

ANAIS NIN'S JOURNAL OF INCEST

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Abstract

Anaïs Nin, thirty three old, meets again with her beloved father, the pianist and composer Joachin Nin. She did not see him since the age of eleven. She then started to write a diary. I want to show that you can interpret the material of her diary like the material of a psychoanalysis. When they meet again, he behaves like an incestual father and commit incest. Through the Journal of the Incest and the Youth Journal, I will try to understand how such an incest can happen.

Keywords: *Incest, borderline state, psychosis.*

1. Introduction

I will treat Anaïs Nin like a clinical case. She died in 1977 and left a diary in which she relates the incest between her father and her.

For Racamier incest is a violence done to the body and the mind, with both a traumatism and a disqualification. (Racamier is a very well-known French psychiatrist and psychoanalyst). Incest is acted by an incestuous father or mother giving to their child the role of a sexual partner and considering him or her like a spouse. There is no recognition of difference between generations, breaking the incest taboo. It is a violence done to a child who can't rebel against. The parent should be there to protect the child, instead he breaks into an immature sexuality with the consequences we know. Incest is a "mind killer", "a pleasure killer" says Racamier. It damages the capacity to fantasize, not on the side of life but on the side of death!

What can we think about the incest between Anais Nin at age thirty and her father fifty-four years old? Anais seems to agree... Reading her "Journal of Incest" I wanted to understand how such breaking could happen.

2. Journal of incest

The material she brings in her diary can be treated like associations in a psychoanalysis. She has a lot of insight on her own. I worked with the Youth Journal 1914-1919 and the Journal of incest 1932-1934.

2.1. The incest

In May 1933, she finds again her father the pianist and composer Joachin Nin, she did not see since the age of eleven when he left his wife and children to rejoin his mistress, a rich heiress. Anais is married, without children, and her life is quite free with several lovers, the writer Henry Miller and her psychoanalyst Allendy. This is what she writes in her diary:

"I found again my father, the God, only to discover that I don't need him anymore".

"When he comes to me, after having such influence on my childhood, I am a woman and I don't need any more a father or a god...He becomes again a man and a child in the same time".

"My father comes back when I have gotten rid of my cruel and blind instinct of punishing him".

"He isn't anymore the intellectual master I dreamed of (it is Henry now), the father I implored, the protector on which could count the child in me"

You can understand here the aggressiveness against her father who left her at age eleven and her desire to punish him and the way she considers him like a child.

2.2. An incestual father

For Racamier “incestual” means creating the climate of incest, “incestuous” committing incest.

When they meet again, Joaquin Nin acts like an incestual father before acting as an incestuous father. Since Anais sent a photo of her at age sixteen, he calls her his “fiancée”. She looks very much physically like him (a Spanish origin, a Catalan father and a Cuban mother). He is going to tell her his love affairs with his mistresses and his sexual life with Anais’ mother: she is deeply shocked and is able to have a sane critical opinion. Then he relates an incestuous dream with her, his daughter, and tells her he is in love with her!!! He will behave like a lover until the consummate incest. Anais seems to be ambivalent, then agrees. She feels desire and fear, and will resist to pleasure. I will spare you the crude details ...

When a little girl of three or four says to her father: “I want to marry you”, the father says: “This is not possible” you will marry your Charming Prince... Here no taboo of the incest. He treats his daughter like a narcissistic object.

How can we explain this incest accepted by an adult woman who seems to agree more or less? The father seems to have a loving feeling for his daughter, the result of a non-resolved Oedipus complex but we can imagine that there was a narcissistic seduction between his mother and himself. She must have treated him like a narcissistic object and gave him the place of his father.... He was a lonely child.

He is a handsome man, a celebrated pianist, and a repentant seducer who did not give up narcissistic seduction with a double of himself. He has incestuous fantasies for his daughter, acts them in a dream and tells her. It is a crude dream without any elaboration. He behaves as an exciting father and manipulator, telling her about the intimate relations with his mistresses and his private sexual life with Anais’s mother. Then he acts his incestuous fantasies, breaking the incest’s taboo with no respect for the difference of generations. For Racamier: “The incestual is a climate where blows the wind of incest”.

When the sexual drives arise, incest occurs. The fathers’ sexual desire appears in the dream and incest is going to happen. Narcissistic seduction is allied to incestuous manipulation. The father will violate his daughter’s body intimacy. It is a breaking in and his pleasure exploded in her (the interdiction increased his pleasure).

