



Hereditary misery: The dysfunctional family and multigenerational transmission in Jonathan Franzen's "The Corrections" and Cynthia Shearer's "The Wonder Book of the Air"

Julia Merkel

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1, University of Frankfurt (Main) (Institut für England- und Amerikastudien), course: Continuity and Change in Contemporary Southern Literature, 18 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: In times of the decline of the family as a social parameter we witness an unquestionable popularity of the family novel in American literature. Are authors writing desperately against the unraveling nuclear family, against patchwork constellations and second and third marriages? Is this merely nostalgic reminiscence, a longing for the long lost? In my paper I will argue that the portrayal of the family in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* and Cynthia Shearer's *The Wonder Book of the Air* is a rigid dissection of the pathological cycle of dysfunction, family often produces. It leaves every generation with the burden of the latter's failures and a lifelong struggle against reproducing revictimization

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