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McEwan and Gilbert Adair“

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of incest and incest taboo have received a considerable amount of attention throughout human history, however the origins of such taboo are utterly unknown and open for discussion. The long-standing problem of obscurity has given opportunity for many theories to flourish and speculate how come such prohibitions exist, as one can read in detail in the following chapter dedicated to the phenomenon of incest theory. The numerous researchers contributed to the territory of consanguinity, most importantly Sigmund Freud and his groundbreaking book *Totem and Taboo* about the urge to commit incest (1913), Edward Westermarck with his opposing theory of instinctive aversion towards incest in *The History of Human Marriage* (1891) and Claude Lévi-Strauss with *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949) in which he connects incest taboo with origins of society.

Incest is usually perceived as something unnatural and believed to be socially unacceptable. The selection of literary works analyzed in this thesis is influenced by the fact that they can be categorized as romances. The issue of prejudice towards the incest itself might be overcome by a deeper analysis of the relationships of the characters. In spite of being romanticized, incest might support the hierarchy of relations dominated by the male sibling. On the basis of psychoanalytic analysis together with feminist analysis this thesis will explore the familial relationships of the characters of the novels and will endeavor to identify the patriarchal hierarchy within the incestuous couples. The topic of incest is depicted variously in the selected novels *The Cement Garden* by Ian McEwan, *The Dreamers* by Gilbert Adair and *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides. The primary aim of this thesis is to demonstrate extent to which it supports the male patriarchy in the relationships of the characters. Via five chosen historical discourses where the incest is deployed in (religion, morality, genetics, law and society stance) the relationships will be juxtaposed in the sex/gender system. The five discourses are chosen because their presence is evident in the stories and their connection with incest has a strong influence on the characters. The feminist literary theory will be worked with in order to determine whether the system is represented as protecting brothers' sexual rights over sisters'.

The secondary interest is the romanticizing the incest taboo in the novels and whether it can be considered to be a means of sublimation. Freudian psychoanalytic

theory will be employed and mainly his concept of sublimation in order to investigate the possible effects of sublimation.

The following thesis is organized as follows: the first part of the thesis deals with incest in general: it includes the incest theory, meaning that the term incest is introduced and it is explained in what ways it is tabooed. The relativism of incest and democratic theory of incest as well as the Freudian psychoanalytic and feminist literary theories' stance towards the subject are also present in the first part. The second part is dedicated to the historical discourses and what are the circumstances of specific relationships in the novels. The organization of chapters is divided according to the novels; the first is *Middlesex*, than *The Dreamers* and lastly *The Cement Garden*. Each novel's analysis has subchapters dedicated to Westermarck effect, legality, genetics, religion, morality, society stance and the investigation of patriarchal structures. The third part of the thesis explores the notion of sublimation and how is it employed in the novels.

The thesis is hoping that the democratic theory of incest will be applied to consensual relationships between siblings (literary characters or real persons) in the future when there is no abuse involved.

1. INCEST THEORY

1.1 WHAT IS INCEST AND INCEST TABOO

Encyclopedia Britannica defines incest as “sexual relations between persons who, because of the nature of their kin relationships, are prohibited by law or custom from intermarrying”. It also states that “the term taboo is generally preferred over prohibition” and anthropology sees incest taboo as “universal”, despite the fact that it is “imposed differently in different societies and knowledge of its breach provokes widely different reactions from society to society”. Taboos seem to be obscure and mysterious. Their origin is unknown and the prohibitions have no grounds (Freud 18). Their fluidity changes from time to time and depends solely on society. As once the incest was a common practice in royal intermarriage, today it is illegal in most Western countries.

Although it is anthropologically tabooed, it is mentioned in literature again and again. The taboo of committing incest grows into fetish and urges authors to break taboos and write about it. How come it is universal and at the same time there are different reactions to it? Is the universality really so unquestionable? It is implied also in the definition of the *Cambridge Dictionary*: universal = “existing everywhere or involving everyone”. Then why the urge to comment on something carved in stone? As John Seery observes, “almost every figure in the Western canon addressed the issue of incest. In fact, we might venture a bolder claim: Incest may well be the only particular topic that all of the above figures have in common” (13). Jacques Derrida, Gayle Rubin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Lacan, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georg Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Martin Luther, William Shakespeare and others form a large constellation of people who “have addressed the topic as a centerpiece of modern and late-modern study, collectively attesting to the premise that an incest taboo ought to be regarded as *the* founding trope of human civilization as such, the ur-origin of law and social order” (Seery 7). The subject matter of the topic is alluring because it has always been forbidden. The introduction to the book *Incest Avoidance and the Incest Taboos: Two Aspects of Human Nature* indicates that Arthur P. Wolf agrees with this position he writes: “Given that if there is anything more interesting than sex, it is tabooed sex, there is probably no need to justify my topic” (3). Chambers and Carver argue that the

humanity itself depends on the impossibility of consanguineous relationships, therefore incest can be seen as a foundation not only of society, but also of being human:

If incest is nothing more than an event so inhuman (occurring only in space 'outside the human') as to be unspeakable, then the act of incest must be prohibited and, if it should nonetheless occur, forgotten and erased. If society depends upon the prohibition of incest, a fundamental taboo against it, then the category of the human is based upon the impossibility of incest (or its erasure). (131)

The most obvious reason of writing about incest is perhaps not the attraction of the topic itself but the obscure origin of the prohibition of taboo. Spain divides the theories into two categories: *bioevolutionary* theory which states "that humans tend to avoid inbreeding and/or incest both because this is consistent with individual fitness aims and because a natural aversion to such acts emerges between people who live in a close, intimate relationship" (623). Wolf calls this position "*constitutionalist*" (2). One of the proponents of this theory was Edward Westermarck who claimed that people who are brought up together since the childhood cannot feel incestuously towards each other (Minkel). The Westermarck hypothesis will be discussed in following chapters. The theory conflicting to this is Freudian *psychocultural* theory, claiming that "incest taboos are effective restraints on innate impulses to commit incest" (Spain 623). Wolf again, calls the same approach "*conventionalist*" (3). These desires must be repressed in order to avoid incest and to maintain the culture in order.

Bruce Thomas Boehrer categorizes explanations into four standard categories:

- a) *instinctive aversion* (Westermarck, as seen above)
- b) *biological degeneration*: "a response to the adverse effects of inbreeding" (24)
- c) *family exogamy*: Lévi-Strauss' theory that incest is "a positive command to marry outside the immediate kinship unit" (26)
- d) *family competition*: above mentioned Freud's claim that "the urge to sleep with one's kin is as instinctive and inevitable as the urge to avoid doing so for Westermarck" (27).

If we are to talk about nature and culture as binary oppositions, incest is purely cultural because it is seen as "a monstrous transgression of nature", "a triumphant violation", "something 'unnatural'". To commit incest is to "break the holiest principles of nature" (Nietzsche 55). Claude Levi Strauss introduced a theory that opposes "the natural and cultural duality of the rule" (25). He claims that "[t]he prohibition of incest is in origin neither purely cultural nor purely natural, nor is it a composite mixture of elements from both nature and culture, it is the fundamental step

because of which, by which, but above all in which, the transition from nature to culture is accomplished” (25). If the incest taboo is really “*the* founding trope of human civilization as such” (Seery 7) why do we keep going back and dispute whether it is acceptable or shameful? Because we judge the individual stories as something that matters in the context of the world, but overall, as Lévi-Strauss suggests: “the prohibition of incest merely affirms, in a filed vital to the group’s survival, the pre-eminence of the social over the natural, the collective over the individual, organization over the arbitrary” (46). If the cultural order is to survive, it has to take into consideration the well-being of the society, rather than review every single case of consanguineous relations.

Christina von Braun in her work *From the Incest Taboo to the Nuremberg Racial Laws* clarifies the term *Blutschande*, which is a biblical or to be precise legal Austrian term for incest. During the WW2 it referred to relations with other races, but prior to the WW2 it referred to the “sin against one’s blood” (128), more specifically “entering into sexual relationships with one’s own family (one’s own blood)” (128). Von Braun says marriage was once: “the ideal of two people being together (or if you like, “twogether”) changed into an ideal of two people being just like one another, of them being as one; in short, it was an ideal of brotherly and sisterly affection” (130). Does not it imply that the model for marriage has been provided by brother-sister relationship? And at the same time, it is the least sinful case of incest. Ford lists the possible reasons why “incest between brothers and sisters does not carry the same onus as incest between fathers and daughters” (3) and thus is more frequently covered in literature: it is less traumatic for the woman and the power and authoritative abuse is not likely to be established as in the case of father/daughter relationship. Freud’s famous Oedipus and Elektra complexes refer to incest with parents. However, this Master thesis deals with brother-sister relationships for the reason that the romantic aspect is present in the novels and the cases themselves leave a polemical impression whether the incest taboo should be imposed here or not. On one hand the siblings commit *Blutschande* against their own blood, on the other hand they listen to what Daniel Wilson calls “a voice of blood” (qtd. in Barnes 1) that lures them towards each other. Therefore it can be concluded that incest is an inner conflict that cannot be resolved as long as one listens to either to voice of blood or voice of conscience. It remains unsolvable and inexplicable.

