



Incest: From a Journal of Love

Anaïs Nin, Rupert Pole (Introduction), Gunther Stuhlmann (Noted by)

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Few writings explore a woman's love life in such detail, with such subtlety, insight, and pain, as does Anais Nin's original, uncensored diary. It is a life record that deals openly with the physical aspects of relationships and unsparingly with the full spectrum of psychological ramifications. Here was a woman who sought the freedom to act out her sexual and emotional desires with the same guiltless, "amoral" abandon that men have always claimed for themselves. When Nin began publishing sections of her diary in 1966, this aspect of her life was excised, though clearly there was more than could be told at the time concerning her relationships with Henry Miller and his wife, June, with the writer and actor Antonin Artaud, with her analysts Rene Allendy and Otto Rank, and - most important - with her father. Here now is the previously missing portion of Nin's life in the crucial years from 1932 to 1934, the shattering psychological drama that drove her to seek absolution from her psychoanalysts for the ultimate transgression. In its raw exposure of a woman's struggle to come to terms with herself, to find salvation in the very act of writing, Incest unveils an Anais Nin without masks and secrets, yet in the end still mysterious, perhaps inexplicable.

Incest: From a Journal of Love Details

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From Reader Review Incest: From a Journal of Love for online ebook

Regina Andreassen says

In my opinion this book is overrated but much better than other works she wrote. As a writer, I do not like her. She is predictable and obnoxious.

Joselin says

This book is really good when you are single and unhappy about it because it will make you fall crazily in love with everything from your pillow to your favorite song. It fixes whatever that thing is that sucks when you are alone. And makes it perfect.

Danelle says

There comes a time in everyone's life where they are faced with conflicting thoughts. On one hand...the basis of my rating, this book is very well written. Anais Nin has such a poetic way of writing. I almost feel as if I'm in Paris with her. On the other hand, the conflicting thought I couldn't help but be mildly disturbed that not only did she sleep with her father, but she also aborted a six month old child. *Which may or may not have been commonplace in that time period* However even with the questionable content I still give this novel (or diary) five stars. Anais Nin writes in a way where you can (somewhat) relate to her thoughts, and even if you can't relate you can from some place in your mind or heart understand. Overall I enjoyed this volume of her diary and I plan on reading the others.

Marcus Regnander says

?

Anaïs Nin verkar ha skrivit dagbok under hela sitt vuxna liv, och nu svider det att jag höll i den fem böcker tjocka, samlade utgåvan på Antikvariat Fausts rea för någon månad sen. 80 kronor! Men du, punktjejen som på min inrådan köpte den istället, hoppas du blev nöjd! Jag är inte alls bitter! ;)

”Incest” utgör ett utdrag ur Nins löpande dagböcker, och skildrar åren 1932-34 då Nin lever i Paris, är gift men samtidigt lever promiskuöst och är älskarinna åt flera män, bland andra sina båda psykoanalytiker (bla. Otto Rank) och soon-to-be-kändisförfattaren Henry Miller. Och nej, bokens titeln är inte symbolisk.

”..men jag är ingen vanlig kvinna. Specialstorlek i intellekt, i sex. En kollektion av det fenomenala. Jag är den enda kvinnliga författare som inte nöjer sig med erotisk litteratur – jag lever på samma nivå som jag skriver – det finns ett egendomligt inbördes sammanhang.”

Hon bedrar inte för att hon vill männen illa, hon anstränger sig tvärtom noga för att inte såra någon. Men det är som att hon inte kan bromsa sin sexuella upptäckarlusta eller sin livsglöd. Antagligen söker hon också desperat efter bekräftelse i och med den i barndomen förlorade fadern som verkar ha lämnat ett så stort hål i henne. Detta lämnas åt oss att tolka, och med all psykoanalys och berättelsens karaktär är det svårt att låta bli. (utan att ha kollat upp måste Nins historia utgöra material för otaliga Freudianska böcker.)

”Jag förråder aldrig mina svek. De är bara för mig.”

”Jag skulle aldrig kunna rymma från mina känslor, min känsla att livet inte är frihet utan kärlek, och att kärlek är slaveri, och att ingen expansion skulle betyda någonting om tre eller fyra personer offras på vägen.”

Henry Miller (under årtionden belagd med pornografistämpel och censurerad) är inte den som Nin är gift med, men som hon ser som sin primära, viktigaste relation, tills hennes far dyker upp. Eftersom ”Incest” är några valda år ur kontinuerligt skrivna dagböcker under 40 år så saknas mycket av bakgrundsberättelsen kring Nins far. Men han lämnade Anaïs och hennes familj tjugo år tidigare, och rev då ett rejält sår i sin dotter. När han återkommer in i hennes liv är Anaïs vuxen, attraktiv både till det yttre och inre, och de båda inleder en sexuell relation, verkligt unik litterär skildring. Nin förälskar sig i sin uppmålade bild av sin far, men förstår i verkligheten rätt snart att han bara kommer med elände.

