

**TRAPPED IN THE *IN-BETWEENNESS*:
THE NARRATION OF GENDER, SEX, AND
SEXUALITY IN JEFFREY EUGENIDES'
*MIDDLESEX***

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Abstract

The 2003 *Pulitzer Award's* winning novel *Middlesex* has been praised in the United States because it is considered to be successful in presenting new perspectives on gender through intersex character who rejects genital surgery. In addition to intersex, this novel also constructs the discourse of sexuality through incest and lesbian issue. This study is conducted to reveal how gender, sex, and sexuality are represented in the novel. Judith Butler's concepts of gender, sex and sexuality are used in this study to understand how the author builds the discourse of incest, lesbian and intersex. In order to find out the author's position regarding these issues, this study also aims to expose what factors have influenced the representation of gender, sex, and sexuality in the novel. The result of this study shows that this novel tends to strengthen the causality between gender, sex and sexuality by portraying lesbian and intersex as *the other*. Incest is depicted as something acceptable as long as it is successfully blurred the kinship and suggests consensual heterosexual relationship. While lesbian is represented as sexual deviant desire that is never accepted in the United States. Intersex which becomes the major issue of the novel is defined as an abnormality that is shameful and should be hidden. In order to be accepted in the United States, lesbian and intersex are required to transform into more coherent gender and sexuality to fulfill what Butler calls as *compulsory heterosexuality*. The representation of gender, sex, and sexuality in the novel are greatly influenced by the political, social, and cultural

factors that developed in Greece, the United States, and Germany in the 20th up to the beginning of 21st century. Furthermore, the discourse of lesbianism and intersexuality that flourished in America when the novel was published also has an effect on the representation of lesbian and intersex in the novel.

Keywords: Intersex, Lesbian, Incest, *Middlesex*.

INTRODUCTION

Incest, lesbian and intersex are three controversial issues which become the major topics in Eugenides' *Middlesex*. Why controversial? Because even though the discourse and the study of gender and sexuality have been evolved along with the progress of science and the mindset of society, but all of these issues still often create the pros and cons as well as the presumption of 'taboo' in our society which tends to be in a heterosexual matrix. When hearing the word incest, lesbian and intersex, the usual response that will emerge are cross-divisions between 'normal' and 'abnormal', between 'right' and 'wrong', between 'who is obeying the norm' and 'who is breaking the norm'. Eugenides, has to be admitted, managed to combine those three taboo issues into a complex story which is appealing for many readers. Not a few who are even praised Eugenides for his success in breaking down the old discourse of binary gender and sex. Through the presence of Callie/Call, an intersex who refused the genital surgery, the novel is considered to have succeeded in breaking down the dichotomy of sex and gender. Callie/Call's transformation who is initially grown up as woman into a man is also believed as the evidence that the novel is capable in presenting gender discourse that is dynamic and receptive to the possibilities of change.

When discussing about intersex, incest, and lesbian, it is impossible to escape from the grip or normative rules which are concerning every single things relate to gender, sex and sexuality. Departing

from the general assumption that there must always be linkage and causal relationship between gender, sex, and sexuality, the individuals who are identified as having intersex genital or having sexual orientation to the same-sex will usually be positioned as 'abnormal' and violating the rules. That there is a 'trouble' in him/her that makes his/her gender, sex, and sexual identity do not work according to the normative rule. An individual can be accepted and recognized as a human being only if he/she can fit into the category of man or woman who is considered 'normal'. If someone was born as a man, he would expect to show his masculine side and his interest in woman to prove his masculinity. And vice versa, to prove his femininity a woman is required to expose her feminine side and her sexual desires for men. This kind of rule is unconsciously agreed and adhered by our society for centuries until it becomes consensus that if it is not obeyed, it will create consequences in the form of social or legal sanctions for those who break it. It certainly becomes a problem for those who are considered as 'abnormal' or have a 'problem' with their gender, sex or sexuality, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and intersex. They are forced to be obedient to the rules and structures that have already been there from the beginning and put them into a difficult position.

Starting from the most basic rule that governs the categorization of sex, it can be seen that there are certain structures which are working in our society and subtly claiming that there are only two 'normal' sex category, namely man and woman. It becomes a problem because there are certain individuals who are born with certain genital which is not male and not female. Intersex is the most obvious example that ransacked our constructed sex norms. Individual with intersex genital is born with mix genitals, hormones, or chromosomes of man and woman. This fact disrupts the traditional assumption which promotes the belief that there are only two category of sex. Butler argues that although this assumption is often seen as something scientific, it is still built based on the culture construction and the belief of a society. According to Butler, the public perception

regarding the categorization of sex that is considered natural is actually the result of social conventions. That sex is actually might not be something 'natural', but it is the result of construction and social norms that continuously perpetuated so it is seen as something natural and scientific. "*Sex is no longer as a bodily given on the which the construct of gender is artificially imposed, but as a cultural norm the which governs the Materialization of bodies*" (Butler, 1993: 2-3).

For Butler, sex is not a condition in which a body given where the gender construction is imposed, but rather a cultural norm governing the body materialization. In other words, the categorization of man and woman is also a cultural construction just like how our society constructs the categorization of masculine and feminine. So if there is someone who has a mix genital of man and woman, or in other words can not be categorized as man or woman according to the existing norms, it will be regarded as a freak or abnormal. That his/her 'in between' position must be corrected in order to fit into the normal category, either as male or female. This kind of assumption creates the so-called normalization on the intersex bodies, an attempt to 'normalize' the genital which is considered ambiguous among people who are born with intersex conditions. This normalization is usually referred as sexual correction of ambiguous genitalia. One thing that should not be forgotten is that the problem among intersex people, in fact, is not only about the normalization of genitalia. The problematic discourse among intersex also relates to the gender identity and sexuality which will be ultimately 'chosen' and embraced by the intersex. Along with the intersex movements which are openly refuse the genital surgery as a form of human right, we can not be forgotte the regulations which are governing the gender and sexuality norm and often become a strength in disguise that had a major influence on the existence of intersex.