1.2 THE RELATIVISM OF INCEST

John Seery investigates the notion of “democratic theory of incest” and one can see the deep investigation of various theoretical stances in chronological order he conducts. In spite of the uncompromising theoretical stance towards the taboo of incest in general, he claims there is an “apparent U.S. literary obsession with incest” (6) and he uses the following quote from R. E. L. Masters: “Novelists, playwrights, poets and literary critic-essayists have made a greater contribution to the understanding of incest than have scientists and scholars” (qtd. in Seer 5). In the following paragraphs there is an intention to subjectively summarize the stance towards incest from the point of view of a reader. The three chosen novels offer completely different cases of brother-sister consanguineous sexual relations. What are being analyzed are the natures of relationships and the extent to which the incest supports the patriarchal hierarchy. Regardless of the results of the analysis in the following chapters, the sexual encounters were fully consensual. Most of the secondary literature one can find while doing research on the topic of incest deals with rape, psychological consequences and children molestation. “In the current social-scientific and therapeutic literatures, and in many media and popular culture sources, incest is almost immediately contextualized as child abuse, or simply sexual abuse without regard to age – most particularly in father-daughter cases” (Chambers Carver 131)”. Such strong topics are in my opinion irrelevant for application to the three novels, as the analyzed works can be classified as romances. Therefore there is no need to include the question of horrors of incest in this thesis.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are many theories related to the incest origin but it is essential to examine particular cases and not to condemn all of them immediately. Similarly to case of Antigone and her story of incest, these novels can be evaluated as non-horror cases of consanguinity. Chambers and Carver assume about her that “[n]either case includes power or aggression. Thus any presumed identity between incest (as heterosexual activity between ‘close’ relations) and scenarios of sexual abuse is undermined; the horror and trauma that result from incest in the tragedy follow exclusively from the taboo itself” (131). The same can be concluded about the novels analyzed here. This thesis neither advocates incest nor does it criticize it. It analyzes the patriarchal structures related to incest but it is everybody’s responsibility to

make their own judgment. However, one should agree with Mr. Masters, to understand incest is necessary to know specific cases in depth and that essential depth is provided the best by literary authors.

1.3 INCEST AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS /FEMINIST LITERARY THEORY

The aim of this chapter is to fill the gap of knowledge of how Freudian concepts of incest and taboo can be applied to the selected novels and to analyze via feminist theory to what extent the incestuous relationships are supporting the patriarchal hierarchy. The further analysis will research the intrafamilial relationships through five historical discourses. As not all of the discourses can be applied to each novel thus they will be mentioned only briefly. The objective is to provide a link between psychoanalysis and the depiction of incest in the literary works in traditional patriarchal familial system.

In his work *Totem and taboo*, Freud explains the relationship of tribal totemism and the origin of incest. He finds them inseparable (3). “In almost every place where we find totems we also find a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying. This, then, is ‘exogamy’, an institution related to totemism” (Freud 3). Exogamy, or otherwise defined as “marriage outside one’s own group” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*) is an opposite of endogamy. The choice of the novels is influenced by the fact that the characters opt for the less conventional type of relationship despite of the possible criticism from the society, ostracism even, and also possible legal consequences.

Gayle Rubin’s groundbreaking paper *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex* criticizes “some of the currently popular explanations of the genesis of sexual inequality” (158). She rereads Lévi-Strauss and Freud and attempts to redefine the sex/gender system. Women take on specific roles in the sex/gender system under specific conditions:

A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money...etc. (Rubin 158)

She insists “that oppression is not inevitable in [sex/gender system], but is the product of the specific social relations which organize it” (Rubin 168). Patriarchy, or male dominance is not necessary and the following thesis will analyze whether the patriarchal structure occurs in the novels and to what extent is it connected with incest. The specific social relations will be examined and the possible oppression will be identified.

Rubin examines the kinship system, thus the “observable and empirical forms of sex/gender systems” (169). The anthropological theory of kinship systems sees these systems not as “a list of biological relatives” (Rubin 169), but rather “a system of categories and statuses which often contradict actual genetic relationships” (Rubin 169). Such rhetoric is relevant to the topic of incest in the novels we will examine for the reason that despite the set genetic relationships: brother = sister, the characters themselves socially define their status as lover = lover, or husband = wife. At the same time to organize their sexuality, they might adopt the male dominated structure (patriarchy), as we will observe in the following chapters.

The kinship structures are the main topic of Lévi-Strauss’ *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, which Rubin labels as “a grand statement on the origin and nature of human society” (Rubin 171). Lévi-Strauss attempts to explain the marriages as “a most basic form of gift exchange” and “the incest taboo should be understood as a mechanism to insure that such exchanges take place between families and between groups” (Rubin 173). Rubin summarizes Strauss’ observation of the topic of taboos’ fluidity:

Since the existence of incest taboos is universal, but the content of their prohibitions variable, they cannot be explained as having the aim of preventing the occurrence of genetically close matings. Rather, the incest taboo imposes the social aim of exogamy and alliance upon the biological events of sex and procreation. The incest taboo divides the universe of sexual choice into categories of permitted and prohibited sexual partners. Specifically, by forbidding unions within a group it enjoins marital exchange between groups. (Rubin 173)

The problematic part of the “exchange of women” as Rubin sees is that “[s]ince Lévi-Strauss argues that the incest taboo and the results of its application constitute the origin of culture, it can be deduced that the world historical defeat of women occurred with the origin of culture, and is a prerequisite of culture” (Rubin 176). Culture, incest taboo and women’s rights were constructed by men “[h]ence feminist readings of the incest taboo stress its character as a cultural construct, imposing identity upon human beings in

general, and women in particular, according to the expedients of patriarchal commodity exchange” (Boehrer 144). To conclude this deduction, incest is mandatory for culture to be established and so is the male patriarchy. These two concepts are thus intertwined. Kinship systems exchange women, “sexual access, genealogical statuses, lineage names and ancestors, rights and people [...] – in concrete systems of social relationships. These relationships always include certain rights for men, others for women” (Rubin 177). In a kinships system “men have certain rights in their female kin, and [...] women do not have the same rights either to themselves or to their male kin” (Rubin 177).

Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory, edited by Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace states that “[t]raditional literary approaches to the representation of incest are of roughly three main types: rhetorical, historicist, and psychoanalytic” (298). In rhetorical approach incest operates in the role of a metaphor and historicist approach examines the way the texts integrates historical debates on incest. Psychoanalytic concept works with incest as a result of repression of human drives (Kowaleski-Wallace 298).

Feminist literary approaches to incest distinguish themselves from these earlier approaches by their interest in how the multiple dimensions of literary incest – its figurative function, its deployment in historical discourses (be they forensic, medical, moral, or theological), and its assumptions about universal human desire – work together as diverse but interrelated aspects of a system of representation that protects the sexual rights of men over their female relatives. (Kowaleski-Wallace 298)

Incest taboos were imposed as “a preventive measure for avoiding potential role conflict within the family” (Turner, Maryanski n.p). The hypothesis of this Master thesis is that in spite the fact that the traditional roles of brother and sister are deconstructed under the influence of incest, the gender roles supposedly remain the same. The following chapters will discuss the patriarchal hierarchy in more detail with the help of five historical discourses influenced by incest: religion, morality, genetics, law and society stance.

2. THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL DISCOURSES

2.1 MIDDLESEX

2.1.1 THE APPLICATION OF THE WESTERMARCK EFFECT

The rarity of incest can be explained in two conflicting theories. Freud's view of incest has already been clarified i.e. "people secretly desire incest but are able to overcome these desires with the help of social taboos and rules" (Ridley 273-274). Edward Westermarck on the other hand, argued that "men do not mate with their mothers and sisters not because of social rules, but because they are simply not turned on by those they were reared with" (Ridley 274). Because relatives get to know each other very well during the period of childhood, they experience instinctive sexual aversion towards them. He evidences it via two sources: Israeli kibbutzim, where children raised together in crèches with unrelated peers form strong friendships, but marriages among them are extremely rare and shim-pua marriage custom, where the daughter is raised by the family of her future husband. Made into step-siblings, such couples are sexually unattractive to each other; therefore their marriages are infertile (Ridley 275).

In Eugenides' *Middlesex*, there is a strong presence of inseparability of the Stephanides' siblings. As children, they are reared together and the isolation of the village Bithynios leads them to a very close relationship and emotional connection. They are so close they remind of "a four legged, two headed creature" well-known from Plato's *Symposium*, where such creatures were split to half, condemned by Zeus to find the other half, their soulmate. Lefty is one year younger than his sister who "often wondered how she'd survived those first twelve months without him" (Eugenides 27). The relationships between Desdemona and Lefty contradicts Westermarck's hypothesis on sexual aversion. During the childhood, the emotional bond is platonic:

Desdemona had always loved her brother as only a sister growing up on a mountain could love a brother: he was the whole entertainment, her best friend and confidant, her co-discoverer of short cuts and monks' cells. Early on, the emotional sympathy she'd felt with Lefty had been so absolute that she'd sometimes forgotten they were separate people. (Eugenides 27)

Without the other half, Desdemona feels incomplete: "She was accustomed to their Siamese shadow springing up against the whitewashed house at evening, and whenever

she encountered her solitary outline, it seemed cut in half” (Eugenides 27). However, the death of their parents during the war with Turks changes the nature of their relationship. As one can read in the previous chapters, Gayle Rubin states that woman becomes something or someone else “in certain relations” (158). The sister becomes the domestic wife because the hierarchy of relationships changes with the death of parents. Desdemona finds herself “imprisoned by the past” (Eugenides 23) and she feels unable “to feel happy like everybody else” (Eugenides 24) after the war. Their mother Euphrosyne dies from a bullet wound and with her last words makes Desdemona promise: “Take care of Lefty. Promise me. Find him a wife!” (Eugenides 26). Desdemona is suddenly linked to her brother not as equal, but she is to organize the family in terms of familial structure. The siblings are suddenly adults and responsible for caring for the house and business. They assume their roles as mother and father. Desdemona works in the silkworm cocoonery and Lefty sells the silk on the market. They share the same bedroom and become conscious of their bodies and nudity. The new-found femininity of Desdemona leads Lefty to using the services of prostitutes in a nearby town. In a process of coping with the grief of losing the parents and suddenly living only with his sister in a new role of the mother of the family, he takes solace in hashish. Desdemona becomes aware of the “growing separation” (Eugenides 28) between them, as she sees him going to the town, buying a suit and studying French.

