She does what her father tells her. The Spanish saint Vincenzo Ferreri[28], known for his miracles, is favored by Francescho's parents. Interestingly, the naming of Francescho is related to this saint. When Francescho searches for a new name for her new identity, she thinks of the first letter of her mother's name 'f' and "trie[s] it on [her] tongue to see where it [will] lead: [her] father mishear[s] [her]: Vv" (219). Upon this, he suggests the name Vincenzo, but she insists on the name Francescho: "My father held his frown: then he smiled in his beard a grave smile down at me and he nodded. On that day with that blessing and that new name I died and was reborn." (222). Through the naming, Francescho builds her new identity with her mother's name in mind. Though the father seems to have influenced her identity construction, she still follows the footsteps of her late mother.

[28] See note 23 and 24.

One of the dualities in the novel is that both narrators are female but under male disguise, though the historical figure Francesco del Cossa is believed to be male[29]. George's gender identity and molding of her character is heavily influenced by her mother, which can be explained with the reproduction of mothering, the pivotal idea of Nancy J. Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* that "analyzes the reproduction of mothering as a central idea and constituting element in the social organization and reproduction of gender" (7). In her work, she mainly draws on "the psychoanalytic account of female and male personality development that women's mothering reproduces itself cyclically. Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother" (7). It is fair to say that George reproduces her mother, even though she sees her as a rival "who deprives her first of milk, then of sexual gratification and finally of a penis" (95). Chodorow includes Freud's ideas that the preoedipal phase plays a great role in especially feminine personality and concludes that children "[are] not originally bisexual, though they [are] potentially so. They [are], rather, gynesexual, or matrisexual" (95). George, in this sense, develops her gender identity in relation to her mother, even after her death.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Nancy Chodorow, in her article "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" points out that the personality of male and females depends largely on the mother because she is universally responsible for nurturing and caring for the child. She further explains that the mother develops different relationships with her children but has a larger effect on the socialization of her daughter compared to her son (43-4). She contends that "the nature and quality of the social relationships that the child experiences are appropriated, internalized and organized by her/him and come to constitute her/his personality" (45). She describes the first years of a child as "infantile

[29] Since there is not much information about the painter, it is believed that he was male.

dependence", a term that refers to the continuation of the emotional and physical bonds in the body of the mother through the placenta (46). The child forms a "sense of oneness" (46) with the mother in the pre-oedipal development phase. After this phase, the boy separates himself from the mother and takes his father as his role-model. However, this is not the same with the girl, who continues her social development in relation to her mother (46). This idea of reproducing femininity is a kind of heritage that passes from the mother to the daughter. The mother finds herself in a double identification in which "a woman identifies with her own mother, and, through identification with her own child, she (re)experiences herself as a cared-for child" (47). In other words, both George and Francescho develop a gender identity in which their mothers have a greater influence than their fathers. It is not surprising that they intend to lead a similar life like their mothers. However, they seek for an identity that is performed by themselves rather than acquired by society.

George's mother has been so influential on her that George has to see the psychiatrist of the school after the mother's death. Mrs. Rock examines George's post-traumatic attitudes because George has not processed the pain of loss and needs help. Mrs. Rock is the only character who reflects the societal norms that are required from George to fulfill. She is also the only character who calls George "Georgia" (Smith 71, 72, 130, 132), which is the name that should normally be used in a heteronormative society. Hence, as the psychiatrist of the school, Mrs. Rock is the representation of the patriarchal social norms which George does not fit in. She is the voice of the society and requires her patients to fulfill the societal norms. She validates the patriarchal norms and expects George to conform. It is interesting that the psychiatrist is responsible for the treatment of mental conditions while she displays indifference to George's case. She always repeats George's words in question form: "You think I'll think you are paranoid and hysterical?" (67). George criticizes inside her head the psychiatrist: "That was what

