

The movie "the dreamers" essay sample

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The movie *The Dreamers* has much to do with youthful idealism. It is set in the revolutionary period of the late 1960s when the youth of Paris revolt against, among other things, authority and what they view as a stale way of life. In the beginning it involves viewing the main characters as friends, who then turn to lovers. Yet inevitably, their love runs dry and the trio splits into what they were before they first encountered one another. It is a story about love lost, and an idealism that refuses to die.

What sets this apart from many other movies, especially movies from the United States, is the unashamed nudity and explicit sexual liaisons between the three main characters. It is rare to see full frontal nudity in a movie in the States, and generally it is a woman who is seen. Even rarer is the completely nude body of a male. But this French film has all of this and yet goes one step further; two of the main characters are siblings. This movie presents to the American audience something never before seen to much of the population. Yet the fact that it was theatrically released with an NC-17 rating, something that had not been done in the States since the movie *Bent* was released in 1997, is testament to the fact that this is not just pornography, but a movie worthy of the admiration of " cinephiles" everywhere. (IMDB)

The movie begins by introducing Matthew, played by Michael Pitt. He plays a young American traveling in Paris in the 1960s. One of the first scenes is of him watching a movie at a theater after he exclaims " only the French would house a cinema inside a palace." The setting of Matthew in the movie theater is a foreshadowing of the importance movies play in the plot of the film. All throughout the movie, the actors pretend to play characters from

certain movies in a sort of game. The game though ends up having serious, but playful consequences; consequences which bring about and cement the relationship which eventually develops among the characters.

At a student gathering is where Matthew first meets Isabelle and her brother, Theo. This gathering is where the audience gets its first glimpse of the idealism that pervades the rest of the story as the gathering turns violent and pits students against police. One part in particular, a scene in which all three are walking together, further illustrates this idealism. In it, night has fallen yet the violence has yet to subside. Amidst the students taunts of "Assholes!, Fascists!, Bastards!" the three make their way back toward home. As the three walk side by side, Theo mentions that he is starving and Isabella pulls from her hand bag a couple sandwiches. Once they begin eating, they realize Matthew too is probably hungry and although he is "too polite to ask," first Isabella and then Theo give to Matthew some of their sandwich. I feel this is meant to symbolize the communist ideals which later take a more central place in the film.

The next day Matthew is invited to dinner at his new friends' house. There is where he meets Theo and Isabelle's mother and father. It becomes apparent quite quickly that Matthew makes a very good impression on their father. Matthew's monologue about the lighter and how it seems to fit so many shapes found throughout the room they are all in, leads him to the conclusion that all things are harmonious and everything has its place. This metaphysical truth that Matthew stumbles upon is followed up with Theo's radical views in which he denounces his father and proclaims that he hopes

he does not turn out like him. It is here that one realizes that there may well be a longing within their father to have a son more like Matthew rather than Theo. Perhaps this is another event which further cements the three together. It seems to give license to Theo to allow Matthew, because of his parent's acceptance of him, into the family. Theo, a couple times throughout the movie, makes it clear to Matthew that he and his sister are twins and nothing will ever separate them. But with the mother and father's acceptance of Matthew, Theo allows him to enter a bit further into their family. After this, Theo and Matthew find themselves alone for the first time. It is here that Theo professes his belief in the non-existence of God. This is something that, I will show, plays into the grand scheme and the movie, and its explicitness.

It is at this point that Matthew begins to suspect his two new friends are more than just brother and sister. At first he sees them kiss on the lips after dinner, after which Isabelle comes over and kisses Matthew, giving him the impression that he and Theo are equals in her eyes. After this, later on in the night after all have gone to bed, Matthew sees Isabelle and Theo lying naked in the same bed together. And then further, later that morning, Matthew is invited to temporarily move in with the two siblings, as their mother and father have left that very morning. With the background of Theo getting naked behind him, Matthew, although obviously feeling a bit confused about the extreme familiarity between the two siblings, agrees to join them.

The first obvious acceptance of Matthew by the two siblings as more than just friends comes after Isabelle is impressed with Matthew's extensive knowledge of film. Once Mathew's "worth" is established, Isabelle asks him to run through the Louve with her and her brother and break the world record which was set in the movie *Bande á Part* in which the characters of the movie also ran through the Louve, setting the record. After an initial hesitation, Matthew agrees and together they run, breaking the record. Once this feat is accomplished, Matthew is fully accepted by the two siblings.

