

## **OPINIONS AND COMMENTS (AS PART OF THE EXPERT REPORT)**

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- (i) Topics touched upon and involved in the publications (listing them out with reference to the questions and answers) with comment that the rest of the questions and answers are very insignificant in terms of sex and sensitivity to the readers in Hong Kong;
  - (ii) Origin of discussions of incest (for instance) in terms of psychology and sociology;
  - (iii) Classic schools and theories about incest;
  - (iv) Wealth of discussions and exploration of the topic of incest in literature and movies etc;
  - (v) Reasons and importance of discussion and understanding of the topic;
  - (vi) Going back to the contents of the publications in question analysis on the neutrality of the questions;
  - (vii) Comments on the context of University students publications;
  - (viii) Comment on the way of arousing interests and discussion through personal experience in the form of questionnaire;
  - (ix) Comment on the answers.
- (same for the other topics)

### **On i:**

In the February issue, the questionnaire was entitled “Audience Opinions’ Survey” printed on p. 23. It was divided into part 1 and 2. Part 1 was aimed at gathering opinions and feedback on different columns of the Erotica section, including book review, film review, short story, travel writing, etc. It also asks its readers whether they consider the drawings “obscene” (question 1e), whether certain columns (like “Letters to Stephy”) are too serious, whether the short stories are “sexy enough”, which columns the readers like to keep, which to remove, and suggestions to add and/or improve. Question 5 specifically asks its readers whether they would like to see the Erotica section “folded”. These ten questions, which constitute the majority of

the page in terms of layout, and details of the multiple choices given, clearly shows the editors' intentions of engaging its readers in a productive dialogue about whether this section is considered appropriate and/or useful as part of a university publication, and also in ways of improving the section to make it better serve the needs of its readers.

The second part of the survey takes up less space than the first part. These ten questions cover various forms of sexual anxieties and fantasies, especially those common among young adults. The first question is on boredom, and the second on frustration--- these are commonly felt emotions among youngsters in Hong Kong not just on issues of sexuality but on many other aspects of life and are NOT usually allowed to be discussed openly in classrooms or in family situations in HK. The next four questions and question 9 and 10 are all on sexual fantasies. Seen in this context and in this particular sequence, it is noteworthy that sexual fantasies are seen as ways of introducing more creativity and more active imagination into the possibly “boring” and “frustrated” habitual ways of thinking about sex and the inability to openly talk about these problems and seek potential resolutions. Questions 8 and 9 are about seeking resolutions to these fantasies. Seen in its original context, this sequence of questions is carefully designed to address some commonly felt frustrations and repressions among young adults through opening up a relatively neutral and unrepressive space for discussing these matters, an attitude most government-endorsed sex education programs in HK would encourage.

### **On vi and ix:**

The March issue publishes the questions again with some answers gathered. One can see that the first two questions generate almost a consensus (3 yes answers out of 4) on feeling different levels of boredom and frustration around having sex, whereas the responses to the questions on sexual fantasies are mostly negative. For question 3, for example, which *may* be read as asking about the possibility of imagining incestuous relationships, all the five answers are in the negative—even when one of the answers bring up a “fleeting” moment of thinking about the possibility of having sex with one’s brother, such fleeting moment of imagination is immediately condemned as “unwanted” by the respondent her/himself-- a direction s/he would not want to pursue. For question 10, which has been condemned by commercial press as

regarding bestiality, two answers are straightforward negative, while two other answers interpret the question as about love and sexual affairs between humans, thus four out of the five answers demonstrate a firm and negative position against the possibility of bestiality (or zoophilia—explanation of these terms found in section on bestiality below). The *only* answer that shows a slightly more ambiguous attitude is answer 4 which recalls the respondent's witnessing a horse's arousal and smile—again, this has nothing to do with a common definition of bestiality. All in all, as a reader, I can see that the editors have made a clear and careful decision in printing the answers which do not contain any narratives describing incest or bestiality, and do not contain any positive advocacy on these sensitive tabooed matters.

If I consider the questionnaires published in the CU Student Press alone (without considering misquotations or commentary from commercial newspapers for example), I would like to emphasize that I do not think the questionnaires published has provided descriptions or narratives of incest and/or bestiality in any way. To read these two questions specifically in light of these two topics risks the danger of (mis)understanding the impact and effects of these two questions and the printed responses out of context, and risks some unfair misreading and misjudgment altogether.