counsellors were trained to do, to say back to you what it was you said, but in the form of a question …" (67). She disregards George's issues and is not interested in applying the necessary therapy as if George is not psychologically unstable. Besides, her indifference to George's psychological condition exhibits her own fixed mindset about rules. As an example, George has to be outside the school's gate to use her mobile phone: "You can now get your phone out Georgia, without breaking any rules… You can send that message now" (132). It can be inferred that Mrs. Rock is strictly bound to rules without any exceptions. Dissatisfied with the therapy, George realizes how challenging it is to survive in a society of rigid norms, to live with people ignorant of individual preferences. George's strive for moving on after her mother's death is similar to Francescho's struggle in the work life after her mother's death. Similar to George's case, the sudden death of her mother also affects her whole life, both socially and professionally. Just like George, she does not process this pain very well and tries to reanimate her mother in the house by wearing her clothes. Judith Butler in an interview describes this pain by referring to Freud's ideas: "When we lose loved ones, we tend to put on their clothes, we start to walk like them, we find ourselves talking like them, there is a kind of unconscious appropriation of their traits that goes on" (Reddy 121). It is clear that their gender identities are largely molded by their mother, but there are many instances that their fathers have influenced them in different ways, such as the way of clothing.

Another duality in the novel is the clothing, which is a way of constructing gender identity. In Francescho's chapter, as mentioned before, the mother dies at a young age. Francescho discovers a trunk of her mother's clothes such as "broadcloth and linens and hemp and wool, belts and laces, the chemise, the work gowns, the overgown, the kirtle and sleeves" (Smith 213). While Francescho wears one of her mother's dresses one day, her father cannot bear it anymore: "I'm going to ask you kindly to stop wearing those

clothes" (215) and explains the reason: "It is like your mother has become a dwarf and as if her dwarf self is always twinkling away in all corners of the house and the yard, always in the corner of my eye" (215). He decides to talk to her daughter and persuade her to wear boys' clothes such as "breeches" or "leggings" (215), in which "[she] could be like her brothers" (216). He also adds that he can get her a job and a good schooling in this way. Her father hides her into the image of a boy and gets her apprenticeship because girls cannot find a place for themselves in the field of painting. This would create an opportunity to work with masters of fresco in workshops, and to earn a good reputation. Otherwise, she would be a good female painter in a nunnery, where she "can spend [her] days making colors or filling the pages of holy saint books with [her] pictures" (217). Her father tries to give her daughter a place in society and encourages her transformation: "and then, when you are established in others' eyes as to who you have *become*" (218, original italics).

In George's chapter, the clothing is not as explicitly described as in Francescho's chapter. However, it is clear that Francescho cannot identify her gender in the first place and thinks of her as a boy when she sees her back in front of the painting. Thus, it is probable that Francescho's assumption of the gender was based on the physical appearance and the clothing which varied extensively in fashion for hundreds of years. However, in the middle of the chapter she realizes that "[t]his boy is a girl. I knew it" (251). Francescho finds out that George is a girl because of her polite way of apologizing and her girlish voice and "this girl is good at dance" (251). As stated earlier, such obscurity in relation to gender is another type of duality that Ali Smith employs in her novel.

Francescho's androgynous state is exemplified in the March fresco, which points to another duality in the novel reflecting both male and female traits. Smith was inspired by the androgynous young man in the March fresco of Cossa. When Borso d'Este

becomes the Duke of Ferrara, he uses the pragmatic side of art as a tool that promotes his political deeds and praises his services both in real life and in fiction. To present himself as an ideal ruler, he builds for himself an upper floor in the palace "with a new big hall in it for feasts and dancing and round that hall's walls was where he wanted painted a whole year of his own life, month by month, to show the people who'd live in the future what a good ruler he'd been" (Smith 290). Francescho is given the east wall of the hall; March, April and May, on which he is appointed to paint Minerva, Venus and Apollo respectively. Each month represents an Olympic Deity on the top layer, and the courtly life of Borso on the bottom layer. In-between these parts, the layer is divided into three decans, representing ten days each with a different symbol of the month's zodiac. Pellegrino Prisciano, an architect, historian and astrologer, is the personal advisor of the Duke and he is responsible for the construction of the frescoes. Mr de Prisciano, the Falcon, gives the instructions on the drawings and paintings of the decans in the middle part of the March fresco:

> The first decan of Aries should be dressed in white. He should be tall, dark, powerful, a masterful man of great good power in the world. He is to be the guardian not just of the room but of the whole year. He should be standing next to a ram to symbolize the constellation. And next to that please put a figure which stands for youth and fruitfulness, holding, say, an arrow, for skill and for aim. A self-portrait maybe, Francescho, your own fine face, what do you say? (297)

It can be inferred from Clark's interview with Ali Smith that the writer was particularly attracted to the androgynous figure. Smith associates this queer figure directly with Francescho in order to blur the duality between the male and the female. In the novel, the Falcon orders Francescho during the painting process to paint this figure in resemblance to her. The figure on the right who is "a masterful man of great good power

in the world" is described with manly traits: "tall, dark and powerful" (Smith 297). Furthermore, he is portrayed as "the guardian not just of the room but of the whole year" (297). As for the figure on the left, the Falcon does not use adjectives related to power, but rather uses adjectives to express the beauty, "youth and fruitfulness" of the figure (297). Hereby, the Falcon reflects the presupposed societal norms on Francescho and expects him to paint accordingly. Francescho is expected to fulfill the requirement of societal gender norms and paint her "self-portrait" and "fine face" (297). Although Francescho does not explicitly state her feelings about being under a male disguise, it can be inferred that she is not pleased with the double standard in payment. Her work would not be appreciated if she revealed her femininity, nor would she gain the same reputation. This is reinforced with the Marquis's payment policy: "The Marquis won't be persuaded to give you any more money than us. … Cause you should know, Master Francescho. That he likes the boys. Not the girls" (319). It is certain that she would not be paid at all had she been a female painter. She does not accept to be paid less than her worth and paints the figures on the fresco with people whom she loved the most; her mother, her father, her friend Barto, the three prostitutes in the brothel. She rejects to paint the courtly life of the Duke as requested and instead paints her loved ones in secret. Upon receiving the news that she will not be paid her worth, she decides to leave Ferrara. She realizes that she will be punished not to conform to the norms of the patriarchy and heads to Bologna. Still disguised as a male, Francescho is represented as a figure who subverts the appointed gender attributes by defying its confines.

In the construction of gender identity, another duality is created with the friends of the narrators. In Francescho's chapter, Barto is the friend of Francescho. He takes Francescho to the brothel where she meets Ginevra, Agnola and Isotta respectively. Each one of them contributes to the construction of her gender identity separately. While Francescho paints Ginevra and Agnola on condition that they rest on bed only, she

becomes intimate with Isotta. At first, Barto does not know that Francescho is a girl: “Is it true? he said. You’ve been false? All these years?” (Smith 278). She answers, “I have never not been true” (278). Barto contributes to the gender identity of Francescho by uncovering her hidden feelings about her own gender. In George’s chapter, Helena Fisker is a friend from school. She visits George at home and becomes intimate with her. She attempts to kiss George, thinking that George has the same feelings for her. However, she does not receive a kiss in return. Just like Barto, Helena also contributes to the construction of her gender identity by making George question her feelings and desires. In fact, the name Helena is stated only once. She is referred as ‘H.’ for the rest of the chapter, which indicates that there is no need and no importance in the naming and gendering the character. H. and George put forth that “nobody’s the slightest idea who we are, or who we were, not even we ourselves” (282). Thus, they accept that their identity is formed in many ways which even they cannot comprehend accurately. The concept of gender fluidity in George’s identity is reflected through her friendship with H., which parallels her mother’s friendship with Lisa Goliard. In other words, her mother imposes the idea of flexibility in relationships and identities on her daughter. In this way, George will not take the burden of societal roles on her shoulders.

