



House Of Incest

By Anaïs Nin

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“The genesis of *House of Incest* was in the dream. The keeping of dreams was an important part of that exploration of the unconscious. But I discovered dreams in themselves, isolated, were not always interesting. Very few of them had the complete imagery and tension to arouse others’ interest. They were fragmented. The surrealists delighted in the image themselves. This was satisfying to the painters and to the film-makers. But to the novelist concerned with human character dramas, they seemed ephemeral and vaporous. They had to be connected with life. It was psychoanalysis which revealed to me the constant interaction of dream and action. It was a phrase of Jung’s which inspired me to write *House of Incest*. He said: “*Proceed from the dream outward.*” In other words, it was essentially a matter of *precedence*. To capture the drama of the unconscious, one had to start with the key, and the key was the dream. But the novelist’s task was to pursue this dream, to unravel its meaning; the goal was to reach the relation of dream to life; the suspense was in finding this which led to a deeper significance of our acts.

“Meanwhile a batch of dreams kept for a year served as a takeoff for *House of Incest*. They supplied the atmosphere, its climate and texture. At the same time I discovered that the dream had to be expanded, recreated, could not be told literally for then it became as flat and one-dimensional as representational realism. One had to find a language for it, a way of describing atmosphere, the colors and textures in which it moved. [...]”

“The dream taught me not only the delight of sensory images, but the fact, far more vital, that they led directly into this realm of the unconscious which Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Proust attained in various ways—Joyce by free association, with words, play on words, Proust by trusting the free associative process of memory and staying lingeringly in the realm between sleep and waking which resembles the waking dream, Virginia Woolf by accepting the vision of the poet as reality.

House of Incest was, like a poem, visionary symbolic dream sequences which were woven together.”

—Anaïs Nin, “The Novel of the Future,” (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986),

Originally published in 1936, *House of Incest* is Anais Nin's first work of fiction. The novel is a surrealistic look within the narrator's subconscious mind as she attempts to escape from a dream in which she is trapped, or in Nin's words, as she attempts to escape from "the woman's season in hell." In the documentary *Anais Observed*, Nin says *House of Incest* was based on dreams she'd had for more than a year. Nin's usage of the word incest in this case is metaphorical, not literal. In this book the word incest describes a selfish love where one can appreciate in another only that which is similar to oneself. One is then only loving oneself, shunning all differences. At first, such a self-love can seem ideal because it is without fear and without risk. But eventually it becomes a sterile nightmare.

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Editorial Review

Review

"House of Incest is a strange and challenging work that demands the full attention of the reader. It is not so much a story of people (although it certainly is that) as it is a visit into the hellish nightmare of the narrator's experience from which she emerges satisfactorily. But, however one approaches the work, House of Incest is Nin's best work of fiction and one that contains most of her basic themes, images and patterns that she would use in her later work."

— Benjamin Franklin and Duane Schneider

About the Author

Anais Nin—the celebrated novelist, diarist, and short story writer—was born in France and spent her childhood in various parts of Europe and in New York. Nin returned to New York just before the outbreak of World War II, and she spent the rest of her life living there and in Paris and Los Angeles. Her work is characterized by a interest in the subconscious. Her five novels in the Cities of the Interior series focus on different female types and follow their lives through lovers, art, and analysis. In 1973 Nin received an honorary doctorate from Philadelphia College of Art. She was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1974.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wayne Hause:

Here thing why that House Of Incest are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good but it really depends in the content than it which is the content is as delightful as food or not. House Of Incest giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no reserve that similar with House Of Incest. It gives you thrill looking at journey, its open up your eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. It is possible to bring everywhere like in recreation area, café, or even in your means home by train. In case you are having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of House Of Incest in e-book can be your alternate.

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