Lefty was dealing with the loss of their parents in the only way he could, by disappearing in a cloud of hash smoke while listening to the absolutely saddest music in the world. Desdemona understood this and so had said nothing. But now she saw that her brother was trying to escape his grief in a way she hadn’t expected; and she was no longer content to be quiet. (Eugenides 31)

The state of being orphaned and having only one person to rely on awakes the sexual desire in Lefty. To recover from his trauma he attempts to stabilize his psyche by escaping the reality in drugs and arms of prostitutes. But even while making love to a strange woman, he calls her Desdemona (Eugenides 36). He cannot escape the reality of being in love with her no matter how much he tries and eventually persuades her to marry him.

The Westermarck effect cannot be applied in the case of siblings from *Middlesex*. They were brought up together as children and the fact that they fall in love anyway inclines us towards Freudian theory. It is important to stress the circumstances of the beginning of their romance – they are left alone without parents in a village with only two eligible girls to marry. This “lack of romantic possibility” (Eugenides 39) is

the basis for Lefty's transferring his romantic feelings towards the closest representative of female sex, with whom he shares the bed. Desdemona's brother experiences "the lack of person he loved more and knew better than any other" (Eugenides 41), thus the closeness of siblings grows into periphesence, in *Middlesex* explained as "the first fever of human pair bonding" (Eugenides 38).

2.1.2 LEGALITY

Out of the three novels analyzed, the case of Desdemona and Lefty is the only one where there is a possibility for legal charges with incest. The siblings are worried during their voyage to the US about possible deportation back to Europe. The Immigration Act of 1917 is in use to determine which persons are undesirable to be accepted on American soil. The Stephanides are particularly scared of the "category of restriction: persons convicted of a crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude" (Eugenides 84) and more specifically of "incestuous relations" (Eugenides 84). Consanguineous relationships are put into the same classification with alcoholics, prostitutes and criminals. "This expansion of restrictions can be explained, in part, by the rise of psychological and eugenics theories categorizing inferior individuals and races and nativist sentiments exacerbated by World War I" (Bromberg). In other words, to prevent undesired heritable characteristics, they select acceptable future US citizens in order to keep the gene pool protected from negative influence. Paradoxically, the genes will become a monstrous issue later on for Desdemona.

As for patriarchy in connection with legality, Lefty is anxious about passing the immigration in the same way as his sister. No hierarchical structures are created yet.

2.1.3 GENETICS

Genetically speaking, sex is a set of two essential procedures, recombination and outcrossing. Matt Ridley in his book *The Red Queen* explains that recombination is a procedure when one set of 23 chromosomes are swapped with chunks of the other. Then the outcrossing happens, when the set is "passed on to the offspring to be married with a set from the other parent" (30). Principal feature of sex is mixing of genes, when "the baby gets a thorough mixture of his four grandparents' genes (because of

recombination) via his two parents (because of outcrossing)” (Ridley 30). This genetic mixing is an essence of the whole phenomenon of sex. “Everything else about it – gender, mate choice, incest avoidance, polygamy, love, jealousy – are all ways of doing outcrossing and recombination more effectively or carefully” (Ridley 30)”. Genetics and incest play a crucial role in *Middlesex*, as they serve as a background story for the main character their granddaughter Calliope, a hermaphrodite. Calliope herself stresses several times the impact the incest of her grandparents has on her situation. She comments on the genetic predispositions that there is “the polluted pool of the Stephanides family” (Eugenides 4) and her hermaphroditism is caused by “the recessive mutation on [her] fifth chromosome” (Eugenides 4). Here can be applied Judith Butler’s concept of unintelligibility, that brings attention to the “incest-born person” (Chambers Carver 122). Calliope is being othered because she is born a hermaphrodite in a consequence of an incest. According to Butler “[t]he unintelligible cannot be tolerated, for they have not been granted access to the category of the human” (Chambers Carver 122).

The novel suggests a possibility that the genetics itself is the cause of incest:

Was it love or reproduction? Chance or destiny? Crime or nature at work? Maybe the gene contained an override, ensuring its expression, which would explain Desdemona’s tears and Lefty’s taste in prostitutes; not fondness, not emotional sympathy; only the need for this new thing to enter the world and hence the heart’s rigged game. (Eugenides 42)

Such theory, although highly polemical would represent a new point of view, radically different from those mentioned in the introductory chapters but at the same time it reminds one of the “voice of blood”, an alluring sexual attraction already previously mentioned by Daniel Wilson (qtd. in Barnes 1). The argumentation whether this genetic intention occurs in the case of Desdemona and Lefty or does not, is open for discussion. Genetics is the central point of break for Desdemona and the marriage development as we will see in the chapter dedicated to patriarchy.

Middlesex is the only novel out of three analyzed in this thesis where the story covers all of the stages of the relationship between siblings, including starting a family, therefore genetics will be discussed only in connection with Eugenides’ work. However, the possible consequences of mixing up genes between brothers and sisters remains unexplained at the time of conceiving the first son. Only later is the inbreeding risk explained to Desdemona and she turns for help in religion. Religion seems to be an answer for everything, as we will see in the following chapter.

2.1.4 RELIGION

Incest has found its way into rules not only cultural or biological, but also religious, more specifically Christian: “[T]he incest rules of the Bible—in particular those found in the two chapters of Leviticus 18 and 20 – have had greater effect on Western law than any comparable body of biblical rules” (Carmichael Introduction). The reasoning why incest is taboo is purely cultural, either given by the Bible: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home” (American Standard Version, Leviticus 18.6-18) or perceived as immoral for no obvious reason.

In spite of the fact that the Stephanides’ siblings in *Middlesex* are brought up in Greek Orthodox Church, Greek mythology is being constantly referred to. Calliope considers it to be a part of her genetic heritage as well as her genetic mutation: “Sorry if I get a little Homeric at times. That’s genetic, too” (Eugenides 4). Desdemona turns to her faith all the time, mainly when she fears for her brother’s future: “What was the matter with God? Why had He taken her parents and left her to worry about her brother? What was she supposed to do with him?” (Eugenides 32). She blames him for being orphaned and suddenly finding herself in charge of taking care of everything.

In the US, Desdemona goes to church every Sunday, but Lefty stays home “working on a modern Greek translation of the “restored” poems of Sappho” (Eugenides 13). She is the one that worries about the God’s punishment. Lefty is not at least concerned with spiritual consequences of their relationship. Desdemona turns to God when she is pregnant with her first child and she learns about consanguinity from Dr. Philobosian (Eugenides 132). He explains to her that the genetic mutations are caused by intermarrying. Cousin Lina argues that the church laws forbidding relationships between relatives are connected with the fear of birth deformities: “Why do you think the Church doesn’t let brothers and sisters get married? Even first cousins have to get permission from a bishop” (Eugenides 133) but dismisses the possibility of problems saying that “these doctors exaggerate” (Eugenides 133). Desdemona is suddenly afraid of the possible consequences her baby might suffer from because of the incest. She makes promise while praying: “Please, I swear I will never have another baby. Just this one” (Eugenides 133). We later find out that she has another child, a daughter named Zoë, but while she is trying to keep from getting pregnant, the

relationship with her husband begins to change (149) and more than that, it turns into “an arctic wasteland” (195). The religious rules impose a moral burden on her and she is terrified of the consequences:

From the moment she learned that she was pregnant, my grandmother was again tormented by fears that the baby would suffer a hideous birth defect. In the Orthodox Church, even the children of closely related godparents were kept from marrying, on the grounds that this amounted to spiritual incest. What was that compared with this? This was much worse! So Desdemona agonized, unable to sleep at night, as the new baby grew inside her. (Eugenides 153)

When their son Milton is sent to war, Desdemona copes with her grief by lying in her bed. She takes blame for the bad things happening to her family and considers them to be a punishment from God: “God has brought the judgment down on us that we deserve” (Eugenides 220). Later on Desdemona learns the largest consequence of her relationship with Lefty is Calliope’s hermaphroditism, she feels remorse: “It’s all my fault” (Eugenides 592) and confesses to Cal her sin: “I thought it was only something for the Church. I didn’t know it was because what can happen to the babies. I was just stupid girl from village” (Eugenides 592). Her moral struggles with bad conscience are analyzed in the following chapter.

2.1.5 MORALITY

The purity of body and mind is a notion told to Desdemona from a very early age. The tales of morality of Euphrosyne, their mother are meant to keep the women in Stephanides’ family from sin. Euphrosyne uses silkworms as guardians of her daughter’s pureness. While working in the cocoonery, Desdemona has to keep in mind that “the silkworms know everything” (Eugenides 24) and “[t]o have good silk, you have to be pure” (Eugenides 24). Desdemona, superstitious and trusting, does not see through her mother’s trick – she really believes it and looks for “a sign of her own impurity” (Eugenides 25). Lefty, on the other hand, after the death of their parents has no intention to “remain pure” or to follow the rules of marrying a village girl. Seeking services from prostitutes, the rules of purity do not apply on men in the family. The sexual purity is male-dominated in Stephanides’ family and observed also by the mother in order to keep Desdemona from losing her virginity.