Hon går i psykoanalys, har givetvis förfört sin analytiker, byter och börjar istället gå till den berömda Otto Rank, inleder så småningom en sexuell relation med denne också. När jag började läsa boken trodde jag att hon skulle förföra sin far på uppmanning av honom, som ett vrickat försök till frigörelse genom ”fadersmord”. Så är det inte, ingen säger åt Nin att ligga med sin far, även om gärningarna så småningom verkar få den frigörande konsekvensen ändå.

”I dessa dagböcker kan ni se att jag uppförstrades i spansk katolicism, att mina handlingar senare inte är onda, bara en kamp i protest mot ett fångelse.”

”Den djävul jag är besatt av och som driver mig att utöva min makt, tivngar mig att erövra män, ger min ingen glädje i förödelsen. Är detta ett bevis på någonting?”

Sidorna i ”Incest” är fulla av relationsbeskrivningar och reflektioner, så uppenbart skrivna av en som brinner, som känner, som märker och som analyserar minsta detalj, både i sig själv och i andra, utan att döma eller plocka bort. Det är lite dialog, få scener, men mycket reflektion. På dagbokens glödande vis är varje anteckning ärlig och utgör i stunden den stora sanningen, för att några dagar senare förändras.

Anaïs Nin skriver sin dagbok med psykoanalysens grundtanke som ledstjärna: Censurera inget, låt alla känslor och tankar komma till uttryck, för att sedan kunna analyseras för att förstå och på sikt frigöra. Denna brutala ärlighet, Nins ickedömande helhetsskildring av sig själv och sitt liv, utgör ett unikt vittnesmål om kvinnlig upptäckarlusta och sexualitet, och skulle vara viktig läsning för så många. Inte för att man nödvändigtvis måste tycka likadant som Nin eller tycka om det hon gör, men hon vågar sätta ord på saker och därigenom tvingar hon oss också att ta ställning till vårt eget inre.

När jag börjar googla inser jag att just den här ickedömande skildringen av en incestrelation (som riskerar att ta över, men inte utgör helheten av hennes författarskap) spelat roll för incestoffer världen över. (Lyssna tex här, läs här. Kolla förresten överlag in den fantastiska samlingen av Anaïs Nin-information på The Official Anaïs Nin Blog. Britt Arenander figurerar tex. i podcast nr 29)

Som om incest och otrohet inte vore tillräckligt provokativt hinner Nin också bli gravid och skildra en obehagligt sen abort (+6 månader :S), och jag tycker att det är oerhört intressant att läsa hur hon kopplar samman ensamhet och moderskapet. (Det är lätt att glömma hur hon lever och skriver detta i början av trettioalet!)

”Jag vägrar fortsätta vara mor, jag har varit mor till mina bröder, till de svaga, till de fattiga, till Hugh, till mina älskare, till min far. Jag vill leva enbart för kärleken till mannen, och som konstnär. [...] Inte moderskap, uppoffring, osjälviskhet. Moderskap, det betyder ensamhet igen, att ge, skydda, tjäna, kapitulera. Nej. Nej. Nej.”

Nin är genom boken säker på Millers geni, trots att han inte slagit igenom. Hon litar inte på de redaktörer och utgivare som säger att hon har större talang än honom, och hon vågar inte berätta det för Miller eftersom hon vet att han skulle bli rasande. Jag sliter däremot mitt hår över att hon inte ser sin egen storhet. Men det kanske också har att göra med att dagboken inte är officiell eller tänkt att gå i tryck.

Jag uppehåller mig länge med tankar om dagboken faktiskt är verlig, eller om det snarare är Nins sätt att leva ut förbjudna tankar genom litteraturen. Även om det säkert är ett sätt för mig att skydda min inrutade tillvaro mot hennes glödande aptit planterar Nin själv såna tankar i texten:

”Det som rinner ur mig i samtal eller handlingar blir sällan rekonstruerat när jag skriver. Det som bevaras, går till samlingarna, är det som exploderar i frukbar ensamhet. Det är därför konstnären är den ensammaste människan i hela världen, därför att han lever, krigar, dör och återföds ensam, och alltid ensam.”

”Författarens privilegium – rätten att alltid förtala i efterhand.”

