

THE FEMININE ARTIST IN CITIES OF THE INTERIOR

THE FEMININE ARTIST IN CITIES OF THE INTERIOR

by

Kathy Olenski, B.A., B.Ed., Maitrise,
8 Henrietta Street,
Brantford, Ontario
(519) 752-5355

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

(October) 1977

MASTER OF ARTS (1977)
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Feminine Artist in Cities of the Interior

AUTHOR: Kathy Olenski, B.A., B.Ed., Maitrise

SUPERVISOR: Dr. J. Sigman

NUMBER OF

PAGES: (ix) 128

Abstract

Certain themes recur in all of the writings of Anais Nin: psychoanalysis; the nature of the artist; the nature of woman. Cities of the Interior unites all these themes in a perceptive study of three female artists. The psychological theories that most influenced Nin were those of Otto Rank, who perceived many similarities between the creative and the neurotic personality. Both are strongly influenced by the subconscious mind, the source of both inspiration and disturbance. The artist, however, can channel his creative energies outward, into art or even into creative human relationships, rather than turning them neurotically inward. The artist develops and fulfills himself through creation. The neurotic, on the other hand, remains trapped in futile narcissism, and never achieves his potential. Nin accepted these ideas, but gave them an added dimension. Rank was concerned mainly with the male artist, but Nin was interested in the psychology of the feminine artist. Cities of the Interior explores the psyche of the feminine artist, using the parameters of Rank's theories.

The three major characters, Sabina, Djuna, and Lillian, strive to overcome neurosis, and fulfill their creative potential on their own terms, without imitating male artists. In doing so, they also create themselves, and this self-creation is, according to Rank, the ultimate goal of the artist. Nin extends this idea. She believes that women are, by nature, in closer touch with the subconscious than men, but that it is only recently that they have had the opportunity to make use of their tremendous creative potential. Thus a woman who reaches artistic self-

realization creates not only herself, but a new kind of artist and a new kind of woman.

Sabina is the least successful of the three artists. Far from being a new kind of woman, she vacillates between stereotypically "feminine" seductiveness and mystery, and aggressive imitation of masculine Don Juanism. She shows many symptoms of neurosis, particularly fragmentation. She has at least as many "selves" as she has lovers, and is unable to unite the various aspects of her personality. As an actress, she is an undisciplined failure, since she can only play her roles for a masculine audience of one. Her creative forces are too scattered to make her a successful actress or a self-determining woman.

Djuna is more successful as an artist, but she lives in a dream-world, preferring the ideal to the real. According to Nin, the artist must "proceed from the dream outward", and Djuna slowly learns to do this. She must also go beyond a feminine stereotype -- the saintly, compassionate woman. She becomes a true artist and a more complete woman when she realizes, first, that destruction is part of creation, and, second, that the interior world of "the dream" should be used as an inspiration and a temporary refuge, not a permanent habitation.

Lillian also goes from neurosis to creativity. At first she is destructive and aggressive, denying her own femininity, rejecting all artistic discipline, and refusing to acknowledge her own inner life. The result is chaos, in her music and in her relationships. As she learns to look inward and understand herself, she is better able to fulfill the artist's function of creating harmony out of unordered, "natural" reality, and better able to interact creatively with others.

Cities of the Interior is marred slightly by didacticism, one-dimensional male characters, and, at times, an overly-psychoanalytical tone, but it is nevertheless a strong statement of Nin's concept of woman and of creativity, as well as being a perceptive study of three psychologically complex characters. Rank's influence is obvious, but it is Nin's own idea that it is not only possible for a woman to be a successful artist, but artistic expression is only one manifestation of woman's potential creativity.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Joseph Sigman, whose patience and good advice assisted me so much.

Note

References to quotations from Nin's novels, Diaries, and critical works will be bracketed, using the following abbreviations:

<u>The Diary of Anais Nin, Volumes One to Six</u>	(DI-VI)
<u>Ladders to Fire</u>	(LF)
<u>Children of the Albatross</u>	(CA)
<u>The Four-Chambered Heart</u>	(FCH)
<u>A Spy in the House of Love</u>	(SHL)
<u>Seduction of the Minotaur</u>	(SM)
<u>The Novel of the Future</u>	(NF)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements..... vii

I. Introduction..... 1

II. Sabina: The Artist-Manqué..... 13

III. Djuna: The Dancer and the Dream..... 46

IV. Lillian: Nature and Art at War..... 84

Conclusion..... 116

Bibliography..... 127

Introduction

Anais Nin's Cities of the Interior is a five-volume "continuous novel", comprised of Ladders to Fire, Children of the Albatross, The Four-Chambered Heart, A Spy in the House of Love, and Seduction of the Minotaur. Because Nin spent more than twenty years writing and revising it¹, there is some critical dispute over the inclusion of certain sections in the first and last of these novels. A short piece entitled "Stella" was originally included in Ladders to Fire, but because it was included in the 1961 edition of Winter of Artifice, Benjamin Franklin concludes, in his bibliography of Anais Nin, that "the author reconsidered her original intention of including that piece as part of her 'continuous novel,'"². However, both of the authors of the two book-length studies on Nin, Oliver Evans and Evelyn Hinz, consider "Stella" as part of Ladders to Fire, although Evans complains that it "does not seem to fit very well"³ with the rest of the novel. There is also a problem concerning a substantial addition to the end of Seduction of the Minotaur, which was written after Cities of the

¹Ladders was begun in 1937, and changes were being made in Minotaur as late as 1961.

²Benjamin Franklin, "Anais Nin, a Bibliographical Essay", in A Casebook on Anais Nin, ed. Robert Zaller (New York, 1974) p. 29

³Oliver Evans, Anais Nin (Carbondale, 1968), p. 93

Interior was first published. Franklin argues for its inclusion; Hinz includes it; Evans leaves it out. Because Franklin's reasons for excluding "Stella" appear sound, and because it has little to do with my approach to Cities, I do not consider it as part of Ladders to Fire. However, the addition to Seduction of the Minotaur does seem essential to the continuous novel, so it will be included in this discussion.

Bibliographical complexities aside, two of the most striking aspects of Cities are that all of the major characters in it are women, and all of these women (as well as most of the men in the novel) are, or wish to be, artists. Nin herself has given various reasons for writing about artists, and critics have contributed other possible explanations. Some of Nin's reasons are simple and matter-of-fact:

I have chosen to write about artists first because I know them best, then because the expression of fantasy and imagination is more clearly manifested in them than in other lives....the artist retains his sensibility; it is the element he needs for his profession. (D I, 170-1)

Evelyn Hinz adds another important reason, "Her characters are artistsbecause she believes the artist embodies the exaggerated feelings of the common man."⁴

There are also many reasons why Nin chooses to write about women. In her own words, "I know more about them, and....they have mostly been done by men who loved them too much or not enough, or hated them."⁵ Nin is trying to portray women as they are, rather than as men

⁴Evelyn J. Hinz, The Mirror and the Garden (New York, 1971) p. 66.

⁵Anais Nin, The Novel of the Future (New York, 1968) p. 70.

think they ought to be. She accepts femininity as something real and valuable, not merely the product of social conditioning. This does not mean that she has a conventional, women's magazine image of femininity. She is often cited by feminist authors, and has been more or less adopted as a spokeswoman by some groups in the feminist movement, though she is not a feminist writer in any political sense. The women in her novels do struggle for freedom, but what they seek is an interior freedom that has very little to do with the practical issues of women's liberation, though Nin was actively concerned with breaking down barriers between the sexes, and applauded many of the changes brought about in recent years by the growth in feminist consciousness. As she said in an interview in 1971, "Men have begun to get rid of [the] role they think they have to play. I like the idea of men working on their own liberation from this role; it should create some relaxation between men and women."⁶ However, for Nin, eliminating barriers between the sexes does not mean eliminating differences. She does not believe that woman can free herself by imitating man, but that she can do it by understanding her own nature and living according to its dictates. She believes, rightly or wrongly, that women are more elemental, closer to nature than men, also more aware of the feelings of others and themselves, and more committed to personal relationships. She agrees that women are indeed conditioned by society's traditional expectations of them, and are often forced into roles that distort their true selves, but she also believes that femininity exists beyond social roles. More

⁶Priscilla English, "An Interview with Anais Nin" in Zaller, ed., (New York, 1974), p. 186.

than once in the Diaries she quotes Otto Rank's statement that "Man is always trying to create a woman who will fulfill his needs, and this makes her untrue to herself" (D I, 278). She also says, "A woman is taught not to think of herself, to be selfless, to serve, to help. This masochism is almost natural to woman. She is brought up in it" (D I, 165). The key word here is "almost", and Nin is attempting, in the Diaries and in her fictional portrayals of women, to look beyond what has become "almost natural", to perceive and re-create in her art the real, essential woman beneath the conditioning.

The specific qualities she values as "feminine" (but which are by no means exclusively woman's property, as they also appear sometimes in men) will be discussed in detail later in this thesis. At the moment it is sufficient to say that, for Nin, feminine power lies less in the realm of conscious, rational intellect and activity than in the realm of emotion, intuition, and imagination -- the unconscious. This idea may appear to carry a considerable echo of the doddering cliché that women are unreflective creatures of feeling and emotion who would do well to leave "hard thinking" and political matters to men, but Nin's convictions on the subject are not that primitive. She does not consider woman's intellect inferior to man's, and makes this point very clear:

Of course women are equal intellectually, but the point here [is] that women had developed, probably due to negative elements surrounding their development, certain sensorial and intuitive qualities that men never believed in. And you have to learn to trust those pre-rationalizations. Men and women must both recognize that there is a part of ourselves which is not rational, a part that relies on intuition, which is, after all,

the sum of observation.⁷

Nin believes that modern society puts a dangerous over-emphasis on intellect and rationality and that, to keep the self whole and in a state of psychic balance, men and women alike should sometimes allow themselves to be "immersed in a state of being which temporarily bars the intellect and so restores our balance."⁸ Women have easier access to this restorative than men do, because of the "sensorial and intuitive qualities" that they have developed.

There has been a certain amount of critical discussion of Nin's concept of woman. Hinz points out that the real heroine of Cities is "Woman"⁹ whose various aspects are represented by the main characters - Djuna, Lillian, and Sabina. This theory seems essentially valid, but somewhat limited, as I will explain shortly. Hinz also confirms that Nin's concern with women is primarily inward, not outward; psychological, not political. Her characters are always motivated more by interior forces than exterior circumstances. Nin has been criticized for being too "psychological", for writing, as one caustic reviewer put it, "case histories" instead of novels.¹⁰ She has justified her psychological approach on the grounds that it is appropriate to her desire to speak for women and find a mode of expression that is intrinsically feminine.

For Nin, the intuitive mode was eventually given confirmation by the terms and insights of psychiatry. What was by its nature

⁷"Interview", in Zaller, ed., p. 187.

⁸Lynn Sukenick, "Anais Nin: The Novel of Vision", in Zaller, ed., p. 159.

⁹Hinz, p. 64.

¹⁰Diana Trilling, The Nation, January 26, 1946, p. 105.

painfully unproven was made firmer by a doctrine founded on a certain consensus about the procedures of the invisible, that is, the unconscious. Nin wrote in Diary I "It is this kind of feminine thinking which psychoanalysis makes clear. I am now able to explain what I feel."¹¹

Other critics have also hastened to her defence, pointing out that her poetic language has "alchemized" (a favourite Nin word) the psychology into art. However, Hinz is unable to resist "diagnosing" Nin's characters. Thus she describes Sabina as being "schizophrenic", Lillian as "an extrovert with an over-developed libido" and Djuna as "an introvert and sexually frigid".¹² This analysis categorizes the characters too rigidly. Of course Hinz does not see the characters only as personifications of various complexes, but in her otherwise perceptive examination of their interior states, their psychology, she does virtually ignore one aspect which seems to me essential -- the fact that each one is, as well as a woman, as well as a neurotic, an artist. The fact that Sabina is an actress, for example, Hinz considers important only because it is an indication of her "deceptive nature".¹³

The connection between psychology and the figure of the artist is perhaps less obvious than that between psychology and "feminine thinking", until Nin's association with Otto Rank is considered. A few critics have remarked on his influence on her, but to date no one has shown in any detail just how profound this influence was. Rank is noted for his theories on the personality of the artist, and these theories

¹¹"Interview", in Zaller, ed., p. 187

¹²Hinz, p. 65

¹³Hinz, p. 58

permeate all of Nin's work; the Diaries as well as the novels. Her woman artists, and indeed all of her characters reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, Rank's conception of the nature and role of the creative personality. This influence is not surprising, because Nin was psychoanalyzed by Rank, then briefly practiced psychoanalysis under his direction. Even before meeting him, she was familiar with his books and was convinced, by interpreting her own experiences in the light of what he wrote, of the validity of his insights. In the Diary, she describes herself thinking of going to see him, and wondering, "Would he be interested in a woman who had lived out all the themes he wrote about?" (D I, 269).

All Rank's theories were based on his perception of the male artist, and Nin is interested in discovering how they apply to the creative woman. If there is one comment made by almost every writer about Nin, it is surely the statement that she is a feminine artist, writing unabashedly as a woman. This comment is usually made in connection with the Diaries, though of course it applies to the novels as well. However, there is much to be learned about her ideas on feminine creativity from studying her characters as artists. To thus articulate her implicit and explicit ideas on the feminine artist is one of the major objectives of this thesis.

This will be done through a study of each of the three female artists, Sabina, Djuna, and Lillian, as they develop throughout Cities, rather than through examining each of the five novels. This approach has not been tried before, and will illustrate the thoroughness and

depth of Nin's skill in characterization.¹⁴

Another objective is to show that the psychology of Nin's novels owes much more to Rank than to Freud. Though she was obviously very familiar with Freud's theories, it does not seem strictly accurate to consider her, as Hinz does, "a transcendentalist" though "more Freudian than Emersonian"¹⁵. Whether or not she is a transcendentalist is not my concern,¹⁶ but she is not primarily a Freudian.

Rank differed with Freud on many issues: the importance of sexuality, the nature of neurosis, the causes of guilt, and the individual's freedom to shape his own life through overcoming the effects of traumatic experience. The most important difference, however, was his affirmation of the will to create as the most fundamental psychological force. Thus the artist is a figure of the utmost importance, in Rank's work as in Nin's. His other themes are present as well in Cities: sexual conflict, neurosis, guilt, freedom, self-creation. They are handled in ways that are definitely not Freudian, in many ways not even psychoanalytical, since a novel must, obviously, be more than a fictionalized psychological treatise.

¹⁴ Evans discusses each novel separately; Hinz incorporates her examination of the three characters into chapters dealing with the general topics of themes, character, structure, etc. Sharon Spencer's article on Cities concentrates on the structure of the novel, and Harriet Zinnes' short article gives only the briefest sketch of each character.

¹⁵ Hinz, p. 11

¹⁶ It does seem that both Hinz and Evans, (who describes some of Nin's themes as "Whitmanesque") are trying to justify her classification as an "American" writer. Nin sees herself more in international terms (E, p. 75) and this view seems a little more accurate.

One or two of Rank's other ideas should be touched on, briefly, before looking at Nin's characters. He sees "a dualism lying at the base of all artistic production"¹⁷, a conflict between the artist's obligation to the values of his society and his need to immortalize himself as an individual. This is a variation on the conflict between "natural man" and "the restrictions society imposes"¹⁸ mentioned by Hinz as one of Nin's chief concerns.¹⁹ However, this is only one of the struggles in which the creative personality is engaged, according to Rank and only one of the kinds of conflict experienced in Cities. In Nin's characters (and in other aspects of her novels - themes, imagery, etc.) there is a continuous, dynamic interaction between polarities, that sets up a tension in the characters. This causes them to undergo a constant, often painful struggle, never definitively resolved, to harmonize seemingly irreconcilable desires, multiple selves, conflicting duties.

Rank believes that what integrates the conflicting forces in the "artist-type" is will. The will assists the artist in his ultimate creative act, the formation of his own personality as an integrated whole:

¹⁷Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings, (New York, 1959), p. 105.

¹⁸Hinz, p. 66

¹⁹Hinz sees Nin as ascribing positive qualities to what is "natural" and negative ones to what is a product of "civilization". She says that for Nin the fall of man is "a fall from a natural state to a civilized one" (Hinz, p. 9), but Nin's attitude does not seem so black and white. However, Hinz does also emphasize the need for fusion, synthesis between these polarities, and this concept is essential to Nin's work.

Rank defined the will as "an autonomous organizing force in the individual which constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another. This individual will, as the united and balancing force between impulses and inhibition, is the decisive psychological factor in human behaviour....It expresses all the unconscious potentialities of the person, his latent creativity and irrational urges in the depths of his being....²⁰

Nin also places great emphasis on will, though she is more inclined than Rank to see it as a manifestation of consciousness, rather than the unconscious. But for her as for Rank, it is an instrument of self-assertion and self-creation, the opposite of passivity and a helpless acceptance of fate, which she always condemns. (In Four-Chambered Heart Djuna tells her lover, "I don't believe in fatality. There is an inner pattern of character which you can discover and you can alter"[FCH, 67].)

In Nin's artists, as in Rank's "creative types", intense conflicts must be overcome and turned into harmony so that the fragmented self can be made whole. There is opposition and interaction between inner and outer reality, between actual and ideal, intellect and passion, individual desires and conscience, security and freedom. The list of opposing forces could be much longer, but the point is clear -- the essential dynamism of the novels comes from creative conflict. The feminine artist is the perfect example of this, because her artistic struggle has an extra dimension; she must integrate the woman and the artist in herself. Like Rank's artist, she is engaged in an act of

²⁰ Ira Progoff, The Death and Rebirth of Psychology, (New York, 1973), p. 206-207.

²¹ "Cities of the Interior", in Zaller, ed., p. 68

self-creation. The theme of self-creation in Nin's novels has been considered before. Sharon Spencer points out that, "For all of Nin's characters, growth, expansion, fulfillment, the process of becoming the ideal version of oneself is the purpose of life."²¹ It is crucial to add, however, that the goal of self-development is an artistic one. Nin is showing her characters in the process of creating a new type of artist and a new type of woman.

Sabina, Djuna, and Lillian progress, unevenly, towards fulfillment, awareness, and maturity, not just as women but as creative people. Full human integration and development are linked inescapably to creative, artistic development, in Nin's novels as in Rank's psychological theories.

It is the process, not the artifact, that is important, and this is perhaps why we see the characters only during their struggle, not after, when they have presumably reached their goal. It also explains why Nin's female artists do not belong to disciplines which produce tangible works, objects. Djuna is a dancer, Lillian a musician, Sabina an actress (though not a successful one).

Each of these characters has a distinct and vivid personality. The fact that they share certain traits, or that a similar description is sometimes used for two or even all of them, leads Evans to object that their identities "overlap", causing the characters to "lose their symbolic force."²² However, I hope to show that the identities of the

²¹"Cities of the Interior", in Zaller, ed., p. 68

²²Evans, p. 112

three characters remain separate; what they share are universal qualities common to women, artists, human beings. Ultimately, in Cities, Nin is going beyond analysis of the workings of the feminine and artistic mind, to insight into the complexities of the human spirit.

Sabina: The Artist-Manqué

Sabina enters Cities in a burst of images of fire and feverish energy. She is the last of Nin's artist-heroines to appear, arriving near the end of the first volume, Ladders to Fire, and plays the smallest part in the continuous novel. She is also the least successful and most neurotic of the three female artists, yet it is appropriate to begin this discussion of Nin's women and artists with her, as the fundamental purpose of the novels is to describe progression from neurosis to its synthesis, and from destruction to creativity.

When Nin was beginning work on A Spy in the House of Love (the novel in Cities devoted to Sabina), she described her project in a Guggenheim fellowship application as follows:

The first three volumes [Ladders to Fire, Children of the Albatross, The Four-Chambered Heart] cover a depiction of the contemporary neurosis in novel form. The next three will cover what I consider a philosophical demonstration of the understanding and mastery of the neurosis. In other words, a guidance under the form of fiction, the way out of the labyrinth of what the poet Auden calls the Age of Anxiety. (D V, 85)

Cities, then, is a kind of Bildungsroman about the feminine psyche, a novel describing the heroines' education and progress, not merely from youth to maturity, but from neurosis and incompleteness to psychological wholeness. There is also a concomittant artistic progression from confusion and destruction to fully developed, active creativity. These goals are approached unevenly, with regressions and setbacks. Even

where there is success, there is no final and permanent arrival at maturity and integrity, because the creative process of reaching it lasts as long as life, though it is possible to reach a point where balance is easier to maintain, and neurosis is subdued if not abolished.

Nin's objectives for Cities seem to have changed somewhat after her outline for the project was written. For one thing, only two further volumes, not three, were produced. Also, the fourth volume, Spy, is not as optimistic as Nin had anticipated. There is little in it to suggest that Sabina conquers her neurosis, though she may come to a greater understanding of it. Djuna and Lillian have far more success than she does. However, the basic goals of the three heroines are established by Nin's statement.