**On vii:**

As a scholar who are trained in studying cultural formations including media representations, I would say that these two questionnaires and answers combined clearly convey an impression that the survey authors would like to find out if their peers share similar problems of sexual anxieties and frustrations as they do, and help their readers to express some sexual fantasies which might not be easily voiced out publicly. The first questionnaire also shows a sincere intention of providing a open platform for positive and negative feedback on their press and their erotica section, for suggestions for further improvement or even change in editorial direction, while both questionnaires offer a platform to discuss some commonly repressed feelings including sexual boredom and anxieties. These are particularly appropriate for a student magazine on the university level of which its main readership is entering young adulthood and craves for information and discussion around sexual matters—topics that have been repressed and avoided in their past experiences. Since most

media representations of sexuality in HK are not legally available to people under 18 years old, these open discussions around sexual fantasies and anxieties, serve an important social and educational function to invite and encourage young adults to be more honest about their sexual feelings, bravely face any psychological or emotional hiccups and problems they might have, and actively seek help if needed. These invitations for honest self-reflection and more open discussion serve as counterbalancing devices against the exaggerated, sensational, glamorized, highly commercialized, yet highly secretive representations of sexuality which we are habitually exposed to in HK mainstream media.

**On viii:**

Asking readers to share personal stories and fantasies is a commonly used media strategy to arouse readers' interests and attract further discussion from readers. This strategy has been used widely by magazines catered for teenage girls in HK since the 70s, e.g. *Sisters*, and is generally perceived to have a positive sexual educational value among youngsters who have been forbidden to voice such matters in schools or homes. This genre carves out a common ground for readers to share feelings, stories and information, invites self-reflection and participation from the readers, helping its readers to feel safe, cared for, and not dismissed or judged upon negatively. In the English newspaper *The Guardian* on March 10, 2007, for example, there was a letter written to the columnist Dr Luisa Dillner regarding sexual fantasies (not unlike the "Letters to Stephy" in the CU Press) and was answered as follows:

*My partner enjoys telling me his sexual fantasies. They often involve someone who isn't me, which irritates me. Is this something men do more than women?*

Most people have sexual fantasies, but that doesn't mean they should share them. Fantasies have the power to be sexually inhibiting as well as liberating. Taking offence at a fantasy, however, invests it with too much meaning: it's just a thought (unless it is depraved, in which case phone the police). A quick search of Amazon reveals more than 1,000 books on sexual fantasies. But it isn't a male preserve - American sexologist Nancy Friday has made a living from her bestselling books on female fantasies, *My Secret Garden* and *Forbidden Flowers*.

Studies show that men have more fantasies. A University of Vermont study of 350 people aged 18 to 70 found that 98% of men and 80% of women had sexual fantasies about people who weren't their partner. Which is interesting, as 48% of people in a New York Times poll said it was 'not OK' to fantasise

about having sex with someone else. Women were more likely to fantasise about an ex-partner. The longer people had been in a relationship, and the more partners they'd had, the more likely they were to fantasise about someone else.

These letters help to show that sexual fantasies are common experiences and the media play a major role in truthfully reporting on these facts of human imagination and therefore help the public to have a better understanding of the complexity of the world we live in.

**On ii and iii:**

While all answers published in the questionnaire rule out the possibility of pursuing a narrative involving any taboos, question 3 could be read as slightly more clear than question 10 in its intention of asking *about* a taboo. In the specific context of Hong Kong schooling system where students are often subject to IQ quizzes, question 10 on the other hand, could be read as a IQ quiz question where the “correct” answer is “human”, since it does not state that the definition of “animals” here should exclude humans. Therefore I would be inclined to accept a possible reading that question 3 might demonstrate a curiosity in bringing the issue of incest into further discussion and debate (the word “incest” does appear in one of the answers to question 3) while question 10 is not likely to encourage that direction. Having considered this, I will only briefly mention some of the academic debates around bestiality (and zoophilia) below (in case the court still finds such information helpful) but will rather focus on outlining some of the very rich and rigorous discourses around the topic of incest, highlighting the psychological, social and cultural meanings around this taboo, and describing some of its imaginary representations. I should also state that to raise a taboo subject—or any subject for that matter—for discussion, analysis and/or scholarly research does *not* suggest in any way that the subject is normal, socially or morally acceptable. A scholar studying deviant acts or suicide, for instance, does not suggest that the scholar has experience of committing deviant acts or suicide, or approve of these acts him/herself.