”Jag vägrar falla in i den universiella pessimismen och trögheten. Jag sätter på mig skygglappar, stoppar vaxproppar i öronen. Mig kommer de skjuta medan jag dansar.”

Men hon diskuterar upprepat dagboken som ett sätt att få grepp om den ogreppbara Anaïs Nin, och ångesten över att någon av alla hennes män ska hitta den utgör ett annat övergripande tema, vid något tillfälle lämnar hon den framme, som ett litet rop efter att verkligheten ska hinna ifatt henne. Det gör den inte utan först på sextioalet publiceras utdrag ur de här dagböckerna, och på nittioalet trycks de ocensurerat, eftersom alla berörda personer då avlidit. Jag har inte läst på om hur publiceringen gick till, det finns delikata etiska bekymmer med den, men resultatet gläder mig. En litterär skattkista av en unik författare.

”Vad behöver världen – den illusion jag gav i livet, eller den sanning jag gav när jag skrev?”

frågar Nin och jag vill ropa: Din skrivna sanning, Anaïs! Vi behöver din skrivna sanning! Tack för att du vågade berätta! Det här är litteratur när det är som bäst. Ett hypnotiskt medryckande språk som ger mig stora viktiga tankar om skam och skuld, som genom sin ärliga skildring hjälper mig se världen med klarare blick. Fenomen, känslor, upplevelser som vi skäms för upphör inte finnas för att vi låtsas att de inte finns. De hanteras genom att få komma till uttryck, och Nins böcker hjälper oss på vägen.

(Henry Millers böcker ”I stenbockens vändkrets” och ”I kräftans vändkrets” verkar handla om just den här tiden. Biografisk, erotisk, togs felaktigt emot av vissa kritiker som ”ett underbart ironisk skildring av ung man på drift” (Miller skrev inte ironiskt).

En annan underhållande detalj kommer i slutet när Henry Miller bjuder hem Aleister Crowley, som vägrar se Anais Nin i ögonen, eftersom han ser henne som en besvärjerska som förtrollar män. Visste Crowley något om Nins liv, eller var han en sån människokänna?

Tim says

No, "Incest" is not a symbolic title. Anais Nin really does do it with daddy — repeatedly — and shares it all with you, dear reader, in her 1932-34 volume of her unexpurgated diary. Since it's Nin, there are other salacious exploits with other people, but her — ahem — unusual experiences with the father who left when she was a girl are the most likely to stay with the reader, for good or ill. Needless to say, Nin went through some analysis during this time. Staying sort of objective is a requirement with this volume, otherwise your disgust/discomfort might not allow you to go on. Nin's amazing thoughts and vivid writing are worth it, though. For the record, not as good as "Henry and June," but I give it the same star rating.

Sharon says

A fascinating insight into a rather complex woman. Not as shocking as I thought it would have been given its title. Anais is a woman struggling desperately to find herself and her own sexuality. She is however certainly no helpless victim. She orchestrates many of her own disasters. Her ability to tell lies and to step from one role and one life to another is remarkable if somewhat disturbing. Though she is not without guilt, for she often laments how she hates all the lies but then goes on to only more complex situations where even more deception and duplicity are necessary. Although there were many facets of Anais's character that did not lie easy with me I was by the time I finished this book quite fond of her.

Nicola says

If you're not up for reading Anaïs Nin's entire catalogue (which is what I plan to do, eventually), *Henry and June* is probably the book to dip into for a taste of her journals: it captures the passion and joie de vivre that

she's famed for. But while I loved that book, I think I enjoyed *Incest* more.

Admittedly, it *is* really, really long (~200,000 words), with an unevenness of writing that can be frustrating. There are times when you're dying to know what's been happening and Nin simply chooses not to record events in any detail. It's also, obviously, missing a real beginning or end.

Nonetheless, it's an extremely compelling book, with a fantastic cast of characters. It became akin to my daily soap opera for the few weeks that I was reading. I would find myself dying for someone to discuss it with – not to examine its literary merits, but simply to gossip about the action as if it were an episode of *EastEnders*. *Oooh, do you think Anaïs is finally going to leave Hugo?* etc.

In terms of action, there's a lot more that goes on in this book than *Henry and June*. Anaïs's relationship with her father obviously forms the book's central point, but the flings and flirtations that she conducts with Allendy, Artaud and Rank also add interest. Though the book lacks the structure of a novel, there is an unexpectedly horrendous moment of drama near the end that acts as a climax, and the book is not entirely without conclusion.

Nin's prose remains a joy in which to immerse yourself. I'm not someone who ordinarily dogears pages, but I find myself doing it all the time when I read Nin's diaries, because there are so many exquisite passages that I want to return to in order to read over and over again.

