

ANAIS NIN AND WOMEN'S VOICE

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The attitude of gender bias, rejection, and negligence of woman in the modern world has been the subject matter of the female writers of today. Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Bronte, Martha Jaeger' M. Esther Hoardings, Rebecca West, Anais Nin. Barbara Craft. Lou Andeas Salome Romaine Goddard Brooks, Colette and many others attempted to raise this concern and make it the "theme" of their literary writings. Anais Nin devoted her life and her writing to the welfare of women in society. She, in the pattern of D H Lawrence, was primarily interested in today's women and her struggle; her striving for gaining her position; her attempt to arrive at a high state of consciousness. She presented a synthesis to dissolve the modern conflict of nature and neurosis.

Nin was against the dominion of man upon woman because it adversely affects the creativity of woman. She favored relating their individual interests as she says, "For the new woman and the new man, the art of connecting and relating separate interests will be a challenge. She intended to see women and man establishing vital relationships. She was fascinated to see woman coming up, shedding many luxuries, simply dressed, relaxed and natural. She was disappointed by woman's acceptance of male dominion, as she mentioned: "Men is always trying to create a woman who will fill his needs, and makes her untrue to herself. Many of your 'roles' come out of this desire to fulfill man's needs. "She advocates for the union of the two in realistic and mutual manner, as she knows that separation causes loss.

Nin attempted to visualise the inner reality and inner necessity. She shaped and presented this truth into are form. She caught up thoughts, feelings, and dreams and presented those in metaphors, images and alliterations. Her writings weave the visual and the aural into complex universal designs. Here we find a conversation taking place between the protagonist and the reader like the painting and the viewer in an art gallery. She wrote best about women and explored the feminize psyche with a sensitivity and a thoroughness that made her a pioneer in this particular types of

fiction. Sometimes she identifies very close to with her characters or with some of their archetypal aspects. Her writings, at such places, appear to be descriptions of the personal, and character's the projections of author's multiple identities. Her male characters have no varieties – at best they are satellites; she portrays them only as they influence the destiny of female protagonists. She described men as “children of the albatross”, Who are victims of parental – mostly maternal domination; whose attitudes are withdrawal and flight; who relate uneasily to the opposite sex; and who are narcissistic, hedonist, frequently homosexual, and self-confined.

The quest for the self is the basic them of her writings which dominates much of the serious fiction in these decades. It is a contemporary obsession, a fact of which the literature of existentialism offers abundant proof. She differed from Sartre and other French existentialists in the finality with which she rejected the outer world – the world of “current events” political and ethical philosophy, and of facts and circumstances. She took interest in psychoanalysis and surrealism and assigned to dreams and symbols and metaphors as clues to the essential self. She believed that men must first know what he is not, before he knows what he is. Nin's novels and short stories are alchemical and by transmutation alter matter and spirit. She is like the alchemist who, while working in silence and seclusion, projects his inner world onto the elements with which he was working. Nin also personified her sensation and endowed them with all types of human characteristics. As in the alchemical process. Nin's literary writings encourage a dual process: it nurtures, yet it paradoxically stifles. Motion frequently becomes skilled, feelings imprisoned and sequences non-existent. Time freezes. Space congeals. Then the reader makes his way into the instinctual domains, which becomes activated. The single creative act is fomented and germination takes place. Anais Nin was very sensitive lady and suffered actually in her life. She had to face the desertion by her father. She had to live a life of solitude and loneliness. Her struggle to achieve a rightful place in this insensitive world, as a woman and as an artist had been arduous. She achieved it by working neither in passive nor in restive manner; she realized that toil and preservice were important factors in the making of the artists. Nin's a houseboat, a Greenwich Village cafe, a snow room or an exotic Mexican greenery, are not representational. These do not delineate the physical space of a Renaissance painting, rather these bring to life a spiritual and emotional area as concretized in the statues and paintings of modern times. Her space bathes in dimensionless tonal values

and a series of transparencies. Her visual images provoke synchronistic conditions. It inhabits a space and time continuum where reader and protagonist and static as well as mobile. In her writings the world of the mystic comes into being, eternal present, which Nin could learn during the creative process, a world of transcendence – the intermediate state between death and rebirth – the void from which creation arises: “Perhaps I have loved the artist because creation is the nearest welcome to divinity”.

Nin observed that the modern writers have “forgotten how masterfully the ancients used charms to encourage salvation”. Nin used the rhythmic style as a means to revive the old literary religion, achieved this through the highly sensuous diction and language to give it a physical expression.

Nin believed that the medium of artist is not ink and paper but his body. She emphasized on the sensual and attempted to convince her readers. Sabina is described as “a mandrake with fleshy roots, bearing a solitary purple flower in the purple-bell-shaped corolla of narcotic flesh. Isolina in *House of Incest* has fur eyelashes and dilated eyes. A character in *A Spy in the House of Love*, while squeezing an automobile horn speaks: “Listen the language of the future. The word will disappear together and that is how the human beings will talk to each-others.” Nin introduced the exotic, the rich, and the symbolic word wherever she could and gave her readers ‘a weapon in place of bread’. In her writings mazes become ‘labyrinths’, temperaments are “Sirocco”, characters make “parabolic appearance’s, and a born manipulator becomes “the Chess players”.