I would also like to stress that I should in no way be considered an expert on the topics of incest and/or bestiality. However, since one of my research interests has been on issues of gender and sexuality, I am more than willing to share with the

public a bit of preliminary research findings, if this opportunity might help the public to gain more understanding of and be more aware of the basic academic, cultural and intellectual significance of these topics. Due to time constraints and limitations in personal knowledge and ability, I apologize that the following does not serve as a comprehensive and/or exhaustive study of the concerned topics in various fields but I will be honored to further elaborate on any of the points in this report, if necessary.

### **Bestiality and Zoophilia in Psychology and Ethics**

It should be noted that the two issues, namely incest and zoophilia/bestiality, which have been called into attention in this case by mainstream media, have a historical affinity in academic research. Sexologist and sex therapist Miletski for example, published the first brief overview of mother-son incest research. She sheds light on a topic that has suffered societal neglect because of the taboo nature of incest, the widespread denial of all forms of female sexual aggression, and social double standards that impede recognition of female sex crimes. She shows that mother-son incest is more common than is thought and that most mothers who commit incest are sane.

Miletski is also most notable for her monumental and pioneering book on zoosexuality, a comprehensive reference work and analysis, which formally established that a genuine sexual orientation might exist (as opposed to a mere sexual fetish), and whether previous research in the field had erred in not fully recognizing this. When she looked for information regarding a patient of hers who reported zoophilic interest, she found that no solid body of research or consensus of opinion in psychology has been reached on the topic. In *Understanding Bestiality & Zoophilia* (Bethesda, MD: East-West Publishing Co., 2002), based on a doctoral dissertation at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco, Miletski examines animal and human sexual contacts area by area, from prehistoric times to the most recent. Following the work of Mark Matthews (1994), she believes there are two general classes of people who have sex with animals: (a) the bestialists, who have had one or a few sexual contacts with an animal or use animals when a more "normal" outlet is not available; and (b) the zoophiles, who prefer animals as sex partners and often form deep emotional relationships with them. Review by Vern Bullough (distinguished professor emeritus at State University of New York, Outstanding

Professor at California State University, past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, and winner of the Alfred Kinsey Award for distinguished sex research) published in *Journal of Sex Research*, May 2003: "In sum, this study is a path-breaking one and gives us a better understanding of the topic. Much work still needs to be done, but Miletski should be complimented for her pioneering efforts..."

The general term zoophilia was first introduced into the field of research on sexuality by Krafft-Ebing in his book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). In sexology, psychology and popular use, it has a variety of meanings, revolving around affinity, affection, or erotic attraction between a human being, and a (non-human) animal. It can refer to either the general emotional-erotic attraction to animals, or (less commonly) to the specific psychological paraphilia of the same name. The terms zoosexuality, signifying the entire spectrum of emotional or sexual attraction and/or orientation to animals, and zoosexual (as in, "a zoosexual [person]" or "a zoosexual act"), have been used since the 1980s. Individuals with a strong affinity for animals but without a sexual interest can be described as "non-sexual" (or "emotional") zoophiles, but may object to the *zoophile* label. They are commonly called animal lovers instead.

In *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality* (London: Verso, 2000), Dutch biologist Midas Dekkers documents a journey of human sexual interest in and use of nonhuman animals as seen in art, literature, court records, personal confessions, veterinary files, and popular culture through history up to the present. Dekkers traces, that since the God of the Christians, like Zeus of the Olympians, once descended in the form of a bird to know a woman—the story of Leda and the Swan and the story of the Virgin Mary being visited by the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove—Christianity "is founded on bestiality". He contends that the central issue in any sexual encounter between humans and other creatures is whether it involves cruelty, meaning coercion and/or infliction of physical pain and bodily harm, regardless of who the perpetrator is. He documents men getting revenge on female farmed animals who refuse their advances, showing the link between nonconsensual sex and human violence. He persuades his readers powerfully that such circumstances may not be uncommon.

Even while noting that the sex life of domestic animals is "completely organized by

human beings" (178), raising the question of whether the consent of a domestic animal is ever possible under any circumstances, desire notwithstanding, Dekkers says that "as long as none of those involved suffers pain, no form of sex should be seen as pathological, bad or mad" (148).