When Sabina first appears in Ladders, she is almost entirely an agent of destruction and confusion. She is told later, "You're a danger to other human beings." (SHL, 115). There is no hint at this point that she is an artist of any kind; she creates nothing, and is described in terms of a consuming fire: "The first time one looked at Sabina one felt: everything will burn!" (LF, 108). She disrupts totally the relationship between Lillian and Jay, first attracting Jay, who approaches warily, feeling challenged by her: "In Sabina's fluctuating fervours he met a challenge: she gave him a feeling of equality. She was well able to take care of herself and answer treachery with treachery." (LF, 113). He later paints her as a prostitute, but she does not see herself this way, even though she is promiscuous and sensual. Lillian is also fascinated by her: "Lillian saw for the first time the woman she had always wanted to know. She saw Sabina's eyes burning, heard her voice so rusty and

immediately felt drowned in her beauty."(LF, 109). Without intending to, Sabina has seduced Lillian as well as Jay.

In Children she appears only briefly, but still acts as a disruptive force between Jay and Lillian. Jay again paints her portrait, this time depicting her as "one of the luxuriant women, a tropical growth, excommunicated from the bread line as too rich a substance for everyday living."(CA, 79). There is still no indication of her being an artist, but she is somehow set apart, and causes people to believe she is involved in some creative activity. "She gathered the flash of adoration from the drugstore clerk: are you an actress? She picked the bouquet of the shoe salesman trying on her shoes: are you a dancer?"(CA, 76).

She makes a brief appearance in Four-Chambered Heart, but takes little part in the action, beyond arousing the anger of Djuna's lover, Rango. She is there primarily as a foil to Djuna's fidelity and self-sacrifice; Djuna feels oppressed by her own "noble" role, and defends Sabina's "philosophy of the many loves". She sees in Sabina a certain daring and strength.

When Sabina appears again, in Spy, seven years have passed, and the setting is New York, not Paris. Sabina is married: indeed she was at the time she first appeared, since she refers to having been married ten years. She is now an actress, but in amateur theatres only. Her sensuality and frenzied energy are undiminished, and she still rushes from one lover to another, finding in each one a partial, fleeting fulfillment for the various aspects of her complex personality. Alan, her quiet, trusting husband, believes her when she

accounts for her frequent absences from home with elaborately contrived stories about being part of a travelling theatre company.

All this activity and deception makes Sabina the most "difficult" and chaotic of the protagonists of Cities. She is a perfect illustration of Otto Rank's statement that "confusion creates art. Too much confusion creates unbalance." (D I, 273). She wishes to be an actress, but fails through lack of discipline and effort, and instead "lives" various characters rather than acting them. She inhabits a complex web of lies, evasions, and illusions, and eventually discovers that "she had lost herself in her stories and fantasies", and had "walked into pure chaos" (LF, 144).

It should be emphasized that the "unbalance" and loss of self caused by her confusion is neurosis, but it never turns into insanity. Hinz calls her a "schizophrenic with a conflicting will to crime and punishment"¹ but this labelling seems somewhat simplistic, as Sabina's conflicts involve more than a simultaneous desire for "crime" and "punishment". Also the term schizophrenic is used rather loosely, since it does imply insanity. Sabina suffers greatly from tension and anxiety as a result of her constant struggle to keep the various elements of her personality from flying apart, but she is never allowed to slide into madness. Nin comments on the difficulties of creating a character as fragmented as Sabina, but says that to allow her to degenerate from neurosis to insanity would be "too obvious and simple a solution, like killing off the hero...an easy 'climax'" (NF, 137). It would also be a

¹Hinz, p. 65.

surrender to pessimism, a denial of her stated objective in writing Cities, which is to show the neurotic's potential for wholeness and creativity.

Nin has a very serious, even didactic purpose in emphasizing neurosis in her artist-heroines. She believes that the artist and the neurotic are similar in being more closely involved with the subconscious than most people. The basic difference between them is that the artist has learned to deal with his inner conflicts, and channel his creative energies constructively, while the neurotic flounders in destructive chaos. Nin ascribes immense powers to the artist, and believes that he (or she) is more effective than the psychiatrist in helping people overcome the stresses of modern life. She says, "My contention is that very few people have been able to obtain help from psychoanalysis, but many more can develop an understanding from the reading of my novels." (D V, 85). This accounts for the preaching tone that sometimes slips into the novels, but it also reveals Nin's perception of a fundamental similarity between the person defeated by the complexities of modern life, and the one who helps others overcome them. In every neurotic there is a potential artist.

The connection between the two types is fairly complex, and some discussion of Nin's concept of neurosis is essential to a full understanding of her characters, and of Sabina in particular.² In many

²The term "neurosis" has often been used quite loosely in critiques of Nin's work. Harriet Zinnes, for example, in "The Fiction of Anais Nin", mentions that Djuna's dancing "fuses the extremes of nature and neurosis" (Zaller, ed. 37). She has defined neurosis as playing a "false role" (though, as I will show, it encompasses much more than that) but what she seems to mean is that Djuna is synthesizing interior and exterior reality. Her use of the term "neurosis" is rather confusing.

ways, Nin shares Rank's view of the neurotic. She is particularly impressed by his idea of neurosis, not as an illness, but as thwarted creativity. "He considered neurosis a failed work of art, the neurotic a failed artist. Neurosis, he had written, was a manifestation of imagination gone wrong"(D.I, 270). There is no doubt that Sabina has imagination. She is bored with everyday life, and when she was very young "began to see the forms and colours of other lives, realms much deeper and stranger and remote to be discovered"(SHL, 34). Listening to music, she envisions "a caravan of spices, gold mitres, ciboriums and chalices bearing messages of delight"(SHL, 34). There are many indications, however, that her imagination has "gone wrong". One is that she has no way of actualizing what she imagines. She dreams of adventure so much that she cannot enjoy her real, present life with her husband. "The present...was murdered by the insistent, whispering, interfering dream"(SHL, 34). She prefers to live perpetually in an ideal world, and is constantly disappointed by reality.

However, for Nin, the dream represents not only an imagined, unattainable perfection, but any experience transforming day-to-day life. She defines the dream as:

ideas and images in the mind not under the command of reason. It is not necessarily an idea we have during sleep. It is merely an idea or image which escapes the control of reasoning or logical or rational mind. So that dream may include reverie, imagination, daydreaming, the visions and hallucinations under the influence of drugs -- any experience which emerges from the realm of the subconscious. These various classifications are merely ways to describe various states or levels of consciousness.(NF, 5)

These inner experiences arising from the unconscious have just as much validity and reality as external ones, and must not be ignored, as they

are the key to a more complete understanding of ourselves. The subconscious is the source of conflicts which, unresolved, produce neurosis, but at the same time it is the source of creative power. The true artist is able, unlike Sabina, to navigate freely between the dream and external reality, and to fuse the two worlds. By doing this, he makes a balance between inner and outer reality available to everyone in his audience, and thus performs a profoundly useful, even healing function.

Such a moment of creative synthesis does come even to Sabina, though only once. It is as if Nin is giving us a glimpse of the artist Sabina could be. Most of Sabina's creative energy is dissipated in merely wishing to be an actress, but when she actually plays a part on stage, her performance has a powerful effect. One of her lovers describes this effect in a letter to her:

From what you told me last night I see that you do not know your power....I felt this last night as I watched you act Cinderella, that you were whatever you acted, that you reached the point where art and life meet and there is only BEINGI felt that you were not acting but dreaming; I felt that all of us who watched you could come out of the theatre and could pass magically into another Ball, another snowstorm, another love, another dream....You have the power of contagion, of transmitting emotion through the infinite shadings of your movements, the variations of your mouth's designs, the feathery palpitations of your eyelashes....To those who respond as I did, you appear as something beyond the actor who can transmit to others the power to feel, to believe.(SHL, 85-6)

For a brief moment, the conflict between art and life, the imaginary and the real, is resolved. Sabina has allowed every member of the audience to enter the magical world of the dream, and has obliterated the barrier between internal and external reality.

Usually, however, Sabina's behaviour is not characteristic of the artist who unites conflicting forces. The neurotic "makes a division, sets up boundaries"(NF, 5) between the conscious and subconscious, instead of creating a bridge joining them. Sabina is split, fragmented, unable to achieve the harmonious union of these two halves of herself. In fact, her psychological confusion is so great that not just two but several aspects of her personality separate into selves, which can never be brought into accord. Duchamp's painting, "Nude Descending a Staircase", is a psychological portrait of Sabina:

Eight or ten outlines of the same woman, like many multiple exposures of a woman's personality, neatly divided into many layers, walking down the stairs in unison...six, seven, or eight Sabinas who will walk sometimes in unison, by a great effort of synthesis, sometimes separately. (SHL; 107-8).

Sabina's neurosis lies, not in the fact of her having multiple selves, but in a lack of harmony between the selves.

She seeks fulfillment of each "self" with a different lover. With her husband, Alan, she allows herself to be a submissive, protected child. Jay sees her as mysterious, but believes that beneath the mystery lies "the most ardent frenzy of desire"(SHL, 104). Accordingly, she is at her most intensely passionate in her affair with him, but she also tries to keep him guessing by telling him contradictory stories about herself, and eluding all his questions. "As soon as Jay listened too attentively, she took a giant sponge and erased all she had said by an absolute denial as if this confusion were in itself a mantle of protection"(SHL, 103). With Philip, an opera singer, she tries to be "the adventuress, the huntress, the invulnerable woman"(SHL, 25), who

plays "Dona Juana" to his Don Juan. She makes a greater pretence of faithfulness with Mambo, a jazz drummer, but seeks through him only a fulfillment of her sense of adventure. She feels she is "drinking of the tropics through Mambo's body".(SHL, 53) By contrast, John, a young aviator who feels guilty for surviving the war which killed so many of his comrades, arouses her protective instincts. So does Donald, one of the effeminate, childlike, ethereal young men who appear often in Nin's novels. Donald mocks all women cruelly, in revenge for his mother's neglect of him when he was a child. Sabina becomes self-sacrificingly maternal, to compensate him for his own mother's treacheries, and feels temporarily fulfilled by this role: "Such serenity came with this state of being woman the mother! The humble, task-performing mother as she had known her in her own childhood."(SHL, 84) However, this role, like all the others she plays, fails to satisfy her for long.

For Nin, a sure sign of neurosis is "absence of joy".(D II, 78) A neurotic lives compulsively, destructively, and "cannot act according to feeling, intuition, desire." He "lives in a state of frustration and anxiety which renders him or her incapable of happiness."³ Sabina finds no joy in her frantic search for mates suitable to each fragment of her shattered individuality. She is constantly afraid of being caught in her infidelities, and imagines guiltily that someone is following her. Far from being able to "act according to feeling" she is intent on feeling as little as possible in her relationships, for fear of experiencing only pain. After making love to Philip, she is

³William Burford, quoted in Evelyn J. Hinz, The Mirror and the Garden (New York, 1971) p. 40.

delighted by the realization that she had felt only sensual pleasure, without emotional involvement: "Without any warmth of the heart, as a man could, she had enjoyed a stranger....That was the meaning of freedom. Free of attachment, dependency, and the capacity for pain." (SHL, 40-1) After this elation, however, comes the realization that she has no reason to stay with Philip. "She gazed at the stranger lying naked beside her and saw him as a statue she did not want to touch again." (Spy 40) She leaves swiftly, and is soon again in search of a new lover.

Sabina's affairs bring no lasting joy to either herself or her lovers because she engages in them for primarily selfish reasons. Even when she is generous, protective, and consoling, as she is with John and Donald, even when she genuinely wishes to give herself, the gift is motivated by an underlying need to justify and fulfill a part of herself. This is shown clearly when her feelings about Donald are described: "She felt: I am woman, I am warm and tender and nourishing. I am fecund and I am good....In his realm, her mother's realm, she had found a moment's surcease from guilt." [emphasis mine] (SHL 84-5) This total self-absorption is just as important a symptom of neurosis as her fragmentation.

Because of her neurotic inability to forget herself, Sabina can see only one side of every lover. Not being a whole, integrated person, she is unable to accept or even perceive anyone else's wholeness. She finally becomes aware of this problem at the end of Spy. The lie detector who receives Sabina's "confession" of guilt for her infidelities and who understands her far better than she understands herself, asks her:

Could you go out now and find the other faces of Alan, which you never struggled to see, or accept? Would you find the other face of Mambo, which he so delicately hid from you? Would you struggle to find the other face of Philip?(SHL, 115)

Sabina's narrowness of vision results in her loving only her own fantasies in each lover. Because of this all the male characters in Spy tend to be one-dimensional, without substance and without clear motivations.⁴ All we know about Mambo, for example, is that he is a drummer, of mixed ancestry, who comes from an island in the Caribbean. He upbraids Sabina so severely for seeking mere pleasure with him that it seems likely that he will reject her advances:

I've known this before...a woman like you. Desire. It's desire, but not for me. You don't know me. It's for my race, it's for a sensual power we have....You wouldn't come to Ile Joyeuse and be my wife and bear me black children and wait patiently upon my negro grandmother!"(SHL, 48)

However, despite his initial anger, he has an affair with her that apparently lasts many weeks. Presumably he does so because of her overwhelming sexual attractiveness, but his motivations, and his feelings during this time, are virtually ignored.

As narrowing as Sabina's self-preoccupation is, it is closely related to the positive, creative attempt to fulfill one's own personality, that Nin sees as essential to the artist. It is important at this point to distinguish between these two attitudes to the self,

⁴Nin defends this apparent weakness in the novel. "I showed only the aspects of the relationship which Sabina could see, no more. The men who played a role in her life were not treated as rounded characters, independent of her because they did not exist in that total way for Sabina."(NF, 58)

since both exist in Cities, and on the surface, both can look like mere narcissism. Some reviewers and critics have condemned Nin and her characters for excessive subjectivity, and even Oliver Evans, in a book that is generally favourable to Nin, suggests that her domination by the theme of the quest for self makes her scope "dangerously narrow".⁵ He also points out that her preoccupation with the inner life makes for careless handling of external action.⁶ These criticisms have some validity; no individual acts entirely accordingly to inner motivations, and one feels sometimes that external influences are not felt strongly enough in Nin's characters.

However, Nin's best defence against the charge of narcissism (for herself, if not for her characters), is found in the Diaries, which show her lively and deep involvement with a great variety of people and situations. Self-development and relationships with others go on simultaneously; the self is fulfilled through action and interaction, not through detachment. This is the route to self-realization taken by the artist. "The artist is aware of his self. He is aware that it is more than his self, that it is at once his guinea pig for experiments, his potential tool, his instrument, his camera, his computer...his medium."(NF, 37) What may look like neurotic self-preoccupation can actually be creative use of self-awareness.

This defence can be applied to Nin's characters, as well as to herself, as Djuna and Lillian grow in self-awareness, they become more active, less isolated, increasingly involved with other people. Their

⁵Oliver Evans, Anais Nin (Carbondale, 1968) p. 198.

⁶Ibid, p. 199.

subjectivity finds outward, creative expression. Sabina, however, comes nowhere near this artistic goal in her obsession with self-satisfaction. However, it is true that she is trying to move outward from the self, and progress from neurosis to creativity. She attempts to love, and thus to move towards other people, but this lie detector tells her, "All these [attempts] were paths leading out of yourself, it is true, and so you thought that they led to another, but you never reached the other. You were only on the way."(SHL, 115).

To reach beyond the self is, for Nin, essential to the artist. He (or she) must "proceed from the dream outward"(NF, 5). This phrase recurs so often in Nin's diaries and critical writing that it is virtually her motto. This introspective person who remains entirely within the dream and does not have the artist's expansive awareness of self becomes broodingly, obsessively focused inward. Sabina endows each lover with qualities that fit with her dreams of passion, adventure, or maternal fulfillment. Philip must always be Siegfried, dressed "in the costume of the myth...everlastingly handsome"(SHL, 115). John, with his memories of the war, becomes little more than a personification of violence and conflict: "I slept with war, all night I slept with war once"(SHL, 75). Donald is always a dependent child. Mambo is merely sensual and exotic. He protests, "I'm a mathematician, a composer, a writer"(SHL, 98), but she is too involved in her own image of all these men to see them as they are.

The essential difference between the neurotic and the creative attitude to the self is described in Rank in Art and Artist, and quoted by Nin in her Diary:

The neurotic suffers fundamentally from the fact that he cannot or will not accept himself,

his own individuality, his own personality. On one hand he criticizes himself to excess, which means that he makes too great demands on himself and his completeness, so that failing to attain leads only to more self-criticism. If we take this thwarted type, and compare him to the artist it is at once clear that the artist is in a sense the antithesis to the self-critical neurotic type. Not that the artist does not criticize himself, but by accepting his personality, he not only fulfills that for which the neurotic is striving after in vain, but goes far beyond it. The precondition then, of the creative personality is not only the acceptance but the actual glorification of itself. (D I, 200)

Sabina is clearly a woman who both idealizes and criticizes herself to excess. She condemns herself for her many love affairs, though what shames her is not her sexual promiscuity per se, but her inconsistency, and the lies which must accompany her adventures. "Sabina did not feel guilty for drinking of the tropics through Mambo's body: she felt a more subtle shame, that of bringing him a fabricated Sabina, feigning a single love" (SHL, 53). But even the lies are not the profoundest cause of her guilt. It is as an artist, or a failed artist, that she is most guilty. Nin's interpretation of Rank's ideas on the subject provide further insight into Sabina's incessant, nagging awareness of having committed some "crime":

Compare Rank's interpretations of guilt with the interpretation of the average psychoanalyst. He feels that guilt comes from a deeper source than a child's offence against moral laws. There is the sense of guilt of the creator. The artist (or the failed artist, the neurotic) takes from the world. He receives impressions, he absorbs colours, pleasurable sensations, he is a witness or part of experiences of all kinds, he travels, he enjoys beauty, he relaxes in nature; and he feels committed to love this in return, to emulate creation, to celebrate, to worship, to admire, to preserve. There is, according to Rank, a guilt about not creating, as well as a guilt for destroying." (D I, 294)

By letting people think she is an actress, Sabina has given herself a special status, that of artist, and has set herself apart from ordinary life, but as she fails to create anything to justify this assertion and the aura of uniqueness it lends her, she is consumed by guilt.

At the same time as she despises herself, she has high ideals; too high, according to the lie detector and to Djuna, a successful, fulfilled artist who is known for her clarity of insight. Djuna shows Sabina that she has idealized her lovers: "In your fabricated world, Sabina, men were either crusaders who would fight your battles for you, or judges continuing your parents' duties, or princes who had not yet come of age, and therefore could not be husbands."(SHL, 115) She has also set up unattainable ideals for herself. Without seeing the contradictions of her desires, she wants to be totally anonymous ("Her greatest pleasure was in being where no one knew where she was"[CA, 74]) yet she also wants to be a successful actress, who must constantly be in the public eye. She wants to be a faithful wife, yet also wants to be free to take lovers as casually as any male Don Juan. She longs to be maternal and self-sacrificing, and at the same time wants to be a "firebird" who soars above the banalities of day-to-day existence. Her insistence on impossible ideals is especially clear after she spends the night with John, the young pilot who is obsessed with flying:

Why doesn't he see the resemblance between us,
between our madness. I want the impossible, I
want to fly all the time, I destroy ordinary
life, I run towards all the dangers of love as
he ran towards all the dangers of war.(SHL, 74)

This desire for the impossible, this demanding of unattainable absolutes, is for Nin one of the essential qualities of neurosis. Overcoming it and finding a way to accept and make use of ordinary reality and

human experience is necessary to any progression from neurosis to creativity. When a grandiose ambition (artistic or otherwise) is modified to more modest proportions, it can be realized instead of remaining a fantasy. Then real creation is possible; then the neurotic becomes the artist.

However, while Nin is aware of the dangers of wanting to live perpetually in an ideal world, she is also aware that, for the artist especially, the world of objective reality is not enough. Sabina's flight from the banal towards the marvellous is destructive only because, like most things about her, it is taken too far. She wants her escape to be permanent. She is also trying to achieve it through the wrong means, physical love, and her constant, blind insistence on the ideal destroys every relationship she attempts:

No place, no human being could bear to be gazed at with the critical eye of the absolute, as if they were obstacles to the reaching of a place or person of greater value created by the imagination. This was the blight she inflicted upon each room when she asked herself: "Am I to live here forever?" (SHL, 55)

She is not aware, however, until the end of Spy that it is a pursuit of the ideal which drives her from one man to another. This lack of self-insight is a final, ironic indication of her neurosis. She is completely preoccupied with herself, but unable to perceive herself with any objective clarity. For Nin, awareness, clarity of vision, is one of the things that separates the artist from the neurotic. She describes the "irrational level of existence...where one lives by pure impulse, pure fantasy, and therefore pure madness" as an "inferno". (D I, 37). The artist cannot submit to the purely impulsive without ceasing to be an artist. She describes her own temptation in this direction, and

concludes: "I want to be in...states of ecstasy or vision while keeping my awareness intact. I am the poet and I must feel and see."(D I, 37) Sabina can neither feel with full intensity nor see with any clarity. She is fragmented, self-absorbed, destructive, and over-idealistic -- everything, in short, that Nin, using Rank's definitions, considers neurotic.