Nin is able to maintain the readers interest and understanding through her imagery which is original, accurate and concrete. She becomes “realistic” and poetic by means of concreteness. In *House of Incest*, she describes weariness: “Greyness is no ordinary greyness, but a vast lead roof which covers the world like the lid of a soup pen.” She is more concerned with feeling rather than with actions; her images achieve the maximum economy and intensity. She is more concerned with feeling rather than with actions; her images achieve the maximum economy and intensity. She is less abstract or verbose. She summarizes, in *Ladders to Fire*, Djuna’s frustration at being stereotyped as an angelic being in a single sentence: I want my dress torn and stained. In a similar way she directly presents Lilith’s early eroticism in *Winter of Artifice*, when Lilith describes her feelings as a desire “to pass a violin bow between her legs.”

Besides emotional accuracy, Nin presented intellectual accuracy for mental nourishment and amusement of her readers, which shows her interest in history, science and tradition. In *Seduction of the Minotaur*, Golconda had once been a pear-fishing village, that “a ship-wrecked Spanish galley had scattered Mexico had adopted as headgear.” Here the difference in temperament and attitude between the civilized Spaniards and the Primitive Mexicans is more evident rather than its historical evidence. Similarly, in *Four Chambered Heart* the emotional implication is more important besides the factual accuracy of historic allusion: “The Seine River began to swell from the rains, and to rise high above the watermark, painted on stones in the middle Ages.” Nin portrayed her characters with the need to externalize the inner conflict. “Women at war with herself” is the unifying theme of her world. In the “parologue” to *Ladders to Fire* she explains that in order to develop this theme “It is necessary to return to the origin of the confusion, which is women’s struggle to understand her own nature.” Nin’s characters have to do very little or not at all with her husbands or children, because the psychomachic struggle is a battle between the ‘various selves’ of the characters, and not between the here and external forces. The four main characters in Nin’s novels represent four different aspects of “woman” – make a composite of the four protagonists. Each of these four characters is described and acts in accordance with one of the basic patterns of associated with the theory of the four elements. Sabina dressed in red and silvers.....evoked the sounds and imagery of fire engines, personifies the passions of restlessness and feverishness; her characteristic activities are evasion and flight. This way, Sabina is a choleric character. Stella, in her white world with “ivory satin bed, white nightgowns, white rug-splendor, satin and space”, is a cool dreamer, a twentieth century phlegmatic. Lillian, “always in a state of fermentation”, always seeking a mate to satisfy her sexual desires, represents the third “humour” – the sanguine temperament. Djuna, like Stella, is reticent, but her reticence leads her to muse rather than withdraw, she represents the melancholic temperament. Nin portrayed these four representatives protagonists in light of Ben Jonsonian theory of the four humours which represents an effective and psychologically true drama of the inner self. Duane Schneider observed: “There is almost something mythic about the characters” which marked now Nin’s characters are traditional and poetic type. Sabina reminds of the famous “rape of the Sabina woman”, Stella means star which consequently evokes the legends of those ink

illuminary virgins – Dia and Artemis; Lillian’s name may be traced to the other Eve, Lilith; and Djuna phonetically taken her place as Juno, the great mother of gods. This schematization gives her work a timeless quality and the work stands poetical. Nin’s characters are symbolic of a specific complex or type of behavior. Here Nin’s concept of modern psychology or her learnings of psychoanalysis is evident. Sabina is a schizophrenic with a conflicting will to crime will and punishment. Lillian is an extrovert with an over-developed libido. Djuna is basically an introvert and sexually frigid. Stella with a ‘screen face’ of wax but an unimpressionable body, vacillates between pleasure and pain in her role of a masochist. These symbolic characters play an important function. Their functional role is to bring the reader into direct contact with the experiences. These characters are magnified so that their sensitivity may be proportionately increased, and the reader participating in their suffering may be relieved in a cathartic manner of his own implicit neurosis. These characters also external-practical attributes that make them ideally suited to the playing of symbolic roles, which they commonly hold: all are women, all are artists, and all are known by their first names. Moreover, Nin chose female characters because with her intuitive and sensitive perception she was better able to analyze the ‘feminine mystique’; and women appeared to her as more elemental than man. Her characters are artists because she believes that the artist embodies the exaggerated feelings of the common man. She recognizes the poetic significance of the stereotype. The archetypal concept of practice governs her practice. The protagonists as artists help Nin in searching for the comprehensive art form, as she attempts for the fusion of prose and poetry. Anais Nin wrote poetic novels – these are reduced in size, dramatic rendering of theme through form, and a disciplined effort of compression. About the novels written thus in poeticized way, Steven Marcus states: “the governing tendency in the novel in the last fifteen or twenty years has been in the direction of poetry.....a poetic conception both of experience and of the shapes which experience must take”. Nin believes that it is in “the moments of emotional crises that human beings reveal themselves most accurately”, as such she deletes all prefatory and post-climatic materials. In *A Spy in the House of Love*, Sabina is introduced and described, meets, seduces and leaves five lovers; makes innumerable dream excursions; and comments on her problems, all in one hundred and thirtysix pages. This style of writing is based on her use of limited point of view and the interior monologue. She wrote: “The accelerated rhythm of modern