Lefty acknowledges the immorality but he decides to ignore his ethics:

But since the night of their waltz, he'd stopped resisting. Because of the messages of Desdemona's fingers, because their parents were dead and their village destroyed, because no one in Smyrna knew who they were, and because of the way Desdemona looked right now, sitting on a suitcase. (Eugenides 55)

From then on he does not feel bad for falling for his sister. Desdemona is the only one who is agonized with fear of having disabled children.

The new country and its language have helped to push the past a little further behind. The sleeping form next to him is less and less his sister every night and more and more his wife. The statute of limitations ticks itself out, day by day, all memory of the crime being washed away (Eugenides 113).

Lefty lets the time and distance to achieve the desired effect. His bad conscience disappears and Desdemona is suddenly only the wife and no longer the sister. However, Desdemona bears in mind their blood relation and decides to prevent any genetic disorders their children might have. It does not meet with Lefty's expectations from his wife. He remains uncomprehending of Desdemona's sense of morality.

2.1.6 SOCIETY

The stance of society is closely intertwined with morals indoctrinated by mother Euphrosyne. When they escape the village and go to Smyrna, the town offers the siblings the anonymity they need for starting a new kind of relationship. "What am I doing? Desdemona thought. He's my brother! She looked at the other refugees on the quay, expecting to see them shaking their fingers, saying, "Shame on you!" (Eugenides 55). Desdemona expects to be shunned as a sign that what they are doing is wrong but nothing happens: "Nobody knew. Nobody cared" (Eugenides 55).

The moral aspect of incest in connection with society is in *Middlesex* present in two stages. To avoid the remorse from having relationship together and at the same time avoid ostracism from society, Stephanides' siblings choose to apply the *performance* on the deck of Giulia, the boat that takes them to the US. In a Butlerian sense gender, or in this case non-incestuous relationship, is "something *enacted* – inscribed in daily practices of speech, both expressed and formed through dress, manner and behavior" (Chambers Carver 3). They invent a plan how to pass as an ordinary couple. It starts as a theatre for other passengers to act out a romance of meeting on the deck, falling in love and a sudden marriage. This "simulated courtship" and "imaginary flirtation" (Eugenides 77) helps them to repress the fact they are siblings. Desdemona and Lefty

start anew with the help of reinvention. All of the old memories are repressed and substituted with “fabricated memories, improvised fate” (Eugenides 77). The taboo of incest is cleansed away with self-transformation, which is “the driving spirit on the *Giulia*” (Eugenides 77). Emigration offers an opportunity to anonymously have a new beginning with new identity and they continue their daily practices as a married couple, not as siblings. Both of them can “re-create themselves” (Eugenides 77) and thus avoid the moral dilemma of incest. This performance continues in a form of *defamiliarization* during the wedding night and honeymoon. They feel remorse before the first sexual contact. Desdemona is wearing the silk corset that reminds her of their mother (Eugenides 80) thus she experiences the inner conflict of “the wrongness of what they were doing” (Eugenides 80). Lefty is conflicted as well and “found it easier to pretend that she was a stranger” (Eugenides 80). Therefore the moral dilemma is solved again with pretense. “Their honeymoon proceeded in reverse” (Eugenides 82), as the siblings attempt to forget the fact they are of one kin and learn made up facts about each other. Their family history is “a fiction created in the lifeboat” (Eugenides 83) invented as a defensive mechanism that protects them from unacceptability of their taboo.

An important theme of the novel is the attempt to pass. The women of *Middlesex* are trying to be *normal*. Calliope in the doctor’s report is supposed to undergo surgeries to pass as a normal woman (Eugenides 493). Desdemona similarly to her granddaughter wants to pass as a wife of Lefty with new identity. Both women choose to escape with new identities. Desdemona flees Turkey to get away from war and possible shame. Calliope also flees her home to find herself as a new person and to accept who she really is. Calliope rightly observes:

Normality wasn’t normal. It couldn’t be. If normality were normal, everybody could leave it alone. They could sit back and let normality manifest itself. But people – and especially doctors – had doubts about normality. They weren’t sure normality was up to the job. And so they felt inclined to give it a boost. (Eugenides 503)

To pass in their social group in America means to convince the only person they know from Greece, Sourmelina. This is achieved by trading a secret for secret. They want to be a “normal” couple just like Sourmelina and her husband. However, Lina is “one of the women they named the island after” (Eugenides 98) and Lefty relies on the fact that she does not want her lesbian past to be revealed. This quid pro quo exchange offers protection for both sides.

The new environment allows a new beginning with no one to judge them: “At the back door, when he turned to kiss her she stepped back, anxious that people might see. But then she remembered that they were married now. They lived in a place called Michigan, where the birds seemed to come in only one color, and where no one knew them” (Eugenides 107). The siblings were new people with no one to know the truth behind their real relationship.

The second stage of morality was remorse. However, the act of incest was not remorseful itself. It was the genetic threat Desdemona dreads. Her apprehension gradually increases in intensity and takes toll on their marriage but “[a]fter everything she had done to atone for her crime, after she had turned her marriage into an arctic wasteland and allowed a surgeon to tie her fallopian tubes, consanguinity wasn’t finished with her” (Eugenides 195). Despite having a healthy son, Milton falls in love with his cousin and it gets Desdemona worried again. Her whole life she is petrified that her own fault would materialize in a form of disfigured child. It would be a living reminder of the sin they committed and the failure of the performance which is still taking place

[...][R]elationships within the heteronormative structure of kinship only make sense within stated terms of consanguinity, which prescribe sexual activity between ‘close’ relations (as variously defined) and thus also proscribe (via a presumed necessary link with reproduction) the possibility of any offspring. Such offspring would be living embodiments of linguistic disorder. They are, therefore an uncategorisable impossibility. (Chambers Carver 124)

It is indeed impossible for Desdemona to recognize a possibility of a child conceived by her brother. “What’s the matter with us? How could we do what we did?” (Eugenides 178). She is the one who is alarmed when it comes to the future of the children and she takes the responsibility for their health. Desdemona aggravates her worries to an extent that she would rather die: “I wish I had died in the fire! I swear to you! I wish I had died in Smyrna” (Eugenides 178).

2.1.7 PATRIARCHAL FEATURES

Patriarchal structures are paradoxically more conspicuous in the New World with the old motherland left behind. The primary reason for that is Jimmy Zizmo and the organization of his household the Stephanides’ are supposed to act in accordance

with. The separation of sexes contributes to the old-fashioned notion that “[o]uter space is reserved for men, inner place belongs to women” (Janeway 7).

The house was sex-segregated like the houses in the *patridha*, the old country, men in the *sala*, women in the kitchen. Two spheres with separate concerns, duties, even – the evolutionary biologists might say – thought patterns. Lefty and Desdemona, accustomed to living in their own house, were forced to adapt to their new landlord’s ways. Besides, my grandfather needed a job. (Eugenides 105)

Zizmo expects the men to be the providers and women the nurturers. Marriage, according to him “is for housekeeping and for children” (Eugenides 104). He seems to be conforming to the theory that women should have their places in household, or literally speaking they should possess “a whole set of traits and attitudes and ways of presenting themselves which we think proper to women, along with the obligations and restrictions that it implies” (Janeway 9). He is genuinely surprised that Lefty did not get any dowry and he married for love. Lefty and Desdemona habituate to patriarchal cultural attitude and he as a breadwinner obtains a job in Ford factory and Desdemona stays at home and cooks. No matter the conditions of the females in the house they are compelled to be in the first place the caring wives. In spite of being pregnant a woman first and foremost needs to feed her husband: “The women’s delicate conditions didn’t excuse them from domestic duties. On swollen legs they carried out dishes of lamb and rice, okra in tomato sauce, Greek salad, rice pudding” (Eugenides 131).

Nevertheless, the genuine patriarchal domination arrives with Desdemona’s findings about consequences of incest. Her endeavor to protect her possible children from genetic disorders eventually becomes the biggest obstacle in her marriage. In her efforts to not get pregnant she gets an answer from cousin Lina that solves the problem of genetics: “Simple. Don’t sleep with your husband” (Eugenides 148). On the other hand it evolves into difficulties with marital duties. In times before contraception the abstinence seems to be the only solution but in case of Lefty and Desdemona it creates a gap between two young people that used to be in love. Desdemona chooses the abstinence over her husband because she feels the sense of duty towards the children that might be born disabled as a result of genetic mutations linked with incest. Her guilt leaves the marriage devastated and it culminates in the punishment in form of going to work.

Lefty’s point of break is the birth of his son. He is no longer the only one in Desdemona’s life and cannot cope with the fact that his wife’s full attention is devoted to the baby. “He felt a mad jealousy toward his infant son” (Eugenides 148) and

together with Desdemona's spiritual promise of not having any children, it changes his personality. Lefty is not sexually satisfied and the motherly love represents the competition to love between the newlyweds, thus he disciplines his wife and resorts to a fully executed patriarchal position. This time it is not because of Jimmy Zizmo's rules, it is to demonstrate his power. If there is no intercourse, Desdemona is supposed to get accustomed with the new hierarchical position.