Throughout the novel, different narrative techniques are employed to convey the idea of duality. To exemplify one of them, the notion of time is challenged in the novel with the use of the present and the past tense simultaneously and interchangeably. This duality is presented with the dual narration of both tenses such as “Not says. Said” (Smith 3) and “Her mother doesn’t say. Her mother said” (10). Likewise, George corrects herself and also corrects her mother’s use of language by sticking to the grammatical conventions rigidly. George uses many shifts during her narration to deliver the parallelism of the past and the present. Her use of language is grammatically and structurally correct in George’s chapter. However, in Francescho’s chapter, there are many attempts to break the

conventions and rules of grammar such as incomplete and incorrect uses of language, because language itself is used as an apparatus in the hands of patriarchy. In Francescho's chapter, Francescho breaks the conventional notion of time and visits contemporary England through the painting in the palace. Following that scene, she travels with George like a ghost or a "doppelgänger[30]" ("doppelgänger") who is not restricted to time and place. Francescho narrates the story in tense shifts when she talks about her apprenticeship and when she talks to the girl in front of the painting. There are plenty examples of unconventional lines, incomplete sentences, ungrammatical structures and faulty use of punctuation. The sentences are sometimes too long, and sometimes some words lack letters. There is little use of capitalization. The perspective is fragmented in thought and language. These are exemplified in the following lines:

> can hardly remember my own name, can hardly
>
> rememb anyth
>
> though I do like, I did like
>
> a fine piece of cloth
>
> and the way the fall of a ribboned bit off a shirt or sleeve will twist as
>
> it falls
>
> …
>
> but oh God dear Christ and all the saints- that picture he's – it's mine, I
>
> did it,
>
> who's it again?
>
> Not St Paolo though St Paolo's always bald cause bald's how you're
>
> supposed to do St Paolo- wait, I – yes I, think I- the face, the –
>
> cause where are the others? (Smith 192)

[30] Doppelgänger in German means someone who is double with the other, generally in appearance. It can be translated as double-goer into English. It is "the ghostly counterpart of a living person" ("doppelgänger").

The grammatical errors and the use of fragmented language makes Francescho's narration more mystical and fantastical than that of George, which is rather conventional. It can be inferred that Francescho's unusual state is strengthened with the use of such language. Furthermore, the perspective through the painting can be regarded as Francescho's imagination, which contributes to the idea of fictionality that is supported with the language. On the other hand, it is fair to say that George fictionalizes Francescho's story when she scrutinizes her works carefully; imagining about Francescho, she finds many similarities with her own state. Ali Smith states her ideas on this as follows: "Smith suggests that we narrativize the contemporary when we look at art from other times, finding connections to our own situations and thereby opening up an uncanny feeling of 'knowing' others who have shared similar social or socioeconomic predicaments to ours" (qtd. in Gray 70). Smith proposes that when George looks at the frescoes and considers about "power, desire, worth, and knowingness" she relates her own state to the frescoes and thus "narrativizes" the story (70).

Ali Smith is fascinated by the outer layer- the fresco- that is visible to the eye, and is curious about the unseen layers underneath. She questions the perception of the eye in her novel through George's mother, using the layering of the frescoes: "Do things just go away? Her mother says. Do things that happened not exist, or stop existing, just because we can't see them happening in front of us?" (Smith 104). The mother maintains that the frescoes in Ferrara have been recently uncovered, and until that time they were not known, which makes them absent to the eye, though they are there in reality. Therefore, Smith deliberately forms the same layered structure of the frescoes in her narration so as to question which layer of the narration leads to the reality. The dual narration comes out of this dilemma: the question whether the narration on the surface reflects the real world and the real human condition or the narration hides stories underneath. George states that "the picture below came first … because it was done first" (103). George's mother

expresses her feelings about the surface layer and the picture underneath: “But the first thing we see, … and most times the only thing we see, is the one on the surface. Thus, does that mean it comes first after all? And does that mean the other picture, we know about it, may as well not exist?” (103). They discuss whether the layers lead to the real story or not, which creates a sense of mystery in the novel. Their discussion on the layered structure of frescoes is associated with the narrative structure of the novel:

> It is like everything is in layers. Things happen right at the front of the pictures and at the same time they continue happening, both separately and connectedly, behind, and behind that, and again behind that, like you can see, in perspective, for miles. Then there are the separate details, like that man with the duck. They’re all also happening on their own terms. The picture makes you look at both – the close-up happenings and the bigger picture. Looking at the man with the duck is like seeing how everyday and how almost comic cruelty is. The cruelty happens in among everything else happening. It is an amazing way to show how ordinary cruelty really is. (53)

It is clear that the layered structure of frescoes bears similarities to the narrative structure of the novel in that it conveys the story in parts, which parallel each other. The details serve for the bigger picture and lead to the reality in different perspectives. Thus, these perspectives from a closer to a distant angle play a considerable a role in reflecting the story as it is, whether as the whole story or in parts. In the novel, it becomes apparent when Francescho’s perspective changes through the painting and when she is next to George. She can observe different focal points only when she changes her perspective.