Amanda says

After years of knowing Anais Nin only as a crossword clue (many of those years believing her to be a him), I thought I should go ahead and pick up some of Nin's writing, most specifically, some of her journals as she is known to me most as a journalist, and then vaguely as an eroticist.

The vagaries of the library resulted in the volume of journal I checked out being the 2nd half of the unexpurgated account of Anais Nin's affair with Henry Miller. The timeline also covers Nin's affairs with her two psychoanalysts; Miller's wife, June; Antonin Artaud; and her father. That is quite a few people for two years, especially considering that she was involved with most of them simultaneously. Not to mention the fact that she was married during this period as well.

Leaving aside all the accounts of her sexual encounters, perhaps the best thing about Anais Nin's journal for me was the opportunity to read another woman's thoughts, and be able to relate to them in a different way from men's autobiographical accounts. Nin explores thoroughly in her journal what it means to be a woman, a married woman, an unfaithful woman. She discusses the difficulties she has focusing on her own writing when she is supporting the writing both of her husband, Hugh Guiler, and that of Henry Miller. Her criticism and feedback become so necessary to Miller that when she vacations away from him, he is unable to write, edit, or otherwise work. Nonetheless, she has the continual sense that her own writing, although perhaps not as "important" as Miller's, is excellent, and has its own place in the world. Incidental people that she meets throughout the journal constantly tell her that her own writing is far superior to that of Miller's, and that she should leave him in order to focus on her own work. This conflict, although not central to the narrative, is vital to it. Nin struggles with her need to be a provider to the men in her life, the needs the men have for her to provide for them, and her desire to be protected, cared for, and provided for herself. Essentially, Nin articulates beautifully the continual feminine conflict of being a wife and mother while being "the weaker sex".

Towards the end of this particular volume, however, Nin begins to seem rather fickle. She cannot decide whether she still loves Henry. She cannot decide if she still loves her father. She constantly wavers between which of her many lovers is her favorite. Nin seems to lose a sense of self in her efforts to juggle, care for, and satisfy all of her men. She fades beneath the questions about which men to stay with, which to jostle. The last hundred or so pages of the volume were therefore unsatisfying for me. The previously strong, independent Nin becomes subject; dependent on Henry for his neediness; dependent on her analyst, Rank, for his approval.

I had intended to check out other volumes of Nin's journals, but after consideration, I think the one volume is all I can swallow at the moment. Perhaps I will dabble in more at a later point, but not likely within this 50 books cycle.

Sarah Pierce says

OK, I don't understand how she could sleep with her father and be even marginally alright with it. I don't believe in the astrology she constantly wrote about, and her morals are completely different than mine. So this book is fascinating to me. The writing is beautiful, and the story of Anais Nin's life from her late 20s to early 30s makes me think that my life is incredibly boring. I mean, seriously, she seduced every male she spent time with, including her father. She seduced some females too. Pretty hot.

Alix says

"To hell, to hell with balance! I break glasses; I want to burn, even if I break myself. I live only for ecstasy. Nothing else affects me. Small doses, moderate love, all the demi-teintes – all these leave me cold. I like extravagance, heat... sexuality which bursts the thermometer! I'm neurotic, perverted, destructive, fiery, dangerous – lava, inflammable, unrestrained. I feel like a jungle animal who is escaping captivity."

how can one describe the hunger and joie de vivre of anaïs nin? years and years of journals but her hothouse prose will never cease to amaze me. a feverish and captivating self-analysis of a hypnotizing artist and her creative growth. a liar, a madwoman, a narcissist; who absolutely exposed and changed some of the deepest aspects of sexuality in literature. i'm so, so damn in love with her "demon of restlessness", her force continues to inspire me with the superabundance of ecstasy. her lovers, her ideas, how changed the people she touched were left. what a way to live! *"Then I sat at the typewriter, saying to myself: Write, you weakling; write, you madwoman, write your misery out, write out your guts, spill out what is choking you, shout obscenely."*

Nicole~ says

I want to spread myself on lots of paper, turn it into lots of sentences, lots of words so that I won't be walked on. - Anais Nin

Nin's *Incest* is an explosive, emotional confession; an illuminating self analysis and in-depth psychological study of her soul. Relentlessly probing and insightful, Nin details and analyzes dreams and daily events, shedding light on her exhaustive need for love, in part due to the vacuous hole in her psyche left by her

father's abandonment of the family when she was still a very young girl. Nin bares naked the sexual and pathological desires not only of herself but of well-known figures to whom she had strong attachments - Henry Miller, Otto Rank, Antonin Artaud, René Allendy, among others - all who seem like father-figures themselves. To Nin, to experience love meant to keep a balance between her independence and interdependence, her singularity and dual nature. Her own assessment of her dual nature is explained with the precision of a professional psychologist, as she describes the controversial liaisons with her estranged father, Joaquin - a self styled **Don Juan**.