From then on, my grandparents' relationship began to change. Up until Milton's birth, Lefty and Desdemona had enjoyed an unusually close and egalitarian marriage for its time. But as Lefty began to feel left out, he retaliated with tradition. He stopped calling his wife *kukla*, which meant "doll" and began calling her *kyria*, which meant "Madame." He reinstituted sex segregation in the house, reserving the *sala* for his male companions and banishing Desdemona to the kitchen. He began to give orders. "*Kyria*, my dinner." Or: *Kyria*, bring the drinks!" In this he acted like his contemporaries and no one noticed anything out of the ordinary except Sourmelina. (Eugenides 149)

Desdemona does not suffer trauma from the incest itself, she avoids the potential consequences. The avoidance has traumatic effects on her marriage and contributes to the patriarchal dominance of her husband. The incest does not assert the patriarchy it is the sexual abstinence that leads to it. Desdemona chooses to execute her sexual rights in order to protect the children but she is banished to her separate sphere from the man of the house. She is expected to offer her body to the husband on the grounds of reciprocity for the reason that he earns the money: "I don't get anything from you. I work all the time and I get nothing" (Eugenides 156). Desdemona's choice not to have sex is labeled as not normal. On one hand, she decides for both of them, on the other hand, Lefty blackmails her with domination and change of behavior towards her. When there is no sex, she is supposed to earn money, too. Being a housewife, raising children and cooking are not enough when there is no sexual intercourse involved. With Desdemona being so submissive, it is clearly to see that Elizabeth Janeway's concept of the myth of female power can be applied here:

We can tell that it is important for her to choose submission, not just to submit willy-nilly, because she is offered something in return. What she is offered is the knowledge that by her submission she does what the man cannot do alone: she bestows on him his full status. Her submission makes him a man. She and she alone has the power to create his mature strength, to show him his new, adult, face, to grant rebirth where once she gave birth. (48)

When Lefty does not feel like a man without sex, it is her responsibility to acquiesce willingly and offer him something in return for his abstinence and that is money.

Desdemona as a good obedient wife finds a job and as it is in a Muslim environment, the submission is expected from her also at work: “She never spoke above whisper. She never asked questions or complained. Having grown up in a country ruled by others, she found it all familiar” (Eugenides 170). Her submission is a punishment for not wanting sex and she accepts it without complaints. She is aware of the impact of her decision on Lefty and she never reproaches his behavior. However, when he is involved in gambling and indebts them, her patience runs out: “WHAT KIND OF HUSBAND ARE YOU TO DO THIS TO YOUR WIFE WHO COOKED AND CLEANED FOR YOU AND GAVE YOU CHILDREN AND NEVER COMPLAINED!” (Eugenides 235). Desdemona demonstrates her attitude with screaming and tearing her clothes as a symbol of betrayal by his gambling.

When he dies, Desdemona after long years of being accustomed to be at Lefty’s side feels abandoned: “She didn’t like being left on earth. She didn’t like being left in America. She was tired of living. She was having a harder and harder time climbing stairs. A woman’s life was over once her husband died” (Eugenides 306). Janeway analyzes the concept of choice in regards with marriage: “Marriage begins with choosing. [...] Now, the right to choose is not the only factor which permits an individual to exercise control over his situation, but it is a very important one and also a *conscious* one” (215). Desdemona’s life is over because she voluntarily chooses her submission and dependence on her husband. There is a striking difference between her attitude and Sourmelina’s. Desdemona retreats to die in her bed but Lina is a lively active woman who shortly after her husband’s funeral surrenders her mourning. One can conclude that Desdemona chooses the life of suffering willingly and consciously but one should bear in mind that she chooses love and at the same time she chooses protection of her children because she is aware of possible consequences. That makes her a sensible mother and a faithful wife.

The lesson of Desdemona’s suffering and rejection of life insisted that old age would not continue the manifold pleasures of youth but would instead be a long trial that slowly robbed life of even the smallest, simplest joys. Everyone struggles against despair, but it always wins in the end. It has to. It’s the thing that lets us say goodbye. (Eugenides 589)

It is not the incest that changes the hierarchical structure of the relationship of siblings but the sexual discontent. Both of the parties are right to some extent but ultimately the relationship is strained and in poor condition. The horror of incest manifests itself in

form of sexual abstinence and consequently transitions from equality to patriarchal dominance.

2.2 THE DREAMERS

2.2.1 THE APPLICATION OF THE WESTERMARCK EFFECT

Adair's *The Dreamers* does not offer such an insight into the siblings' childhood. The twins' relationship is depicted only in the present, when they are 17 years old. The only exception when the childhood is discussed in relation to their affair is when Matthew asks about how they "come to be together the way they were" (Adair 116). Isa calls it a "love at first sight" (Adair 116). No further explanation is offered, the connection between the twins is perceived as something natural, something that occurred spontaneously and no force was used. It appears to be a relationship that only ensures the *Siamese twins* bond between them. They entered the figurative marriage Christina von Braun mentioned as "an ideal of brotherly and sisterly affection" (130), the ideal of a young attractive couple that resemble and complement each other. Thus the Westermarck's theory cannot be applied in this case.

2.2.2 LEGALITY

The age for consent was 15 in France at the time the novel takes place as it is today. Both of the siblings are seemingly willingly in their relationship and legality of the incest is never spoken of. Théo and Isa do not seem to intend to have family together and while they remain hidden in their isolated flat, they are free to live in sin without the legal prosecutions. Stealing groceries is a common part of their lives while living without parents, therefore it can be concluded that the legal matters do not seem to bother them.

2.2.3 GENETICS & RELIGION

The Dreamers does not mention any concerns regarding sexual relations neither any desire to have children therefore no worry about genetic disorders is expressed by the characters. The only religion the twins seem to worship are the movies. They are the rats of The Cinémathèque Française and this cinephilia does not prescribe or determine the taboos that should or should not be kept. Isa is even contemplating suicide which is

a mortal sin, thus the spiritual or moral restraints are not imposed in the case of the twins.

2.2.4 MORALITY

Morality is a concept that the siblings do not seem to be familiar with or rather it seems to be unimportant to speculate what is moral or immoral. They openly talk about taboo topics as: “Matthew and Isabelle often spoke of incest, of physical love between a brother and sister” (Adair 116) but neither of the twins shows any regret or remorse regarding the topic. The only moral constraint is that the whole affair is to be kept secret from their parents.

2.2.5 SOCIETY

The society is absent in *The Dreamers*. The flat isolates the three inhabitants from the rest of the world. Isa, Théo and Matthew become voluntary outcasts and take shelter in the flat of their own account. Without the cinema, the only reason to go out is to steal food and after some time they rather stay at home with tins of cat food. The flat does not only provide a protection from the outside on-going protests, of which is the trio completely unaware, but also a platform for a new habitat – a remote country without parents, supervision, rules or laws. With crime, filth, faeces, and breaking taboos comes the fall of the house of rats. Society returns by the end of the novel when the trio becomes interested in the rebellion outside the walls of the apartment.

Societal stance appears in a form of the authority of parents. The siblings do feel some kind of restraint when it comes to the parents’ opinion on the incest. When Matthew asks Isa: “What would you do if your parents found out?” (Adair 116), she replies more than once: “It must never, never happen” (Adair 117). Parents are thus the last respected authority in the household in spite of the fact, that they are absent throughout the novel. Their presence lingers in a form of superego, however, that does not mean the siblings refuse to *play* the game of love and life because of the authority of their parents. Isa and Théo simply strive to conceal the nature of their relationship from them. The authority is strong enough to make them hide their relationship, but not to observe the incest taboo.

2.2.6 PATRIARCHY VERSUS HIERARCHY

The dynamics of Théo and Isabelle's relationship is significantly different than the one in *Middlesex*. We see them interact within the triangle of ménage à trois with Matthew. With an addition to an unconventional incestuous affair they are involved in; the siblings initiate Matthew into their eccentric lifestyle and form a family-like triumvirate where the powers are noticeably divided unequally.

Isabelle, in spite of the fact that she is an hour and a half younger than her twin brother, appears to be the one in charge in their relationship. She fulfills the function of the leader of the group as she browbeats not only her brother but also Matthew: "Don't speak. I command it" (Adair 69). Théo calls her a "bitch" several times and she indeed resembles an alpha female of the pack. He attempts to lower Isa's impact on their new friend: "Don't listen to her, Matthew," said Théo. "She's a bitch. She breathes in all the air around her" (Adair 14). And Théo seems to be a truthful observer, as Isa is the vertex of the trio and the femme fatal of central importance. She is the one whose assertiveness is the most heard: "As a Trappist monk takes a vow of silence, she had taken a vow of conversation. She annotated the spectacle that lay spread out at their feet. She played God" (Adair 22). Isa, the goddess, successfully enforces her wishes to Théo and Matthew and she would gladly command even the weather: "It started to rain. Isabelle, who couldn't bear 'weather that *touches* me', insisted they take the metro, even if the two boys would have preferred to saunter along the quays of the Seine" (Adair 22-23). Knowing exactly what she wants, she contemplates to be in charge not only of her life, but also of her death. Isabelle considers herself to be one of the "born suicides" (Adair 115) and stocks sleeping pills in case of a suicide.

Isa becomes the lady of the house, the one that at first does the cooking, and the one that shuts the door from reality and invents a new world behind closed doors:

It was Isabelle who held the outside world at bay. It was she who, forging her mother's handwriting, wrote a letter to the headmaster of the school she and Théo attended, announcing that both of them were bedridden with viral hepatitis. It was she, too, who accepted to be interviewed by the aunt commissioned by their parents to occupy herself in their absence with their children's welfare. (Adair 113-114)

Not one line from the novel describes the siblings better than the following one: "Theo and Isabelle were born addicts, addicts to whose cravings the cinema and each other were the sole opiates ever to have presented themselves" (Adair 92). They

envision themselves as “mythical lovers, Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde” (Adair 130) however, their relationship is far darker as their love for each other is likened to drugs and opiates. In the long run aforementioned type of love is more consuming and tragic rather than romantic. Théo and Isa do not simply enjoy being in love, they lust for the power and dominance, therefore they invent the game of guessing the movies. The isolated life inside the flat transforms into a movie screen and the trio recreates scenes from popular films. The innocent fun metamorphoses into fierce battles with a taste of ignominy in order to disturb the balance of power. Isabelle’s dominance is discernible in a way how she attempts to humiliate her brother in front of Matthew: “Didn’t he revolt you, Matthew? Weren’t you ashamed to be seen with him? Have you ever known anyone so abject? I’m sorry to say, my brother is just as pathetic as the others” (Adair 36).