Princeton philosophy professor Peter Singer further argues that zoophilia is not unethical if there is no harm or cruelty done to the animal. Singer's suggestion that interspecies sex, whether initiated by humans or nonhumans, could conceivably be moral and mutually satisfying, raised a furor among some animal rights advocates. The primary objection to bestiality is that sex between humans and nonhumans, regardless of the circumstances in which it occurs including rape, is an offence to human status and dignity as human beings. Philosophy professor Karl Ning of National Central University in Taiwan, however, argues that studies on sexual relations between humans and nonhumans only focus on the possibility of abuse and avoid the issue of animality found in all animals including humans; this might create the effect of reproducing the ideology of anthropocentrism (interpreting the whole world only through human values, and assuming humans as always in the center of the world and more superior than others).

There is also presently considerable debate in psychology over whether certain aspects of zoophilia are better understood as an aberration. The activity or desire itself is no longer classified as a pathology under DSM-IV (TR) (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association) unless accompanied by distress or interference with normal functioning on the part of the person, and research has broadly been supportive of at least some of zoophiles' central claims. Critics point out that that DSM-IV says nothing about acceptability or the well-being of the animal, and many critics outside the field express views that sexual acts with animals are always either abusive or unethical. Defenders of zoosexuality argue that a human/animal relationship can go far beyond sexuality, and that animals are capable of forming a genuinely loving relationship that can last for years and which is not functionally different from any other love/sex relationship.



**On iv:**

**Bestiality and Zoophilia in Children's Stories, Literature and Legends**

Despite the topic's potentially controversial nature, imaginary narratives around zoophilia highlighting the romantic attraction between humans and nonhumans could be easily found in children's tales including *Frog Prince*, *Swan Lake*, *Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* etc. Many of these stories also have movie versions.

There is also a vast body of Chinese literary texts and legends which contain narratives of sexual encounters between humans and nonhumans. Just several examples below:

In *Journey To The West* (西遊記), considered one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, the pig monk Zhu Bajie has numerous sexual affairs with women.

In the popular Chinese legend *Madame White Snake* (白蛇傳) (or *Lady White Snake*), white snake Bai Suzhen married Xu Xian, a herbal medicine shopkeeper and she gave birth to a boy, who later rescued his mother from the bottom of the Leifeng Pagoda so that she could be reunited with her family. This narrative has of course been retold in novels, films and stage performances for numerous times, among Chinese-speaking communities and beyond.

In *Liaozhai Zhiyi* (聊齋誌異), which has borrowed from a rich folk tradition of oral storytelling in Chinese culture, tells tales in which humans mate with various forms of nonhuman species, often with happy endings. Ghosts and nonhuman (foxes, deers, tigers, dolphins, insects, rats, frogs, birds, flowers, trees, to name a few) spirits are often bold, loving and trustworthy, while humans are on the other hand weak, indecisive and easily manipulated, expressing the author's own disillusionment with his society and his admiration for nonhuman species uninhibited by (his own) social and political constraints.

**On ii and iii:**

## **Incest in History and Mythology**

Narratives of incest are abundant in the history of human civilization and in mythology, especially those concerning the origins of human civilization. I would limit myself to two examples only:

1. It is relatively accepted that incestuous marriages were widespread during the Graeco-Roman period of Egyptian history. Numerous papyri and the Roman census declarations attest to many husbands and wives as being brother and sister (Lewis 1983, Bagnall and Frier 1994, Shaw 1993). Some of these incestuous relationships were in the royal family, especially the Ptolemies. In some royal families, as in ancient Egypt and among the Inca, were such marriages customary, perhaps with the goal of conserving royal prerogatives and property. Incestuous unions were frowned upon and considered as *nefas* (against the laws of gods and man) in Roman times, and were explicitly forbidden by an imperial edict in AD 295, which divided the concept of *incestus* into two categories of unequal gravity: the *incestus iuris gentium*, who was applied to both Romans and non-Romans in the Empire, and the *incestus iuris civilis* which concerned only the Roman citizens. Therefore, for example, an Egyptian could marry an aunt, but a Roman could not. Despite the act of incest being unacceptable within the Roman Empire, Roman Emperor Caligula is rumored to have had open sexual relationships with all three of his sisters, (Julia Livilla, Drusilla, and Agrippina the Younger), killing his favorite (Drusilla) when she became pregnant with his child. During Roman times, incest was apparently normal practice in the UK, at least in the south of the country. When Julius Caesar invaded Britain for the second time in 54 BC, he noted the customs of the Britons, remarking, “Wives are shared between groups of ten or twelve men, especially between brothers and between fathers and sons; but the offspring of these unions are counted as the children of the man with whom a particular woman cohabited first.” (Lewis-Stempel 2005)

Some of the Greek myths on incest, eg. Oedipus and Electra, will be mentioned again in the psychology section below.