However, having fully examined the negative aspects of Sabina's character, it is now necessary to emphasize that Nin is doing more than merely transforming Rank's ideas on neurosis into fiction. Despite Sabina's fragmentation, she is not presented as a hopeless case, or indeed even primarily as a "case" at all. It is a potential artist, an actress, and a woman who dares to obey her impulses, that she is interesting. In fact, Sabina's nonconformity and her creative potential are aspects of her character that are closely related to each other. Jay says that artists live "as others live only in their dreams at night".(SHL, 109) Sabina, too, does exactly this. She feels that her life is influenced by the moon, and we are told, "The seeds of many lives, places, of many women in herself were fecundated by the moonrays because they came from that limitless night life which we usually perceive only in our dreams."(D I, 35) She is attempting to be creative, not only as an actress, but as a woman in transition from the old stereotypes to a new way of being feminine that remains unclearly defined in Spy, mainly because Sabina never quite achieves her artistic or personal goals.

It is important to stress that the goal, self-creation, is not blameworthy, though Sabina's approaches to it are inadequate. Her failure to develop herself is at the root of all her other failures.

For Nin's artists, expansive self-creation is essential, even more important than the production of actual works of art. According to Rank, it is the artist's ultimate goal:

The problem of the individual is to put his creative force directly into this formation of personality, without the assistance of art. The more an individual is driven toward real life the less will traditional art forms help him; indeed they have for the most part already been shattered individualistically.⁷

In her diary, Nin mentions "the creator's desire to be born a hero, self-born, a mystical birth". (D I, 294) Giving birth to one's real self is even more important for the female artist than for the male, so she can escape from masculine ideas of what a woman is, and can find her own voice. In a sense, any modern woman must become a kind of artist, in order to create her own reality, her own self.

At the root of Sabina's chaos and division is not only the conflict between art and life that besets every artist. There is also an additional dimension: a conflict between artist and woman, and also between the stereotype of the feminine, seductive, mysterious woman, and the modern ideal of the self-assertive, independent woman. The actress, seductress, and free woman are in constant interaction and opposition within her. It is difficult to discuss these facets of her character separately, since they overlap and influence each other so much, but since this thesis is most concerned with Sabina as an artist, she should

⁷Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings, (New York, 1959) p. 239. A friend of Nin's, Lawrence Durrell, says much the same thing, more succinctly, through a character in one of his novels: "The object of writing is to grow a personality which in the end enables man to transcend art." (Lawrence Durrell, Balthazar, p. 133).

be looked at first as an actress.

Her intensity and love of illusion make acting the most appropriate art form for her. She seems to embody all the complexities and ambiguities of Nin's general conception of the actor. For Nin, acting does not seem to be by any means the pinnacle of all art⁸ though it is perhaps one of the most difficult, and, if not practiced by a genuinely creative person, the most dangerous to integrity and sincerity. These are two qualities which Nin values highly, and qualities that are conspicuously lacking in Sabina. Nin believes that "art should help man to be truthful in the existentialist sense of sincere or authentic"⁹, yet the actor's profession is "to manipulate his face so others may have the illusion they are reading his soul". (SM, 70) The actor uses more of himself than any other artist. He uses his voice, like the singer; his body, like the dancer; his powers of invention and illusion for the creation of characters, like the writer. Because of this, it is hardest for the actor to maintain the delicate equilibrium between art and life. It is difficult for him to keep his abilities to create a feeling, an atmosphere, from being used insincerely, to create lies instead of art. In the actor more than in any other artist, the boundary is easily blurred between marvellous illusion and mere deceit, between art and artifice.

Sabina employs the artifices of costume and make-up as a defence and a mask. They are not used to create something new and wonderful,

⁸That place is reserved for music. In her diary, she writes: "Music is the highest of the arts" (D IV, 58).

⁹In Zaller, ed., p. 98.

but only to hide her own fears and weaknesses. In the care with which she dresses and designs her make-up, she only parodies the actress preparing for a role:

She was like an actress who must compose a face, an attitude to meet the day.

The eyebrow pencil was no mere charcoal emphasis on blond eyebrows, but a design necessary to balance a chaotic asymmetry...

She considered her clothes with the same weighing of possible external dangers as she had the new day which had entered through her closed windows and doors.

Believing in the danger which sprang from objects as well as people, which dress, which shoes, which coat demanded less of her panicked heart and body? For a costume was a challenge too, a discipline, a trap which once adopted would influence the actor. (SHL, 6-7)

There is a comment in Four-Chambered Heart that could easily apply to Sabina: "Whereas the actor is respected for creating an illusion on the stage, no one is respected for seeking to create an illusion in life." (FCH, 123) If one plays a part in life, it is not acting, but the role-playing of the neurotic. What is created is not an imaginatively-conceived character, but a false self.

Sabina, of course, has created a multiplicity of false selves, false in that she presents each one as the "real" Sabina. She imitates the actress in seeking to give each self -- the sheltered wife, the adventuress, the passionate seductress, etc. -- reality by dramatizing it in front of an audience. However, it is always an audience of one as she moves restlessly from one lover to another. In the short story "Sabina" (which may have been intended originally as part of Cities), Djuna says Sabina is "like an actress. She needs an audience as proof of her visibility. She doubts her existence, her

lovability."¹⁰ A successful actor must have a strong central self he can return to when the play is over, otherwise he can become lost in the character he portrays. Sabina is acutely aware of this, and aware that she has no such stable self she can return to:

To whom could she explain that what she envied [the actors] was the ease with which they would step out of their roles, wash themselves of it after the play and return to their true selves. She would have wanted these metamorphoses of her personality to take place on the stage so that at a given signal she would know for certain they were ended and she might return to a permanent immutable Sabina. (SHL, 89)

The sense of dispersion she feels may be an occupational hazard for any artist, if Jay is to be believed. He says:

[The artist] is born with a mania to complete himself. He is so multiple and amorphous that his central self is constantly falling apart and is only recomposed by his work. With his imagination he can flow into all molds, multiply and divide himself, and yet whatever he does, he will always be two. (LF, 127)

Sabina's multiplicity is not, in itself, what causes her chaotic life and neurotic anxiety; it is simply a characteristic of the artist. What is at fault is her inability to give it any form. Jay pulls himself together by his work, but Sabina, except when she acts in amateur theatres, does not. His work has power, and makes an impact on those who see it. It is, for example, one of his paintings which gives Sabina a moment of self-revelation. ("She could see at this moment on the wall an exact portrait of herself as she felt inside.") (SHL, 93) It has the beneficial effect Nin ascribes to the best art, because it has

¹⁰Anais Nin, "Sabina", Chicago Review (Winter-Spring¹⁹⁶²), p. 162.

made Sabina see herself clearly for the first time, and given her some of the awareness she so desperately needs in order to become creative. Jay's art reaches beyond himself, and becomes more than a particular type of therapy for his personal dissolution, whether or not he consciously intends such an effect. Part of the reason for this is that it has a form, though not a traditional one. He communicates the essence of his perception and experience in a way that is comprehensible to a wide audience.

Form is extremely important in Nin's conception of the artist.

In The Novel of the Future, she says:

The writer can enter the world of the subconscious at his own peril, but as artist he must remain in control. That is the difference between the paintings of the insane and of the artists: not only the talent, training, and gift are different, but the art itself is a form of control. Control, not suppression. The insane seek merely to decompress from too rigid a mold, they explode. That is not the motivation of the artist. He is there to experience and describe experience. (NF, 139)

Form is not only a way of distinguishing between the creations of the insane (or the neurotic) and the genuine artist, it is also a means for the artist to maintain his sanity. According to Rank, "The artistic form is in itself a necessary protection of the artist against the dynamism of a conflict that would destroy him if he failed to put it into form."¹¹ It is a means of resolving the struggle within the artist between asserting his individuality and remaining in contact with the collective.

¹¹Rank, p. 206.

In Rank's view of the artist, one of the primary needs of the creative personality (and of every human being) is to find a way of ensuring his own continuance. Most people accomplish this through having children, but the artist, seeking the immortality not just of his physical being, but of his personality, uses the means of producing a work of art that is uniquely, unmistakably his. Without the discipline of form, life and art become hopelessly, unproductively tangled, and the would-be artist is no longer seeking to immortalize himself, but to understand himself.

Obviously the artist's work must have some intelligible form, must mean something to his society in general if it is to fulfill its purpose. The actor especially must appeal to the collective to ensure his immortality in the form of lasting fame, since he leaves no artifact to bear witness to his creative powers. Sabina's practicing of her art outside all the forms and conventions of the theatre and "acting" only with a series of men who do not even know they are fulfilling the function of an audience, is denying an essential part of the artist in herself.

One of the reasons that she finds it so hard to express her creative impulses through any conventional form is that she is, by nature, rebellious, and, characteristically, she carries her rebellion to extremes, and allows it to invade almost every facet of her life. Any creative or potentially-creative person is bound to feel a certain rebellion against what is considered "normal"; it is part of his conflict between individual and society. Jay describes the artist as an "exile"(SHL, 109), as one who must "run away from home"(LF, 127). Sabina's rebellion is partly a manifestation of the creative forces

within her, and allows her access to the realm of the dream: "Her denial of ordinary life had a purpose: to send her off like a rocket into other forms of existence. Rebellion was merely the electric friction accumulating a charge of power that would launch her into space."(SHL, 34) However, her defiance takes non-artistic forms and often has destructive, not creative, effects.

One form her rebellion takes is simply a refusal to be monogamous. She feels that perfect freedom would consist of being a "Dona Juana" without the impediments of guilt or fear. She is not entirely wrong in this definition of freedom; there is considerable justification for her wishing to escape her stiflingly conventional marriage to Alan, who can only see one dimension of her character. Her failure to conform to the accepted standards of marriage is also expressed in another way; the fact that she does not have children. This may seem to be a minor point, since none of the heroines of Cities have children, and it is difficult even to imagine Sabina with a child, yet it does illustrate another of her creative conflicts. The artist must find a means of ensuring his own continuance, of a kind of immortality, but Sabina never solves this problem. She does not produce any lasting work of art, even in the form of performances whose memory remains in the minds of her audience. By practicing the art of acting only with her lovers, she is denying herself any hope of artistic immortality. At the same time, since she has no children, she has also relinquished the purely personal and traditionally-feminine means to immortality.

She also tries to rebel against the feminine stereotype by borrowing qualities of masculinity. Jay is acutely aware that she regards men "as he regarded women: as a possible or impossible lover".

(LF, 111) Even in her style of dressing, she takes on masculine attributes: "The cape held within its folds something of what she imagined was a quality possessed exclusively by man: some dash, some audacity, some swagger of freedom denied to woman" (SHL, 7).

Sabina's rebellion, however, does not make her a free woman, for several good reasons. One is that her defiance of convention cannot be an end in itself. It should be used to free her for creative activity, not just for its own sake, but she never fully realizes this. Also, she tries to obtain sexual equality by imitating men, rather than by trying to find a deeper understanding of her nature as a woman, and trying to find a woman's freedom. Another reason is that part of her seems not to want freedom, with all the dangers and responsibilities it implies. She is still in many ways a traditional, "elemental" woman, and this aspect of her personality makes itself felt very strongly, sometimes overwhelming the "modern" woman and the potential artist within her. Even the part of her that deliberately does not conform to masculine expectations remains unconsciously under male domination. This is illustrated in her relationship with Lillian. Their brief affair is in part a rebellion against masculine influence. "We hate Jay tonight. We hate man" (LF, 107).

Their uniting against man is also an attempt at a creative act. Sabina and Lillian are trying to make a world for themselves, one hospitable to woman in a larger world that is otherwise entirely man-made: "They would create it all out of themselves, fashion their own reality." (LF, 111) One reason why their attempt fails is that the image of man is still invisibly present to both women. They are thinking of Jay while making love to each other, and thus are not creating any truly new

reality for themselves. Lillian wants, by loving Sabina, to become like Sabina, so Jay will love her for qualities she absorbs from the more experienced woman. She suspects Sabina of feeling the same way, and accuses her, "It's Jay you love, not me." (LF, 126)

In her heterosexual affairs, Sabina conforms even more obviously to man-made stereotypes. With each lover, she tries to be the ideal woman. With her husband, she feels "impelled by a force outside of herself to be the woman he demands, desires, and creates." (SHL, 17) She plays every role from temptress to mother to moon-goddess, thinking through these performances that she can find freedom. However, they become instead merely a form of submission, and she feels a tremendous conflict between asserting herself and living up to these fantasies of womanhood. The pressures of trying to embody another person's illusions are very great, and contribute much to her sense of fragmentation and loss of self. Her sense of contradiction is described clearly in Children, when she realizes that there is:

nothing more difficult to live up to than men's dreams. Nothing more tenuous, elusive to fulfill than men's dreams.

She might say the wrong phrase, make the wrong gesture, smile the wrong smile, and then see his eyes waver vulnerably for one instant before turning to the glassy brilliance of disillusion.

She wanted desperately to answer man's most impossible wishes. If the man said: you seem perverse to me, then she would set about gathering together all her knowledge of perversity to become what he had called her.

It made life difficult. She lived the tense, strained life of an international spy. She moved among enemies set on exposing her pretences. (CA, 75)

Taking everything to extremes as she does, she takes the feminine tendency to accept man's definition of her to its logical conclusion,

with disastrous consequences to herself. She becomes so intent on being what each of her partners wants to see, there is nothing of her left, no central self.

One stereotyped idea about women that is imposed on Sabina is Jay's belief that behind all feminine mystery lies the simple, animal fact of sexual desire. He refuses to see any other aspect of Sabina, and would certainly never regard her as a potential artist. However, simplistic as Jay's view is, she is obviously an intensely physical, passionate woman. She perceives everything in sensual terms. This could be a factor influencing her desire to become an actress, since the actor's art is so physically involving. Her first encounter with Philip is described as "a performance of his voice and her body".(SHL, 23) Sabina, of course, gives a more literally physical performance than any other actress. In his "letter-to-an-actress" Donald tells her, "It must take great courage to give to many what one often gives but to the loved one....That is why we love the actress. They give us the intimate being who is only revealed in the act of love."(SHL, 87) He says this without realizing that for her, the performance and the act of love are almost one and the same.

This concept gives us a new perspective on her promiscuity. For her, it is a substitute for, and exaggeration of art. Instead of going on the stage to create the illusion that she is displaying "the intimate being who is revealed only in the act of love!", she produces this illusion with each lover. Donald is fooled by it totally, and perceives Sabina as "immense, complete".(SHL, 87) As we have seen, she is in no way complete, and Donald is aware of only one side of her, the maternal and protective, without even seeing much of her passionate nature. But

despite her neurosis, she has enough of the actress's power of illusion to convince him that he knows her fully.

It could be said of Sabina that she is so passionate that the only way she can practice the art of acting is with a lover; the intimacy of the actress-audience situation will not satisfy her, and her sexuality is too strong to be sublimated into art. It seems more likely, however, that the reverse is true. It is a Freudian axiom that the artist creates out of a sublimation of sexuality. A Freudian analyzing Sabina might say that her desires are acted out in life rather than sublimated into acting, hence the reason for her artistic failure. However, Nin turns such a tidy analysis on its head. In Cities, sexual conflict is never at the root of any situation, never a cause. A turbulent sex life is a symptom only, and most often a manifestation of unresolved conflicts. Far from trying unsuccessfully to sublimate her sexuality into acting, Sabina is trying to channel her artistic energy into her sexual relationships, and make passion take the place of creativity. Her problems arise because, despite her passionate nature, creative conflicts are too varied and complex to be "sublimated" into sex.

In Nin's ideas about sexuality, Rank's influence is again discernible. He maintains that there are conflicts more fundamental than sexual ones, that the desire to create in any form, not just to reproduce oneself physically through sex is at the heart of the human experience. Rank even sees the creative and the sexual impulses as opposed, and this opposition as the cause of sexual problems for the artist:

The creator-impulse is not...sexuality, as Freud assumed, but expresses an anti-sexual tendency in human beings, which we may

describe as the deliberate control of the impulsive life.¹²

The will [as shown in the creative will-to-art], conscious or unconscious, will always be the expression of the individual, the indivisible single being, while sexuality represents something shared, something generic that is harmonious with the individually-willed only in the human love-experience, and is otherwise in perpetual conflict with it.¹³

Sabina is trying to fulfill her creative impulses, which demand an assertion of her individual self, through sex, which is an act of sharing and thus in conflict with such self-assertion.

She illustrates the particularly intense way this conflict is felt by a woman with aspirations to be an artist. In almost any woman artist there would probably be some tension between biological and artistic creation, and in a woman like Sabina who tries to maintain an ultra-feminine image, the difficulties are further increased. Her self-creative as well as artistically-creative powers are re-routed into sex. In passionate relationships she tries to fulfill all the diverse potentialities in her personality; the artist, the rebellious, adventurous modern woman, and the traditional woman.

Her passionate nature, unique in its intensity, has some admirable, even liberating aspects that should not be overlooked. By openly "behaving as all women do in their dreams" (FCH, 165) she is making an active effort to overcome puritanical repression of female sexuality. Ultimately, her passion amounts to an attempt to resolve an age-old duality and conflict, "the Christian rift between mind and body". (D V, 162)

¹² Rank, p. 140.

¹³ Ibid, p. 182.

However, Sabina never accomplishes this transcendent goal. She is caught in the realm of sexual passion, and remains earthbound no matter how much she wishes to fly. Just as sex is never the most fundamental cause of conflict in Nin's characters it is never the ultimate solution for them either.

Sabina tries to become a free woman by taking lovers freely, but this course causes her so much suffering that she becomes a good example of what feminine liberation is not. She becomes disconnected from all feeling in the one incident where she manages to take a lover without emotional pain, and thus dehumanizes as well as defeminizes herself. She thinks for a moment that she has become free to love as she pleases, but has only succeeded in becoming free not to love anyone, even herself. The only way she can be free to love and create is to arrive at an understanding and acceptance of herself, and the only way she can do this is by relating to other human beings as whole and complex entities.

She has failed to fulfill herself both as artist and as woman, but Nin makes it clear that she has failed at something both difficult and dangerous. "It is not easy to achieve freedom without chaos." (D V, 84) Sabina remains trapped in chaos, carried by her intensity and complexity out of control past the heightened experience of art into delusion and futile dreams of the impossible. She has no "brakes", either in the form of discipline as an actress or thoughtfulness and judgment in relationships. Her behaviour is therefore more often destructive than creative.

Nin does not, however, picture Sabina as an evil and deliberately destructive person. Her passion, her multiplicity, her lies (which are always told to spare someone's suffering), her quest for the marvellous,

become destructive, and painful to her only because she never attains the central interior strength to transfigure her conflicts and channel them into creative production, either of characters on the stage or of her own personality.

By the end of Spy (which is the last time in Cities that Sabina appears), we understand why she feels as she does, and why she has failed as an actress and as a creative woman. It is even likely that she herself, with the help of Djuna and the lie detector, is beginning to understand herself better and thus progress towards psychological wholeness and creativity. The final note is optimistic; the lie detector's final words assure Sabina, "There is a remedy".(SHL, 118) However, this conclusion seems unsatisfying, even if we accept Oliver Evans' explanation that since Nin is not writing a traditional novel, we cannot expect a traditional conclusion with all the loose ends neatly tucked away. He holds that it is enough to accompany Sabina to her moment of illumination without needing to know what happens afterwards.¹³ But this interpretation overlooks one very important problem. It remains uncertain how much impact the final, optimistic moment of the novel has, how much Sabina really is illumined. Certainly she is told a great deal about herself, but since her only reaction is to weep, with "a complete dissolution of the eyes, features, as if she were losing her essence", (SHL, 115) there is no way of knowing the effect of these revelations. The image of dissolution is not a particularly reassuring one.

Much of what Nin is trying to say about Sabina, and about

¹³ Evans, p. 159.

neurotics and near-artists, is merely said, stated in dense chunks of didactic prose at the end of the novel. This is perhaps the greatest weakness of Spy. For example, what she says about the effect of Beethoven's Quartets on Sabina does make an essential point, but in language too abstract and clinical to have poetic impact:

Beethoven's Quartets began to tell Sabina as Djuna could not, of what they both knew for absolute certainty: the continuity of existence and of the chain of summits, of elevations by which such continuity is reached. By elevation the consciousness reached a perpetual movement, transcending death, and in the same manner attained the continuity of love by ~~seizing~~ seizing upon its impersonal essence, which was a summation of all the alchemies producing life and birth, a child, a work of art, a work of science, a heroic act, an act of love.(SHL,118)

Similarly, such a pronouncement as:

You probably see this guilt mirrored in every policeman, every judge, every parent, every personage with authority. You see it with others' eyes. It's a reflection of what you feel. It's your interpretation: the eyes of the world upon your acts.(SHL, 114)

has a clinical flavour. Nin herself admits that the tendency to incorporate a figure in each novel who would fulfill the function of analyst and help the characters overcome their neurosis, is one of her greatest problems:

The problem I have to solve is how...Djuna, Lillian, and Sabina arrive at a moment of transformation of their personality, without describing analysis. It is the writer who must do the analysis. He must do it in such a way that it seeps into the writing separate from the personality of the analyst. Many confessions are made without priests.(D V, 109)

She feels that only in Minotaur has she finally succeeded in "absorbing the interpretations, the knowledge, the vision of the analyst within the novelist".(NF, 140)

She also admits to having great difficulties with the character of Sabina. In Novel of the Future, she says, "The complexity of describing a multiple personality who is not an artist (for someone has said genius is plurality) had finally defeated me."(NF, 158) But despite Nin's sense of defeat, the portrait of Sabina in Cities remains a deeply perceptive study of neurosis and its significance for a character as woman and artist. Her failure to effect a "cure" for Sabina, or even much progress towards growth and creation, despite the help of Djuna and the lie detector, simply shows that a cure must come less from the "analyst" than from the inner resources of the "patient" -- an idea, incidentally, which Nin accepts totally. At the end of Spy, Sabina's resources are still too scattered for achievement of wholeness to be convincing.