In *Middlesex*, before the discourse of the intersex is presented, incest and lesbian issues have already been constructed and play an important role in the text. Callie/Call is narrated born with

the intersex genitals as a result or consequence of her/his grandparents' (who are actually siblings) incest relationship. At first Callie/Call is grown and raised as a girl because no one, neither her/his parents nor herself/himself, realized that she/he has a mix genitals. At puberty, Callie/Call is described as a teenage girl who has sexual attraction to her female best friends, *The Obscure Object*, in other words, the lesbian narrative is also presented before Callie/Call is aware of her/his condition as an intersex. How incest and lesbian are represented in the novel becomes an important point that should not be forgotten and should be taken into consideration in order to understand how gender, sex, and sexuality are constructed in *Middlesex*. Through the discourse of intersex, incest, and lesbian, *Middlesex* appears as a novel that presents the complexity of gender, sex and sexuality. The next question is what kinds of narration of gender, sex and sexuality are offered by *Middlesex*? In this novel, Callie/Call who is initially raised as a girl until the age of fourteen and has a sexual attraction to the same sex, despite consistently refuses the genital surgery, in the end she/he chooses to use heterosexual man as her/his gender identity after knowing the doctor's diagnosis that she/he is suffering from *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome*, a type of intersex conditions in which a genital looks like a vagina at birth, but undergoes a significant change that it appears like an imperfect penis in the age of puberty.

With this kind of narration, suspicion arises, whether this novel is really defending the marginalized people like intersex, just like some previous studies' assumption, or is it the opposite. And how does this novel regulate the discourses of sexuality regarding the issue of incest and lesbian? To whom is the discourse of gender, sex and sexuality in the novel actually take a side? Departed from these questions, this study is initiated to seek the answers by using the perspective of gender, sex and sexuality from Judith Butler. In other word, this research tries to address:

1. How is the narrative of gender, sex and sexuality represented in *Middlesex*?

2. What factors affect the representation of gender, sex and sexuality in *Middlesex*?

DISCUSSION

Incest In Heterosexual Matrix: Taboo in Disguise

The narration of incest in *Middlesex* is presented in the form of sexual relationship between two siblings Desdemona and Lefty. Incest is displayed as the cause of the intersex condition of the main character Callie/Call who is their grandchildren. Incest narration is firstly presented in the middle of the Greek society who are in the middle of Balkan war (a war between Greece and Turkey which is take place in 1922). The author constructs the incest narratives through an incestuous relationship between Desdemona and Lefty who have been living together since their parents died because of war. These two siblings live in a small village named Bithynios which is located in Smyrna city Greece. In 1922, Bithynios is such a small village where the number of its inhabitants has been decreased over time as a result of the endless wars. It turns Bithynios into an isolated village in which the majority of the population is old people with a very limited single women. There are only three unmarried girls including Desdemona herself. The lack of a single woman becomes the factor used by the author as a background to build the incest narration between Desdemona and Lefty.

The author presents incest in the middle of war so that incest appears as a phenomenon that seems understandable. Incest is not presented as sexual harassment or immoral sexual practice, incest is portrayed as a reflection of the social condition which is affected by the Greek-Turkish war at that time. Love between siblings which is considered as something wrong and forbidden in Greek society transformed into a touching romantic relationship between brother and sister. It suggests that incest in *Middlesex* is built as a love story in the middle of the messy war that provokes sympathy. However, the author seems also agrees with the stigma that although incest is presented as

a touching romance and appears as a resistance againsts the existing norm of sexuality, incest is still taboo, violating the norm, shameful and should be hidden. This stigma creates assumption that incest offender is a disgrace of the society, and therefore their existence should be hidden or even eliminated. When they are still in Greece, Desdemona and Lefty live as brother and sister despite their mutual interest. They are afraid to express their feelings because they know the norm in their society prohibits incest. But just when they started to mutually acknowledging each other's interest and no longer able to hide their feelings, Turkish troops attack and destroy Smyrna and most other Greek regions. The uncertain security condition as well as the stigma of the incest taboo in Greek society becomes the reasons that ultimately motivate them to flee and migrate to America.

When they have migrated to the United States, the incest narrative is still represented as a taboo relationship and must be buried deeply. Desdemona and Lefty sealed the secret of their incest relationship and their effort seems to be quite successful. Nobody knows and suspect their incestuous relationship which is considered as a forbidden relationship according to the United States' laws. The only person who knows their secret is Sourmelina, their cousin who has been long migrated to the United States and also has a big secret as a lesbian. Desdemona and Lefty is viewed as normal couple just like other married couples even though their relationship hide a dark secret which is even considered as a crime under the US law. It happens because they managed to display their identity in accordance with the norms of American society that is 'whiteness and heterosexual'. Since coming and settling in Detroit Michigan, Desdemona and Lefty who have been using a false identity as French immigrant, constantly tries to get legitimacy as an American citizen. They are settled in Detroit, a city in which in early to mid-twentieth century has been stained by the issues of racial crisis between whites and blacks. The difference between whites and blacks in Detroit is so apparent and it makes Desdemona and Lefty had no other choice but to present