2. In Chinese mythology, the origins of the Chinese race and civilization (中華民族

人始之初) could be traced back to “San Huang/Three Kings” (三皇). “The Head of the Three Kings” (三皇之首) is Fuxi (伏羲), who is married to his sister Nuwa (女媧), giving birth to humans thereafter, thus they are often called the "parents of humankind". Fuxi has been considered by folklore belief as one of the most superior and wisest beings in early Chinese culture. Legend has it that he devised the earliest agricultural skills in China by inventing nets for fishing and taming animals for farming and for food, while Nuwa is known as the goddess who is able to upkeep and maintain the “Wall of Heaven”. It was also believed that Fuxi invented a mathematical system which laid the groundwork for calculators and computer systems today.

Both Fuxi and Nuwa are also half-serpents/dragons and half-humans (人首蛇身) (see illustrations below). Their marriage could therefore also be seen as a form of zoophilia.



### **Incest in Psychology**

The Oedipus complex is a highly influential and popularized concept within psychoanalytic theory referring to a stage of psychosexual development where a child of either gender regards the parent of the same gender as an adversary, and competitor, for the exclusive love of the parent of the opposite gender. The name

derives from the Greek myth of Oedipus, who unwittingly kills his father, Laius, and marries his mother, Jocasta. While Freud argued that both sexes experience desire for their mothers and aggression towards their fathers, Carl Jung believed that females experienced desire for their fathers and aggression towards their mothers. He referred to this idea as the Electra complex, after Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon. Electra wanted to kill her mother, who had helped plan the murder of her father. Although common usage refers to 'suffering from an Oedipus complex', psychoanalysis does not consider the complex a pathology, but instead a perfectly normal stage that all children go through. Oedipal desires are thought to remain heavily repressed and unconsciously in the minds of all functioning adults.

Perhaps also relevant to our study here of the CU Press (cf. the answer recalling the smile of the horse to question 10) is the famous case of Freud's patient "Little Hans" in a paper entitled "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy" published by Freud in 1909. Hans was a young boy who was the subject of an early but extensive study of castration anxiety and the Oedipus complex, taking the shape of a phobia of horses (*Equinophobia*). Hans's fear and anxiety were thought to be the result of several factors, including the birth of a little sister, his desire to replace his father as his mother's mate, conflicts over masturbation, and other issues. Freud saw this anxiety as rooted in an incomplete repression of sexual feelings and other defense mechanisms the boy was using to combat the impulses involved in his sexual development. Hans' behavior and emotional state did improve when he was provided with information by his father, and the two became closer. Hans himself was unable to connect the fear of horses and the desire to get rid of his father. The ability to discuss his feelings and experiences with horses helped Freud to understand and diagnose his anxiety. George Serban commented:

"Freud himself admitted that 'Hans had to be told many things that he could not say himself'; that 'he had to be presented with thoughts which he had so far shown no signs of possessing'; and that 'his attention had to be turned in the direction from which his father was expecting something to come.' (Serban 1982)".

Evolutionary psychologists have argued that humans who grow up in similar environments possess similar psychological mechanisms. The Westermarck effect, that children who are raised together during the first five to ten years of life have inhibited sexual desire toward one another, is one strong piece of evidence in favor of this. While studies have supported the hypothesis that some psychological mechanisms cause children who grow up together to lack sexual attraction to one another (e.g. anthropologist Melford E. Spiro demonstrated that inbreeding aversion between siblings is predictably linked to co-residency), it is not unusual for biological siblings who did not know each other in childhood to be attracted to each other when meeting as adults, generally understood as a condition called “Genetic sexual attraction” (GSA). Several factors have been suggested by scholars as contributing to GSA:

1. People commonly rank faces similar to their own as more attractive, trustworthy, etc. than average. Heredity produces substantial physical similarity between close relatives.
2. Shared interests and personality traits are commonly considered desirable in a partner. The heritability of these qualities is a matter of great debate; to whatever extent they are heritable, they will tend to cluster in close relatives.
3. In cases of parent-child attraction, the parent may recognize traits of their sometime mate in the child.

There is also a tremendous amount of study focusing on incest as a form of child and sexual abuse. Clinical studies in this area could be easily found in any good library. Generally speaking, such studies tend to encourage a process of speaking up and sharing—a process of “breaking the silence” in order for the victim to undergo possible healing.