In conclusion, the novel presents several examples in dualities that contribute to the construction of gender identity of the narrators. It is obvious that Smith reflects these through the individualistic use of narrative techniques in order to present the idea of

fluidity in the construction of gender identity and defy the established gender roles. By employing parallelisms through the past and the present, she deconstructs the traditional narrative style and breaks the regular flow of time in her novel. In this flow, the duality of the male and the female is defined as a fluid construct that is *performed* by the person rather than *learned* by the society. Smith's construction of a fluid gender identity suggests that there is no fixed attribute of genders that should be expected to be the essential trait of a gender. In this novel, Smith not only turns the society's perception of gender identity upside down with her unconventional narrators, she skillfully exhibits that the gender identity is a performance and not a fixed concept with the help of the layered structure form and the dual narrative techniques.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has aimed to analyze the unconventional narrative techniques in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* and Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* in the light of selected narrative theories. It is argued that both writers create ambiguously gendered narrators who subvert the fixed binary gender system in a patriarchal society in various ways. Winterson's *The PowerBook* and Smith's *How to Be Both* can be considered to be the postmodern representations of the twentyfirst century British novel as they engage with the subversive nature of gender roles in a patriarchal society and they offer the idea that the constructed gender roles have impacted the narrators' construction of gender identity. These two contemporary novels elaborate on the gender roles which have been rendered meaningless in alternative worlds. The female narrators in both novels suffer from societal constraints and struggle for a place in society where they can embrace their gender identity. Through their different characterization, the narrators clearly demonstrate how easily they can transgress the boundaries of their genders, which can be regarded as a resistance to the male dominance and power. Therefore, the chosen works exemplify how the narrator can construct his/her gender identity in relation to the concept of performativity through the unconventional narrative techniques.

This thesis has argued that Winterson and Smith apply unconventional narrative techniques to challenge the traditional narratives and to turn the patriarchal voices into fluid queer voices. The selected novels embrace the ungendered characters in a system of heterosexual matrix. Both writers experiment on narrative styles in their novels because they aim to create a queer voice within a world of patriarchal writing. In other words, the need for new voices in the realm of male dominant narratives have come out because queer voices have been neglected. In their texts, they empathize the notion that since the male dominant narrations serve to androcentric mode of thinking, it is almost impossible

to bring the female or queer thinking to the fore. With this aim in mind, it has been discussed that Smith and Winterson deconstruct the traditional linear plot structure by incorporating cyclic plot structures in their dual and multiple storytelling in order to create individual patterns of narration. They have brought a novelty in the novel genre that embraces the queer voices that stand out of the binary system. They dislodge the narrators from fixed sexual and gendered attributions to acknowledge nonbinary voices in a heteronormative world. While in *How to Be Both* there are two narrators in the dual narratives, in *The PowerBook* there are multiple narratives with one narrator in numerous figures. It can be regarded that these different voices embody the female voice in the patriarchy.

The first chapter has provided the requisite theoretical background for the analysis of this thesis. It has examined that women are rendered *the other* in the literary realm, let alone in social life. The chapter brings forth that there is an overwhelming male dominance in literary works that neglect the female voice. Within this single-voiced territory, there has not been enough space for the female or the queer voices. The need for these voices has brought about the feminist narrative techniques, in other words, the newly developing genre- feminist narratology. Prominent critics such as Susan Lanser and Elaine Showalter have argued that narratology that lacks female and queer voices is insufficient; thus, they assert that it is necessary to create such voices in the narratives for those who do not belong to the male dominant narratology. The critics propound that by deconstructing Aristotelian plot structure, which is linear, sequential and chronological, feminist writers introduce a cyclic plot structure, which is non-linear, nonsequential, and unchronological. In structural aspects, feminist narratology subverts the traditional notion of time and place and constructs an unconventional territory through the hands of the female and queer writers.