themselves as white. Racial conflict that occurred in Detroit does not give any room for a third ethnic, there are only two options, being white or being black. Being white is simply do not have black skin. And because of the color of their skin, Desdemona and Lefty can easily fit into a group of white people. Their economic condition which is gradually improved after Lefty opened a bar called *Zebra Room* reinforce their identity as a white middle-class Americans. The climax is the Detroit Riot actually positioned them as the lucky party who obtains a compensation insurance so they have an opportunity to buy a house in an elite residential area named *Grosse Point*. The most crucial thing is the heterosexual identity presented by Desdemona and Lefty which is not only affirming their social status as an upper middle-class citizens but also is able to blur their incestuous marriage. The incest taboo can be disguised because what American people see in Desdemona and Lefty's relationship is a regular heterosexual relationships between woman and man. Mason Stokes argues that the identity as white people will work optimally when it is juxtaposed with heterosexuality: "*Whiteness works best-in fact, that it works only-when it attaches itself to other abstractions. Both whiteness and heterosexuality work together to form an enormous, yet nearly invisible, "normative disciplinary presence"* (Stokes, 2001: 13).

Incest which is actually considered as taboo and even judged as a crime according to the law and the norms of American society can ultimately be masked due to the representation of white middle-class and heterosexual identity displayed by Desdemona and Lefty. Butler explains that in the case of heterosexual incest, it is the object which is prohibited, not the desire. While in the case of homosexual incest, it is both of the object and the desire which are rejected: "*In the case of a prohibited heterosexual union, it is the object the which is denied, but not the modality of desire, so that the desire is deflected from that object onto other objects of the opposite sex. But in the case of a prohibited homosexual union, it is clear that both the desire and the object require renunciation and so Become subject to the internalizing strategies of*

Melancholia" (Butler, 1999: 75). It means that for American society, the problem in Desdemona and Lefty's relationship is the object. It is their kinship that makes their relationship seen as taboo and forbidden. Meanwhile their desire is not seen as a problem because it is in the heterosexual matrix. If they were the same sex, either the 'object' and the 'desire' in their relationship will be equally prohibited. Moreover, in Butler's view, people like Desdemona and Lefty are those who are considered as intelligible gender by the heterosexual norm, those who are considered able to maintain the coherence between their gender, sex and sexuality, "*Intelligible genders Reviews those are roommates in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity Among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire*" (Butler, 1999: 23). Desdemona and Lefty have been succeed in presenting the coherence between gender, sex, and sexuality so that they have been accepted by the American public. Desdemona is a feminine woman and have an interest in man, so does Lefty, he is a masculine man who is interested in woman. Regardless of the incest taboo discourse, there is nothing wrong about their relationship when it is viewed from the perspective of heterosexual society. Desdemona and Lefty's relationship does not violate the norms and even contribute and perpetuate to what Butler calls as the '*compulsory heterosexuality*'. Therefore, Desdemona and Lefty are depicted as an incest couple who are able to avoid social and legal sanctions of American laws because they able to blur their kinship by displaying dominant racial identity in the United States (white) and sexual identity which is considered 'normal' and 'acceptable' for American society (heterosexual).

Lesbian: The Forever Forbidden Desire

According to Butler, in a society that upholds the values of heterosexuality, gender, sex and sexuality are three things that have always been associated with each other. Sex and gender identity are usually considered as an absolute determinant of subject's sexual orientation. If someone has been identified for having sex and gender identity as a female, it will be considered normal only if she

has a sexual attraction to man, and vice versa. However there are many individuals who have sexual attraction to the same sex. It proves that sex and gender is not necessarily influence sexuality, as Butler states that "*Sexuality does not follow from gender in the sense that what gender you are determines what kind of sexuality you will have*" (Butler, 2004: 16). But the problem is that one's sexuality often determines how a subject is accepted in society. If someone's sexuality does not conform to the norm, then his/her existence is regarded as a freak who violates sexuality norms that had been believed to be the absolute truth. People who have sexual orientation to the same sex are usually difficult to be accepted by the society because there are barriers which are created between the 'normal' and 'abnormal'. These barriers are maintained for the purpose of perpetuating the so-called *compulsory heterosexuality* where each individual is required to be heterosexual.

In *Middlesex*, before presenting the lesbian narratives through an illicit romantic relationship between Callie/Call with her best friend (The Obscure Object), the author has already raised the issue of lesbianism through the character of Sourmelina, Callie/Call's grandmother from Greece who is also Desdemona and Lefty's cousin. Sourmelina is described as a Greek woman who has been caught dating with other women for several times. Although in some Greek mythology there is a narrative about same-sex relationships between men, but in general the Greeks strongly condemned sexual relations between two women: "*Both the Greek and Roman cultures throughout the ages Generally looked with distaste upon female-female relationships*" (Johnson, 2005:110). The scandal which states that Sourmelina has a romantic relationship with other woman makes her expelled from Greece. As a woman who likes other woman, her presence can not be accepted by the Greek society. Her family intentionally moved her to America in order to remove the negative stigma that has been already known by their neighbourhood. But even when she is in America, she still has to hide her lesbian identity. She must be married to a man named Jimmy Zismo who

asks amount of dowry to her family. In Greece, she was expelled because of scandal involving same sex-relationship. Meanwhile in America, she still has to pretend to be heterosexual women, married to a man and having children. She had to hide her sexual orientation in order to fit into the role of heterosexual American woman. It shows that there is no place for lesbian women both in Greece and in America. Lesbian is considered as violations and deviant that can not be accepted. Sexuality determines whether a subject may be accepted by the public. Sourmelina has to suppress her sexual desire towards woman and follow the norms which is prevailing in the United States in order to be accepted by the American society. Greece has rejected her and the only chance left is to live in the United States in compliance with all of existing rules and norms, to be a good wife and a good mother for her family.