### **Incest in Sociology**

Yehudi Cohen, in his article "The Disappearance of the Incest Taboo", argues that incest rules become far more relaxed in those societies that do not depend upon intermarriage among different extended kinship groups as a means of survival. According to Cohen, as population increased within human societies and as businesses, governments and other non-kin-based institutions have become

increasingly responsible for the social, economic and political functions that were previously performed by kinship relations in lineage-based societies, the social importance intermarriage between lineage groups has declined. This has led to the gradual disappearance of the incest taboo and along with it a reduction in the very definition of what constitutes incest. Cohen's point can be seen by examining the definition of incest used by most states in the U.S. As the state laws clearly indicate, incest in the U.S. refers only to marriage or sexual relations within the immediate family. In none of the states does incest apply even to first cousins, and in the case of Massachusetts, it applies only to parents and children. Laws around incest are indeed changing rapidly around the world. Adult incest is no longer a criminal offence in Belgium, Holland, and France. Sweden permits half-siblings to marry.

#### **On iv:**

#### **Incest in Literature, Movies and Television Programs**

Incest narratives have proved to be quite popular in literature, movies and television programs worldwide and across different historical times, in classical literary texts, in art films, and in popular culture:

In the classic English novel *Son and Lovers*, known to be autobiographical of D.H. Lawrence (Cambridge University Press, 1992), taken by many to be his earliest masterpiece, the protagonist Paul Morel loves his mother (and is jealous of the father) so much that he seeks to drift towards death after his mother's death. In 1999, the Modern Library ranked *Sons and Lovers* ninth on a list of the 100 best novels in English of the 20th century.

In the published literary diary *A Journal of Love* (1932-1934), the renowned French writer Anaïs Nin (writer of the famous *Henry and June*, Penguin Books, 2001, made into a wildly popular movie), the focus of Nin's obsession is her father, Joaquin Nin, a Spanish pianist and aristocratic who seduced her after a 20-year absence. Nin sought absolution from her psychiatrist and lover, Otto Rank, who advised her to bed her father, then dump him as punishment for abandoning her when she was 10.

In the epic fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, fraternal twins Cersei and Jaime of

House Lannister have engaged in a secret incestuous relationship for much of their lives.

The book *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* by Vladimir Nabokov is largely about the incestuous romance of Van and his sister Ada, who initially think they are cousins, starting during early adolescence and progressing throughout their lives.

In the movie *Back to the Future* the main character Marty McFly goes back in time and accidentally meets his teenage mother who is very attracted to him.

In J.V. Jones' trilogy *The Book of Words*, Jack, the boy of the prophecy, discovers that he had been in love with his half-sister, also a bastard of the late king.

In the film *Code 46*, William Geld falls in love with Maria Gonzalez who is a genetic clone of Geld's biological mother.

In V.C. Andrews novel *Flowers in the Attic*, the two elder children, Cathy and Christopher end up being sexually attracted to each other and engage in sexual activity. This is due, in part, to their seclusion from the outside world. They, in turn, were the production of inbreeding as their parents were related also.

In the Booker-Prize-winning-novel *The God of Small Things* (Harper Perennial, 1998) by Indian author Arundhati Roy, Estha (male) and Rahel (female) are twins who are separated at a young age then reunite as adults: "...they broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved." (pp. 310-311)

In the TV show *House, M.D.* episode "Fools for Love", House treats a married couple that turn out to be half-siblings.

In the movie *The House of Yes*, fraternal twins Marty (Josh Hamilton) and "Jackie O" (Parker Posey) engage in explicit incest, which started when they were pre-adolescents, though could probably be traced back even in infancy. According to their mother (Genevieve Bujold), "Jackie was holding Marty's penis when they were

born..."

The anime series *Koi Kaze* tells the story of a brother and sister (ages 27 and 15, respectively) who gradually fall in love with each other when they are reunited after a ten-year separation. A similar case occurs with the anime *Please Twins!*, who in this case are the same age and have previously met.

In *Lone Star*, the instant and deep attraction which Sam Deeds and Pilar Cruz feel towards each other is ultimately connected to the fact that they are half-siblings, unbeknownst to both of them. Despite this they decide to continue their relationship. This matter has large metaphorical significance with regards to the primary theme of the movie, race relations in the small town.

In the book *Middlesex* by Jeffery Eugenides, two main characters, a brother and sister, move from Greece to the U.S. in the 1930s and start a family. Later in the novel their son marries his cousin.