The struggle for dominance disguised as a fight over Trenet’s record played too many times is described as “a clash of arms” (Adair 82) and Théo is afraid of “his sister’s viperish tongue” (Adair 86) when he secretly investigates whether the Cinémathèque is reopened. Théo endeavors to oppose his sister, mainly when playing the game as he refuses to decline her challenge. Théo is forced to masturbate in front of the Gene Tirney’s portrait otherwise he would lose the game. He calls his sister “[a] bitch and a sadist” but nevertheless he cannot stand to be defeated by Isa. “Very well, Isa. The game must go on” (Adair 97). This act is not a forced act in a physical sense. Isa and Théo struggle for dominance not physically but with verbal abuse and challenges that confront their inner limits and push beyond them. Such behavior ensues from their desire to own one another. They can be neither equal nor balanced, in spite of the fact that they once shared a womb and now they play Truth or Dare game without the option to surrender.

To push Isa to similar situation, Théo challenges her into another extreme – sleeping with Matthew. In this act of voyeurism, it is interesting to point out that she loses her virginity because she cannot remember in which movie a cross marks the spot of a murder and rather accept to pay in kind. Théo wreaks his vengeance and once more accomplishes to “win” over his sister as he in a position of a voyeur observes the act. Fascinating about the aforementioned situation is how the author describes Isabelle’s virginity: “There were still obstacles to be overcome. They were both virgins, Isabelle because she had never made love except to her brother, Matthew because he had never made love except to himself” (Adair 110). Incest seems to be not fitting the category of

sexual intercourse. Having made love only with her twin, Isa remains pure and untouched, as her brother is of her own flesh thus it does not count as a violation of her chastity.

With an arrival of Matthew, Théo finds himself in a new position. To some extent he is replaced by the newcomer. He feels jealousy, but also greed, because the exclusivity is gone: “he was jealous, in the word’s other sense, of the exclusive hold that he himself had once had over his sister’s body and soul. At moments he found himself nostalgic for the purity of the taboo which together they’d breached” (Adair 131).

The dynamics of the trio resembles a nuclear family. As it is unclear who of the couple Isa and Théo is more dominant (they constantly fight and there might never be a winner), they put Matthew in a position of their child. The hierarchical structure is the most clearly visible in his submission when around the trio. Alone in a new country, he finds solace with the siblings thanks to the cinema but he constantly feels that it is “a privilege of which he was undeserving and he live[s] in fear that his friends [will] eventually arrive at the same conclusion” (Adair 8). Isabelle realizes his submissive character, described in the novel in a form of fable: “There was once a faun that came to a mountain pool but was incapable of drinking any water because it would turn aside, again and again, to reassure itself that no hostile presence lurked nearby. It finally died of thirst. Matthew might have been that faun” (Adair 7). Insecure, shy and with a low self-esteem, he falls unknowingly into arms of a duo whose egocentrism devours him. In spite of the fact that *The Dreamers* has a subtitle *A Romance* and the word love is mentioned several times, at first he becomes a playtoy. Théo considers him to be “a pet, a tame spaniel wagging its tail at the least sign of affection, an amusing new acquisition to divert Isabelle and himself from their airless intimacy” (Adair 130) but later Matthew grows into the role of a lover.

Fighting in front of Matthew leaves an impression to him more of a married couple, rather than nagging between siblings. His feelings about such cruel fights are mixed and child-like:

Matthew dared not intervene. He never felt more an outsider than during these scenes. His silence was that of a pyjama-clad infant standing in the middle of the night, listening at his parents’ bedroom door behind which insults are being traded that cannot be taken back. (Adair 35-36)

Their tendency to love and fight at the same time resembled “a two-headed eagle, now pecking each other’s eyes out, now fondly nuzzling each other’s beaks”

(Adair 39). The metaphor of one creature made of two bodies is also present in the moment when Matthew accidentally sees the twins asleep naked together. “What made them such an extraordinary sight was that the limbs seemed also to belong to the other” (Adair 68). It is also foreshadowed by the two strangers making love near the Cinémathèque: “Siamese twins joined at the lips” (Adair 20). After Matthew joins the siblings in their nightly habit of sleeping naked together, they officially become “the beast with three backs” (Adair 111). Matthew is one of them now, one of their blood in spite of the fact that they treat him as he is on a significantly submissive level.

To love in this particular Parisian apartment means to play, to hurt, to torment and to break taboos. Love is a hurting game of humiliation. The incest does not support the patriarchy in the relationship of Isabelle and Théo, but between the twins and Matthew. Matthew is at the bottom of the hierarchy, with the siblings fighting for the supremacy and sharing the role of the patriarchal tyrant. The coin of the twins’ love has two sides: Matthew is at the same time “the externalised object of these [extreme] fantasies” (Adair 140) but also “the object of his tormentors’ love” (Adair 140). He chooses to be loved but that also means to be bullied. The paradoxical condition of an offer of love is to accept the pain that comes along. “The indignity submitted to, they would at once tearfully hug him, smother him, suffocate him with kisses, beg his forgiveness with the humblest, the most sincere of apologies” (Adair 140). Matthew experiences the uttermost humiliation that pushes way past his limits: a rape by Théo. For Théo this act seems to be just another level of their game that needs to be surmounted. The game that oppresses Matthew right where he is supposed to belong: to the lowest point of the hierarchy.

2.3 THE CEMENT GARDEN

2.3.1 THE APPLICATION OF THE WESTERMARCK EFFECT

The Cement Garden describes the continual process of growing up and coming-of-age as a consequence of being left orphan. The storyline and the dynamics can be divided into three phases:

- a) when the family is complete
- b) after the Father’s death
- c) after Mother passes away

While the father is alive, the kids devise a game where the two older siblings, Jack and Julie act as “scientists examining a specimen from outer space” (McEwan 6). The role of alien is played by their younger sister Sue and she is being stripped naked and researched by her siblings. One can conclude a game such as this one to be an invention of natural childish curiosity, but Jack, the narrator, desires to explore also the body of Julie, their older sister. However, at that time Julie is taboo: “I longed to examine my older sister but the game did not allow for that” (McEwan 6) and Jack will not break it.

2.3.2 *LEGALITY*

Legal actions are at first mentioned not in connection with incest, but when mother realizes the children have to take care of themselves without her help. She fears the social workers and she persuades the two oldest children to maintain the order in the family: “The house must be run properly, Jack, and Tom has to be looked after. You’ve got to keep things clean and tidy otherwise you know what will happen” (McEwan 51). What could happen is that the children would be put into foster care. Such an idea haunts not only the mother, but also the siblings when the mother passes away. That is the reason why they refuse a normal burial and choose a secret grave under the layer of cement. To keep the family united they hide the truth together with the body of the mother.

Julie and Jack do not seem to worry about the legal prosecution connected with the act of incest. Hiding from the rest of the world and keeping their fantasies secret partially protects them. The very last scene of the novel shows the consequences and the real society suddenly enters the house with police apparently called by jealousy-induced Derek. “It was the sound of two or three cars pulling up outside, the slam of doors and the hurried footsteps of several people coming up our front path that woke Tom. Through a chink in the curtain a revolving blue light made a spinning pattern on the wall” (McEwan 152). The siblings accept the incoming faith in a calm manner and the next advances are unknown to the reader.

2.3.3 MORALITY

As Jack is the narrator of the book, we can see clearly into his head. However, his sense of morality when it comes to his sisters is very limited. He does not feel remorse about using Sue to play “the game” or desiring Julie to do the same. He repeatedly challenges Julie to be the next subject of examination, but he never forces her. One can conclude it is because he is younger and she is the one in charge, thus he feels the submission of his position in familial hierarchy.

Nevertheless he is aware of his intentions being unconventional, as he keeps them for himself. He uses the mental image of his sisters to masturbate but never pressures them into sexual acts. Jack feels the sexual attraction towards Julie and when she sunbaths in the garden, he enjoys it but later he feels some moral constraint when putting a lotion on her: “This time I rubbed the cream on as quickly as I could, with my eyes half-closed. I felt hot and sick in the stomach” (McEwan 44). The body of the older sister is taboo and brother should not be the one touching it, and for that reason Jack experiences nausea.

The moment they consummate their relationship is not accompanied with any reluctance or hesitation. It is consensual and as Julie observes “easy” (McEwan 150). The morality however, can be questioned in regards with Julie’s boyfriend. She lets him see the intimate embrace with Jack and in addition to that she escalates the situation by lying to Derek. Julie is the most enigmatic character of the book. The reader does not know what is happening in her head and why she acts so confusing towards the end of the novel. She might be intentionally intensifying the taboo in order to escape the situation. Julie reacts in calm, one might even say cold manner to Derek seeing her with Jack and later to the arrival of the police. It could all be part of her plan – to escape her siblings, the house, the smell of her rotting mother and also to leave behind the cement garden.

2.3.4 SOCIETY

Society in *The Cement Garden* is almost not present. The house is isolated, only visited by Tom’s little friend and Julie’s boyfriend. As Jack’s observes: “No one ever came to visit us” (McEwan 19). They have “an unspoken family rule that none of us

ever brought friends home” (McEwan 17), a taboo rule that isolates the family from the rest of the world. The school is mentioned in the beginning but later on both Julie and Jack decide not to return there (McEwan 147). The only contacts with civilization are the walks to the shops and to pick up the government support money. Julie is the one who establishes contact when she escapes the house to see her boyfriend Derek and eventually brings him around. Derek is the key pillar of society whose opinion and stance matters. He represents the judgmental prejudice the siblings are attempting to avoid and for that reason they hide the fact that their mother is buried in the cellar and lie about the rotten smell lingering around the house. The smell is the remorse they have for preparing the cement garden and they falsely claim it is Jack’s dead dog.