Djuna: The Dancer and the Dream

Djuna, who tries to help Sabina by clarifying her problems, putting them into ordered words, is almost a polar opposite to her friend. Sabina and Djuna both seek psychological wholeness and integration, but Djuna must discover, not how to assemble and meld scattered fragments, but how to break down barriers and involve herself in living experience. Sabina needs form and control; Djuna needs spontaneity and the ability to "flow" into life.

Like Sabina, Djuna is trying to "proceed from the dream outward", and create a harmonious union between the artist's inner realm of the dream, and the exterior world. The same words are used to describe Sabina's and Djuna's difficulty in doing this: "The present was murdered by this insistent, whispering, interfering dream"(LF, 150). However, there is an important difference between the way Sabina and Djuna handle the creative personality's basic conflict between art and life. Sabina expends all her energies confusedly in living, and thus fails as an artist. Djuna, on the other hand, has no difficulty disciplining herself or overcoming obstacles that might have prevented her from expressing herself as a dancer. Dancing is as natural to her as breathing. Childhood poverty and unhappiness, compounded by her father's desertion and her eventual placement in an orphan asylum cannot prevent her from fulfilling her artistic ambitions. In fact, her ability

to dance has been an almost miraculous means of liberation from poverty and loneliness:

Her life was thus divided into two parts: the bare, pedestrian one of her childhood, with poverty weighing her feet, and then the day when her interior monologue set to music led her feet into the dance.

Pointing her toe towards the floor she would always think: I danced my way out of the asylum, out of poverty, out of my past. (CA, 4)

She lives as if she wants always to be at the apex of a grand-jeté, without ever coming down to earth, but she needs to be more involved in life.

Unlike Sabina, Djuna is aware that a synthesis of art and life is necessary. In fact, awareness and understanding are among her most important qualities. This is made clear at her first appearance in Cities, early in Ladders, when she meets Lillian and uses her clairvoyance and understanding to alleviate Lillian's confusions: "She had enormous fairytale eyes, like two aquamarine lights illuminating darkness...they became beacons, with extraordinary intensity of vision, of awareness, of perception. Then one felt one's chaos illumined, transfigured (LF, 181). There is, incidentally, a great similarity between the reader's first and last encounter with Djuna. When she appears for the last time, at the end of Spy, she is engaged in precisely the same kind of perceptive consolation, receiving a confession from Sabina, much as a priest or a psychoanalyst does. Part of her function in Cities is to enact the role of the analyst-figure that Nin finds it necessary to incorporate into her novels, but she is of course much more than that. Her insight and wisdom are essential parts of her character, but they only form one aspect of it.

She is, as well as being artist and "analyst", a woman trying to live as fully and richly as possible. In this context too, she can be compared and contrasted to Sabina. Like Sabina, she is trying to unite different types of women within herself, but unlike her, she is better able to accept her own femininity. She never deliberately imitates men because she never considers femininity incompatible with strength, intelligence, or creativity. As artist, analyst, and woman, she is involved in an active, ordered quest for self-completion. She approaches her goal through a gradual maturing, rather than through a frenzied search for a magical solution to all problems at once, such as Sabina attempts.

Much more of Cities is devoted to Djuna than to Sabina. She appears in both Ladders and in Children, where one section, "The Sealed Room", deals almost exclusively with her, describing her adolescent and childhood experiences. Thus we are given a more complete history of her life than of Sabina's, though the emphasis is still on interior, psychological events rather than exterior, circumstantial ones. Four-Chambered Heart, however, is Djuna's book, just as Spy is Sabina's and Minotaur is Lillian's. Unlike Children, Four-Chambered Heart deals with a single important experience in Djuna's life, her affair with Rango. A probable reason for Djuna playing a much larger part in Cities than Sabina is that fact that her development as a woman and an artist is more complete. She changes and grows more successfully. However, the woman, the "analyst-confessor", and the artist in Djuna all exert subtly different demands on her. Reconciling them all in order to achieve wholeness is formidably difficult, though by the time we see her for the last time at the end of Spy she has gone a long way towards a synthesis

of these three aspects of her personality.

Success in her task of self-creation will have implications that reach beyond merely personal significance. Djuna is ultimately progressing toward the creation of a new kind of artist, a purely feminine artist-type, distinct from the masculine artist. The difference lies in the feminine artist's attitude to the personal, and to human relationships. The masculine artist uses creation as a means of transcending "merely" personal reality:

In art, in history, man fights his fears, he wants to live forever, he is afraid of death, he wants to work with other men, he wants to live forever. He is like a child afraid of death. The child is afraid of death, of darkness, of solitude. Such simple fears behind all the elaborate construction. Such simple fears as hunger for light, warmth, love. Such simple fears behind all the elaborate constructions of art. (CA, 47)

His creations are impersonal. Djuna makes a plea for a more personal art, that fuses creation with human reality. "Keep a human relation -- leaf, man, woman, child. In tenderness....Humanity makes everything warm and simple. Humanity. Let the waters of humanity flow through the abstract city, through abstract art" (CA, 48). A more direct description of the role of the feminine artist is found in Nin's Diary:

Woman has [a] life-role, but the woman artist has to fuse creation and life in her own way, or in her own womb if you prefer. Woman must not fabricate. She must descend into the real womb and expose its secrets and its labyrinths. She must describe it as the city of Fez, with its Arabian Nights gentleness, tranquility and mystery. She must describe the voracious moods, the desires, the worlds contained in each cell of it. (D II, 244)

It is true that Nin is describing the feminine writer here, and Djuna is

a dancer, but Nin is interested in all woman artists. Her concept of the feminine artist is a general one, and does not only apply to writers.

On a biographical level, Djuna is the character in Cities who is most like Nin herself, especially like Nin as she reveals herself in the first and second volumes of the Diary, which cover the period from 1931 to 1939. Since both Children and Four-Chambered Heart were written in the forties, Nin is clearly using a younger self as the basis for her portrait of Djuna, though it must be emphasized that Djuna and Anais are not one and the same. Djuna may embody some of Nin's own characteristics, and experience similar situations and conflicts, but her responses to life are not always the same as Nin's. However, it is worthwhile to take a brief look at one significant parallel between character and author.

During the thirties, Nin was trying to emerge, as an artist and a woman, from a sheltered, quiet existence, and transmute the richness of her imaginative life into artistic and human reality. It was at this time that she met Rank, and found that both his theories and his analysis of her aided her efforts immeasurably. Her faith in psychoanalysis per se continued long after her association with Rank ended, in fact all her life, so it is not surprising that the figure of the analyst should be incorporated into Djuna's character.

However, much as Nin valued psychoanalysis in the form of Rank's thought and advice, she differed with him on a very fundamental point. He was not quite convinced that a woman could be a true artist. Nin describes his doubts on the subject in her Diary:

Women, said Rank, when cured of neurosis, enter life. Man enters art. Woman is too close to life, too human. The feminine quality is necessary to the male artist, but Rank questioned whether masculinity is necessary to the woman artist. (D I, 309)

He was open to the suggestion that it was possible for a woman to become an artist, and Nin, of course, felt that she could do so. However, Rank's doubts set up a conflict between the woman and the artist in her. He once said to her, "When the neurotic woman gets cured, she becomes a woman. When the neurotic man gets cured, he becomes an artist. Let us see whether the woman or the artist will win out; for the moment you need to become a woman"(D I, 291). This conflict is also present in Djuna, and she tries to resolve it the same way Nin does, by integrating the conflicting parts of herself to create a completely feminine artist. Whether Nin finally accomplishes this union in herself can only be decided from reading the Diaries, and is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is possible to judge Djuna's success in her attempt.

In this chapter, I will first discuss briefly the qualities that contribute to Djuna's development as a feminine artist; her talent as a dancer, her psychological clairvoyance, her particular kind of femininity. The rest of the chapter will be a study of the difficulties she must overcome, and the ways in which she approaches creative self-fulfillment.

First we will look at Djuna as an artist, a dancer. She most obviously is an artist in the "Sealed Room" section of Children. The first image in the novel is of Djuna stepping off a bus, lightly, with a dancer's step, on her way to a ballet lesson. The controlling metaphor for all the "Sealed Room" is the dance; it touches each of Djuna's many relationships. She goes from an unfulfilled, adolescent love (a "deft dance of unpossession")(CA, 24) with Michael to a lighthearted friendship with Lawrence ("they healed each other by dancing, perfectly mated in enthusiasm and fire")(CA, 40) to a delicate, protective relationship with Paul ("together they had taken leaps into

the air to avoid obstacles")(CA, 70).

In Four-Chambered Heart, the metaphor is altered considerably, and we are aware of Djuna more as a woman than a dancer. This is not surprising, as she is no longer in a realm of barely-physical involvements with "airy young men"(CA, 33), but entangled in an earth-bound and chaotic passion with Rango. There is very little mention of the dance, or of any aspect of Djuna's life apart from her lover. However, her dancer's sense of rhythm is still very clearly present:

The importance of rhythm in Djuna was so strong that no matter where she was, even without a watch, she sensed the approach of midnight and would climb on a bus, so instinctively accurate that very often as she stepped off the bus the twelve gongs of midnight would be striking at the large station clock. (FCH, 43)

Her "lightness and freedom of movement", (FCH, 44) so essential to a dancer, also remain important to her. In addition, it is dancing that first draws her towards Rango, since her first words to him in Four-Chambered Heart are: "Would you play once for my dancing?" (FCH, 6). On a symbolic level, Djuna seeks in Rango a union of her own dancer's rhythm and the rhythm of his music. The dancer must have music, and Djuna chooses to dance, symbolically, to his rhythms.

The place of their meetings (the barge floating in the constant movement of the Seine) also reinforces this rhythmic motif.¹ The motion of the boat, turbulent or lulling, provides a continuous symbolic background to the relationship. Though the imagery of the dance is not nearly as apparent in Four-Chambered Heart as in Children, the theme

¹in Zaller, ed., p. 47.

of rhythm, which is necessary to the dancer's art, underlies the entire novel.

This sense of rhythm that is as fundamental to Djuna's personality as to dancing, is, according to Nin, essential for the total aliveness sought by the three heroines of Cities. "Rhythm is inseparable from life, from the senses, from a sensory way of feeling and perceiving life."² To a greater degree than the art of the actor, the art of the dancer is physical, involving the entire body. The dancer uses the body to create an outward expression of interior reality, without being assisted, as the actor is, by words.³ Like all Nin's important female characters, Djuna is affected by tension between the demands of exterior reality and the lure of the "cities of the interior", the dream world to which she so often escapes. However, as a creative person, she can sometimes fuse these conflicting realities:

In the external world she was a woman who had submitted to mysterious outer fatalities beyond her power to alter, and in her interior world she was a woman who had built many tunnels deeper down where no one could reach her....

But at the moment of dancing a fusion took place, a welding, a wholeness. The cut in the middle of her body healed, and she was all one woman moving. (CA, 4-5)

Dancing is the art that forms a bridge between her two realities, and unites them, if only temporarily.

Dance is one outlet for her creative energy, but it is not the

²Novel of the Future, p. 90..

³That Djuna happens to be as adept with words as she is in dancing is another indication of parallels between her and Nin. It also shows that there is another aspect to her artistry which has nothing to do with dance. This point will be dealt with later in this chapter.

only one, nor does it provide a permanent path outward from the cities of the interior, or a strong link with other human beings. Her relationship with the ballet master makes this clear. They are perfectly united by the dance, and their artistic union is described in very sensual terms, but as a woman, Djuna is simply not interested in him:

She always felt his hand exceptionally warm whenever he placed it on her to guide, to correct, to improve or change a gesture.... Yet not for a moment did he become for her a man. He was the ballet master. If he ruled her body with this magnetic rulership, a physical prestige, it was as master of her dancing for the purpose of the dance.(CA, 7)

Her lack of interest does not stem from any inhibition about sex. Her retreats to the dream do not make her a prude, though the passionate side of her nature does develop slowly. What holds her back is simply that, at this point in her life, there is a separation between Djuna-the-artist and Djuna-the-woman, and she has only an artistic relationship with the ballet master.

As a woman, Djuna is much more traditionally feminine than Sabina and Lillian, both apparently strong, extroverted women. Yet she has a gift for bringing order to chaos, even within herself, that makes her much stronger than either of them:

Outwardly Djuna was the essence of femininity....But, inwardly the nature was clarified, ordered, understood, dominated....As a child, alone, of her own free will, she had taken on the oriental attitude of dominating her nature by wisdom and understanding.(LF, 22)

This wisdom does not necessarily make her more "liberated" in a feminist sense, than Sabina or Lillian, but it does give her an awareness that femininity does not necessarily imply weakness. She has no need to prove

her strength by taking on a masculine role, such as Sabina does when she attempts to take lovers unemotionally.

It might be easy for Djuna to slip permanently into a traditionally-feminine stereotype of helper and Muse. She does take on these roles, almost to the exclusion of all others, for a long while in Four-Chambered Heart. However, she is so intent on fulfilling her creative potential that she must go beyond the stereotype. Certainly she has a great many "feminine" qualities: intuition, selfless devotion, commitment to the subjective and personal over the objective and abstract. She feels emotion strongly; in fact emotion is at the centre of Djuna's femininity. Her eyes are described as "a sea of feeling" (LF, 18), and she has the ability to empathize completely with the emotions of others, and make their feelings her own. "This power of absorption, the sponge of receptivity...she used to receive all communication of the needs of others" (LF, 36). She is also a Muse, especially for Jay, with whom she has a strong friendship:

When Djuna was there he painted better. He did not paint her....Djuna's image was too tenuous for him.

But when she was there he painted better.

Silently she seemed to be participating, silently she seemed to be transmitting forces.

Where did her force come from? No one knew. She merely sat there and the colours began to organize themselves, to deepen....(CA, 79)

This exemplary femininity, which never falls into any of the supposedly feminine weaknesses of sentimentality, illogic, or helplessness, might make her a mere caricature if she possessed it without conflict. Yet we are told soon after being introduced to her that there was a price to pay for her serenity, because she has had to subdue parts of herself:

As a child Djuna had looked upon the storms of her own nature -- jealousy,

anger, resentment -- always with the
 knowledge that they could be dominated....
 With the use of every known instrument --
 art, aesthetic forms, philosophy,
 psychology [her nature] had been tamed.
 (LF, 22)

This repression of her own violent nature causes her much suffering later on.

Another factor that keeps Djuna from being a mere paragon of feminine virtue is her refusal to be passive. She is an "active lover of the world"(LF, 36) giving lavishly of her understanding and sympathy, without demanding emotional security as a more "typically feminine" woman would be likely to do. Even Sabina, so ostentatiously "free", is looking for a lover who will give her a sense of emotional stability. Djuna, on the other hand, believes firmly that "women are moving from one circle to another, rising towards independence and self-creation" (LF, 133). This goal of feminine self-creation which Djuna pursues provides another outlet for her creative energy. According to Nin, all forms of creativity are valuable, and this one is just as legitimate as artistic creation: "Whatever we achieve inwardly will change outer reality".⁴

Djuna does not concentrate exclusively on her own self-development; she also attempts to communicate (specifically to Lillian) the awareness that self-creation is necessary, especially for women trying to free themselves from outmoded roles. This constitutes her effort to "change outer reality", or at least change reality for another person. Some of her conversations with Lillian are reminiscent of

⁴ Anais Nin, In Favour of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays (New York, 1976), p. 63.

feminist "consciousness-raising" sessions:

"Djuna, did you ever think how men who court a woman and do not win her are not hurt? And woman gets hurt. If woman plays the Don Juan and does the courting and the man retreats she is mutilated in some way."

"Yes, I have noticed that. I suppose it's a kind of guilt. For a man it is natural to be the aggressor and he takes defeat well. For woman it is a transgression, and she assumes the defeat is caused by the aggression. How long will woman be ashamed of her strength? (LF, 21)

Despite her sympathy with some feminist issues, Djuna is not a feminist, nor is she trying to turn Lillian into one. (In fact her assumption that it is "natural" for man to be "the aggressor" might raise a few feminist eyebrows.) She is trying to help Lillian, on a one-to-one basis and out of love, rather than out of any desire to propagate her beliefs about women.

Djuna's insight comes from the same source as her artistic ability and her feminine gift for emotional empathy; that is, her intimate contact with the inner realm of the dream, the subconscious. She uses this contact creatively, and seeks to exteriorize it, not only through art and through compassionate, self-aware femininity, but also through what amounts to a kind of psychoanalysis. Being articulate as well as perceptive, she is able to explain people to themselves, and help them interpret events, words, and situations in their own lives. We have already seen her doing this for Sabina at the end of Spy, and she does it for Lillian all through Ladders. At one point she says: "Someday I will sit down and write a little dictionary for you, a little Chinese

⁴Anais Nin, In Favour of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays (New York, 1976), p. 63.

dictionary. In it I will put down all the interpretations of what is said to you; the right interpretation, that is"(LF, 43). Djuna's understanding provides Lillian with a continuous analysis of what happens to her.

This analysis is almost as much a form of artistry as dancing is for Djuna. At the end of Spy, the dancer and the compassionate, perceptive "analyst" in her are very closely linked:

Djuna arrived as a true dancer does, walking as naturally from her ballet bar work a few floors above the night club as she had in Paris when she studied with the Opera ballet dancers. Sabina was not surprised to see her. But what she remembered of her was not so much her skill in dancing, her smooth dancer's legs, tense, but the skill of her compassion, as if she exercised every day on an invisible bar of pain, her understanding as well as her body.(SHL, 110)

Djuna epitomizes Nin's belief that there are some similarities between analyst and artist. Both are able, because of their insight, to "break through false patterns and disguises"⁵; both are interested in interior conflicts, and attempt, in different ways, to illumine them.⁶ For Nin,

⁵Anais Nin, "Realism and Reality", quoted in Zaller, p. 88.

⁶One critic, Paul Grimley Kuntz, has discussed these parallels. He writes: "The difference between a therapist and an artist might seem to be merely that the therapist is in the sociological category of the medical profession. That is, patients come to the therapist and pay him a fee to work towards overcoming conflicts with a view to restoring the personality to integrity and harmony; only the artist deals with himself and his friends and supports himself by using these problems and solutions in the generalized form of novels, dramas, poems, paintings, dances, etc."(Zaller, 93). He not only compares the artist and the analyst, he seems to equate them: "Should we not conclude that art and therapy generally are two aspects of the common enterprise of maintaining balance and creativity?"(Zaller, 93). Nin, however, tends to feel that the artist, who reaches a greater number of people, goes beyond the analyst.

the best kind of psychoanalyst, who goes beyond the conventional "normalizing" practiced by many psychiatrists, shares the artist's contact with the dream. She praised Rank because he practiced psychology almost as an art form: "Otto Rank was a poet, a novelist, and a playwright, in short a literary man, so that when he examined the creative personality it was not only as a psychiatrist, but as an artist"⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that one of Nin's feminine artists should also use her creative powers as a type of non-professional analyst.

However, Djuna's gifts of understanding and insight do not indicate that she herself has attained the perfect inner balance she has helped others reach: In a way, she is as much in need of healing as Sabina and Lillian, though for different reasons. She obviously does not have all Sabina's symptoms of neurosis; she is notably free from self-preoccupation and lack of feeling. If anything she feels too intensely, and takes on other people's sufferings too readily. However, she is neurotic in some ways. Her personality is fragmented, (the same image is used for her fragmentation as for Sabina's: "Not one but many Djunas descended the staircase of the barge, one layer formed by the parents, the childhood, another molded by her profession and her friends.... The movement of the many layers of the self described by Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*".)(FCH, 163-4). In Four-Chambered Heart she acts a role instead of allowing her real self to develop; and above all, she is constantly pursuing the ideal. Nin calls this aspect of neurosis "the contemporary form of romanticism, where the ideal wish was

⁷Philip K. Jason, ed. The Anais Nin Reader (Chicago, 1973) p. 280.

unfulfilled and ended in withdrawal."(NF, 55)

Djuna spends too much of her time in the dream, using it as an escape, and as a result is cut off to a certain extent from other people and from life. The source of her creativity is also the source of her isolation. This ironic situation is revealed almost as soon as she first appears in Ladders:

...[her eyes'] vulnerability and sentience made them tremble like the delicate candlelight or like the eye of the finest camera lens which at too intense daylight will suddenly shut black. One caught the inner sensitivity like the photographer's dark room, in which sensitivity to daylight, to crudity and grossness would cause instantaneous annihilation of the image.
(LF, 20)

Even as a child, she found dreams infinitely preferrable to the drabness of everyday life:

I was prone to the most excessive dreaming, of such intensity and realism that when I awakened I felt I lost an entire universe of legends, myths, figures and cities of such color that they made our room seem a thousand times more bare, the poverty of the table more acute. (LF, 31)

The dream is wonderful, but it is a dangerous place to remain for too long. The dreamer soon comes to be dissatisfied with reality, and unhappy when it does not conform to the ideal world conceived in the imagination. The final result is neurosis, withdrawal.