The leading theorists in narratology, Gerard Genette and Mieke Bal, have contributed to the field of feminist narratology. Their works examine the function of the narrator and how the narrator is studied in different layers. This thesis has focused on the autodiegetic narrator, who is the main character narrating the story. The autodiegetic narrator uses the first-person narration. However, this point of view may change according to the different focal points it presents. The term focalization has been explained in relation to the narrators' storytelling in which opposing perspectives are presented in the same scene. This has been exemplified with George and Francescho's paintings. Through the painting, two perspectives have been demonstrated; one from the painting to George, the other from George to the painting. These two focal points either create a distance between the reader and the narrator, or a close relationship with the narrator. Both functions have been applied in the novel to break the conventions of storytelling.

The theorists have demonstrated that most European languages are gender-specific, as the use of personal pronouns reveals gender. In other words, it is almost impossible to narrate a story without revealing the narrator's gender in European languages. However, there are certain languages, as Turkish, whose personal pronouns are gender-neutral. In this language, it is possible to avoid revealing the gender. The interchanging use of personal pronouns in both novels offers a fluidity in gender identity which frees the narrator. As a consequence, language can be regarded as an instrument to demonstrate the gender of the narrator, but can also offer a medium for a fluid gender identity construction.

The second chapter has discussed Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* in relation to Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity and has argued that Winterson challenges the traditional narrative by deconstructing the notion of time and place in a virtual world with an unconventional narrator who subverts the presupposed gender roles.

The main focus of the chapter has been on the narrator Ali, who is an e-writer and writes stories for her customers. Ali appears in different characters in the multiple stories of the novel. These stories are intertwined with each other although they take place in different time zones and places. Liberating herself from the gender expectations, Ali transforms into different characters to dismantle the binary of male and female. S/he is in a constant flux throughout the story and reconfigures the gender norms. The use of fantastical images, the inclusion of technology in an alternative virtual world and the fragmented storytelling contribute to the unconventional narrative techniques that serve to challenge the traditional and the familiar. In the chapter, it has been argued that Ali is a narrator whose gender identity remains obscure as to relieve himself/herself from the burden of gender roles. With this in mind, s/he tells stories in which she is the main character with the leading role who has been on a journey of finding her true self. This journey starts with "open[ing] [the] hard drive" (Smith 7) and "sav[ing]" it at the end (233). The chapter provides many instances of Ali's characterization that lead to the questioning of her current state of gender. The art of horticultural grafting enables Ali to perform both gender traits that have problematized the preconstructed gender roles. In this way, the boundaries of gender roles are easily transgressed with a tulip flower attached to the place of the genital organ. This flower is a tool to ridicule the faculty of men and to undermine the male sexual power by attaching a flower to the body. Interestingly, Ali performs both genders excitingly and deconstructs the established perceptions of gender. At this point, this particular thin line between fact and fantasy suggests the possibility for an alternative space for nonbinary genders.

The chapter has revealed that Winterson's narrative style challenges fixed gender identities created by patriarchal norms and subverts gender roles assigned by patriarchy. It subverts conventions of space and time by exceeding the boundaries of traditional plot structure. The novel exhibits women's status in social life and provides a safer place for

female characters in a virtual world. In other words, Winterson's unique narrative style proposes gender-free characters and unconventional settings in order to express their gender identities in a virtual world without any boundaries. The e-writer Ali or Alix is the embodiment of various characterization. S/he represents a queer person with a gender-free identity, who is relieved from the confines of gender norms by challenging the mainstream values. In this aspect, she defies traditional boundaries and invents spaces and times for the newly constructed identities in order to construct a voice in the patriarchy.