Lesbian narrative re-presented through Callie/Call's desire for her best friend in her school, Baker & Inglis. In this girls' school, Callie/Call meets The Obscure Object, one of her classmates who caught her attention from the first time. Although the school environment supports the intimate friendships among fellow female students, but the heterosexuality values remains to be the basic standard of how the norms and rules have been applied there. It makes Callie/Call scares and worries about her own feeling and desire. Callie/Call keeps her feeling as a secret. She tries to conceal her interest because she realizes that if people knew her desire toward The Obscure Object, she will get mockery and may be ostracized. As Butler argues, in a society which tends to be heterosexual, a girl like Callie/Call who has an interest with the same sex will be categorized in a group of unintellegebile gender, a group of people who are considered to have a gender identity which is not coherent with their sex or when their sexuality is not in accordance with their gender identity and sex. Butler describes unintellegebile gender as: "*Those in the which gender does not follow from sex and those in the which the practices of desire do not 'follow' from either sex or gender*" (Butler, 1999: 24). In this case, Callie/Call is regarded as the subject who has

sexuality which is not in accordance with her gender and sex. As a girl, Callie/Call is expected to not having an interest with other girl. People like Callie/Call who are categorized as unintellegebile gender will usually get a direct and indirect 'social punishment', it can be in the form of alienation or in verbal and physical violence: "*Performing one's gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect , and performing it well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all*" (Butler, 1998: 528).

According to the prevailing norms of American society, Callie/Call who has a gender identity as women is required to has an interest in men, not in women. If her interest to the same-sex known by the surrounding, she will get a social sanction in a form of derision and alienation from her classmates. Therefore, Callie/Call chooses to hide her sexual desire toward The Obscure Object. The authors describes the relationship between Callie/Call and The Obscure Object as nothing more than a relationship which is only happen in a dream. It means that their relationship can only be shown at night and in the dark place when no one was looking. Their relationship should not be shown in a daylight let alone at an open space because what they do is a violation to the existing norms of sexuality. Callie/Call describes her relationship with The Obscure Object as a relationship that seems to happen only in a dream. "*So that was our love affair. Wordless, blinkered, a nighttime thing, a dream thing*" (Eugenides, 2002: 385).

Lesbian is discribed as nothing more than a sexual disorientation that must be continuously repressed. In order to survive and accepted by the society, a lesbian is described as a subject who must comply to a very heteronormative norm. Not only Sourmelina who ultimately must pretend to be a heterosexual woman, Callie/Call eventually is forced to comply to the existing rules. Several years after her intersex identity has been revealed, Callie/Call decides to change her appearance and gender identity into a man and leave America to work as a foreign consulate in American Embassy

which is located in Berlin Germany. Germany is considered as one of the most 'friendly' countries towards the LGBTcommunity. But despite of living in Berlin which is believed as a gracious city for lesbian, in order to have a sexual relationship with woman, Callie/Call nevertheless has to hide her/his intersex identity and performing heterosexual male identity. When living in Berlin, Callie/Call is described to have a relationship with a Japanese descent woman named Julie Kikuchi. Dissimilar to when having a relationship with The Obscure Object, Callie/Call has already changed her/his appearance into a man when she/he is dating Julie. It means that the lesbian narrative which is initially presented is forced to disappear and replaced by the narration of heterosexuality. No more Callie/Call who is a lesbian. There is only Callie/Call, an intersex who is transformed into a heterosexual male.

Intersex: Between Resistance and Subservience

In *Middlesex*, the narration of intersex is presented through the representation of Callie/Call who is initially grown up and raised as a girl. Both of Callie/Call and her/his parents are not realized that she had an intersex genital. Her/his intersex condition is finally revealed at her age of fourteen. Before claiming as an intersex, Callie/Call spent his teenage years as a girl. At puberty, she is described as a girl who has delayed physical growth. When friends of her age began to grow tall and having breasts, Callie/Call becomes the shortest girl in her class who has a flat chest. As a girl who is at the period of puberty, Callie/Call is expected to show some physical developments such as the increasing height, the growing breasts, the changing of the body shape, or having menstruation. But Callie/Call does not experience these kind of things so that she feels like a failure as a woman because of her unusual body development. The increasing height, the changing of the body shape, breast enlargement, and menstruation are usually regarded as a natural process which is always experienced by almost every teenage girl who is in

a puberty. Whereas in fact, the condition of each woman's body is different. There is a woman who is regularly menstruating every month, but there is also a woman who does not menstruate in her entire life. So the normative rules about the normality of growth at puberty may also be a social construction which is regarded as the absolute truth. A body like Callie/Call who does not follow the normative standard of growth during puberty is often seen as an abnormal body.