The father does not feel guilty. The incest taboo doesn’t exist for him. He wants to pursue this incestuous relation and is sorry not to be able to marry his daughter!!! Her father says: “When you were a child your body was so marvelous, had so perfect shapes. You had such a beautiful arched back. I loved to take picture of you.” This is not the way a father looks at his daughter, he looks at her like a lover. Her father was certainly an incestual father in her childhood.

2.3. Consequences of the incest

Anais feels guilty and responsible for this incest, just like the children victims of incest. She is ambivalent, feels desire and fear but also disgust. She has the impression to be poisoned by this union. Anais seems to remain this little girl of eleven, in love with her father, and feeling betrayed and abandoned by him for another woman, Marie-Louise his mistress. At eleven was she preferred to her mother, taking her mother’s place, when the parents were fighting together? What is repeated in this family where incestual reigns? Thanks to her diary, Anais can liberate herself of the traumatism of this incest. Anais had to promise her father the secret but she tells her lover Henry Miller and “confesses” to her ex psychoanalyst Allendy.

Two weeks later, she feels intense heart beats and anxiety, thinks she is going to die (somatic and psychical symptoms) “My life stopped... I am restless... during the travel, I expected to die... I was crying... I can’t stop dreaming... I lost my joy”. She has anxiety dreams: “Henry leaves her and she runs in the forest sobbing”. Anais Nin is an adult and her mind is already structured. She has a hysterical personality with seduction but her capacity to think, fantasize and dream is not touched. Her sexual life, arrived to maturity, looks like her father’s: a spouse and lovers with an identification to him. She acts like a female Don Juan who was preferred by the father and her hypersexuality increases after the incest. The revelations on her parents’ sexuality seem to have an impact. Anais thinks that her father is the best lover she ever had!!! Anxiety and fears of death will disappear. When her possessive and jealous father wants her to quite Henry, she breaks up with him and gives up the acting of her incestuous fantasies.

3. Acting in and out: Incestuous equivalence

3.1. Acting in during her psychoanalysis with Allendy

Listen to Anais in her Journal of Incest :“The role I play to possess Allendy, I let him believe that analysis put an end to my masochistic devotion for Henry. I settled the story of this breaking with much care... My capacity to lie to Allendy the psychologist.” This testify to her desire of influence on Allendy, with much pleasure!! The capacity to seduce, manipulate and lie evokes the narcissistic perversion

described by Alberto Eiguer. Acting in during a psychoanalysis is a breaking of the rules on both sides, the patient and the psychoanalyst. Anais transferred on her psychoanalyst Allendy her incestuous fantasies for her father and acted them. The incest with her father will repeat the acting in. Did the acting in make the incest easier?

The acting in during a psychoanalysis is an incest equivalence. The fantasy of seduction of an hysteria becomes an acting of transference (René Roussillon). When the transference is too intense, there is release of drives, release into acting. The acting in happens during the session, the acting out after the session. For Freud this is an acting of the transference with a shifting of affectors on the person of the analyst. Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel stresses the absence of psychical elaboration, of mental work (which can go with a normal intelligence).

3.2. Acting out with Otto Rank

Anais writes on November the 7th 1933: “I go to see him to confess myself... I am preparing a false comedy like with Allendy... but I was sincere as I am in front of my diary.” She wants to confess like with a priest, because she feels guilty! Rank ask her to give up her diary, to break with everybody and to live alone!!! She understands that she wrote her journal to replace her father. Unconsciously she imitated her father, her double. She has been a child, a spouse, a lover but not a woman.

It was not a psychoanalysis but a psychoanalytic therapy which lasted only three months. We don't know how many sessions a week. Otto Rank is an Austrian psychoanalyst, considered as Freud's spiritual son, secretary of the psychoanalytic Society of Vienna. His book “The traumatism of birth” hasten the breaking up with Freud. Anais admires Rank. She is fascinated by his fineness, his liveliness, his curiosity and his spontaneity. It is an intellectual adventure unique for her. The acting will occur after the end of her psychotherapy. She misses Rank, writes to him and visit him. She dreams that she makes love with him. She invites him and his wife with her husband. Then she will seduce him offering her lips and five days later they will make love. They will go through a big passion. She finds him sensual, voluptuous, instinctive. She can in the same day have sexual intercourse with Henry in the morning, Rank in the afternoon and her husband in the evening!!! How can we understand her hypersexuality?