The third chapter has discussed Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* in relation to Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity and how the two narrators subvert the gender roles through unconventional narrative techniques in various ways. Constructed on dualities, the novel provides many instances of the past and the present, fact and fiction, male and female. The narrators construct their gender identity in a patriarchal society, whether it is in the fictional or real world. The novel focuses on the dual narration of Francescho and George, who perform their genders regardless of the expected societal norms. On the other hand, this novel makes use of fantastical elements in an alternative world with androgynous narrators who are closely associated with the Renaissance art. The narrator Francescho struggles to get a place among the male fresco painters and for this reason she has to wear male clothes to share an equal position with them. She has been heavily influenced by her parents, who contribute to the formation of her gender identity immensely. The mother, who died at an early age, encourages Francescho to perform a fluid gender so that she can be free from the societal norms. However, the father asks her to hide herself in the male dominant world since he is accustomed to the male thinking and presumes its confines for a young girl.

On the other hand, George is a young girl whose gender identity is shaped by her mother much more than by her father. Her real name has been Georgia, which only Mrs.

Rock calls her. Mrs. Rock has been the spokesperson for the society, who expects her patients to conform to the rules of society without any resistance. She is ignorant of George's mental health; what is more, Mrs. Rock's behavior distracts George so much that she criticizes the meaningless societal norms through the psychiatrist. This example questions the utility of the mental health institution and displays institutional restrictions based on the society's rules.

The chapter has analyzed the dual narratives and exhibited how these narrations merge into one another in the middle of the story. As it is a dual narration, the story does not have a proper beginning and end. It has been argued that these novels attempt to challenge the traditional linear plot structure and invent a cyclic plot structure that disregards the chronological order of time. Additionally, Smith avoids prearranged assumptions of the characters and the plot, which is the reason why she has created ambiguously gendered narrators. Along with the structural novelties, Smith has created unconventional characters by subverting the traditional notion of time and space and bringing about infinite possibilities of gender in an alternative realm.

Similar to Winterson's *The PowerBook*, Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* introduces a new space and a new time zone in which the narrators can embrace their gender identity. Whether the storytelling is real or fictional, the narrators merge into one another in the place of purgatory. One half of the story is "composed of fragmentary snapshots of del Cossa's life" in Renaissance Italy while the other half presents "late twentieth century England, with characters experiencing, interpreting and otherwise contemplating del Cossa's art" (Anker 21). For this reason, the novel's structure is itself like a puzzle since it is hard to find connections in two seemingly separate stories. This in-between temporal and spatial zone, namely between sixteenth century Italy and twentieth century England, provides the narrator with an unconventional setting in which s/he can find her/his real identity.

Although the genders of the narrators are not revealed at the beginning of each chapter, it is this unclear, ambiguous and fluid gender identity that Ali Smith aims to construct. This ambiguity enables a new identity for the narrators in the new space and time zone. The novel explores this new identity constructed through the stunning dual narration which is free from space, time and gender. The overlapping historical structure in the novel subverts the traditional chronological time order and creates a nonlinear sequence of time. Duality is the key point in Smith's novel as "the text is presented in both orders, Francescho is both male and female, the novel concerns with both history and fiction, George is both George and Georgie" (Bilge 114) while Francescho is speculated to be a girl, Francescha. In this sense, the novel explores social boundaries in gender, space and time while it constructs a new place and different identities in an alternative world.

To conclude, this thesis has analyzed the unconventional narrative techniques that play a vital role in constructing the narrators' gender identities and that become instruments to challenge the patriarchy and subvert the traditional gender norms in *The Power Book* by Jeanette Winterson and *How to Be Both* by Ali Smith. In this sense, this thesis has argued that both Winterson and Smith have successfully established their literary standings within the contemporary British literature by reconstructing the gender identities of their narrators. It has been conducted a close textual analysis by referring to the dual and fragmented narrative styles and the representation of the characters who signify the need to pursue a gender-free and safe place for their self-realization. It has also been clarified that Winterson and Smith's works employ similar narrative instruments. Their unique construction of the narrators' gender identity subverts the established gender norms. Although the techniques used by both writers seem similar, it is the unique construction of their narrators' gender identity and splendid use of

storytelling that distinguish them. In that sense, they contribute new perspectives to the ongoing discussions in these subjects.