life could not be without its counterpart in literature, the true meaning, the true purpose of abstraction is not a dehydration of experience, but an extracting and distilling of its essence to achieve greater intensity. Nin used symbolism as a literary device and made concrete object a symbolic one in order to achieve the desired condensation and accuracy to her writings. She never included the concrete object or fact unless it has a symbolic role to play while laying significances to her drama without being abstract. Thus, the barge on which Rango and Djuna live is also a Noah's ark, the River Seine is both the river – the flow of unconscious and a French landmark; the policeman on the shore is also Djuna's conventional conscience. This method makes Nin's writings poetic and allows her to employ "metaphor and image to form a complex of experience unanalyzed and intact to achieve a poetic affect." Nin embarked on a lifelong voyage into the Sensual World, which exists in relation to the self, reflecting the depths of the unconscious. According to Nin, the self is the only world and the outer world is its projection. In the psychological climate of her writings, the self is the ultimate mystery; its mastery is the whole mission or goal, relationship is the final meanings; the body is the field of being; and analysis and art are the complementary keys to understanding the ardors and adversities of life. In this world of the self only the labyrinthine journey of self-discovery brings awareness and action is achieved. As such individual probes his interior world, awareness develops and spreads throughout the human underground, and finally it is expressed through compassionate action – awareness made physical through those who disseminate it with love and care. This love and care is written as a gospel of senses, which is a testament to the creative power of the body and its language. In her first book *D H Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study*. Nin revives Lawrentian plea for whole and complete vision: "to see with the soul and the body" and to "realize philosophy not merely as an intellectual edifice but as a passionate a blood-experience." Her early prose-poem *House of Incest* is a description of the descent, through violent and voluptuous imagery, into the psyche. The realism of her *Diary* records her instantaneous awareness; the symbolism of her novels reflects her style of writing – to reveal "that delicacy and awe of the senses." Her novels tell of women in love. Their sexual themes literally and symbolically described, reflect the inseparable imperatives of sensuous pleasure and spiritual union. Her erotica written in 1940s and published posthumously as *Delta of Venus* and *Little Birds*, reveals the same sensibility.

Nin spoke very highly and strongly of the liberation of woman's self in her novels. She was aware of this condition in society, and through her writing she always inspired them to break the social and religious orthodoxical taboos. She believed that women were not supposed only to serve and nurture men's desires and nurse their habits, rather they could set their independent and new directions also. Besides playing roles of a mother, the sacrifice, women reserve the right to enjoy their own self too. Nin, in her writings, directed her 'women' to learn the art of changing hate into love, destruction into creation, despair into joy. Her women attempt for nourishment to sustain the life of the spirit, so that they can act into the world. That try to gain their strength and values for their self=growth and self-discovery, and finally succeed in restoring their shattered selves into whole one. This is achieved through the principle of creative will. Regarding woman's sexuality and the mutual need of man and woman for the relationship of tenderness and passion. Nin, in agreement with Jung, view that the expansive aspects of woman allowed many dimension so that sexuality, independence, and motherhood are not exclusive as in Christianity. Woman has been accepting man's need or desire for multiple relationship while male has been clinging to the idea that women are above sexual desire or more easily able to repress them. The modern age of social changes and new discoveries has brought some changes in this trend of thinking. The modernity has proved that woman possesses the power to ignore the demands of motherhood, if she likes; she can enjoy as many choices as she desires or as a man enjoys. Today's woman being economically and emotionally self-sustaining, may not find marriage an attractive act as the women of the past did. Independent women, like independent men, will have the greater opportunities and the liberty to chose their partners freely and to meet the challenge of multiple relationship in a more daring way. Nin believed:

.....In a few years we will dispense with the legal marriage. Marriage and divorce should not be in the power of law and lawyers. Society will have to recognize all children as equal, legitimate or illegitimate. And marriage should be merely a free choice of the one at the centre of one's life. The idea of multiple relationship has been granted to man. It will be granted to woman.

The new woman will be free from guilt of her freedom. She will be able to enjoy the joys of creation, of self-growth and discovery. Nin said that the woman retains a more

human relationship to human beings; she is not corrupted by the impersonality of powerful interests. With her gift for personal relationships she can deal more effectively with injustice, war and prejudice. About the modern, the New Woman, she proclaimed:

The woman of the future, who is really being born today, will be a woman completely free of guild for creating and for her self-development. She will be woman in harmony with her own strength, not necessarily called masculine, or eccentric, or something unnatural. I imagine she will be very tranquil about her strength and her serenity.....She is not aggressive, she is serene, she is sure, she is confident, she is able to develop her skills, she is able to ask for space for herself.