Djuna does not withdraw totally from reality, or even take herself far enough away for her neurosis to be crippling as Sabina's. However, she is trapped by her longing for the ideal, except when she is able to use dancing as a bridge leading out of the dream. When she is not active in her art, her fantasies of the ideal threaten to overwhelm her. This is made explicit at the end of Ladders, during a party that

is described in terms of the psychological states of the people attending it. Djuna, Sabina, and Lillian are all shown to be inhibited and isolated from the other people around them. Djuna is remembering another party; one that she observed from her bedroom window when she was sixteen, and longed to attend:

Was it the first party she wanted and none other, the one painted out of the darkness of her solitude?...Merely by wishing to be elsewhere, where it might be more marvellous, made the near, the palpable seem then like an obstruction, a delay to the more marvellous place awaiting her.(LF, 150)

The recollection of the earlier party is so vivid that she becomes detached from the one happening around her.

Noting Djuna's inattention, another character says, "I shall bring you someone who will make you dance"(LF, 151). This casual offer reminds us that it is dancing which makes Djuna wholly alive and present. At this point, however, it is not enough, and she responds vehemently:

Bring me one who will rescue me! Am I dreaming or dying? Bring me one who knows that between the dream and death there is only one frail step,...one who knows that the dream, without exit, without explosion, without awakening, is the passageway to the world of the dead! I want my dress torn and stained!(LF, 151)

At least Djuna knows she is isolated, and wants to overcome her separateness. Any genuine experience, even if its ferocity leaves her clothing "torn and stained", is what she knows she needs to awaken from the dream.

The specific kinds of experience from which she has withdrawn are violence, the assertion of power, and sexual passion. Because she has always been serene, self-sacrificing, and "good", any violence within

herself has been tamed and controlled until it appears not to exist. Not only is she unable to acknowledge violence in herself, she is reluctant to assert power over anyone, and mistrusts power in others, especially men. A childhood incident accounts for this fear of power. A sexually aggressive and tyrannical "watchman" at the orphanage where she was raised convinced her that there was no possible resistance to any masterful older man. She retained the "childhood conviction that events, man, and authority together were stronger than one's capacity for mastering them"(CA, 13).

Her response to men who do not exert power is kind, supportive, even sensual in a romanticized way, but it is not passionate. When her youthful lover, Paul, first wants to make love to her, she is hesitant, and even after their union, she is concerned for him: "She looked at Paul's face lying on the pillow, clouded with anxiety, and she was struck with fear. Too soon. She had opened him to love too soon"(CA, 54). These fears are not the reaction of a woman involved in an overwhelmingly passionate love; they are almost maternal.

Her withdrawal from passion and violence contributes to her neurosis just as much as her allegiance to unattainable ideals. As Nin puts it, "neurosis based on fear creates solitary cells to protect itself from invasion."(NF, 8). Part of Djuna exists in these "solitary cells", waiting to be freed. Even the titles to the parts of Cities where she plays a dominant part contain this cellular imagery: The Four-Chambered Heart, "The Sealed Room". The metaphor is complex, but worth exploring, as it provides an interesting key to Djuna's character. In Four-Chambered Heart, she muses on the "cell" of reverie, of the dream, "the mysterious, the padded, the fecund cell in which everything is born."

(FCH, 14). This is the source of fantasy, and, in essence, the "womb" of artistic creation. It is also a refuge, and exists, not only in Djuna's mind, but in exterior reality, in the form of the barge where she and Rango rendez-vous: "We wanted to find an island, a solitary cell, where we can dream in peace together"(FCH, 12).

However, a cell is also a prison, and, as we have seen, Djuna feels imprisoned within her imagination. On the literal level, there is on the barge a very small room which was like "a small pointed prison with barred windows"(FCH, 17). A cell isolates. It also contains that which is dangerous. There is another kind of cell in Djuna's personality in which she hides all her destruction, violence, and passion. In Children, she lives in a house containing a walled-up room. One night she stands in the courtyard, sees the house with all but one of its windows lighted, and perceives it in terms of herself:

She saw the whole house on fire in the summer night and it was like those moments of great passion and deep experience when every cell of the self lighted simultaneously and she hungered for this that would set aflame every room of her house and of herself at once.

In herself there was one shuttered window.
(CA, 16)

Later in Children we are told directly what is imprisoned behind her "shuttered window": "She could see...the cell of her being like the walled-in room of her house in which was lodged violence as having been shut and condemned within her out of fear of disaster"(CA, 69). In order to become fully creative rather than neurotic, she must accept and integrate all the parts of herself.

It is especially necessary for Djuna as an artist to integrate the destructive side of herself with the rest of her personality,

otherwise she will remain unable to assert herself and to transcend the stereotyped feminine roles of Muse, mistress, and helper. Nin believes that destruction is part of creation.⁸ She writes in her Diary of the "inhumanity of art" (D_V_, 38), and in Cities artists are described by Jay as "atom bomb throwers of the mind, of the emotions, seeking to generate new forces and a new order of mind out of continuous upheavals" (SHL, 96). As a dancer, Djuna is perhaps less likely than a writer or a painter to participate in this destruction-in-order-to-create, but any artist who creates something original necessarily opposes himself to the existing order.

Most of Djuna's progress towards a creative synthesis of all her separate "cells" occurs in Children and Four-Chambered Heart. In Ladders (which focuses mostly on Lillian) she copes with Lillian's problems without solving any of her own. This becomes apparent at the party, where she cries out for a rescuer. This rescuer would appear to be Rango, a possibility that is suggested by the fact that the description of him at the party is repeated almost word for word at the beginning of Four-Chambered Heart. However, in the sequence of Cities, Children comes before it. This novel sums up all of Djuna's life before she becomes involved with Rango, and has a retrospective quality; it is almost a flash-back. Djuna is not only looking backwards towards an earlier stage of her life, she is retreating, emotionally, into adolescence.

She begins this journey backwards when the ballet master declares his love for her, and asks her to run away with him. She refuses, not only because she does not love him, but because she realizes she isn't strong enough, psychologically, for the kind of life he proposes:

⁸Hinz, p. 111.

There is something broken inside me. I cannot dance, live, love, as easily as othersI am the dancer who falls, always, into traps of depression, breaking my heart and my body almost at every turn....(CA, 8-9)

This inner weakness thwarts her development both as an artist and as a woman, and she looks back over her life to see why it exists.

It is significant that the original title of Children was "Minuets of Adolescence"(D IV, 93). All the important male characters, Michael, Lawrence, and Paul, are adolescent, and Djuna, though older chronologically than Lawrence and Paul, is unable to rid herself entirely of the inhibitions that are a carry-over from her own youth.

Her first love is Michael, whom she desires physically, but whose feeling for her "dissolves into jealousy without pausing at desire"(CA, 26). Their relationship is very much like a minuet; refined, delicate, and almost without physical contact. Djuna is charmed by this delicacy at first, but it soon becomes clear that Michael has no passion to give her because he is a homosexual. After their relationship ends, Djuna continues "to relate to the other Michaels in the world"(CA, 28), but there is always the same lack of intimacy. "But the same little dance took place each time, a little dance of insolence, a dance which said to the woman: 'I dance alone, I will not be possessed by a woman'"(CA, 28). One reason for her persistent attraction to this type can be clarified by Nin's explanation of her attitude to the homosexual: "What I see in the homosexual is different from what others see. I never see perversion, but rather a childlike quality, a pause in childhood or adolescence when one hesitates to enter the adult world."(D IV, 141). It is important for Djuna as an artist not to lose contact with childhood and youth, in herself and in others. Nin shares Baudelaire's

idea that the artist is "man, woman, and child in one" (D IV, 141), and thus it is natural for Djuna to value the friendship of people like Lawrence, because they seem to have achieved this combination:

They are making a new world for me, felt
Djuna, a world of greater lightness. It
is perhaps a dream and I may not be allowed
to stay....I want to stay in this room
forever not with man the father but with
man the son, carving, painting, dancing,
dreaming, and always beginning, born anew
every day, never aging, full of faith and
impulse. (CA, 41)

Djuna does not yet realize that, as an artist, she must not let anyone "make a world" for her, she must do it herself. Staying in one created by men like Lawrence is tantamount to trying to remain in childhood. It is equivalent to living exclusively in the world of the dream.

Djuna is aware, despite her enjoyment, that there are problems involved ("I may not be allowed to stay") (CA, 41), but she is not yet ready to leave on her own initiative.

Her next partner in the minuet is Paul, a "beautiful boy" of seventeen who wants to become a dancer. With him she dances a little further from adolescence and towards completeness as a woman. This relationship is at least consummated, though even its most sensual moments have a joyous, almost child-like innocence: "His hair which had never been crushed between feverish pillows, knotted by nightmares, mingled with hers and untangled it" (CA, 53). By initiating Paul to physical love, Djuna brings him to a new sense of maturity and independence.

The effect on Djuna herself, however, is quite different. Paul's sexual initiation is treated very much as a rite of passage, almost a sacrament of maturity, and Djuna is compared to the "wafer" of communion. In fact, Paul uses "Wafer" as a nickname for her. Nin often

uses this symbol: the title of a section of Ladders, "Bread and the Wafer", is meant to symbolize two kinds of women, one who provides the "bread" of everyday comfort and emotional support in a relationship, and one who personifies the "wafer" of transcendent, heightened experience. If Djuna is only the "wafer" for Paul, she is still fulfilling a role that makes her not-quite-human, even though she is his mistress. She is still far from real experience. Sexuality has been allowed some small expression, but power and violence still remain denied in her character.

Djuna has taught Paul to assert himself against his tyrannical and strait-laced parents, but in helping his self-realization, she ignores her own, and never once asserts herself. When Paul's father threatens to arrive, Paul is momentarily intimidated, and asks her, "Please make yourself less pretty." She submits: "Djuna went and washed her face of all make-up, and then she unpinned the airy feather bird from her hair"(CA, 57). She is depriving herself, and creating a false image in order to please someone else. She may have been creative in making an adult of Paul, but her own self-creation is ignored.

Violence as well as assertiveness is effectively shut out, literally as well as metaphorically. All the scenes between Djuna and Paul take place indoors; in fact for the whole duration of her relationship with him, we never see her outside the house. Both of them withdraw from the world, retreating into a "sealed room" of their own, in order to feel safe. There they dance their "ballet of oscillations...pirouetting with all the winged knowledge of birds to avoid collision with violence and severity"(CA, 70). However, this withdrawal cannot ultimately protect Djuna. As Paul becomes more at ease with his new freedom and manhood, he takes on some of the typically

"masculine" characteristics (domination, objectivity, concern with the abstract rather than the personal) which originally impelled Djuna's affections away from authoritative, powerful males, and towards boys like himself: "Then he seemed no longer the slender adolescent with dreamy gestures but a passionate young man rehearsing future scenes of domination" (CA, 61-2). Eventually Paul leaves to take a job in India, and Djuna must emerge from her "sealed room".

She still has a long way to go towards self-fulfillment, but she has come to an understanding, through the relationship with Paul, of the limitations she has imposed on herself, and even to a moment of synthesis of all the parts of herself. "They were both listening to César Franck's Symphony in D Minor. And then the conflicting selves in Djuna fused into one mood as they do at such musical crossroads"(CA, 65-6). This synthesis is only momentary, however, and the music, "flowing and not flowing", caught in a "static groove"(CA, 66), suggests to her that the gentle sort of love she has been experiencing is ultimately static.

By now she is no longer "the dancer who falls". She and Paul have been able to "take leaps into the air to avoid obstacles"(CA, 70) and both are better prepared to deal with exterior reality after their gentle, sequestered romance. For Djuna, the next step is to learn to deal directly with obstacles rather than merely to evade them, to "leap over" them. Her mild neurosis and withdrawal have not prevented her from being creative with Paul, both as a dancer who inspires him and a generous, insightful woman who helps to lead him out of adolescence to maturity. It is now Djuna's turn to move outward.

In "The Café", the second and final section of Children, she is in the very public world of the café life of Paris, where all the artists meet and all the major characters of Cities converge. The café

is a complete contrast to the "sealed room"; public, animated, and full of people engaged in fluctuating interactions and imaginative, rich conversation. Djuna focuses her attention mostly on Jay, as the "one person who might rescue her from...[the] city of the interior....She might learn from Jay how to walk into a well-peopled world and abandon the intense selectivity of the dream"(CA, 92). As a dreamer, she rejects the ordinary, but Jay, expansive, sensual, pleasure-loving, embraces it with gusto.

However, Jay's acceptance of life is indiscriminating. He embraces ugliness and mediocrity along with the simplicities that Djuna craves. She find mediocrity hard to bear:

Jay invited the ordinary. He was content with unformed fragments of people, incomplete ones: a minor doctor, a feeble painter, a mediocre writer, an average of any kind.

For Djuna it must always be: an extraordinary doctor, a unique writer, a summation of some kind. (CA, 92)

She still has the neurotic's and the romantic's insistence on the ideal, and her "sudden revulsions" from the ordinary drive her "back into the solitary cell of the dream"(CA, 93). Jay's friendship and example cannot lead her outward for long, and at the end of Children, we are told, "Djuna walked back again into the labyrinthian cities of the interior"(CA, 110).

She finally makes contact with unidealized, exterior reality in Four-Chambered Heart, in her long and turbulent affair with Rango. Like Jay, he is an habitué of the cafés, where Djuna goes in an effort to maintain contact with the world of action. Rango lives almost entirely in this world. He leads a chaotic, bohemian life, playing the guitar, drinking and talking politics. Djuna is attracted by the apparent

freedom of his life, and seeks in him an ideal liberation from all the inhibitions that bind her. But she soon discovers that he is not as free as he appears to be, since he is tied down by Zora, his demanding and chronically sick wife. As soon as Djuna sees the cramped, prison-like house where Rango and Zora live, she flees, disillusioned, as she always flees from ugliness. But despite her disillusionment, she remains attracted to Rango. For once she does not withdraw immediately because someone does not conform exactly to her idealized image.

However, both of them are still romantics, and insist on idealizing each other at the beginning of their relationship. They see each other as figures from myths. Djuna calls Rango the "God of Fire" (FCH, 31) and compares him to Heathcliff and Othello. He treats her with medieval chivalry, worshipping her in the best tradition of courtly love:

Rango rowed as if they were lost at sea, not in the heart of a city; and Djuna sat and watched him with admiration, as if this were a medieval tournament and his mastery of the Seine a supreme votive offering to her feminine power. (FCH, 31)

Whenever one of Nin's characters creates a myth around another, it is a sign of neurosis. The fairy-tale quality of Djuna and Rango's love is soon dispelled. "They had reached a perfect moment of human love.... This highest moment would not remain as a point of comparison to torment them later on when all natural imperfections would disintegrate it" (FCH; 42). Reality intrudes more and more into their idealized world.

Part of the reason for the gradual disintegration of their relationship is their idealization and polarization of the concepts of

masculinity and femininity. Rango feels that men and women have very distinct roles, from which they should not deviate. Men must be strong, dominant, protective, active in the world. Women must be submissive and faithful. Djuna, dazzled by myth, submits for a while to this primitive and totally unrealistic view of woman. But obviously no one can be a perfect embodiment of the "feminine" or the "masculine" principle. The tension between the two is one of the sources of creative conflict in the artist, and Djuna comes to feel it very strongly later on. It is also a source of difficulty between Rango and Djuna. Rango generates most of the trouble. He expects her to be perfectly faithful, and she tries to do so, but he cannot even maintain his role of chivalrous knight. Though he would rather be with Djuna than with Zora, he often neglects Djuna to pander to his wife's dependency and helplessness. "He seemed to love Zora for her weakness" (FCH, 161), possibly because that weakness is flattering to his masculine pride. He resents Djuna's having any kind of life of her own, and is even jealous because of her past experiences.

A comment Nin makes in her Diary could apply perfectly to the Djuna-Rango-Zora relationship:

Gonzalo [the original of Rango] is terrified by women's new roles....But I say..."Women are much more dangerous as thwarted wills, unfulfilled artists, frustrated mothers, perverted power-seekers, who seek to dominate indirectly, via man. Women of yesterday and their negative wills!" (D III, 283)

Zora is obviously a woman of strong negative will, and has much more power than Rango. "The strings were in Zora's hands. The heirarchy was firmly established: if Zora had a cold, a headache, Rango must stay at home" (FCH, 102). Her traditionally feminine use of indirect methods to get what she wants is highly exaggerated, even caricatured, but it is

still symbolic of the helpless brand of femininity preferred by self-consciously "masculine" men like Rango.

There is another important dimension to Zora's character, one that becomes significant for Djuna. As a woman of "thwarted will", Zora is a classic example of the artist-manquéé, like Sabina, except that she is much more destructive than Sabina ever was. She was once a dancer (like Djuna) but gave up dancing for flimsy, irrational reasons. After that, her creativity was allowed no outlet besides the violent dramatization of her own illnesses:

When Zora said, "I have a burning sensation in my stomach" she made the gestures of a person writhing in a brazier of flames.... Zora's gestures to describe her troubles became for Djuna a special theatre of exaggeration, which at first caused terror then numbed the senses.(FCH, 98)

She indulges in a distorted kind of acting which replaces the dancing that once gave her credibility as an artist. There is "only a showman left in her"(FCH, 139). Finally there is no distinction between acting and delusion. Her denial of her own creativity has driven her past neurosis into madness.

She causes havoc all around her, chaining Rango down when he would rather lead a gypsy life, and trapping him in poverty. However, he submits to it passively, believing in her illusions and refusing to take any action to dispel them. He too is a failed artist. He has talent as a musician, but his creative energy is dispersed by lack of discipline: "A little blue flame of music...had lured him from his birthplace, to the cities, to the cafés, to the artists. But it had not made of him an artist"(FCH, 37-8). Since he will not create as a musician, or create himself by taking his destiny into his own hands, he

fits Nin's Rankian definition of a neurotic.

The destructiveness of these two has a profound effect on Djuna as a creative woman. As long as she resists Zora's manipulations, or is even aware that devious tactics are being used, she is to some degree asserting her own strength, and working towards creating a new, more active kind of femininity. Eventually, however, she lets herself be manipulated by Zora, and submits to Rango's angers, even allowing him, at one point, to burn all of her books. He imprisons her with jealousy and possessiveness just as surely as if he had carried out his half-serious threat to lock her away in the small room at the prow of the barge if she were ever unfaithful.

She puts up with Rango's caveman antics and Zora's whining hypochondria for various reasons. The most obvious is that she has at last experienced passion, and will try to stay with her lover at any cost. One of the locked-in parts of herself has finally opened up, and allowed her to love fully. Also, Rango allows her access to her own repressed, sealed-off destructiveness. When he breaks down a door to evict the drunken watchman on the barge, she "felt relieved of some secret accumulation of violence, as one does watching a storm of nature, thunder and lightning discharging anger for us....She had touched through his act some climate of violence she had never known before" (FCH, 27). By seeing him as nature, and participating vicariously in his raging, she has arrived at a temporary, symbolic solution to the artist's conflict between art and nature. She, inhabitant of the dream, dancer, enhanced physically by feminine artifice, represents art, and he, powerful and chaotic, stands for nature. However, love between personifications of art and nature is not enough for creative fulfillment

for either of them. Djuna must resolve the conflict within herself. In order to become complete as an artist, she must accept not only the natural, but the destructive side of herself.

Another reason she stays with Rango is that she believes she can help him make something of his life, help him create instead of destroy. Thus she is using her own artistic powers just as she did for Lillian and Paul, to help fashion fulfilled, integrated human beings. She acts creatively as woman and analyst in this task, but has little success. Her feminine devotion is manifested when she tries to curb Rango's excessive drinking, not by lecturing, but by keeping a small barrel of red wine on the barge, "having faith that their warmth together will soon take the place of the warmth of the wine" (FCH, 45). She acts as a perceptive analyst when she realizes that frustration of his creative potential is at the source of his violence and disorder: "Why do you drown the dynamite in you in wine? Why are you so afraid to create?" (FCH, 67). When he answers her question by blaming everything that happens to him on fatality, she tries, with some skill, to argue him out of his fatalism: "It's only the romantic who believes we are victims of a destiny. And you always talk against the romantic" (FCH, 67). None of this does any good, partly because he refuses to accept the idea that self-creation is necessary or possible. His neurosis is beyond her help.

Another reason why her efforts fail is that she has been concentrating too long on "creating" other people, and neglecting herself. She is further from a synthesis of her "selves" than she has ever been. Zora and Rango require her to be constantly generous, patient, and understanding, and though her clairvoyance and devotion are, as we have seen, manifestations of her creative energy, and immensely

valuable, they become disproportionate. The wise "analyst" and loving, supportive woman threaten to overwhelm the self-creative artist in Djuna, or at least to condemn this aspect of her personality to remain in the background.