4. Youth journal

4.1. A traumatic separation at eleven

The incestual climate started certainly in her childhood. I hoped to find in her Youth Journal 1914-1919 elements about her relationship with her father but unfortunately, they are very few. Anais don't talk about the past before her eleven years.

We have to go back to the moment when the father leaves his family in Arcachon in May 1914. Anais starts her diary at the end of July just before the beginning of the war. After a stay in Barcelona with her paternal grandmother, Anais mother's and her three children sail to New York where aunts and cousins greet them at their arrival, a large, loving, lively and warm family. Anais *idealizes* her father “the greatest pianist in the world”. She receives a letter from her dear father and hopes he will come for Christmas or for her birthday in February but she will be disappointed. She misses her father and often cries, take refuge in her diary and hides her sadness to the family. About communion in church at Mass, she says: “*During the Communion I feel rather kissing my father and receiving him than receiving God*”. Is this a fantasy of incorporation or an incestuous kiss? She learns that a mistress retains him: Marie-Louise. Anais will then dress in black. She feels his absence as a treason. She started then the mourning of her father's love and of her incestuous oedipal desires for him.

In New York, her mother will give her a maternal role, heavy to bear for an eleven years old girl, yet very mature. When she has to leave, she asks Anais to take care of her two younger brothers, do the cooking and the housework. I make a link between Anais' somatic symptoms (pain in the legs and in the back) and this heavy maternal role. In a repetitive way, during a year and a half she will complain in her diary about the lack of a father and her sadness. Anais finds refuge in writing a diary, poems, short stories and reading and is excellent in French essay. Writing is a need, a passion. Little by little, she will come out of her depression, go out with friends, visit her cousins, go to the movie, the theater, ride horse and have a life rich in friendship and leisure. She will take care of her look, get interested in boys and go to dances and balls. This testify the mourning process related to her father: she gives up her oedipal and incestuous desires and get interested in boys of her age and house holding with an identification to maternal substitutes. She says she is the “maid” of her mother who is in the same time mother and father.

Here some confidences of her mother: “Your father never loved his house, always with friends, strangers. Life was miserable because he was very brutal. He locked me in a room to be able to beat the children. He came home to criticize, to scold; One day in Arcachon, he wrote a letter and left... Do you

remember those brutal scenes? No answer from Anais... Anais seems to have repressed that! The image of a brutal father who beats his children appear, not only a seducer and a manipulator. He seems to fluctuate between psychosis and narcissistic perversion. We can ask ourselves if the distance with her father and the good influence of the maternal family was not positive for Anais who was able to renounce to this excessive attachment to her father.

5. Conclusion

Racamier conceived of the idea of “incestual” for psychotic patients and psychotic symptoms without evident psychosis. Anais seems to be very sensitive to object loss and separation. Her hysterical personality, separation anxiety, psychosomatic and pervert symptoms shows a patchwork you can find in borderline state. She is good too at manipulating and lying to her psychoanalyst Allendy and her lovers and husband. Incest had an impact on her: heart palpitations, death anxiety, tears and loss of joy.

The father oscillates between psychosis without symptoms and narcissistic perversion. He certainly created an incestual climate in her childhood and preferred her to her mother and put her in her place. He is an incestual and incestuous father who seduce and manipulate his daughter. The dream where he makes love with his daughter is crude and raw, with no elaboration, no mental work, no symbolization. The taboo of the incest, and the difference of generation doesn't exist for him. He has no respect for the body and intimacy of Anais and treats her like a narcissistic object. When he has sexual drives for his daughter, he acts them. He asks her to keep the incest secret. Fortunately, she doesn't and write in her journal and tells to her lover Henry Miller and “confess” to her ex psychoanalyst and lover Allendy. Anais seems to consent. She is ambivalent, she feels fear and desire, and also disgust. She feels guilty and responsible like would be a child. Is she again the little girl of eleven years in love with her father? We understand that Anais has been seduced and manipulated by her father in her childhood and that the painful and traumatic separation may have been beneficial for Anais and also the sane attitude of her mother's family.

Incest is a manifestation of sexual perversion. It leads for a child to destruction and havoc of the psychism. The impact is not as serious for an adult.

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