The very moment the tension between Jack and Julie escalates into a sexual act, Derek is right there to offer his opinion. They cannot escape his judgment. “It’s sick,” he said loudly, ‘he’s your brother” (McEwan 149). Julie, however refuses to conform to conventions and she stubbornly hugs her brother. She is dominant towards Jack, but also towards society. The stance of other people, even of her own boyfriend does not matter to her. Interestingly, she lies to Derek that the incestuous relationship has been going on for ages (McEwan 149). As we read the story only from the point of view of Jack, he is the one imagining sexual acts with his sister, he is the one initiating the incest (only in his fantasies) but right at that moment we can see the glimpse of Julie’s thinking. Admitting that the relationship is a long-term one, she reveals that the feelings were mutual.

2.3.5 *PATRIARCHY*

The opening line of the book starts with Jack’s comment on his father’s death: ““I did not kill my father, but I sometimes felt I had helped him on his way. And but for the fact that it coincided with a landmark in my physical growth, his death seemed insignificant compared with what followed” (McEwan 3), but throughout the book we can see glimpses to the past and how the children and their mother act around the father while he is still alive. The family background shows us that the father fulfills his patriarchal role of being the head of the house. When the cement for the garden arrives, mother attempts to protest but she has no power over her husband. “He knew how to use his pipe against her” (McEwan 5). Both of parents are called with capitalized names,

addressing them as the Mother and the Father expresses the parental power and supremacy they have in the eyes of the offspring.

Father is a serious figure and taboo. Neither of the children can reach him or doubt his authority. He can joke about his children all he wants, but he cannot be made fun of.

Jokes were not made against Father because they were not funny. He sulked. I felt guilty when I desperately wanted to feel elation. I tried to convince Julie of our victory so that she in turn would convince me. We had Sue up that night lying between us but the game was giving us no pleasure. (McEwan 11)

Children think that by mocking their parent they will win or accomplish to be at the same position in hierarchy but they cannot succeed. The authority of the father is too strong to be challenged.

The father expresses also his attitude towards female sports. His oldest daughter is a successful athlete but he does not consider it worth of his attention: “She already held the local under-eighteen records for the 100- and 220-yard sprint. She could run faster than anyone I knew. Father had never taken her seriously, he said it was daft in a girl, running fast, and not long before he died he refused to come to a sports meeting with us” (McEwan 16). Julie does not explicitly articulate her opinion on father’s deprecation of her athletic accomplishments however, Jack’s characterizations of his older sister’s personality might suggest how the underestimations contribute to her shyness. He describes her reputation as having “disruptive, intimidating quietness” (17) and later in her new role as the mother of the family she is strict but remains quiet after all:

Her silence made us all a little afraid of her, but again she would protest, her voice musical with bemusement, that she was the one who was afraid. It was true, she was shy – there was a rumour she never spoke in class without blushing – but she had the quiet strength and detachment, and lived in the separate world of those who are, and secretly know they are, exceptionally beautiful. (McEwan 20)

The death of both parents turns her shyness into dominance. Julie takes care of her siblings with a silent attitude; nevertheless she maintains her position of a leader. Jack, as the oldest representative of the male sex, has problems to accept his sister as his ‘supervisor’. Julie is not a sister; she is an object of his affection: “We agreed that our elder sister was getting above herself. I did not really think of Sue as a girl now. She was, unlike Julie, merely a sister, a person” (McEwan 31). The structures of kinship functions are stated by Chambers and Carver like this:

This 'law', as we all know, decrees as a matter of logical consistency and linguistic intelligibility that son and husband, father and grandfather, brother and father, for example, cannot be the same person. The incest taboo therefore dictates a fixed and constrained family structure, in which every member can be distinctly sorted into non-overlapping categories. (123)

Julie's role according to Jack is not only to be his older sister, but also the guardian and an object of affection. Jack is at the same time attracted to her as a woman and appalled by her dominance: "I wish you'd stop telling people what to do,' [...] 'You're not God, are you?'" (McEwan 37). His inner patriarchal male encourages him to control sexuality of his sister, when she starts to bring around her boyfriend: "I had a confused notion that as Julie's brother I had a right to ask questions about her boyfriend" (McEwan 85). Jack becomes jealous of Derek and intimidated by the adulthood and manliness of his opponent who is a snooker player.

The household in the first phase acts in accordance with Freudian concept of Oedipal obsession with mother. The men of the family command the attention of Mother: "Julie had told me recently that now Father was a semi-invalid he would have to compete with Tom for Mother's attention. It was an extraordinary idea and I thought about it for a long time. So simple, so bizarre, a small boy and a grown man competing" (McEwan 8). She is supposed to take care of 6 people, including herself, yet the men attempt to monopolize her, as Jack admits:

When I was eight years old I came home from school one morning pretending to be seriously ill. My mother indulged me. She put me into my pyjamas, carried me to the sofa in the living room and wrapped me in a blanket. She knew I had come home to monopolize her while my father and two sisters were out of the house. (McEwan 22-23)

The Mother becomes associated with sexuality after she discovers Jack's teenage obsession with masturbation. She reasons with her son that it is damaging but with no effect (McEwan 25). Later in the novel Jack dreams of masturbating in front of his mother, what one might see as a defiant act of striving for escape from her parental control. He loves his mother but at the same time he feels mature enough to be without a parent. When she is bedridden, she is no longer attractive for Jack. Another attempt of rebellion is the filthiness on purpose. At first it is to disoblige the Mother: "In her quiet way my mother reproved me continuously, but I now felt proudly beyond her control" (McEwan 17). The abandonment of the hygiene is a coming of age ritual where Jack is initiated into manhood with filth. Later on, his sister Sue observes in her diary that it relates to Mother's death, therefore it might be a way of coping with grief:

He has not changed his clothes since you died. He does not wash his hands or anything and he smells horrible. We hate it when he touches a loaf of bread. You can't say anything go him in case he hits you. He's always about to hit someone, but Julie knows how to deal with him.... (McEwan 105)

The last remark points out the authority Julie possesses over Jack and rest of the siblings. No rebellion can change her silent way of holding the family firmly together.

Julie's new role is not only being the head of family, but also to embody the mother figure for everyone. Especially Tom becomes very clingy and in spite of the fact he is a school-age child, he longs for mother's touch and attention. The youngest sibling prefers to remain in state of baby, with Julie as a replacement of mother. Julie enjoys her new role and lovingly spoils her small baby, which sparks jealousy in Jack. Again, the situation with mother-monopolization repeats itself and both Tom and Jack want the new "mother" for themselves. She takes pleasure in tending her younger siblings and we can see a glimpse of jealousy when Derek comments on Jack's clean look: "He said to me, 'Pulling the ladies now are you?' Julie rested her hand on my head. 'Oh no,' she said, 'we're having none of that round here'" (McEwan 127). Julie exercises her law of an alpha female in the household: she is allowed to bring home men, but Jack is forbidden to have girlfriends.

Julie is the one who grows and changes the most. Her character goes through a rapid development for the reason that she is suddenly responsible for younger siblings and gone are the days when she was also a child with sports ambitions. Julie is forced to change and her personality changes as well, what is also observed by Jack:

On the way home I thought of a time not long ago when Julie had never spoken unless spoken to. Now she was talking excitedly to Tom about circuses and once she stopped and knelt by him and with a paper tissue wiped his lips clean of ice cream and snot. (McEwan 134)

2.3.6 *THE HIERARCHY*

The sexes in the family are balanced: Mother, Father, two girls and two boys. However, with parents gone, Julie is the new head of the family and suddenly the youngest boy Tom begins to incline to femininity. At first it is a way of avoiding bullying. He wants to be a girl because "you don't get hit when you're a girl" (McEwan 47). This situation sparks a large fight between Jack and Julie, with Jack disagreeing with dressing up as a girl and Julie defending her female rights: "You think it's humiliating to look like a girl, because you think it's humiliating to *be* a girl" (McEwan

48). Julie, in spite of being shy and quiet, suddenly exercises her inner feminist and stands up for her sex:

Girls can wear jeans and cut their hair short and wear shirts and boots because it's okay to be a boy, for girls it's like a promotion. But for a boy to look like a girl is degrading, according to you, because secretly you believe that being a girl is degrading. Why else would you think it's humiliating for Tom to wear a frock? (McEwan 48)

The girls are only happy to care for Tom and defend his choice of clothing. It sets the balance towards women, leaving Jack the only man in the house. With three “women” they are in the majority, not that they have ever used democratic rule of voting while making a decision.

3 SUBLIMATION

Incest is not the only feature that these three novels have in common. Mirrors appear in each of them and their presence can be explained in a psychoanalytical view as a way of sublimation of the taboo. Traditionally, the symbol of mirror one can describe as a reflection of one's soul. It is a part of the story as a visual representation of unconscious mind. By looking in the mirror the characters are reminded of what they have done for the reason that the looking glass remembers everything and it reflects the truth. Mirrors might awaken remorse and when there is a lack of remorse, it is a symbol of what those who look into should be ashamed of.