To meet the normative standard which regulates how the woman body is considered 'normal', Callie/Call begins to lie by claiming to have experienced her first menstruation. She pretends to experience stomach cramps and headache like other girls who are experiencing menstruation. Beside falsifying her period, Callie/Call also stuffed Kleenex in her bra so that she looks like having a big breasts. Having menstruation regularly and having a big breasts will make her looks like other normal girl. Menstruation and breast become the standard to decide whether a woman is normal or not. It indicates that the narration in the novel shows a subject who is helpless and obedient to the existing normative rules. Woman is only defined based on the size of her breasts and menstruation. There is no other option for women like Callie/Call to define himself as a woman who is different and has her own characteristics. She must follow the existing rules if she wants to be categorized as a normal woman. Unfortunately, Callie/Call's false scenario about having a big breasts and her menstrual cycles do not last long. Due to an accident, she was injured and had to be taken to a clinic. At that moment, her identity as an intersex is revealed. Callie/Call is diagnosed as having *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome*, one of the intersex types in which the genital looks like a vagina at birth but undergo a significant changes to become a small penis at puberty due to the influence of

particular hormones. Callie/Call's genital is described as *crocus* which is sometimes feels soft and smooth to the touch (like a clitoris), but sometimes it feels so hard as root (like a penis): "*To the touch, the crocus sometimes felt soft and slippery, like The flesh of a worm. At other times it was as hard as a root*" (Eugenides, 2002: 330).

Because of having a mix genital consist of clitoris and penis, once again, Callie/Call is thrown from the woman's category. Her efforts in falsifying her big breast and menstruation so that she could fit into the category of normal girl becomes futile because there is something which determines her level of womanliness more, that is the genital. In public's opinion, a woman is considered normal only when she has a genital in the form of vagina. Because Callie/Call is known to have a mix genital between clitoris and penis, she can not be called as a normal woman according to the normative norms. However, to be classified as a man, Callie/Call also does not meet the existing normative standards. Although her genital develops into a penis, but it does not look like a normal penis possessed by other men in general. Callie/Call's penis is described as a small penis which is does not grow perfectly and does not have a hole at the tip. Despite having a penis, Callie/Call still has to squat when urinating just like women in general. She/he can not pee while standing up like what other men mostly do. Kesler states that in a patriarchal culture, urinating is not only a matter of passing the yellow liquid out of the body. Urinating position becomes a cultural standard to determine the levels of masculinity for a man: "*Urinary positions are cultural tests for masculinity*" (DeFranza, 2005: 45). Therefore, Callie/Call was deemed can not fit into the category of normal man due to her/his incapability of urinary position which becomes the standards of masculinity. Callie/Call is tossed in *in-between* position, she/he is a combination of female (clitoris) and male

(penis), but she/he is also neither male nor female. Through the presence of Callie/Call, the author tries to offer a new discourse of sex. In the existing normative construction, sex is seen as a binary entity, there are only two sexes in the world, male and female. Callie/Call's existence who is neither male nor female, but also can be regarded as unification of male and female, proves that the existing categorization of sex is only a myth. Because in fact, there are subjects who can not fit into these categories just like Callie/Call who is an intersex. At this point the author narrates the discourse of intersex as a critique of sex dichotomy which is considered as the absolute truth.

But in a society that glorifies sex dichotomy, the existence of intersex is often identified as monstrosity or something strange or unusual. Reis states that in America, other than regarded as the other and inferior, intersex is also identified as monsters which is scary, threatening, and unfortunate: "*In the United States they have been marked as other, as monstrous, sinister, threatening, inferior, and unfortunate*" (Reis, 2009: xv). Intersex is seen as nothing more than a monster because of her/his ambiguous genital. Consequently, intersex is claimed as a disease and therefore the reaction toward intersex is an attempt to cure it. This kind of reaction is performed with the intention to 'normalize' the intersex genital which is considered ambiguous. For an intersex, to be called as a human being, she/he must undergoes a number of normalization procedure so that she/he could fit into the category of male or female. The normalization procedure usually involving some medical experts who will recommend a genital surgery. Realizing that she/he would lose the ability to feel some sexual pleasures if she/he undergoes a genital surgery, Callie/Call rejects Dr. Luce's recommendation. She/he escapes from New York and moves to San

Fransisco. According to Butler, genital surgery on intersex gives more destructive effect instead of 'fix' it. In *Middlesex*, Callie / Call is depicted rejecting the genital surgery which is in Dr. Luce's opinion is a necessity for an intersex like herself/himself. It shows that the author tries to offer resistance narration toward genital surgery which is one of the most discriminating oppressions among intersex. Callie/Call's rejection shows that as an intersex, she/he is able to resist the discourse of sex dichotomy that requires her/him to undergo a genital surgery. Callie/Call wants to keep her/his genitals which is a mix of the clitoris and penis. She/he refuses the genital surgery which is basically want to change her/his genital into a 'normal' vagina. Through this narrative, the author seems succeeded in breaking down the sex dichotomy which is only acknowledging men and women as the existing sex category. Callie/Call's existence who has an intersex genital automatically fracturing the discourse of binary sex. Her/his rejection to genital surgery is a resistance toward intersex normalization that has been existed in the medical sphere for decades.

But in spite of Callie/Call's resistance toward genital surgery, one thing that should be examined further is the narrative presented behind Callie/Call's decision and what is her/his actions afterwards. In addition to the realization that she/he would lose sexual function, what most motivates Callie/Call in her/his refusal is the medical report made by Dr. Luce. After she/he quietly reads the medical report which states that she/he is suffering from *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome*, Callie/Call has a determination and conviction that she/he is not a woman but a man, and therefore she/he does not want her genital to be converted into vagina and feel compelled to change his appearance into a man. In one hand, Callie/Call who refuses genital surgery becomes a challenging new narrative. She/he wants to keep her/his intersex genital which is a mix of clitoris and penis. It is a very rare condition among intersex who are generally