In the Japanese anime show *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, the main protagonist, Shinji Ikari is shown to have feelings towards his fellow Eva Pilot Rei Ayanami, who is revealed to be a clone from the genetic material of his deceased mother Yui Ikari towards the end of the series.

In the original *Star Wars* movies, Luke Skywalker and his twin sister, Princess Leia, experienced a strong form of GSA, although both were unaware of their relation. In the highly popular TV series *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, they even shared a kiss, although Princess Leia eventually appeared to choose Han Solo long before she realized that she and Luke were siblings.

In the novel *Time Enough for Love* by Robert A. Heinlein, a pair of twins who allegedly share no genetic material marry and have children, then have to be talked out of letting their children marry each other.

A storyline in the BBC's flagship hospital drama *Casualty* in 2003 involved GSA,



when staff nurse Anna Paul began a relationship with house officer Merlin Jameson. After telling Anna that he was adopted, she encouraged his search for his birth parents, only to discover his mother was Anna's mother. This revelation caused both characters great suffering and virtually destroyed Anna's relationship with her/their mother, but her feelings had grown so strong for Merlin that she continued it, eventually getting pregnant. The baby was never born, however, as she was involved in a train crash at the start of the following series, and after first having both legs amputated, she eventually died of her injuries. The characters of Merlin and his/Anna's mother did not continue after her death.

In a Korean movie *Old Boy* (Jury's Prize at Cannes Film Festival 2004, Best Director and Best Male Actor at Asia-Pacific Film Festival), directed by Park Chanwook, the protagonist Dae-su finds comfort and compassion in his love affair with Mi-do after 15 years of confinement. He later discovers that Mi-do was his long lost daughter. His confinement turns out to be a revenge plot designed by his old classmate, whose affair with his sister was carelessly publicized by Dae-su.

In the Dutch award-winning movie *Festen*, directed by Thomas Vinterberg, Christian and his twin sister have both been raped by their father while their mother stood by her husband.

In the past few years, the Japanese anime *My Sister, My Love*, authored by Aoki Kotomi, on a love story between brother and sister, has sold more than 600 million copies and was made into a movie played by teen idols in Japan in 2007. It was also translated into Chinese (《妹妹戀人》) and published in Taiwan in 2005.

For Chinese literature, popular classics like 《天龍八部》 by 金庸, 《心鎖》 by 郭良蕙, 《盛夏的櫻花》 by 沈星妤, 《笑林廣記》 by 游戲主人 and highly regarded literary texts from the newer generation including 《無人知曉的我：兒子》 by 陳雪—all contain plots around incest (between brother and sister, between parent and child or between in-laws).

### On v:

Studying incest helps us to understand the historical, sociological and cultural specificity of taboo formations—how and why they change through times and places. It also lays important framework for understanding how changes in social structures have significant and lasting psychological, mental and emotional impact on human beings. In the benchmark 3-part study *The History of Sexuality*, French philosopher Michel Foucault reminds us that "We must not forget the discovery of the Oedipus complex was contemporaneous with the juridical organization of loss of parental authority". Opening up space for debates and discussion around taboos like incest in contemporary Hong Kong especially helps us to examine and understand better the moral standards and social (in)justice of Hong Kong society, and ways to maintain the competitiveness and compatibility of its legal and political regulatory systems with the rest of the civilized modern world. Dr. Ng Mun Lun from the Department of Psychiatry, University of Hong Kong, for instance, has presented a study on the current child protection laws in Hong Kong in 2001, pointing towards a critical analysis that the current Hong Kong laws around incest could reinforce gender and age discrimination.

Incest narratives have made up an intrinsic and indissoluble part of many art and literary traditions worldwide. There has been a rising scholarly interest recently in studying incest as a recurrent narrative motif and its cultural and historical implications. Scholars have shown that studying incest as a widespread and long-lasting imagined narrative sheds poignant lights for understanding social changes, human emotions, yearnings and ideals as well as sexual roles and differences. In a scholarly study *Sibling Love and Incest in Jane Austen's Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) by Glenda A. Hudson, Assistant Professor of English at California State University in Bakersfield where she teaches Victorian literature and the British novel, she observes that "Children of the same family, the same blood, with the same first associations and habits, have some means of enjoyment in their power, which no subsequent connections can supply; and it must be by a long and unnatural estrangement, by a divorce which no subsequent connection can justify, if such precious remains of the earliest attachment are ever outlived."