When Rango tells her she looks as if she inhabits "some region between heaven and earth which the Chinese called 'The Wise Place'" (FCH, 44-5), this recalls an earlier comment on wisdom, in Ladders: "Wisdom was a swifter way of reaching death. Death was postponed by living, by suffering, by risking, by losing, by error" (LF, 19). Djuna's wisdom, and her desire to use it to help Rango and Zora, has only succeeded in cutting her off somewhat from life, even at this point, when she is participating more than ever before in the "real" world. Rango calls her an "angel", and says half-seriously, "I can't believe you can be taken like a woman" (FCH, 68). Believing that angels are "the least desirable of bedfellows" (FCH, 68-9), she soon proves him wrong, but he and Zora continue to make demands on the "angelic" side of her personality: "She was invited to bring her good self only, in which Rango believed utterly, and yet she felt a rebellion against this good self which was too often called upon" (FCH, 81). However, her irritation does not lead to any action to change the situation, and eventually she allows her goodness and wisdom to eclipse every other quality in her. She has created a false self: "This goodness is a role, too tight around me; it is a costume I can no longer wear" (FCH, 85). As long as she remains in this "costume" she is almost as neurotic as Sabina, because she is acting a role instead of living creatively. She feels trapped, but is unable to devise a means of escape.

However, it is Rango who makes the first move towards escape:

Djuna was unprepared for Rango's making the first leap out of the trap. It came unexpectedly at midnight as they were about to separate. Out of the fog of enswathing caresses came his voice: "We're leading a selfish life....There is a revolution going on, and I want to help."(FCH, 142)

As a revolutionary, he begins to criticize Djuna for her allegiance to the dream and withdrawal from the world: "You're like all the artists, with your big floodlights fixed on the sky, and never on earth, where things are happening"(FCH, 142). This comment is ironic, because it comes just as Djuna has begun to feel she is a little closer to the earth:

She had acquired some of [Rango's] gypsy ways, some of his nonchalance, his bohemian indiscipline. She had swung with him into the disorders of strewn clothes, spilled cigarette ashes, slipping into bed all dressed, falling asleep thus, indolence, timelessnessA region of chaos and moonlight. She liked it there. It was the atmosphere of earth's womb.(FCH, 148)

Though she remains a dreamer, she has learned not to retreat so precipitately from situations that lack the ordered perfection of the ideal.

For a while Djuna tries to dedicate herself to the revolution, to please Rango, but her attempts are always forced and artificial. Because Nin feels that art and personal solutions are superior to politics as a means of dealing with people's difficulties, it is not surprising that everything creative in Djuna rejects Rango's new political devotion. The polarization of the "masculine" and "feminine", always evident in Four-Chambered Heart, becomes especially acute in this situation. Djuna has a distrust of masculine "objectivity"; she feels that Rango "was ready to live and die for emotional errors as women

did"(FCH, 72), but that he dignified them with the impersonal labels of "history, philosophy, metaphysics, science"(FCH, 72). For her it is much more meaningful, and more difficult, to fulfill one's creative instincts in the realm of the personal. "She smiled at man's great need to build cities when it was so much harder to build relationships ...to create a perfect human life"(FCH, 72-3). If Rango's revolutionary activities are an embodiment of the masculine principle, then Djuna's loyalty to artistic intuitions and to relationships rather than to abstract ideals is feminine. The barge becomes the centre of this masculine-feminine conflict.. Rango tries to use the barge, which originally represented his private world with Djuna, as a place for political meetings. This fails, but since he has already tried to use it for his political purposes, she feels justified in asserting herself enough to use it to serve the cause of art. It is as an artist that she finally rebels against politics:

When the barge failed to become the meeting place for Rango's fellow-workers, it was suddenly transformed into its opposite: a shelter for the dreamers looking for a havenThey came to the barge as if it were Noah's Ark against a new deluge.... Djuna's friends brought to the barge the values they believed in danger of being lost, a passionate clinging to aesthetic and human creation.(FCH, 156-7)

The symbolic significance of the barge changes subtly here. It has always represented the dream world, but now it is no longer a place of fantasy, myth, and illusion, no longer a place of escape for two people only, but a very real and necessary place of refuge for any artist who is oppressed by the harshness of the world. This change shows Djuna's new relation to the dream. Now it is more a source of sustaining

artistic creation than of romantic, unattainable ideals. It is a place of creativity, not neurosis.

Djuna is now much less neurotic, not only because she has experienced passion, but because she has become able to assert herself in opposing Rango's ideas, and in using the barge for something she considers important. Yet even though she still clings to "aesthetic and human creation", she no longer turns away immediately from exterior realities like politics. Rango, however, continues to refuse to acknowledge the validity of Djuna's beliefs, and does not even attempt to understand them. He makes no compromise between the masculine and the feminine principles, whereas Djuna, in resolving some of her inner conflicts, has made some progress in this direction. Rango never perceives that it is the artistic, intuitive, creative side of himself that should be developed to make him the whole and productive human being he desires to be. Every individual, male or female, has elements of masculinity and femininity within himself. For the psychological wholeness sought by Djuna, Rango, and indeed all of Nin's major characters, it is necessary to affirm both these elements, and bring them into harmony with each other.

What is still lacking in Djuna is access to the "masculine" aggression she has repressed. She must grow beyond her "good self". She also needs a little more "masculine objectivity", in order to see Rango's weaknesses more clearly. All of this comes only when she is driven to the utmost despair by her enslavement to Rango and Zora. A crisis occurs to precipitate the necessary changes when Zora finally becomes so unhinged that she tries to kill Djuna. Djuna is more angry than frightened, and finally reveals the animosity she has long felt

towards Zora: "I don't like you, and you don't like me either; even if Rango did not exist you and I could never like each other"(FCH, 171). By admitting this incompatibility without any feeling of guilt, Djuna has gone a long way towards accepting herself as she is, rather than as she thinks she ought to be.

However, verbal openness is not enough. Action is needed to release all her pent-up violence, hitherto only lived vicariously through Rango. Paradoxically, the action she takes is against herself, and against him. She pulls a rotted plank from the floor of the barge, trying to sink this "Noah's Ark going nowhere"(FCH, 177). Then she lays down beside Rango to wait for death.

She experiences a symbolic drowning, a complete immersion in the waters of the subconscious. This is a retreat that is meant to be final, into the realm of the dream. Psychological as well as literal suicide. But the closeness of death gives her new insight into herself, and the clairvoyance she has always been able to use for others now illuminates her own being. She experiences a rebirth. By submerging herself in the subconscious and reaching the innermost part of herself, she gains the ability to come back, changed, from this flowing dream:

...from the end in water to the beginning
in water, she would complete the journey,
from origin to birth and birth to flow...
...she would return to the life above the
waters of the unconscious and see the
magnifications of sorrow which had taken
place and been the true cause of the
deluge....(FCH, 180)

In this short period of concentrated awareness she makes many discoveries. Perhaps the most important is the fact that she is at last able to surrender her persistent desire to realize unattainable ideals:

...on the theatre of death, exaggeration is the cause of despair...
 the red Easter egg I had wanted to be so enormous when I was a child, if it floats by today in its natural size, so much smaller than my invention, I will be able to laugh at its shrinking....(FCH,182)

Reality no longer has to conform to some imagined ideal of perfection in order to be bearable.

In the light of this new awareness, Rango's and Zora's inability to change becomes less important because Djuna's need to see them in terms of the ideal has vanished. "She saw, now that she was out of the fog of imprecise relationships, with the more intense light of death upon these faces which had caused her despair, she saw these same faces as pertaining to gentle clowns"(FCH, 178-9). Now that she is more objective about Rango, separating from him appears much easier than it did: "I was afraid to grow or move away, Rango. I was ashamed to desert you in our torment, but now I know your choice was your own, as mine was my own..."(FCH, 179). Even accepting the everyday imperfections and banalities of life becomes easy. She envisions a comical union between artistic creations and ordinary events from daily life, then laughs at her own fantasy:

...the organ grinder will accelerate his rhythm into arabesques of delight to match the vendor's cries: "Mimosa! Mimosa!" to the tune of Grieg's Sleep, My Little Angel, Sleep.
 "...Couteaux! Couteaux à éguiser!" to the tune of Madam Butterfly....
 She laughed. (FCH, 182-3)

A laughing woman is obviously not going to complete a suicide attempt; Djuna has turned away from death towards life.

What finally motivates her to go on living is the realization that she is needed, not just by Rango and Zora, but as a creative

person: "As the barge ran swiftly down the current of despair, she saw the people on the shore flinging their arms in desolation, those who had counted on her Noah's Ark to save themselves"(FCH, 180-1). She realizes that "she was making a selfish journey...she was sinking a faith"(FCH, 181-3). This realization is more than a manifestation of the altruism formerly displayed by her "good self". Such altruism was ultimately only for the purpose of nourishing her own need for love. Now she intends to give out of her strength, not out of weakness, and to share her faith in the value of intuition, dreaming, intimate relationships, and artistic creativity. She is now able to "proceed from the dream outward".

At this point, she awakens Rango, the leak is repaired, and they walk onto the quay. A fisherman shows Djuna something he has caught in the river. "It was a doll who had committed suicide during the night. The water had washed off its features. Her hair aureoled her face with crystalline glow"(FCH, 189). This doll represents, partly, the "broken doll of her childhood"(FCH, 180), the Djuna who had escaped from the miseries of her early life through voyages into fantasy, and who, even as an adult, preferred a dreamed perfection to the flawed reality around her.⁹ It is also, with its angel's aureole of hair, her angelic self, which kept her isolated from human experience. These aspects of her personality have "committed suicide" in order to allow her other selves to flourish. Her encounter with death has turned into a baptism in the waters of the unconscious, and

⁹ Oliver Evans makes a similar observation in his book Anais Nin (p. 140), but does not discuss the image of the doll in terms of Djuna's psychological integration.

what began as a self-destructive act has been transformed into a self-creative one.

The "selves" in Djuna that have survived are now in harmonious proportion with each other. Just as Zora and Rango now seem less imposing, her own "wise" self has assumed more reasonable dimensions: "In the face of death Rango seemed less violent, Zora less tyrannical, Djuna less wise"(FCH, 186). She is still wise, but not so much that she is detached, and cut off from participation in life. She is also still feminine, but she has ceased to battle against the "masculine" aspects of her personality. She is no longer only "good", self-sacrificing and submissive. She can "learn from Sabina how to make love laughing"(FCH, 180).

Most important, however, is that she is still an artist, in touch with the dream but no longer imprisoned by it. The last line of the novel is "Noah's Ark had survived the flood"(FCH, 186). This reaffirms the value of the artist's world of the imagination. It is not a place where anyone can remain permanently, but Djuna is at last able, symbolically, to step freely off it, onto the solid shore of reality. However, it remains as a refuge and a source of strength. Djuna has at last been able to resolve her conflict between allegiance to art and allegiance to life.

She almost disappears from Cities after this, but we do get one last glimpse of her at the end of Spy, where she is once again practicing the art of dance. The artist in her has obviously emerged from the background in her being. It is appropriate, too, that she listens to Sabina's "confession" as an understanding friend who uses her feminine insight and experience to try to help. She has shown her

creative powers in an act of self-creation at the end of Four-Chambered Heart, and continues to be creative as a compassionate woman, as a dancer, and as a confessor at the end of Spy. She has been able to make of herself a truly feminine artist.

Lillian: Nature and Art at War

With the portrait of Lillian, Nin completes her exploration of the nature of the feminine artist, and approaches it from another perspective. She has shown, in Sabina, how difficult it can be for a woman to fulfill her creative potential. Interior conflicts can inhibit her success even if she wants to be an artist and has talent. In the portrait of Djuna, on the other hand, Nin has demonstrated that a woman can be, at the same time, actively creative and extremely feminine. With Lillian, who confronts the world aggressively, like a man, and who is determined to escape from all that is usually associated with femininity, she is presenting a very different type of female artist.

Of the three protagonists of Cities, Lillian is the most "fictionalized", furthest from being simply an adaptation of any of the "portraits" in the Diaries. All are, to a certain extent, composites, but Sabina can be closely compared to June Miller (who is described in Diary I), and Djuna is very much like Nin herself; but Lillian is a synthesis of many women -- a character who is fully, artistically created. As such, she is the most vivid and striking woman in Cities.

She is also, indisputably, the most important character in the novel. In her, Nin's affinity for sharply-defined conflict within a character is most clearly demonstrated. In Lillian is contained a volatile combination of impulse and inhibition, violent temper and

maternal protectiveness, sexual aggression and frigidity. Through Lillian, Nin is also dealing with a conflict that is not necessarily interior, but is nonetheless central to the novel -- the conflict between art and nature¹. Lillian is described as being "like nature, chaotic and irrational" (LF, 22), but as a musician, she is also an artist. Her artistic side is what suffers as a result of her "natural" chaos and indiscipline.

Despite her contradictions, or perhaps because of them, she becomes, by the end of Minotaur, an aware, creative, balanced person. Her extreme conflicts are necessary to her as an artist; without them she would be content to achieve a "normal" female role. There would be no need to "create all by myself a climate which suited me" (SM, 16). As it is, doing so is imperative, or she will remain as lost and scattered as Sabina. In trying to create her own climate, Lillian changes and develops more than any other character in Cities. Sabina never really does overcome her neurosis to become a free and creative woman; Djuna starts out already creative, but unable to actualize her full potential. She does resolve her emotional conflicts, but disappears from the novel as soon as interior harmony is achieved. Lillian, however, undergoes a major transformation, and is described in all phases of her development, from destructive neurosis to fulfilled creativity. The changes in her, though dramatic, are convincing. They are also significant because they illustrate Nin's ideas on woman's artistic potential, and woman's

¹Nin stresses this in the Diary. Describing Ladders, she writes: "The book I am writing is concerned greatly with symbolism and with the conflict between art and nature" (D IV, 40).

capacity for development beyond old stereotypes, without sacrificing femininity.

In Ladders and Children, Lillian is unhappy and chaotic, searching for someone (anyone -- Jay, Djuna, Sabina) to give her stability and confidence, and save her from her own recklessness. In Minotaur, the tone changes. Lillian tries to leave behind all that is tormenting her, and runs away from solutions that don't work and people who can't help. Her escape is literal, physical, unlike Djuna's evasions of reality via the dream. She goes to Mexico, seeing it as a more natural, emotionally healthier world than the one she inhabited in Paris and New York. Because she feels free and restored as soon as she arrives (even though, in reality, she still has many inner restrictions to overcome), there is an atmosphere of serenity and joy-in-living that does not exist in the other novels of Cities. Minotaur is the most optimistic of the five books, and the least concerned with neurosis. Because Lillian is, all through the book, well on her way to being "cured", she is as close as Nin ever gets to a portrait of a fulfilled, creative woman.

Lillian is also of primary importance in Cities because she is an active, extroverted, "modern" woman with whom many female readers might identify.² Many women have also seen themselves as Sabina, or seen Sabina in other women,³ but she has a much smaller role in Cities

²In Diary VI, Nin describes meeting a "handsome blond woman, bold and beautiful" who "talked of how she gave Ladders to friends to read when they had difficulties in relationships, of her piano playing, and of her house by the sea. She must have identified with Lillian" (D VI, 67).

³Nin describes receiving a letter which began, "I lived with a Sabina..." (D V, 220).

than Lillian does. Djuna appears almost as often as Lillian, but her ethereal femininity, her introspection, elusive voyages into the dream, and almost superhuman clairvoyance would probably make her a figure with whom the majority of women would find it hard to identify. Lillian, though a highly individualized character, is typical of a kind of modern woman that Nin describes somewhat perjoratively as "all action, and copies of men" (D III, 27).

Lillian's objective, all through Cities, is freedom -- freedom to be herself. That her deepest self has been denied is made apparent early in Ladders:

The strength, the fervour, the care Lillian spent in the house, on her husband and children came from some part of her being that was not the deepest Lillian. It was as if every element but her own nature had contributed to create this life. Who had made the marriage? Who had desired the children? She could not remember the first impulse, the first choice, the desire for these, nor how they came to be. It was as if it had happened in her sleep. (LF, 24)

It is clear, too, that what prevents her from being free is not her husband, Larry, not her children, but interior disharmony, neurosis. In the discussions of Sabina and Djuna, Nin's idea of what constitutes neurosis has been quite thoroughly developed, and Lillian's particular neurosis is similar in many ways to that of the other two characters. It involves diminished sensitivity to and appreciation of sensual pleasures, excess idealism, and destructive self-criticism. It is therefore not necessary to discuss it in detail, but it will be referred to in the context of Lillian's progress towards freedom and creativity. This progress will be discussed in terms of what Nin thinks necessary for a woman to achieve this goal. Because Lillian eventually

incorporates within herself some of Djuna's and Sabina's best qualities (especially Djuna's) as well as sharing their neuroses, she becomes a paradigm for all "liberated" creative women. She also sets a standard for the feminine artist, and for the new kind of artist that Nin feels must develop in the modern world.

Lillian makes several different attempts to free herself from neurosis, and from stereotypes and restrictions imposed by society. She tries blind rebellion, imitation of men, and even, when these fail, surrender and passivity, but none of these methods bring her what she needs. Her rebellion often takes a destructive form -- quarrels, outbursts of temper, and overly-blunt outspokenness. This first attempt she makes at freedom is not even a deliberate one, it is simply part of her tumultuous nature, which is exaggerated by rebellion against the over-restrained kind of "civilized behaviour" her mother wanted to impose. The mother, a "great lady", discouraged Lillian's spontaneous outburst of affection, and told her repeatedly: "Don't behave like a savage"(SM, 84). Lillian began to enjoy disobedience and confusion because she felt she was "rescuing her warmth and naturalness from her mother's formal hands"(SM, 84). The results of this tempestuous behaviour, however, are disastrous, and she is constantly beset by neurotic anxiety.

The anguish, the mysterious poison...
 distorted the relationships, blighted the
 food, haunted the house, installed war
 where there was no apparent war, torture
 where there was no sign of instruments,
 and enemies where there were no enemies
 to capture and defeat.(LF, 16)

In art, no less than in the personal life, freedom is not achieved by lack of discipline: "She took to music passionately, and

there too her wildness, her lack of discipline, hampered her playing" (SM, 84). As we have seen, Nin believes the artist is the one who orders experience, gives form to the random events of life. As one of her minor characters says: "Chaos always turns out to be the greatest trap of all" (LF, 87). Mere frenzied activity that is not directed into positive creation allows no opportunity for the manifestation of the "creative will" that is essential to the artist. This will is a powerful force, which can become destructive if not given a proper outlet. Lillian exercises no will in her music. Not only does she play passionately but without control, but she allows her musical ambitions to be sidetracked: "She had given up playing in order to work for Jay's support" (LF, 63).

Lillian distrusts all artifice, to the extent that she confuses it with form and discipline. This wariness of artifice might seem normal in such a "natural" and open person as Lillian, but is indicative of the unresolved conflict within her between art and nature. This conflict is shown clearly during a concert she gives "in a private home which was like a temple of treasures" (LF, 78). She plays violently: "she overwhelmed [the piano], she tormented it, crushed it" (LF, 79), but her emotional intensity actually prevents her performance from being artistically perfect, rather than contributing to its quality. "She turned her face upwards, as if to direct the music upwards, but the music would not rise, volatilize itself. It was too heavily charged with passion" (LF, 79). Lillian is using her music, not to get beyond herself, to "proceed from the dream outward", but as a substitute for satisfactions lacking in her life: "Lillian was storming against her piano, using the music to tell all how she wanted to be stormed with

equal strength and fervour"(LF, 79). She has confused art and life, and is using her talent, not to create, but to express her frustrations, "struggling to tear from the piano what the piano could not possibly give her"(LF, 79). Her playing is mere sublimation, and unsuccessful sublimation, at that. Not only does the music suffer, but Lillian wears the expression of "one who reached neither sainthood nor pleasure"(LF, 79).

Djuna is present at this concert, and after the music is finished, her attention turns to a luxuriant garden, which she sees as a symbol of nature, and which is contrasted to Lillian's playing : "Music did not open doors. Nature flowered, caressed, spilled, relaxed, and slept"(LF, 80). In the garden are three mirrors, ambiguous symbols that represent both art and artifice.⁴ The overly-civilized people in the house need artifice to keep nature at a safe distance:

The eyes of the people had need^d the mirrors, delighted in the fragility of the reflections. All the truth of the garden, the moisture, and the worms, the insects and the roots, the running sap and the rotting bark, had all to be reflected in the mirrors.... Art and artifice had breathed upon the garden and the garden had breathed upon the mirror, and all the danger of truth and revelation had been exorcised.(LF, 81)

In some ways the mirrors provide a barrier between human beings and the reality they find so hard to bear, and thus represent all that is

⁴Nin discusses the importance of this symbol in the Diary. "Unconsciously I had arrived at a key to the book [Ladders], an imagine which clarified my meaning. Woman as nature, poetry and art. At times I describe nature as nature, at other times I used the mirror. The mirror is also an expression of fear. There is a taboo on truth, a fear of truth. The mirror allows us to contemplate nature while out of danger"(D IV, 41).

artificial. This point of view is taken by Hinz, who has a negative interpretation of the symbol of the mirror in Nin's work: "The mirror as symbol in Nin novels, then, has three referents: on the metaphysical level, the empirical world; on the aesthetic level realism, and on the psychological level neurosis.⁵ But the mirrors are not only a negative symbol of artifice, neurosis, untranscended reality. People, especially artists, do need some distance from pure nature. Lillian's violence, otherwise unsoftened, is "attenuated by her reflection in the mirrors"(LF, 81). Some truths do have to be reflected in mirrors, that is, made palatable through the means of art. The mirrors, however, represent only one aspect of art -- the artifact, the created object. rather than the artist's imagination, which is the source of the artifact. The people attending this concert, surrounded by beautiful, valuable objects, listening to a performance whose real significance escapes them, may believe they are devoted to art, but their appreciation is on the surface only. They are more interested in the artifact than in its source, or in the creative process. Art and nature, not separate enough in Lillian, have become totally divorced for these women "candied in perfume, conserved in cosmetics" and men "preserved in their elegance"(LF, 80). All that is left for them is artifice.