obedient to a doctor's scalpel. The author seems succeed in his efforts to break the discourse of binary sex by presenting Callie/Call's existence who has a mix genitalia and rejecting normalization of intersex through genital surgery. On the other hand, the author seems also stuck in the old doctrine that believes that sex determines gender. Upon learning that the medical claims for her/his intersex condition is *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome*, Callie/Call claims herself/himself as a male and not a female. *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome* is a medical term that describes a condition in which a genital appears like a vagina when someone is still a baby, but because of the influence of certain hormones the normal sized clitoris has been enlarged and becomes look like an undeveloped penis. Patient with this syndrome is usually also referred as male *hermaphrodite* or an intersex who is genetically considered inclined to a male character. By presenting this kind of narrative, the author's effort in breaking the dichotomy of sex becomes futile. At first the author offers an intersex narrative as a form of resistance against the rigid discourse of sex, but then the narrative is again trapped in the old doctrine that sex is an absolute truth that determines gender. Someone who is born with a vagina has to present a feminine character, as well as someone who has a penis has to portray a masculine character. Because Callie/Call is claimed to be a *male hermaphrodite*, she/he feels required to present masculinity. It means that Callie/Call's determination to change his appearance into a man is influenced by the doctor's diagnosis that actually could be just the construction in the medical field. Gender identity as a male or as a female is still determined at the level of anatomy. Yet according to Butler, gender is a *free-floating artifice* which is not determined by sex. As a result, the intersex narrative in the novel becomes a sort of confusing narrative which is try to tear down the discourse of binary gender and sex, but eventually adhere to the rigid construction.

In her/his escape to San-Francisco, Callie/Call is described has been totally changed her/his appearance into a man. She/he cuts her/his hair and also stripped off all of her/his feminine

attributes. She/he is no longer had to stuffed kleenex in her/his bra or pretend that she/he is having a menstruation. Dr. Luce's medical claim convinces herself/himself that she/he had to turn into a man. While in fact, even after she/he changed her/his appearance into a man, there is still upheaval in herself/himself that she/he is not entirely comfortable and 'feel' as a man. Part of her/him still believes and 'feel' that she/he is also a woman: "*Unlike other so-called male pseudohermaphrodites who have been written about in the press, I never felt out of place being a girl. I still do not feel entirely at home among men*" (Eugenides, 2002: 479). Callie/Call continues to oscillate in a never ending question "Am i a man or a woman?". This question shows that in fact Callie/Call's condition is at the midpoint or in-between. She/he is an intersex. She/he is not a man nor a woman. She/he is a mix between man and woman. However because of the medical claims, Callie / Call constantly disciplines herself/himself and his body to be a man. The discourse of intersex as a resistance toward the dichotomy of sex and gender becomes 'fuzzy' because what can we learn from Callie/Call's transformation is the tendency to strengthen the categorization of man/woman and masculine/feminine. The intersex subject is forced to submit and discipline herself/himself to the existing categories. If not became a feminine woman, then she/he must be a masculine man. This kind of narrative contains an implicit meaning that inspite of the chance to reject the normative sex discourse by refusing genital surgery, but in the end the intersex subject remains trapped in the rules of binary gender. The determination of an intersex in altering gender identity through performativity is ultimately determined by the social construction (in this case determined by a medical record). It is also crucial that the doctor's diagnosis which states that Callie/Call is a *male-hermaphrodite* intersex suggests that the existence of intersex in the medical world must be grouped into several new categories. The implication is that intersex who is not a man nor a woman is forced to fit into an acceptable category. Intersex who is in a *in-between* position ultimately is regulated through new binary categories (*male hermaphrodite* versus *female hermaphrodite*). Intersex discourse which is

presented to challenge the dichotomy of gender and sex becomes useless because the author eventually representing new categories which are not really different with the existing dichotomy of gender and sex.

Another factor that affects Callie/Call's determination in choosing her/his gender identity is her/his own sexuality. As previously explained, before she/he is claimed as an intersex, Callie/Call is depicted as a girl who has an interest in the same sex. It means that if Callie/Call decided to remain to be a girl and did not change her/his appearance and gender identity into a man, she/he would be a lesbian woman. Lesbian woman is considered abnormal by American society in the 20th century. Lesbian is still considered as a disease or sexual disorders at that time. So instead to be a lesbian woman who is considered abnormal, Callie/Call prefers to be a man. Although these changes will bring some new problems for her/him (for example the stigma of being a transgender), but it seems that a heterosexual male identity becomes a lucrative option for Callie/Call. It shows that Callie/Call's effort in performing her/his gender identity as a man is affected by the social construction. Being a heterosexual man is considered better than being a lesbian women. The causality between gender, sex, and sexuality becomes the main motive that drives someone to perform her/his gender identity. This kind of problem is often criticized by Butler, that the social construction in the end influences the subject (unconsciously) to fit herself/himself into a rigid and normative categories. The fear to come out of the social order and the threat to be categorized as the other unconsciously motivate the subject to voluntarily submit into the existing rules.