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Judith Butler'ın toplumsal cinsiyet performansı teorisi ışığında, Jeanette Winterson'ın *The PowerBook* ve Ali Smith'in *How to Be Both* eserlerinde geleneksel olmayan anlatı teknikleri kullanarak ataerkillik tarafından önceden oluşturulmuş toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini nasıl yıktıklarını incelemektedir. Toplumsal cinsiyet, doğumla birlikte edinilmekten ziyade performans yoluyla elde edilen bir olgudur. Bu performans, ikili cinsiyet sistemini yapıbozuma uğratmaktadır. Feminist anlatıbilimdeki son gelişmeler, postmodern feminist yazarların geleneksel olmayan anlatı teknikleri aracılığıyla akışkan cinsiyet kimliği inşa etmelerinin yolunu açmıştır. Her iki yazar da alternatif mekanlarda döngüsel olay örgüsü kalıpları yaratarak ve Aristotelesçi geleneksel olay örgüsü yapısına meydan okuyarak zaman ve mekân düzenini yeniden yapılandırır. Mikhail Bakhtin'in roman hakkındaki düşüncelerine göre, roman türü kolaylıkla yeniden yapılandırılabilir çünkü değişime açıktır ve sürekli gelişim halindedir. Her iki roman da ataerkil bir dünyada toplumsal cinsiyet sınırlarını aşan anlatıcılardan akışkan cinsiyet kimlikleri yaratarak önceden oluşturulmuş toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini yıkmaktadır. Winterson'ın romanı anlatıcının farklı bedenlerdeki temsilleriyle birden fazla anlatıdan oluşurken, Smith'in romanı, akışkan cinsiyet kimliği arayışında olan iki anlatıcıyı ikili bir anlatı üzerinden anlatmaktadır. Bu romanlar, kişisel zamirlerin birbiriyle yer değiştirmesi yoluyla anlatıda toplumsal cinsiyetin nasıl çözüldüğünün birer örneğidir; bu da okuyucuyu karakterin cinsiyetiyle ilgili herhangi bir önyargılı varsayımdan alıkoymaktadır. Benzer şekilde bu romanlar, Donna Haraway'ın herhangi bir toplumsal norma uymayan arada kalmış varlığı olan *cybor*guna benzeyen *queer* anlatıcılar sunarlar. Her iki roman da ataerkil bir dünyada karşıt ikili cinsiyet sistemini eleştirir. Bu metinler anlatı yapısına akıcı bir ses katmaktadır ve bu seslerin kendilerini gerçekleştirmeleri için cinsiyetten bağımsız ve güvenli bir yere sahip olmaları gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Toplumsal cinsiyet performansı, çiftcinsiyetlilik, feminist anlatıbilim, Jeanette Winterson, *The PowerBook*, Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* and Ali Smith's *How to Be Both* by focusing on the unconventional narrative techniques through which they subvert the preconstructed gender roles assigned by the patriarchy in the light of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Gender is a constitution that is performed rather than acquired by birth, and this performativity deconstructs the traditional binaries of male and female genders. Recent developments in feminist narratology have paved the way for postmodern feminist writers to construct a fluid gender identity through unconventional narrative techniques. Challenging the Aristotelian traditional plot structure, both writers reconfigure the order of time and place by creating cyclic patterns of plots in alternative realms. These changes can be easily applied to the novel genre, because it is open to change and is always in progress which coincides with Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on novel. Both novels subvert the preestablished gender roles by creating fluid gender identities of the narrators who transgress the boundaries of gender in a patriarchal world. While Winterson's novel is based on multiple narratives with different embodiments of the narrator, Smith's novel is constructed on a dual narrative, presenting two narrators in search of a fluid gender identity. These novels exemplify how gender is dissolved in narration through interchanging use of personal pronouns, which prevents the reader from any preconceived assumptions of the character's gender. In a similar fashion, both novels present queer narrators who can be resembled to Donna Haraway's cyborg, an in-between being that does not fit to any societal norms. In their novels, these two writers criticize the fixed binary system of gender in a heteronormative world. These texts incorporate a fluid voice into the narrative structure and demonstrate the need for these voices to have a gender-free and safe place for their self-realization.

Keywords: Gender performativity, androgyny, feminist narratology, Jeanette Winterson, *The PowerBook*, Ali Smith, *How to Be Both*