Mirrors are a large part of psychoanalysis. However, Lacan's concept of mirror stage will not be analyzed in this chapter. The Freudian concept of sublimation in connection with mirrors will be studied in depth instead. Sublimation for Freud "involves the redirecting of a repressed sexual drive toward a nonsexual aim" (Gemes 38) in order to deflect the taboo. It is "a process that diverts the flow of instinctual energy from its immediate sexual aim and subordinates it to cultural endeavors" (de Mijolla-Mellor). However, the sublimation does not involve the creation of art. It creates a new role for characters altogether. Instead of repression of sexual drives, they sublimated them with the help of mirrors. The desexualization throughout mirror is employed – mirror shifts the sexuality from the character, not from the object of affection. The sexual instincts are not tamed but the understanding of oneself is changed.

In Eugenides' work mirror is mentioned only once, in the early part of the story, when the siblings are still in Greece and they are not in a relationship. Lefty is getting ready to go to town and Desdemona comes into the room. "For a moment, the mirror held their two faces" (Eugenides 26). Mirror could be a tool to redirect self-perception: a brother transforms into a man, eligible to desire the sister. The sexual drives are belated until the performance on the board of ship. Thus, the mirror and the consequent performance contribute to sublimating the taboo of incest. The love of the couple can be therefore romanticized and perceived by the reader as a romantic love affair.

The symbol of a mirror appears several times throughout the novel *The Dreamers*, even on the 2004 film tie-in book cover. It is used to describe Isabelle's unique fashion style – she does not use it when dressing herself as she claims: "It's

vulgar to look at yourself in a mirror. A mirror is for looking at others in “(7). Isabelle refuses to look in the mirror which might be a sign of being afraid of the truth and reality. To avoid the remorse looking back at her, she looks at others from a position of an observer, not via mirror. Watching her brother masturbate shocks Matthew but later, as their relationship evolves into a more depraved phase, the gradual looseness of morals is more evident. Isabelle, in a special chair, like a queen on a throne, uses her female gaze to observe the theatrical performance of Théo’s and Matthew’s masturbation at the same time. She exercises her power to be amused with something that has been previously hidden and intimate. Male masturbation is used in the novel is a way of freeing of the chains of shame.

The most intimate gaze is experienced by Isabelle in the lavatory, after Matthew’s diarrhea. The last taboo is broken as the homosexual rape occurs:

Previously, between the two youths, a sense of propriety, as to when and where to stop, as to how far to go too far, had always been observed. From its origins, now irrecoverable, lost for ever, their mutual horseplay had confined itself to the petty humiliations and self-abasements of rituals and raggings. Now, with Théo about to rape Matthew, a rape that already filled him with elation even as he knew its intention was to pain and degrade him, they had ceased to obey their own rules. (Adair 139)

Isabelle washes away Matthew’s faeces and shaves his pubic hair as in a ritual of initiation. Aroused Matthew starts to kiss his own reflection in a mirror and suddenly Théo rapes him, all while still standing in front of the mirror and while Isa watches “silently thrilled” (139). The mirror serves as a symbol of truth, as it reflects and reminds the characters what the real world feels like. Matthew kisses his reflection because he finally understands his self-worth. At the same time he gets attacked from behind for the reason that the outside world is dangerous and even the ones that love you the most can stab you in the back. The three young people barricaded from the outside world do not use mirrors as objects that support vanity but on the other way around, the mirrors show the harsh reality they are attempting to hide from. Once the reality in form of the revolution forcefully gets into the flat, they are no longer isolated. However, when Matthew is shot dead, it can be concluded that with his innocence he cannot survive outside the imaginary world they built in their isolation. The real world kills his innocence and thus ends his young life.

Mirrors play an important role also in *The Cement Garden*, as Jack in spite of the fact that his personal hygiene is uncared for, his fascination with observing himself in mirrors remains intact:

I frequently stared at myself in mirrors, sometimes for as long as an hour. One morning, shortly before my fifteenth birthday, I was searching in the gloom of our huge hallway for my shoes when I glimpsed myself in a full-length mirror which leaned against the wall. My father had always intended to secure it. Coloured light through the stained glass above the front door illuminated from behind stray fibres of my hair. The yellowish semi-darkness obscured the humps and pits of my complexion. I felt noble and unique. I stared at my own image till it began to dissociate itself and paralyse me with its look. It receded and returned to me with each beat of my pulse, and a dark halo throbbed above its head and shoulders. 'Tough,' it said to me. 'Tough.' And then louder, 'Shit...piss...arse.' (McEwan 17-18)

Mirror is not simply an object of narcissism and a way of exploring the new body in teenage years. For Jack it is associated with his dead father and in a house full of children he pursues uniqueness and individuality through the reflection in mirror. He is seeking something more so desperately that the mirror starts to speak back to him with words associated with taboo topics. In Jack's world full of filthiness, sexual fantasies about his sisters and bad temper, mirror should sublime his acts and attempt to ease them somehow. Jack himself expects the mirror to be a tool of remorse, something that he would use to change his actions: "I looked at myself carefully in the mirror. What was wrong with me? I tried to frighten myself with the reflection of my eyes, but I felt only impatience and mild revulsion" (77). Jack wants to be punished but mirror is only a passive object that has no active role in his way of thinking.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis argued that the incest supports the patriarchal relations between the siblings and the analysis via Freudian psychoanalytic theory and feminist theory was employed in order to support this claim. At first the theory of Edward Westermarck about siblings who were reared together not feeling any attraction to each other was challenged and proven wrong and with the help of five historical discourses it was concluded that in spite of the presence of some patriarchal features (*The Dreamers*, *The Cement Garden*) or very strong patriarchal dominion (*Middlesex*), incest did not contribute to such structure.

These particular cases of incest in literature were depicted as romanticized and the incest itself did not contribute to the hierarchical structure in regards to the relationship between the characters. The only patriarchal dominion proven was in the case of *Middlesex* and it was not caused by incest itself, but by the sexual abstinence of Desdemona. The possible consequences in a form of genetic disorders began to haunt her and she opted for abstinence in order to save the health of her children. *The Cement Garden's* Jack felt threatened by female dominion in the household and challenged the women in the house. However, he could not execute patriarchy when his sister was the older one and given the power over him by the Mother. The patriarchal structures were neither induced by incest in this case nor in the novel *The Dreamers*. The female twin was the dominative one in the relationship and in spite of the fact that the guessing game about the movies was devised in order to challenge the hierarchical superiority of Isa, she remained the one in charge of the rest of the trio.

There were three important features of the analyzed novels that were similar. All three couples experienced some kind of change in their lives that brought along also a shift that lead to incest. Desdemona and Lefty's parents died and the siblings were forced to at first take care of the silk business and then flee to the US. The new country offered them a possibility to start anew and to reinvent themselves as a married couple. Jack and Julie's parents also died and Julie as the oldest is in charge gained a new role of the mother of the house. The household was isolated from other people and thus also from societal stance towards incest. Théo and Isa welcomed a third person into their relationship and isolated themselves from the world in a flat. The incestuous relations between them were present also long before the change however, the isolation creates a

whole different situation and living in three influences the twins' position as parents and Matthew's role of a child. Each of the couple participated in a game or in the case of *Middlesex*, in a performance. This performance helped to overcome the remorse brought around by incest and created a new identity for Desdemona and Lefty. The game in *The Cement Garden* was used as an expression of childish curiosity and in *The Dreamers* it was a way of gaining the superior status in the hierarchical structure. The third common feature was the presence of mirrors in all of the three novels. Mirrors helped to transform the character's own self-perception from being the sibling into a non-relative. Desexualization was employed via sublimation and the sexuality was shifted. The sublimation through mirrors contributed to romanticizing the incestuous relationships and thus depicting them as less unacceptable.

This thesis was written in a hope that consensual incest between two people over the age-of-consent will not be judged as immoral and there will be an inclination towards the democratic theory of incest. As Lefty comments: "I think love breaks all taboos" (Eugenides 77), and one cannot agree more with him after reading the three novels analyzed in this thesis. The society stance in general shifts to a more liberal way of thinking therefore it is highly probable to expect in near future the attitude towards incest to change as well.

The topic of incest had been dealt with multiple approaches before and its obscurity will surely attract numerous theorists in the future. However, its connection with patriarchal structures should be broken in order to move towards a more democratic stance to consensual consanguineous relationships.

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ABSTRACT

The goals of the following Master thesis are to determine to what extent the incest supports the patriarchal structures in consanguineous relationships in *Middlesex*, *The Dreamers* and *The Cement Garden*. The thesis analyzed the hierarchy in intrafamilial relationships between brothers and sisters through the complex lens of Freudian psychoanalysis, Westermarck's theory on incest and also Gayle Rubin's theory of women in relation to incest. The analysis revealed that incest does not contribute to men-dominated hierarchy and the taboo of incest is sublimated with a symbol of mirror. On the basis of these results it can be concluded that incest in consensual brother-sister relationships is not connected with patriarchy.

ABSTRACT IN GERMAN

Das Erkenntnisinteresse der vorliegenden Masterarbeit ist darauf gerichtet, anhand der Analyse der Werke *Middlesex*, *The Dreamers* und *The Cement Garden*, festzustellen, in welchem Maße die patriarchalischen Strukturen durch den Inzest unterstützt werden. Diese Masterarbeit hat sich somit als Ziel die Analyse der Hierarchie der Verhältnisse unter den Brüdern und Schwestern vorgenommen, wobei die Freud'sche Psychoanalyse, Westermarcks Theorie über den Inzest sowie die Gayle Rubin's Theorie über die Rolle der Frau im Inzest angewendet werden. Den Analyseergebnissen zufolge, können die folgenden Schlussfolgerungen gezogen werden. Der Inzest spielt weder eine Rolle in der Männer-dominierten Hierarchie noch sind die Verhältnisse unter den Brüdern und Schwestern mit dem Patriarchat verbunden. Das Tabu des Inzestes wird durch das Symbol des Spiegels sublimiert.

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