The representation of those narratives is closely linked to certain factors which have a strong influence on the issues (incest, lesbian and intersex) that appear in the novel. These factors are consist of internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include social, political, and cultural issues that flourished in Greece, the United States, and Germany in the the 20th century up to the beginning of the 21st century

which is used as a setting in the novel. While the external factors include the social, political, and cultural issues that flourished in the United States in fifty years prior to when this novel is published (1950-2002). The internal factors that affecting the narrative of the novel include the political and cultural factors that flourished in Greece in the 20th century. The author seems to be influenced by the political factor such as the Balkan War that occurred in 1922 and the cultural factor such as Greek mythology which is contain the narrative of incest, intersex, and lesbians. Balkan war is considered as a relevant and appealing situation to be used as the background that triggers the practice of incest. Balkan war makes Greece as a place that is relevant and has sufficient factors to be used as a setting in which the incest narration is created. The social condition of the Balkan war is narrated as a major factor of the incest relationship between Desdemona and Lefty. The Balkan war that has been occurred over the decades is causing the death of thousands Greek people including Desdemona and Lefty's parents and relatives. The Balkan war is also narrated as a factor contributing to the lack of single women in Smyrna so that a young man like Lefty falls in love with his sister. In addition to political factors, the narration in the novel is also influenced by Greek mythology as the cultural factor. It is common knowledge that Greek mythology contains some incest discourses. In Greek mythology, many God and Goddess are told to having incest relationship as a way to maintain their power. Zeus is believed to have an incestuous relationship with his mother (Rhea) and his sister (Hera). Zeus himself is the result of incest marriage between Rhea with his brother (Chronus): "*Greek mythology contains numerous examples of incestuous activity by the gods. Zeus raped his mother, Rhea, and married his sister, Hera. Zeus was born of the union between Rhea and her brother Chronus*" (Brat, 1984: 259). However the incest narrative in Greek mythology is of course fictional and unreal. To create a reasonable and relevant incest narrative in a novel that is aimed for the the 21st century American society, the author needs a supporting factor which is more real and logic. For that reason, the historical facts and political conflicts of the Balkan

War are used as a motive to present the incest narration in the novel.

Besides narrated as the emergence of incest, Greece is also described as a forerunner of Callie/Call's intersex condition. This narrative once again is influenced by the Greek mythology which is contains intersex narration of hermaphrodite. In Greek mythology, hermaphrodite is the son of Aphrodite and Hermes who is told to have a combination of male and female genitals. This hermaphrodite narration in Greek mythology seems (again) does not stand alone. There is other factor (medical factors) that influences how Greece is narrated as the origin of the intersex. In the novel, Dr. Luce claims that the type of intersex experienced by Callie/Call is (*5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome*), a type of intersex which is very rare and only exist in certain countries such as the Dominican Republic, Papua New Guinea, and South Turkey (which is where Callie/Call's grandparents come from): "*It's very rare genetic condition, by the way. The only other Populations where we know of this mutation expressing itself are in the Dominican Republic, Papua New Guinea, and southeastern Turkey. Not that far from the village you parents Came from. About three hundred miles, in fact*" Luce removed his silver glasses" (Eugenides, 2002: 428).

What is shown in the novel is apparently not a mere fictional story. The narrative seems to be created based on a medical discoveries which states that the cases of intersex with *5-alpha-reductase-deficiency-syndrome* is a very rare case and usually only occurs in certain countries such as the Dominican Republic, Papua New Guinea or Turkey South. "... *The second cluster with inherited 5a-reductase deficiency is located in the Taurus Mountains of southern Turkey, where 13 male pseudohermaphrodites were identified*" (J. Imperato, 1991: 293). This medical discovery issued by the New York Hospital is a medical fact which is considered valid by the American society. This medical factor seems to be the background for the author in constructing the intersex narrative in the novel.

In addition to incest and intersex, lesbian narration in the novel is also depicted as sexual deviation which its perpetrators come from Greece. Sourmelina dan Callie/Call are described as lesbian women who has a Greek ethnicity. Through the narration, Greece is again represented as the origin of a deviation (lesbianism). This narration is apparently influenced by the cultural factors that the word lesbian itself is derived from the Greek language. The origin of the word lesbian is Lesbos, it is a city where a Greek poet named Sappho was born. Sappho is a poetess who is famous for her controversial works mostly depict romance between females. Through the narrative of incest, intersex, and lesbians which are presented in the novel, Greece is described as the middle of nowhere and is positioned as the cause of gender, sex, and sexual abnormality in the novel. Because of the influence of political, social, and cultural factors described above, Greece is transformed into an easy target to be represented as the other, abnormal, deviant, and the inferior which needs to be normalized by America. Meanwhile America is narrated as a place where sex and sexual deviations are normalized. Incest couple Desdemona and Lefty have to bury the secret of their kinship if they expect their relationship to be accepted by American society. Callie/Call who is an intersex has to transformed into a heterosexual man when he is still living in the United States (before his nomadic life in some countries). Meanwhile, Sourmelina and Callie/Call who are narrated as lesbians are forced to positioned themselves in a heterosexual relationship if they want to survive in Amerika. The narration of America in this novel shows that America is only reserved for those who obey the existing social and political construction, (the adherence to heterosexuality). In other words, America can not accept anything that is considered deviant and non-heterosexuals. If anyone found guilty of irregularities on social norms and rules, they are required to undergo a process of normalization. Being narrated as a superior, the image of America constructed in the novel is as advanced, normal and civilized country. This is certainly dissimilar compared to how the author narrating Greece as inferior and abnormal.