A new kind of artist is required to restore interaction between art and nature, and the need for this return to balance is imperative: "Under the house and under the garden there were subterranean passages and if no one heard the premonitory rumblings before the explosion, it would all erupt in the form of wars and revolution"(LF, 81). The brittle

⁵Hinz, p. 12.

society that values only artifice and represses all nature, especially woman's nature, is doomed if it continues on its present course. Nin seems to be suggesting that the woman artist is the one to accomplish the task of restoring communication between art and nature. "Woman's misused and twisted strength"(LF, 81), revealed in Lillian's music, can and must be channelled, not only for Lillian's sake or even for the sake of all creative women, but for the sake of society itself.

However, Lillian must overcome her own neurosis before she can contribute anything to the cause of art or society. All through Ladders she is avoiding any formalization and artfulness (what she considers artifice), not only as an artist, but as a woman. She is mildly shocked by the feminine artifice that Djuna employs:

She investigated the perfumes, the cosmetics, the refined coquetries, the veils, the muffs, the scarves. She was almost like a sincere and simple person before a world of artifice. She was afraid of being deceived by all this artfulness. She could not see it as aesthetic, but as the puritans see it: as deception, as immorality, as belonging with seduction and eroticism.(LF, 23)

This passage shows how Lillian's "creative will" has been misdirected. Her neurosis lies not so much in her distrust of artifice as in her suppression of sensual pleasure, though the two are related, since her potentially creative forces are turned to puritanical self-repression, rather than to artistic discipline. Her puritanism inhibits and thwarts her. "One felt it, like a heavy silver chastity belt around her soft, rounded body"(LF, 40). She is caught in the paradox of being too "natural" as an artist, and not natural enough as a woman, as a result of the misdirection of her creative will.

Another indication of Lillian's incompleteness as an artist is

her lack of insight. All her rebellions are completely blind; she is totally unaware of the source of her discontent and anxiety, and afraid to look inward. "She is afraid to see, to analyze her nature" (LF, 33). At the beginning of Ladders, all she knows is that she is not happy in the wife-and-mother role that she has played for so long without satisfaction but without open rebellion. For her, then, the obvious step towards freedom is simply to leave. After much agonizing, and a failed attempt to establish a passionate relationship with Djuna, she does leave, and lives in Paris with Jay. This theme of woman leaving home in defiance of stereotyped roles has been a favourite in feminist writings since Ibsen's Nora slammed the door of her "doll's house" behind her, and Nin is making use of it again, but with a new emphasis. "Leaving home" (that is, defiance and rebellion) is at best only a beginning for a woman in search of freedom. Nin, with her emphasis on interior causes and solutions for external problems, is not going to allow Lillian's problems to be solved by this simplistic step. Her "liberation" is inextricably bound to her freedom as an artist, which in turn comes from interior harmony, not simply from being allowed to work as a successful musician.

In fact, Lillian has not been confined to being only a wife and mother. She pursues a career as a pianist, while her husband, who had also wanted to be a musician, willingly surrenders his career to hers: "He seemed content in his silences, content to let her and her jazz musicians play and talk. This peripheral life seemed natural to him" (SM, 100). The fact that music brings her no real satisfaction is an indication that she is running from more than just feminine stereotyping. Obviously, rebellion against outdated concepts of women's roles is

justifiable, even essential for Nin's characters, but rebellion against femininity itself is not. Lillian tries to deny her own femininity, and this is what makes her defiance merely destructive.

Refusing to be feminine, Lillian imitates men. She does this partly because she believes "lady-like" women are cold and unloving, as her mother was, and partly because she discovered early in life that "men determined their own destiny and women did not" (LF, 47). Masculine behaviour gives her a sense of control of her own life. The most important reason for her "masculinity", however, is that she has "no confidence in herself as a woman" (SM, 124). She rejects her mother's kind of femininity because she knows she can never aspire to it herself: "She felt despair, that because she was as she was, and unable to be like her, she would never be loved" (SM, 84). Self-defeat has asserted itself, and as long as it is present she will never find herself beautiful enough, civilized enough, gentle enough. She imitates men because she has an exaggerated, neurotic ideal of what femininity is, and is afraid she can never live up to this glorified concept. Like Sabina and Djuna, she has set up unattainable goals for herself.

To compensate for this self-doubt, she takes on masculine roles. She is the active partner in her marriage. She is violent in her dealings with people. She chooses timid, quiet men as lovers, then pursues them aggressively, because she feels they will never arouse themselves sufficiently from their passivity to pursue her. Her tendency to "rush forward" is always disastrous to the relationship, not because (as she seems to believe) her "unfeminine" behaviour in reversing the traditional roles of courtship frightens men away, but because of the anxiety that makes itself felt in her aggression:

At a dance, as a girl, the moment of waiting before they asked me seemed intolerable; the suspense and the insecurity; perhaps they were not going to ask me! So I rushed forward, to cut the suspense. I rushed. All my nature became rushed, propelled by the anxiety. (LF, 47)

When she takes the initiative with a man, she does so not out of passion, or a desire to show her love for him, but out of fear that he will not love her. It is the fear that is destructive, not the assertiveness. Her so-called strength and aggression are only "a hard armour and disguise around her weakness" (LF, 47).

In her relationships with women, as well as with men, she imitates masculinity. She begins an elaborate "courtship" of Djuna, showering her with the traditional lovers' gifts of perfume, jewelry, and clothes. Djuna soon feels oppressed by Lillian's possessiveness, and comes to realize that her generosity has a selfish motive. Having Djuna to herself is only a compensation for Lillian's own, unfulfilled femininity: "Lillian's femininity imprisoned in the deepest wells of her being, loving Djuna, and knowing it must reach her own femininity at the bottom of the well by way of Djuna" (LF, 46). Her aggressive "seduction" is merely an attempt to become the other woman, an attempt which must fail because she is using masculine tactics to acquire femininity.

After one of Lillian's jealous rages, Djuna compares her violence to "a mere sirocco wind, burning and shrivelling" (LF, 46). It is destructive because "it was not attached to anything, it was not creating anything" (LF, 46). The key word here is "creating". Once again, Lillian's creative will is causing havoc, manifesting itself in pointless scenes of jealousy rather than being channelled into creation. She imitates men to the point of duplicating the least attractive of the

traditionally masculine attitudes to a beloved woman -- jealousy and possessiveness. There are moments when her unreasoning anger is much like that of Rango, another undisciplined, uncreative character. Lillian chooses his kind of masculinity for a model; a poor choice at best. She asserts her will in competing with men, triumphing over them, refusing to yield to them sexually, when she should be asserting this will in creativity.

It is suggested in Ladders that what Lillian most deeply wants is "to be made to yield" (LF, 15). Evelyn Hinz's discussion of Lillian takes for granted the "normal female desire to be conquered"⁶, and even Nin comments that, in Minotaur, Lillian is "learning passivity...or becoming feminine" (D VI, 133). These comments equating femininity with passivity are too simplistic to be taken seriously. Nin herself rejects the idea of the "passive female" in a conversation recorded in Diary I. A friend tells her, "I see myself in you....You have the same strange mixture of utter femininity and masculinity." She replies, "That is wrong, June. As soon as a woman has creativity, imagination, or plays an active role in life, people say: masculinity. Allendy [Nin's psychiatrist] does not call it that. You are active" (D I, 146). What Lillian needs to learn is to be less aggressive, not less active. It is not demonstrated by the events in the novels that to be completely feminine a woman must be passive, or that a desire to be conquered is either "normal" for all women, or even exclusively a female characteristic. Lillian's attempts at becoming totally submissive do not bring her fulfillment. Rather than merely submit, she must conclude

⁶Hinz, p. 70.

a treaty in her competitive war with men, and allow herself "the invasion of passion"(LF, 58); that is, the experience of sexual "letting go". This does not mean she must meekly adopt the female stereotypes she fought against with such intensity. Rather, she needs to find an outlet for her strength that is appropriate for her as a woman.

The artistic personality fulfills itself upon achieving a balance between the conflicting forces within herself. Both the masculine and the feminine sides of her personality must be allowed expression. For example, Djuna needed to experience violence and destruction before she could be complete as an artist, but she did not have to make it a permanent part of her life. Similarly, Lillian may need to allow herself the luxury of surrender, but that does not mean she needs to turn herself into a submissive and pliant woman. When she tries to do this, the results only make her unhappy, and, worse, stifle her as an artist.

She is passive when she is living with Jay, and experiences life through him, even though, ironically, she is the one who earns the money to keep them both alive. When she sits at the café with him, she feels "the wine running down her throat was passing through the throat of the world. The warmth of the day was like a man's hand on her breast, the smell of the street like a man's breath on her neck"(LF, 89). Everything is sensualized. When she is alone at the same café, however, everything is different:

The wine has ceased passing down Lillian's throat. It has no taste. The food does not seem rich....Everything now happens outside, and not within her own body.... Because Jay is not there?...Did she receive her pleasure, her appetite, through his gusto, his lust?(LF, 89-90)

Jay is the one whose desires must be acquiesced to, who must have every whim fulfilled: "He always admitted and conceded to his own wishes first, before she admitted hers. Because he was sleepy, she had to become the panoply on which he rested. Her love must fan him if he were warm and be the fire if he were cold" (LF, 58). Lillian's will, her desires, are ignored, even nonexistent to Jay.

She is allowed to show strength, but only a maternal kind of strength that supports him emotionally and financially. Her combination of masculine forthrightness and aggression with "feminine" passivity and with intense maternal feelings might seem at first to indicate a contradiction in her character. The paradox is solved, however, when we realize that the nourishing, giving power of the mother and help-mate was the only constructive kind of power permitted to the traditionally feminine woman. According to the stereotype, a woman's strength could go into protective cherishing or into destructive jealousy, violent and unpredictable emotionalism, devious manipulation, etc. A woman could be a maternal, if flawed Eve, or a violent Lillith.

Lillian has tried destruction (living up to the Lillith image), now she swings back to the other extreme, being both mother and mistress to Jay:

The maternal and the feminine cravings were all confused in her, and she felt that it was through this softening and through this maternal yieldingness that Jay had penetrated where she had not allowed her husband's manliness to enter, only to visit her. (LF, 61)

She even sacrifices her art to support him, and "surrender any hope of becoming a concert pianist to attend better to their immediate needs" (LF, 63-4). Becoming a "woman" rather than an artist is at this point

all important for her.

Lillian expects too much from Jay in return for all her sacrifices. Since she cannot accept herself as she is, she wants "someone to create a lovable Lillian"(LF,132). She must instead learn to create herself, and not rely on man as woman has always done, though the temptation to do so is strong.

Jay, who fundamentally is indifferent to anyone but himself, would have little patience with the idea that he must "create" Lillian. His art is all that matters. His insensitivity is revealed when he tells her "one of his most joyous experiences"(LF, 61). He was once responsible for a friend's piano being left out in the rain, and the sight "sent him into an absolute state of gaiety"(LF, 63). Lillian is upset, both by the story itself, and by his expectation that she will laugh at it. The extent of her submission is shown when she does laugh, despite the pain it causes her.

There is no real trust in Lillian's submission to Jay, no peace. Because of this anxiety, Lillian turns away from him, to Sabina, who gives an impression of power and experience. Lillian submits to her, rather than to Jay, whom she now perceives as childish and selfish: "Her loneliness drew her close to Sabina"(LF, 119). When the two women dance together, Sabina is "dark and potent, leading Lillian"(LF, 121). But her passivity with Sabina does not lead to a satisfying relationship, any more than it does with Jay.

The experience of submission (and indeed all of Lillian's experiences, including rebellion and imitation of men) has not been completely without value, however. She learned from Jay not to be afraid of sensual enjoyment, and even goes so far as to say, "He made me a

woman" (CA, 84). He has not, however, made her an artist. Only she herself can do that; but it is interesting that while living with him, she changes her musical style from classical to jazz, a form more suited to her temperament. "Classical music could not contain her improvisations, her tempo, her vehemences" (SM, 115). It is with Sabina, though, that Lillian first becomes aware of women's need to "fashion their own reality" (LF, 123).

Despite these glimmerings of progress, however, Lillian still has far to go at the end of Ladders. Her ideas of femininity are still confused, and her conception of herself is still half-formed. She has tried, with little success, to find herself through rebellion, imitation of men, and extramarital and lesbian variations on the old themes of femininity. Interestingly, most of what she has done has been in keeping with modern feminist goals. The women's movement has asserted the need for women to compete on an equal footing with men, for women to be allowed to love freely, for women to be at liberty to love other women without social stigma. Lillian tries all these things, but her failure shows they do not, in themselves, automatically give a woman freedom. Obviously, Nin does not condemn Lillian, or any woman, for trying these solutions to the problems of her discontent and frustration. Lillian learns a great deal in the course of her adventures, but the point is that real freedom, especially for a woman, involves insight into one's true nature, and creative use of one's artistic potential. The only way for her to escape from neurosis and torment is to become an artist; not only a musician, but the creator of her own personality. Djuna tells her these things, but her insight is not enough to raise Lillian above the pain and confusion of her struggle to emerge:

These sudden shafts of light upon them could not illumine where the circle of pain closed and ended and woman was raised into another circle. [Djuna] could not help Lillian emerge out of the immediacy of her pain, leap beyond the strangle-hold of the present."(LF, 133-4)

She must accomplish her own salvation; Djuna cannot do it for her any more than Jay can.

Failure to use creative potential positively is neurosis, and nowhere is Lillian's neurosis more clear than in the party scene at the end of Ladders, the same party where Djuna is overwhelmed by the dream and Sabina finds herself "becalmed". It is a psychological rock-bottom for all three characters; they are trapped in their private suffering, and unable to make contact with others. Lillian's difficulty is the most acute; it amounts to "internal suicide":

In this invisible hara-kiri she tore off her dress, her jewels, tore off every word she had uttered, every smile, every act of the evening. She was ashamed of her talk, of her silences, of what she had given, and of what she had not given, to have confided and not to have confided. (LF, 148)

Her painful dissatisfaction with herself comes from failure to live up to the two conflicting ideals: being man's equal and being traditionally "feminine". Her symbolic suicide is the culmination of the destructiveness that her neurosis has been causing all through Ladders.

Children is more optimistic. In this novel, Lillian is still trapped, but no leaning as heavily on other people, or expecting them to free her. She has become aware of Jay's true character, and knows she can't depend on him. What is still lacking is the clarity of insight and deep awareness that Nin considers essential to the artist, but at least Lillian is beginning to see others as they are, rather than as she

wants them to be. For the first time, she pauses and reflects on what she must do, and is shown in thought rather than in motion: "Lying in bed and listening to Jay whistling while he shaved in the bathroom, Lillian wondered why she felt simultaneously in bondage and yet unmarried, unappeased"(CA, 81). Characteristically, though, the course of action she decides on is to run away from Jay. Her instincts are sound, at least. She does not precisely, intellectually understand that the passion between her and Jay is "a feverish desire to fuse elements that were unfusible", but she "felt it happening, knew that this was why she had wept so bitterly at their first quarrel"(CA, 81).

Escape is necessary, but escape to something more fulfilling, rather than mere escape from Jay. The means she uses are interesting. First she locks herself in her room and plays the piano, "to seek in music the wholeness which she could not find in love"(CA, 83). The music does nothing for her but evoke old nightmares and doubts, hitherto repressed. She is not yet strong enough to confront them, and the emotional "flood of debris"(CA, 83) overwhelms her.

Another reason she cannot escape into art is that she is a different kind of artist from Jay, who can forget everything when he is involved in his painting. She cannot live exclusively in and for her art; it always impells her back towards life. His detachment is the one characteristic of his that annoys Lillian most, since it allows him to ignore her. She tells Sabina, "He was glad we were going out together, he said it would give him a chance to work....He doesn't give a damn about anyone or anything"(LF, 119). This basic difference between Jay and Lillian is also what Nin considers one of the most important differences between the masculine and the feminine artist. The masculine

artist, to her, is more detached, abstract. She says, in Novel of the Future, "men write about alienation, and women about relationships" (NF, 38); a broad generalization, and open to dispute, but illustrative of her position. The feminine artist remains more drawn to life, in the creative conflict between art and life, than her masculine counterpart. Lillian must learn not to let the "emotional debris" of her life swamp her music, but she must also avoid merely imitating masculine artists, as she imitates men in other things. Any artist who manages to create without withdrawing from human contact, from life, is coming closer to Rank's idea of a new type of creative personality. Lillian's success or failure implies not only a new kind of femininity, but a new kind of creativity as well, that is valid for both men and women.

First, however, she needs to free herself from Jay, and since an artistic solution is not the answer at this point, she flings herself headlong into life again. She is angry over Jay's unfaithfulness, and decides to revenge herself in kind. However, because she commits her infidelity à la Sabina, wearing Sabina's cape, and "with the kind of man Sabina would have chosen" (CA, 85), she realizes she is only pretending to be free. Copying Sabina's apparent freedom is no more liberating to Lillian than imitating men.

Finally, it becomes obvious that there is only one other alternative -- putting literal, geographical distance between herself and Jay. She is "leaving home" again, but this time she is not as naive and inexperienced, or as neurotic, as when she left her husband. Escape is still not the ultimate answer, but it is a right decision. Once the decision is made, it is immediately, physically apparent that she is acting autonomously and healthily, out of a growing sense of self-

determination:

All these tangled cords, from the first to the last, from the mother to the husband, to the children, and to Jay, all dissolved at once, and Jay was surprised to hear Lillian laugh in a different tone, for most times her laughter had a rusty quality which brought it closer to a sob, as if she had never determined which she intended to do. (CA, 108)

She is ready to begin a new self-creative effort.

Lillian's voyage to Golconda, described in Minotaur, is of great importance to her as a creative person. She goes there as an "adventurer": on the first page we are told, "With her first swallow of air she inhaled a drug of forgetfulness well known to adventurers" (SM, 5). As we have seen in the study of Sabina, the artist is a traveller and adventurer too, who "submits himself to adventures into the irrational" (D V, 122), and travels the unmapped areas of the interior dream. Since Lillian is still afraid to venture inward in her explorations, the trip to Mexico is at first a symbol and substitute for interior "travelling".

Once in Golconda, however, she soon becomes more sensitive to her inner self. When she has her fortune told, she acknowledges to herself, "I am quite willing to seek guidance for my inward journeys" (SM, 38). Earlier, she would not have thought herself capable of such inward adventuring. Simply living in Mexico brings her into contact with the realm of the dream. In fact, it was a dream which impelled her towards Mexico:

Some voyages have their inception in the blueprint of a dream, some in the urgency of contradicting a dream. Lillian's recurrent dream of a ship that could not reach the water, that sailed laboriously, pushed by her with great effort, through city streets, had determined her course towards the sea, as if she would give this ship, once and for

all, its proper sea bed. (SM, 5)

The sea is a common symbol for the subconscious, and Lillian's dream represents a need to float and navigate freely in that realm.

This particular dream is full of effort, straining after the impossible, but one thing Lillian learns very quickly in Golconda is that effort and violent activity are unnecessary. The frenzied activity that characterized her in the earlier novels has now diminished sharply. Even before she begins her inward voyaging, she becomes able to fully accept and enjoy sensual pleasure. Her body is restored to her. Even a swim in the ocean becomes a kind of baptism into the life of the senses:

The sea folded its layers around her,
touched her legs, her hips, her breasts
-- a liquid sculptor, the warm hands of
the sea all over her body. She closed her
eyes. When she came out and put on her
clothes she felt reborn, born anew. (SM, 78)

Her art flourishes, too. Jazz is "the music of the body" (SM, 18), and the atmosphere of Golconda is perfect for it. There are no more incidents of Lillian "storming against the piano". Jazz gives her "freedom to embroider on all her moods" (SM, 43). Yet despite this freedom, she still feels at certain moments that she is "a prisoner of timidities" (SM, 44). The process of liberation is not yet quite complete, but it is well-advanced.

Lillian thus finds a partial solution to her conflicts in the same way Djuna does, by immersing herself in the very source of her unbalance. Djuna is prone to excessive dreaming, yet must risk her life by penetrating to the heart of the dream, as she does when the houseboat almost sinks. It is only in this extreme situation, close to death, that she realizes fully that some counter-balance is needed, and emerges into

life. Lillian, who has been compared to nature in her tempestuousness and irrationality, now loses herself in nature, and is fulfilled in some ways by the experience. She muses:

I was always an exaggerated character because I was trying to create all by myself a climate which suited me, bigger flowers, warmer words, more fervent relationships, but here nature does it for me, creates the climate I need within myself, and I can be languid and at rest. It is a drug...a drug....(SM, 16)

It is this kind of passivity that Nin may be referring to when she writes in the Diary that Lillian is learning to be feminine through passivity. It is not the kind of female submission that Lillian attempted with Jay; the "passive passion"(D VI, 133), as Nin calls it, is simply a counter to her former excessive aggression. She needs to experience it as Djuna needed to experience violence. By yielding to nature, rather than to a man, Lillian comes closer to accepting her own nature.

