



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**UNRAVELLING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SEXUALITY IN JEANETTE
WINTERSON'S *THE PASSION* AND *WRITTEN ON THE BODY* THROUGH
FREUDIAN AND FOUCAULDIAN INTERPRETATIONS**

ZARINA HAMZAH @ SHAREENA HANTHOM

FBMK 2012 9

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UPM By

ZARINA HAMZAH @ SHAREENA HANTHOM

**This Thesis Submitted to the school of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
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fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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Faculty: Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication

This study focuses on Jeanette Winterson's conceptualization of sexuality in two of her novels, *The Passion* and *Written on the Body*. I argue that while sexuality has mainly been viewed as either biologically and physically determined or socially and culturally prescribed, Winterson approaches the subject with greater fluidity, avoiding too deep an attachment to either camp. Instead, Winterson at once acknowledges the material passion generated from human bodies and the conditioning of those bodies by social specificities, thus creating a type of sexuality that, at times, even defies distinctions of sex and gender. In other words, sexuality for Winterson is an ambiguous condition, or rather, an endless experience.

Sigmund Freud and Michel Foucault can be deemed as sitting at opposite ends of the pole of sexuality, as it were. While Freud affirms that sexuality is inherent, an impulse

and a physical manifestation of noumenal conditions, Foucault advocates the inevitable relationship between power and sexuality, wherein the latter works within a framework that involves culture, society and politics. But, I argue, understanding Winterson's peculiar approach to sexuality is made clearer through both Freud's and Foucault's interpretations of sexuality, since she does not adhere to either strand but seems to build her own ideas of sexuality through supposed contradictions.

Therefore, in this study, I propose to show, through a mobilization of Freud and Foucault's theories of sexuality, how Winterson rejects simplistic distinctions thus far propounded within the discourse of sexuality. Following this, I attempt to draw out Winterson's own lexicon of sexuality, one that both internalizes and externalizes issues such as passion, lust, love and desire. Finally, through her rejection of conventional notions of sexuality, out of which her unique lexicon of sexuality is generated, I argue that Winterson's final purpose in breaking away from mere generalizations of sexuality is to affirm that sexual fluidity and honesty lead towards self-realization, a condition that is necessary for societal change and the possibility of change on a larger, more global scale.

Abstrak Dari Tesis Dibentangkan Kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Bagi
Memenuhi Keperluan Untuk Ijazah Master Sastera

**MEMPELOPORI KONSEP SEKSUALITI DARI PANDANGAN JEANETTE
WINTERSON DALAM “*THE PASSION*” DAN “*WRITTEN ON THE BODY*”
MENGUNAKAN KAEDAH FREUDIAN DAN FOUCAULDIAN**

Oleh

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Kajian ini berkisar mengenai konsep Seksualiti dari pandangan Jeanette Winterson dalam dua novelnya yang bertajuk “*The Passion*” dan “*Written on the Body*”. Dari pandangan pengkaji, Seksualiti secara umumnya telah dilihat sama ada dari segi biologi dan fizikal atau sosial dan budaya yang telah diamalkan sejak turun temurun, tetapi Winterson memberi pendekatan berbeza terhadap konsep ini secara lebih luas, di mana konsep ini mempunyai definisi yang berbeza sama sekali dari teori Freud dan Foucault. Winterson mendefinisikan konsep Seksualiti sebagai keghairahan untuk memiliki kehendak dan keinginan yang dijana dari tubuh manusia mempengaruhi keadaan tubuh manusia dari segi sosial, di mana ia mewujudkan sejenis seksualiti baru yang menentang dan merentasi perbezaan seks dan jantina. Dalam ayat yang mudah,

seksualiti dari pandangan Winterson ialah keadaan separa sedar, atau secara ringkas, keadaan yang akan dialami seumur hidup atau untuk jangka masa yang lama.

Sigmund Freud dan Michel Foucault mempunyai pandangan yang bertentangan mengenai Seksualiti, sama sekali berbeza dari definisi konsep ini yang telah dikemukakan oleh Winterson. Freud berpendapat bahawa Seksualiti wujud secara semulajadi dan diwarisi, naluri hati dan manifestasi fizikal ke atas keadaan noumenal, manakala Foucault berhujah bahawa hubungan di antara kuasa dan Seksualiti adalah bergantung rapat dengan satu sama lain dan tidak dapat dipisahkan, dimana Seksualiti berfungsi dalam kerangka kerja yang melibatkan budaya, masyarakat dan politik. Sebaliknya, pengkaji berpendapat, pendekatan Winterson yang agak pelik dapat difahami secara mudah, berbeza dengan tafsiran Seksualiti oleh Freud dan Foucault terhadap konsep Seksualiti, kerana dia tidak mematuhi kedua-dua tafsiran yang disebutkan tetapi mengutarakan idea beliau sendiri mengenai Seksualiti yang berpandukan kedua-dua pendapat dan idea Freud dan Foucault.

Oleh sebab itu, dalam kajian ini, pengkaji mencadangkan mobiliti atau pergerakan dari teori Seksualiti yang diutarakan oleh Freud dan Foucault kepada konsep baru, serta bagaimana Winterson menolak konsep terdahulu secara mudah kepada umum dalam wacana Seksualiti. Mengikut kaedah ini, pengkaji akan melakar leksikon Seksualiti Winterson, dalam satu kerangka kerja yang akan meliputi aspek dalaman dan luaran isu seperti keghairahan, nafsu, cinta dan keinginan. Kesimpulannya, pengkaji berpendapat leksikon unik yang dikemukakan akan dibangunkan dengan penolakan tanggapan Seksualiti yang konvensional dan akan membawa ke arah pencapaian matlamat akhir

Winterson, iaitu mengubah pandangan umum terhadap Seksualiti dimana keperluan seksual berubah-ubah dan kejujuran akan membawa ke arah kesedaran diri, satu keadaan yang perlu untuk mengubah pandangan masyarakat dan kemungkinan mengubah tanggapan ini dalam skala yang lebih luas dan global.



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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 8 June 2012 to conduct the final examination of Zarina Hamzah on her thesis entitled “Unravelling the conceptualization of Sexuality in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion and Written on the Body* through Freudian and Foucauldian Interpretations” in accordance with universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra or at any other institution.

ZARINA HAMZAH @SHAREENA HANTHOM

Date: 8 June 2012

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL – Art & Lies: A Piece for Three Voices and a Bawd

AO – Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery

GS – Gut Symmetries

KC – Lighthousekeeping

O – Oranges Not the only Fruit

P – Passion

PB – PowerBook

S – Sexing the Cherry

WB – Written on the Body

Vol: 1 – Volume 1: An Introduction

Vol: 2 – Volume 2: The Use Of Pleasure

Vol: 3 – Volume 3: The Care Of The Self

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5. CONCLUSION

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