Joaquin: *"I had a dream of you which frightened me. I dreamed that you masturbated me with jeweled fingers and that I kissed you like a lover. For the first time in my life I was terrified."*

Anaïs: *"I also had a dream of you."*

"I don't feel toward you as if you were my daughter."

"I don't feel as if you were my Father."

"What a tragedy. What are we going to do about it? I have met the woman of my life, the ideal, and it is my daughter! I cannot even kiss you as I would like to. I'm in love with my own daughter!"

Nin's writing aesthetic is hypnotic: the unrestrained style in which she reports events have both dreamlike and authentic qualities; fantastic yet real, allusive as well as explicit. She dares to write about such tabooed feelings and acts never before printed in women's books. In heated episodes of seduction, she becomes the 'bad' girl her father desires - she becomes in effect his double, a **Donna Juana**.

(view spoiler)

Nin acknowledges that she tortuously embraced the role of seducer to her *padre -amour* in order in the end to hurt Joaquin. *Incest* is a salacious confession in which Nin has laid herself widely opened like French doors on the balcony of the world - and oh, what a view!

*Relationship was impossible unless one gave the most secret and deepest part of oneself...
The diary is not a Recherche du Temps Perdu. It is actually a seeking to unite the past, the present, and the future. My life today is just as it was when I was writing the diary; it is always very full and very rich. I'm always exploring new realms of experience, I'm always curious, I'm always ready for adventure.* - Anaïs Nin, A Woman Speaks.

Lisbeth says

Anais is inflated, overly romanticizing and obviously obsessed with her prowess. Good for her. She also changed the face of the feminine and exposed some of the deepest aspects of sexuality that has ever been writ. She almost made me want to sleep with my own father. Almost.

jenna says

I love how Nin writes; so tangibly and sensuous. She writes about ugly, terrible, taboo things and makes it so damn beautiful and romantic and sexy. And, of course, with a bravery and exposure that I'm not sure I've ever seen paralleled!

Nin is all feminine and is a fantastic example of the female writer. Analytical, emotional, insightful, psychological, relational, personal, strong, beautiful, asthetic, narrative, dynamic, non-linear. I find her very exciting to read.

i also found her inspiring. Her fearlessness to bare what was ugly about herself, to look so bravely into her true drives and desires inspired me to take my journaling to a new depth. Herein I learned so much more about who i am, things long buried and denied. it freed me to make bold choices that previously were not even acknowledged as choices! Because of this book i left my marriage and became integrated with my femininity and sensuality and here I am now-never happier!...and I didn't even need to fuck my father to get there!

Angel says

I have never encountered a more hateful and repugnant subject of literary work than Anais Nin. I was eager to read her after hearing her lauded as a feminist hero, but what I found was a broken, tedious, narcissistic person with no sense of personal ethics. You're essentially reading the diary of a bored, spoiled housewife who fills her days with various adulterous escapade. This does not come across nearly as interesting as it sounds. This is not the story of a sexually liberated woman, but of a dysfunctional egomaniac with a literal oedipal complex who uses sex to validate her life and compensate for the childhood abandonment of her father. She seems to have sex, not because she is seeking pleasure, but simply because men expect it. She gives in even when she is otherwise not interested because it gives her a sense of power. She is on a never-ending quest for men who can fill the gap her father left, but no one is able to meet her impossible expectations of what a man should be. The more a man loves her, the weaker she finds him. Unfortunately, she never turns her hypercritical eye on her self. How interesting this book would have been if Nin had been capable of true introspection. Instead, we get delusions of grandeur where self-reflection should be. She constantly tells us how wonderful she is and how important she is to everyone in her life. Her obvious need to compensate for her fragile ego is tiresome. She constantly rationalizes her lying and manipulations, which seem to be her *raison d'être*. She exploits her husband's love for her and his honorable character to subsidize her exploits and lovers, all the while holding him in abject disdain. There is nothing redeeming about her, not even her tedious writing, which is so bloated with self-importance that it is a chore to get through. Anais Nin is a person too self-interested to actually be interesting.

Ana says

What a beautiful, beautiful thing: to be a woman. This is what Anais and her neuroticism, whore-ish behaviour and countless mistakes teach you.