The factor which influences the intersex narrative in the novel is the development of science and theories in the American medical world. America in 1950-1960 is marked by the discovery of the gender theory and the debate among doctors and psychiatrists related to the intersex issue. There are two doctors (Money and Diamond) who raises a debate about the sex-reassignment among intersex in the 20th century. According to Money, how the appearance of genital anatomy or shape is the basis of social identity as a male or female. Meanwhile in Diamond's opinion, the basis of gender identity is determined by the presence of the Y chromosome in the body, or in other words the presence of the Y chromosome is the primary determinant of one's masculinity (Butler, 2004: 63). This debate among medical experts in the United States seems to be the background how the author narrating America as a place where intersex experiences normalization or sex-reassignment process. America is the only country in 1950 which has a very rapid medical developments (particularly related to intersex cases), so that narrating America as a country in which an intersex experiences a normalization becomes the most relevant thing for the author. In this case, the author presents Money's opinion through Dr. Luce character who believes that because Callie/Call has grown up and nurtured as a female, her/his gender identity will be stable and automatically adjusting the socialization that has been experienced during her childhood into adolescence. Dr. Luce also suggests that Callie/Call's genital should be corrected and changed into a vagina just like Money's theory. Meanwhile Callie/Call's resistance to refuse genital surgery and transform into a man (based on the diagnostics which states that she/he is a male-hermaphrodite) is basically following Diamond's argument. That the presence of the Y chromosome becomes the proof that she/he is a man and not a woman (despite the fact that Callie/Call also has a woman's hormones and chromosomes).

Regardless of the debate on sex-reassignment for intersex, America becomes the perfect place where the gender identity determination of an intersex is build based on the

development of science and theories in the medical world. In other words, America appears to be a place in which rationality and empiricism upheld through the research and the development of the theory in the medical sector. If Greece is described as 'the other' with all of those irregularities and abnormalities, America is narrated as normal and coherent. If Greece is associated with mythology which is fictitious and irrational, America is described as a modern, advanced, logic and realistic because it is always stand on the development of theory and research in the medical field which is considered to be scientific. America becomes a place where some subjects who are initially considered as the other had transformed into a part of the society which is considered normal and acceptable. Desdemona and Lefty transformed into a normal married couples by burrying the secret of their kinship. Sourmelina lives as a heterosexual woman by marrying a man and having children. Callie/Call who is intersex had transformed into a heterosexual male who is described having a coherence gender and sexuality.

Meanwhile Germany becomes the final destination as well as an alternative for Callie/Call. Germany is chosen by the author to portray how Callie/Call finally feels comfortable with her/his surrounding. "*I feel hopeful here in Berlin*" (Eugenides, 2002: 106). It is only in Germany when Callie/Call is finally being honest about her/his intersex identity to someone (Her/his lover Julie Kikuchi). It means that Germany becomes a comfort zone for Callie/Call (an intersex who uses a heterosexual male identity). This narration apparently is influenced by the social and political condition in Germany which is considered as one of the most friendly countries toward lesbian, transgender, or even intersex.

In addition, the development of lesbian and intersex issues in the United States from fifty years prior to the publication of this novel (1950-2002) also affect the author in narrating lesbian and intersex in the novel. *Middlesex* is emerged as a reaction in the middle of pros and contra of the lesbian theme in American literature that has been

took place since 1990. Among the emergence of some novels that began to portray lesbian with a positive image, this novel seems to reject the lesbian discourse by reaffirming heterosexuality as American identity. Meanwhile in relation to the intersex issue, the author wants to reinforce the stigma that an intersex should remain as an invisible subject in a normative society.

CONCLUSION

Callie/Call's decision as an intersex to reject genital surgery and to change her/his gender identity from woman into man is narrated based on the doctor's diagnosis (which states that she/he is a male-hermaphrodite) and her/his sexual desires toward woman. It means that even though this novel tries to challenge the dichotomy of sex and gender through the presence of an intersex who rejects the genital surgery, this novel also reaffirms the old discourse that promotes causality between sex, gender, and sexuality. An intersex subject is forced to transform into more coherent gender which is considered in accordance with her/his sex and sexuality. Contrary to the main purpose of the intersex movements that developed in America, that is '*to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgery*', the novel is precisely narrating intersex as an embarrassing condition that must be covered up (in the form of stealth identity) and regulated into coherent gender identity (heterosexual man). Through the representation of sexuality (lesbian and incest) which are presented in the novel, the author also tends to reaffirm the discourse of heterosexuality by marginilizing homosexuality (lesbian). Incest as a taboo relationship is narrated as something acceptable as long as its displays a consensual heterosexual incest. On the other hand, lesbian becomes the representation of sexual disorientation that is always in a marginalized position because it presents non-coherent gender and sexuality. In order to be accepted, lesbians had to discipline themselves into a heterosexual relationship.

The narration of gender, sex and sexuality represented through the issue of incest, intersex, and lesbian is influenced by social, political, and cultural factors that flourished in Greece, the

United States, and Germany in the 20th century up to the beginning of 21st century that is used as the setting in the novel. Through the narratives, this novel becomes the reflection of the social, political, and cultural condition in Greece, the USA, and Germany in the 20th century up to the beginning of 21st century, especially in relation to the incest, lesbian and intersex issues. But unfortunately, in reflecting the social, political, and cultural condition of those three countries, the authors chooses to narrating Greece and America as two opposition which are contradictory. Greece is represented as the inferior party where abnormalities and deviations come from, while the United States is narrated as the superior country which is normal, modern, civilized and has the capacity to 'normalize' every deviations derived from Yunani. Meanwhile Germany is depicted as a solution and a confort zone for Callie/Call (an intersex who has been experienced gender transformation). In spite of the narrative which seems trying to express the discrimination and the rights of the marginalized people (intersex and lesbians), this novel actually appears as an ideology tool that wants to reinforce the notion that lesbian and intersex are still seen as an abnormality in American society and should be obedient and regulate themselves into more coherent categories. Finally, the narration of gender, sex and sexuality constructed in this novel is in the position of *in-between-ness*. It means that on one side it looks like a resistance which defends the marginal (lesbian and intersex), but on the other side it confirms their position as the other who should be submissive to the heteronormative rules.

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