Her study analyzes the incest motif in numerous works of the period and argues how

the handling of incestuous themes in Jane Austen's classical novels *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Sense and Sensibility* represents a revolutionary stage in the development of the English novel. "Austen's incestuous unions with which some novels end-- reveal her concern with preserving the sacred inviolability of the home in a time of upheaval and social change." Her depiction of a tightening of familial ties is an attempt to maintain traditional values in a rapidly changing *fin de siecle* world where marriages between in-laws and first cousins could serve to protect and fortify the home, and consolidate the family. She argues that the concern with the family and depiction of home as ideally the haven of domestic bliss is the author's reaction to the rapidly changing and (perceived as) increasingly unstable society and times. For middle-class Victorians, home was the last bastion of morals, a refuge from the debasement of the changing world and from war and revolution. It was regarded as a scared place, a safe haven resisting the buffeting and upheaval of external terrors. Authors as Dickens, Trollops, Eliot and Ruskin all reveal the primacy of this belief.

Ellen Pollak's influential book *Incest and the English Novel, 1684-1814* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) further widens our perspectives on the history of English novels by opening with the following paragraph:

"A striking number of English prose fiction narratives written between 1684 and 1814 predicate their plots on the tabooed possibility of incest. Aphra Behn's popular *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684-87), arguably the first extended epistolary fiction in English, is based on an incestuous affair between Ford, Lord Grey of Werke, and his sister-in-law, Lady Henrietta Berkeley. Multiple studies of incest, one between siblings and several between guardians and wards, punctuate Delarivier Manley's popular anti-Whig scandal novel *The New Atalantis* (1709). The eponymous heroine of Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) marries her own brother... the hero of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) has sexual relations with a woman he later mistakenly believes to be his mother... Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) weaves an elaborate incest plot around the figure of Mr. Macartney and displays a general fascination with the problem of incestuous desire between fathers and daughters. Even Jane Austen demonstrates a preoccupation with the question of incest, most notably in *Mansfield Park* (1814), a novel that resolves its linked obsession with brother-sister relations and intrafamilial exchange through the marriage of the heroine

to her cousin.”

Through seeking to understand the use of representations of incest to configure the relationship between power and sexual difference, and incest narratives as part of the history of modern cultural formations, Pollak challenges anthropological and psychoanalytic models of society and the human subject. Rather, she argues that fictional representations of incest in the eighteenth century are part of the history of the formation of a discursive construct in which incest is transgressive and liberatory. This construction of incest has its roots in discourses of political and religious liberation that emerged during the Reformation and evolved over the course of the 17th century. Scholars have commented on Pollak’s study:

*"Incest and the English Novel* makes a strong claim that incest is a nexus of patriarchal power that victimizes women, while its representation in the eighteenth-century novel paradoxically offers liberatory opportunities for them. This is a fine piece of scholarship that has no equal..." Felicity Nussbaum, UCLA

"Ellen Pollak has written an elegant and savvy book demonstrating that incest lies at the discursive center of modern normative conceptions of gender, sexuality, desire, and social power." Ruth Perry, MIT

Anne Allison, professor of cultural anthropology at Duke University, in her book *Permitted and Prohibited Desires: Mothers, Comics, and Censorship in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), contextualized the media panic in Japan in the late 1980s and early 1990s about the supposed prevalence of mother-son incest within a wide-ranging discussion on the social construction and production of desires in contemporary Japan. She analyzed the delicate ways in which lunchboxes, children's cartoons, adult comic books, mother-son incest, and the removal of restrictions on photographic representations of pubic hair—usually seen as separate objects/topics of study—are in fact inter-connected sites which are mutually perpetuating. All of these involve the socialization of individuals into the habits of productive workers and national subjects, and the production and policing of desires commences very early in the life cycle of the individual. It is in such a context that comics with explicit sexual imagery, and

depictions of incestuous behaviors serve to reinforce the profound importance and sanctity of the domestic sphere, and provide readers with a certain release from the sexual and social status quo. "That in a society where there is so much expectation and pressure, this is what you turn to for that momentary escape." (Allison as quoted by Booher 2007)

In other words, studying the tabooed topic of incest is crucial in fostering our understanding of human development in various social and cultural contexts, of issues of gender and sexuality, and of the operations of social and political regulation. Telling and reading incest imaginary narratives and fantasies could also offer opportunities for women and disempowered subjects to resist social injustice and negotiate safer spaces and emotional outlets in many social contexts.

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