



# Body Image and Identity in Jeanette Winterson's "Written on the Body"

*Britta Sonnenberg*

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Seminar paper from the year 2003 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0 (B), University of Cologne (English Seminar), course: Hauptseminar Writing with a Difference, language: English, comment: , abstract: Jeanette Winterson's "Written on the Body" (1990) draws a realistic picture of twentieth century England, but in contrast to the majority of post-modern works that display chaos and displacement often accompanied by apocalyptic future visions, "Written on the Body sets love and trust against individualism and control. The simple plot of the story as well as the overload of metaphors and imagery have misled some critics into judging the novel as trivial and romantic, but a closer look clearly does not hold that interpretation. The use of imagery and fantastic elements is much too pointed to be read as mere poetic illustration of romantic feelings. In fact what seems trivial and naive at the surface appears highly thought through at a deeper look. "Written on the Body" is a notable comment on society's perception of gender and identity. The ostentatious playing with cultural conventions and assumptions related to sexual relationships and the female body, constitutes a sociocritical statement, which is artistically wrapped up in a melodramatic love affair. It challenges the conventional binary gender system, although, at the same time, it seems itself trapped in this system. In this paper I want to explore the representation of body, gender, and identity in "Written on the Body".

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