It is at this point in the movie that sexuality takes a leading role. The first of a series of games begin in which the contestant must answer a movie trivia question correctly or face a punishment; the punishment always being sexual. The first time, Theo loses to Isabelle and is forced to masturbate in front of both her and Matthew. Once he completes his "punishment" and has ejaculated all over the door, both Theo and Matthew leave the room. It is here that the audience gets the first illustration of just how eccentric the brother and sister are, for it is when Isabelle is alone that she goes over to the door and begins playing with her brother's semen. The camera cuts and we are left wondering just how strange this relationship will get.

Further in the movie, Theo poses a question to both Matthew and his sister which they both fail to answer. As a consequence of their incompetence Theo requests Isabelle and Matthew to have sex. Again, after some hesitation, Matthew agrees. They begin to have sex, and Theo, taking a passing interest, begins to make some food. As the two begin to reach orgasm, the sounds of screaming and sirens are heard from the street

below. When Theo opens the window to see the commotion, we are given a scene in which communist revolutionaries are fleeing the police. During this scene, Isabelle and Matthew climax and all noise stops. We then learn, after Matthew's hand follows Theo's down to Isabelle's bloody vagina, that Isabelle was a virgin and Matthew has just deflowered her. The scene ends with an emotional embrace between Matthew and Isabelle in which Isabelle's vaginal blood is smeared over each of their faces as the hug and kiss.

Blood from Isabelle's vagina plays another important role later in the movie. After all three awaken from having fallen asleep together in the bathtub, Matthew notices the water is bloody and is taken aback. But once he learns that this is a "good thing" because Isabelle has had her period, all three relax. The difference between this time that Isabelle is bleeding and the first, in which she lost her virginity, is that in the latter, it signified a beginning. The blood from Isabelle's period, however, signifies the end. Matthew scolds both of them for being so weird, and tells them that they cannot go on living the way they do because they will never grow as people. He attempts to take Isabelle away from Theo by attempting to be with her all alone. However, once Isabelle realizes the full implications of this, and hears Theo with another woman, she cannot go on. After this, it is apparent that Isabelle cannot ever be exclusively with Matthew, and in the end, they part ways for good.

Aside from what many people, who see an NC-17 rating on a movie as a threat, may have you believe, this movie is as incredibly complex and as deep as the characters involved. The United States seems at times to be

unique in the industrialized world in their views on sex and sexuality.

Whereas Europeans seem to be generally more sexually confident and unafraid of confronting sexuality, Americans in many regards see sexuality, especially that sort that is more than strictly for procreation, as dangerous. What accounts for this is, in my estimation, a religious difference between the cultures in both the personal lives of people and the governments of the respective countries.

It is a well known fact that American culture is by far the most religious culture among the industrialized nations. According to a Gallup poll, as many as 35 percent of American's believe the bible is the direct word of God. 22 percent of Americans believe without a doubt that Jesus will come back to earth within the next 50 years. Another 22 percent believe that he "probably will." This is nearly half of the population of the United States, over 100 million people, who believe this. (Harris, 17)

In other polls it has been observed that 60 percent of Americans claim that religion is "very important in their lives." This is contrasted to the U. K. in which only 17 percent of the population says the same thing. Similar to this, a study done by the City University of New York concluded that by most standards, the United States is the most religious of all the industrialized countries except Poland and Ireland. (Land)

Christianity, like most religions, expounds upon the idea that any sex besides that for procreation is a sin. For instance, Mary was supposedly a virgin. According to the Christian, there is no way Jesus could have ever been conceived from a fuck. That is dirty, that is a sin. And historically one need

not look far into Christianity's past to see a religion that for at least a thousand years was as misogynistic as modern Islam.

When many people believe the same sort of belief, it is of course going to affect society. Perhaps one of the reasons sex "crimes" such as sexual harassment are such a large problem in the U. S. as opposed to another country like France is because of this overall negative attitude toward sex. Perhaps in other countries where sex is not so serious, individuals view what Americans would consider a crime as a compliment. In the movie, the nudity becomes natural. For myself, it was strange to see it at first, but after a while, I barely noticed it. And the sex scenes were not nearly as explicit as a true porno. Until the fundamental attitudes of American's change we will not be able to view certain movies without some sort of stigma. This conservative attitude does a great disservice to all people interested in the arts. Repression in all forms must be overcome.

Works Cited

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