In this state of submission to nature, she exorcises her persistent dream of a stranded boat: "Today she was fully aware that the dream of pushing the boat through waterless streets was ended. In Golconda she had attained a flowing life, a flowing journey"(SM, 23). She feels completely cured of all her anxieties, and is tempted to simply go on living in this languid "warm bath"(SM, 83) of sensuality and comfort, but for the artist, this is impossible. Nin gives us a hint of this difficulty when she describes Golconda (pure nature, untransformed by the artist) as "a drug". A drug anaesthetizes, inhibits the artist's essential awareness. It does not provide a permanent escape. For Nin, "the telling of stories [that is, her own art] is the only balm, the only drug, the only permanent indestructable, constant, ever-inhabitable island"(D III, 303). All other "drugs",

other forms of refuge besides art, are illusory. Escape into nature cannot be permanently fulfilling for Lillian, because, for the artist, nature and art are always in conflict. Nature, for Nin, is chaos, and even though chaos can be many things ("rich, destructive, and protective" [SM, 83]), it must be given form by the artist. Lillian sees Golconda as a place that both represents and completes her, but it also overwhelms her, and this is dangerous to the artist. Nin comments, "I remember D.H. Lawrence complaining that nature was too powerful in Mexico, that it swallowed one. If I lived there, would the need to write disappear?" (D V, 39). The city Lillian is really seeking is not Golconda, but a "city of the interior". Her landlocked ship has only begun to voyage, and she must journey farther inward if she is to gain awareness and self-understanding, and give form to her still-confused inner life.

Golconda is a drug that helps for a while, since it enables Lillian to forget her past problems, but Dr. Hernandez reminds Lillian that unless the patterns of the past are overcome, nothing permanent can be accomplished; neurosis cannot be transmuted into creativity. "Neurosis is a 'possession'. It is the spirit of the past. It is the past selves superimposing themselves over the present, blurring it, choking it", according to Nin (D V, 234). Lillian may feel free from neurosis, but Hernandez shows her that her liberation is still not complete

Dr. Hernandez plays an interesting role in Minotaur. Hinz sees him as representing Lillian's conscience,⁸ but his function in the novel seems to be more wide-ranging than that. He is compared directly

⁸Hinz, p. 72.

to the lie detector, and is like him in being sympathetic but relentlessly truthful, perceptive, and detached from the life around him. In other words, he is the wise "analyst-figure" that recurs so often in Nin's novels. In Minotaur, such a character is perhaps less essential than in the other novels, since much of what Lillian learns, she learns on her own, after Hernandez has first made her understand that she must overcome the past. Eventually she feels that she can help him, having absorbed all his insights, and developed her own perceptions of other people's character. But it is too late. He is killed before she can talk to him.

His is one of the few literal deaths in Cities, and as such, it is significant. The analyst-figures and the doctors in these novels represent wisdom, but also stasis and death. In Ladders, there is an incident involving a young doctor who lives for six months with the corpse of his wife locked up in a bedroom. Hernandez, too, is associated with death, concerned as he is with disease and drug-traffic in Golconda, and obsessed with the negative aspects of the place. Nin is thus showing her ambivalent attitude to "wisdom". It can be a tremendous positive force, but it can also cause too much detachment from life. Ultimately, the doctors, the healers, the analysts, are not artists and it is the artist, not the "wise man" who is, for Nin, the most alive, dynamic kind of character. Lillian not only incorporates all of Hernandez' awareness and analytical power, she goes beyond it, because she remains committed to life, not to death. The artist learns to survive without the analyst.

Before reaching this stage, however, Lillian must develop her creative awareness and overcome the past. She is swindled out of some

money that she thought would be used to free an American prisoner, and afterwards discusses what happened with a man who is passionately concerned with freeing all foreigners in trouble with the Mexican police. She perceptively diagnoses the cause of his obsession: "When you're intent on freeing others, you must be trying to free some part of yourself, too" (SM, 47). Her clarity of vision into other people's situations has grown enormously, and become almost equivalent to Djuna's, but she still lacks the self-awareness, and understanding of her own hidden motivations that is necessary if she is to break her former patterns and become a fully creative woman.

One minor experience that increases Lillian's self-awareness is meeting Edward, an ex-musician who loudly repudiates all art. After a few glasses of tequila, he tries to convince anyone who will listen that he left the musical world by choice:

In this place music is not necessary.
Golconda is full of nature music, dance
music, singing music, music for living.
The street vendors' tunes are better than
any modern composition. Life here is
full of rhythm, people sing while they
work. I don't miss concerts or my own
violin at all. (SM, 52)

However, the real reason he no longer plays is soon revealed: "At the third glass of tequila...his glance would fall on his left hand where a finger was missing" (SM, 53). The message he conveys to Lillian is clear: Golconda is merely a substitute for art; a beautiful, almost-satisfying one, but a substitute all the same. It is pure life, not shaped by the artist.

Lillian is reminded that there is a dimension missing in this "natural" life she is leading in Golconda, despite its apparent freedom.

She meets Michael, Djuna's first love, who takes her to the ancient, ruined city where he lives. Everything about the place, and about Michael, indicates that Lillian is making a symbolic journey into death. The city is also a "city of the interior", to which Lillian had never travelled before, and is rich in symbolic meaning. On the way there, she dreams that a native guide asks her if she would like to visit an Aztec tomb, then she wakes to find herself in a city with the eerie, moribund splendour of a ruined temple. In many ways it is a tomb, since Michael, afraid of life, has sealed himself off in this place without wind and without birdsong, as silent and static as eternity.

Lillian is at first impressed with the city, as it reminds her of a Chirico painting, and seems to be, in a way, as inspiring to creativity as a work of art:

It was a city rendered into poetry by its recession into the past as cities are rendered into poetry by the painters because of elements left out, allowing each spectator to fill in the spaces for himself....A city in ruins, as this ancient city was, was more powerful and evocative because it had to be constructed anew by each person, therefore enhanced into illimitable beauty. (SM, 61-2)

Despite its beauty, it is also like a work of art in that it is disconnected from life.⁹ The impersonal ruins ultimately evoke only

⁹ Rank has a comment on the connection (or lack of it) between a finished work of art, and life: "In creation the artist tries to immortalize his mortal life. He desires to transform death into life, as it were, though actually he transforms life into death. For not only does the created work not go on living; it is, in a sense, dead, both as regards the material which renders it almost inorganic, and also spiritually and psychologically, in that it no longer has any significance for its creator, once he has produced it. He therefore again takes refuge in life..." (Rank, p. 140).

poetic moments which the tourists come to seek -- sitting on broken columns, or focusing their cameras on empty ransacked tombs, none of them knowing they are learning among ruins and echos to devaluate the importance of one man, and to prepare themselves for their own disappearance. (SM, 62)

It is a place perfectly suited to Michael's sterile withdrawal.

Lillian experiences another mingling of dream and reality while there. She falls asleep in the sun, and dreams that a vulture (symbol of death) circles over her, then swoops down and sinks its beak into her shoulder. She awakens immediately, and realizes she has not been dreaming: "A vulture had marked her shoulder, and was flying away slowly, heavily" (SM, 63). The fact that she then begins to dislike the city, out of a new, as-yet-unfocused recognition of its deadliness, shows she understands the significance of the incident. This merging of dream and reality indicates that she has reached a new stage in her artistic growth. She is able to interpret her experience, and be guided by it, and is thus now in touch with the realm of the dream. She is guided by her subconscious; informed and prepared by it to perceive reality in a new way. Her perceptions are now fully aware.

She had seen the city as being like a work of art, but there is nothing of the artist left in it. There are artifacts only, like the priceless but funereal objects with which Michael surrounds himself: "The beauty of his house, his clothes, his paintings, his books, seem like precious jewels, urns, perfumes, gold ornaments placed in the tombs of Egyptian kings" (SM, 66). All tension and interplay between art and life is absent, because Michael has denied life and love. Lillian, who was always too chaotic, too much involved in life and nature to be a fulfilled artist, has been given a look at the other extreme.

Michael has tried to withdraw to a world of pure art. There are allusions to all the arts throughout the whole episode in the ruined city: Lillian is reminded of Chirico, and A Thousand and One Nights; there is the "poetry tournament", where the young men court the girls with ballads. But Michael is not creating any of these things. His world is composed of the "artifice" that Lillian had feared so much. He has not made his life a work of art, he has merely varnished it over, like a painting, to preserve it, and has only made in unchangeable, dead.

Michael's world is completely opposite to the natural, flowing one Lillian had experienced in Golconda. It is obvious to her that she can not stay in the ruined city, yet it was necessary for her to go there, as she has learned many things. First that Michael's solution to all problems, escape, provides no final answers. She herself had come to Golconda to escape, but by this point she seems able to appreciate the parallel between herself and Michael. Already she is beginning to prepare for her return home. It was also necessary for her to encounter death, so that she can understand the meaning of the life she plunges into so intently. Even more important, she has had a vitalizing encounter between dream and reality, and has been brought back to the idea of art. Even though it was a dead art that surrounded Michael, it provided a contrast to the unstructured life she was living in Golconda. Even in the dead city of artifacts Lillian, unlike Michael, could, with her imagination, create something, fill in the empty spaces, because she is a living, responding, creative human being. In her, art and life can form a dynamic, creative synthesis.

All of Lillian's next voyages are "interior". She makes a literal trip from Golconda to visit Hatcher, an American living in

Mexico. On the way there, she is carried far back into her past, and we learn the reason for her distrust of art and artifice, and of ventures inward. As a child, living with her parents in Mexico City, she had played in underground passages beneath the city (an obvious symbol for the subconscious). She once got lost in these passageways, as a result of ignoring her mother's call. She was too engrossed in cutting paper flowers, that is, in artistic activity. What she learned from the experience is this:

When you do not answer the whistle of duty
and obedience, you risk death all alone in
the forgotten cities of the past. When you
engage in the delights of creating pink, blue,
white animals and towers, ships and starry
stems, you court solitude and catastrophe.
(SM, 72)

The dangers of creativity outweighed its rewards for her, so her artistic impulses were thwarted and confused. Not repressed, since she is, in Minotaur, a successful musician, but prevented from reaching their highest development. Later, she even comes to realize what was wrong in her music: "In music too there was a higher organization of experience. Yes, she knew that she was undisciplined and wayward" (SM, 74). She is completing her artistic self-awareness.

By confronting past events hitherto hidden away beneath the surface, she can keep these experiences from recurring in karmic repetition, and progress to new experiences. She is free to grow, and to perceive with her own vision as an artist. She has become independent, no longer relying on Golconda, or the past, or others' images of her. She can now create her own climate, image, and self.

The first thing she perceives with her new awareness is that she must go home. She does not return simply because, as Hinz puts it:

"Lillian realizes now as a civilized white woman it is impossible for her to live solely by instinct".¹⁰ A more important reason is that she is an artist, and living in pure nature is not enough for her. She has now gained the artist's powers of ordering and transcending experience, and must use them.

The last thirty pages of Minotaur are devoted to Lillian's reveries on her return journey -- reveries that encompass all the important events of her life. She puts them in order and understands their significance for the first time. She is no longer possessed by the past. Her neurosis has been conquered, and she can use the past creatively. Her creativity, however, will always turn more towards life than towards art. As a fully feminine artist, she is equally interested in the creation of a relationship (i.e., with her husband, Larry, to whom she is returning), and in the creation of music. She has not made a choice between art and life, but has become able to harmonize the two often-opposing forces. There is no need to surrender her music (all indications are that she is a better musician than before), but she does realize that Larry needs a chance to develop himself as a musician:

It was true that Larry had accepted this abdication from life and seemed fulfilled when she lived for him in the musicians' world....But this division of labour had become a charade. When they grew tired of it (Lillian tired of Larry's indirect spectatorships, and Larry tired of Lillian's predominant role) they had not known how to exchange roles!(SM, 100)

Lillian is now able to nourish the artist in others, as well as herself.

Thoughts of Larry become intermingled with thoughts of Hernandez,

¹⁰Hinz, p. 73.

but he has given her all that he can, and she no longer needs him. She was not in time to give him creative psychological support in return. He was generously and profoundly wise, but wisdom is not enough to sustain him, just as it was not enough to sustain Djuna. He lived a vicarious, ultimately unfulfilled life. He dies, but Lillian is fully alive, as a woman and an artist, equipped with a piercing clarity of insight equal to Hernandez' and Djuna's. This vision is finally all her own; she is an artist whose creative powers have come to full fruition in shaping her own life, her own self.

Conclusion

Since the influence of Otto Rank appears all through Cities, it is appropriate to begin this conclusion with one final quote from this psychologist. He saw the solution to the artist's conflicts between individual and society, matter and spirit, the interior and exterior worlds, art and nature, in a "constructive process of acceptance and development of one's individual personality as a new type of humanity".¹ Nin also sees the possibilities for a new type of humanity emerging in the twentieth century. This new personality will be individualistic, self-aware, self-accepting, in close contact with his (or her) own subconscious, and, above all, creative. This creativity will manifest itself not only in artistic production, but, as Nin said in a lecture given to the Otto Rank Association, in "the creation of a child, a garden, a house, a dress....Not only the actual products of art, but the faculty for healing, consoling, raising the level of life, transforming it by our own efforts. I was talking about the creative will, which Dr. Rank opposed to neurosis as our salvation".² The artist, for Nin, is the living prototype of man's creative will, an intensified personality, symbolic of modern humanity. Women artists are especially

¹Rank, p. 210.

²Anais Nin, Essays, p. 58.

appropriate as symbols of the new type of creative personality because they have always been considered more "intuitive" than men, more in touch with the interior reality of the subconscious. They have also been more inclined to use their creativity in their lives and the lives of others rather than in the production of works of art, though for a long time this was true by default; women were simply not allowed any wider scope for their creativity. However, the fact remains that it is a feminine kind of creativity that seems best suited to the new humanity that Nin and Rank see developing. Nin's female characters do not merely exemplify typically feminine attributes. Their artistic activity takes them beyond mere stereotyped femininity, without making them "masculine". They are active, if not aggressive; in fact Nin seems to be saying that the most appropriate expression of feminine activity is creation. Not only does a woman artist fulfill herself through creative activity, she brings into being a new type of creative human being. The feminine artist is the artist of the future.

In Cities, Nin is attempting to write the "novel of the future" about the "artist of the future". Awareness of psychology has changed the modern reader's consciousness, therefore, she reasons, novels must change, too. Since we are aware of a deeper, psychological reality below the surface of actions and appearances, Nin feels it is imperative for the novelist to express this reality. The urgency of this task is explained in a passage she quotes from Hans Wolfert's An Act of Love, in her Diary:

"A new conception of what is human reality is rising. A new conception of what is reality at all is rising. Dr. Freud and Dr. Einstein have opened no new world to the artist. But they have presented him, if he is a novelist, with the challenge of a new dimension. This

dimension is enlarging the consciousness of readers of fiction. Unless novelists learn how to deal with it, the novel will perish."(D VI, 148)

The means of articulating the truths below the surface is symbolism, the language of the unconscious, the "language of the hidden self"(D VI, 47). All of Nin's female characters learn this language, with varying degrees of success, and all are given a controlling symbol that expresses their innermost selves, and reveals something about each one as a creative woman. The cities of the interior through which each character voyages are symbolically like Venice in that the means of "transportation" through them is a boat. Djuna's symbol is the houseboat, the refuge for lovers and artists, afloat both in the Seine and in the waters of the unconscious. It is the artist's Noah's Ark -- a viable haven between land and water, conscious and unconscious, ordinary reality and the dream. It is the symbol of the creative synthesis of opposing forces. Lillian's symbol is the stranded "solar barque" that she sees in her recurring dream.³ It represents her everyday, awake, conscious self, which is alienated from the subconscious, and which is finally brought to float in its proper element when Lillian accepts and channels her own creative powers. Sabina, too, tries to make a symbolic, creative "sea voyage", but she remains "the voyager who can never reach termination as ordinary people reach peaceful terminals at the end of each day"(SHL, 91). The cape she always wears is her symbol. It is her sail, her precarious method of inward travelling, "a sail unfurled in full collision with the wind"(SHL, 8). It fails her, and she fails as an

³The original title of Seduction of the Minotaur was Solar Barque.

artist: "Her cape which was more than a cape, which was a sail, which was the feelings she threw to the four winds to be swelled and swept by the wind in motion, lay becalmed....For Sabina, to be becalmed meant to die"(SHL, 92). The cape is a complex symbol, since it is not only a "sail". It is the transforming costume of the actress, the disguise of the spy, the dramatic, flamboyant sign of the adventurer. It conceals and protects her, but it is also deceptive, and in the end it hides Sabina even from herself. She can only begin to perceive where her play-acting ends and her real feelings begin.

Nin uses symbols effectively, often brilliantly, but she sometimes lacks confidence in her reader's ability to interpret them, and adds her own analysis. For example, in the passage in Ladders, where Jay tells Lillian the story of leaving a piano out in the rain, it is fairly obvious why Lillian, as a pianist, and as a victim of Jay's indifference, takes the story personally and cannot laugh wholeheartedly at it. The piano is a symbol for herself. However, Nin explains the anecdote in more detail than is strictly necessary:

Jay's mockery wounded her, for it exposed his insensitiveness to anyone's loss, and to her loss too, his incapacity to feel for others, to understand that with the loss of her pianist self she had lost a very large part of herself, annihilated an entire portion of her personality, sacrificed it to him.

It was her piano Jay had left out in the rain, to be ruined.(LF, 64)

Nin says that "the writer must not translate symbolic images" because "we must all learn the language of symbolism"(D VI, 106) but she sometimes seems as intent on teaching that language as she is on using it.

Because Nin is so convinced of the importance of understanding symbolism, and of psychological insight, the novels sometimes become

didactic. The clearest example of this preaching is in Spy, when Djuna is trying to help Sabina, but the problem occurs in other places as well, usually when one character is giving another advice. For example, Dr. Hernandez tells Lillian:

You will never rest until you have discovered the familiar within the unfamiliar. You will go around as these tourists do searching for flavors which remind you of home, begging for Coca-Cola instead of tequila, cereal foods, instead of papaya. Then the drug will wear off. You will discover that barring a few divergences in skin tone, or mores, or language, you are still related to the same kind of person because it all comes from within you, you are the one fabricating the web. (SM, 19)

Perhaps this didactic note is inevitable in a work whose three underlying purposes are so serious and ambitious. Cities is an attempt to revolutionize the form of the novel, to re-educate the literary perceptions, and even the psyche of the modern reader, and to define new artistic and feminine prototypes. It is naive to think any novel can accomplish so much, especially in the area of helping people become more psychologically balanced and integrated, and more at ease with the unconscious, but Nin does have some success in all her goals, despite her moments of preaching. However, she is hardly the first to experiment with a novel form that concentrates on the psychological, inward lives of the characters, rather than on external events. She is perhaps unique in excluding so much of external reality, and carries this tendency to sometimes confusing extremes. The time sequence in Spy, for example, is difficult to keep in order. Scenes and descriptions repeat themselves. This happens partly because Sabina is unable to transcend previous experiences, and remains caught in the same patterns, but an

uninitiated reader could be excused for being somewhat hazy about literal times and places in Spy, and for that matter in Ladders and Children. Nin believes in proceeding from the dream outward, but she seems to work outward from her own psyche straight into the interior reality of her characters, without pausing very long at exterior reality. This difficulty is especially important since her whole system of thought is based on the idea that an artist must create a synthesis between the conflicting forces of interior and exterior reality. She has shown Djuna and Lillian arriving at such a synthesis, but she herself has not quite achieved it in Cities.

Perhaps some neglect of external details is inevitable, given Nin's intense faith in personal, individual creative effort. She feels that "practical problems are often solved by psychological liberation".⁴ This statement contains a great deal of truth, but it could lead to dismissal of any practical (i.e., political or scientific) solutions to practical problems. Creating a more liberated human being is an admirable goal, but while we are working towards it, we must still cope with external reality, with all its difficulties, as best we can, a fact which Nin does not exactly ignore, but certainly does not emphasize. Her belief that we could do without politics if everyone fulfilled his creative potential recurs all through her Diaries, but its Utopian quality is revealed in a short essay on feminism:

What of ghettos and poverty? A new kind of human being would not allow them to be born in the first place. It is the quality of human beings I want to see improved, because we already know that drugs, crime,

⁴Anais Nin, Essays, p. 28.

war, and injustice are not curable by a change of system. It is humanism which is lacking in our leaders. I do not want to see women follow in the same pattern.⁵

It is almost as if it is up to creative women to remedy the age-old ills of humankind. However, all this goes beyond the frame of reference of the feminine artist in Cities. The messianic quality of the creative woman is not stressed in the novels, only her potential to resolve and to create beauty and harmony out of confusion. The worst consequences in Cities of Nin's artistic and philosophical dislike of mundane, material detail are only a certain dream-like quality to the novels, and a hint of the ethereal in the characters. Neither of these effects can really be considered flaws; Nin wanted to concentrate on psychological conflicts and these are made more vivid and intense simply because the characters are at times slightly detached from material reality. This is not always true; there is some extremely sensual, even earthy writing in Cities, but at times the characters seem, not quite disembodied, but certainly not anchored to reassuring everyday realities. The effect is disturbing, deliberately so. The reader shares the characters' sensations of psychic vertigo and striving for balance.

Thus we can see that Nin has succeeded in the third of her objectives in Cities: creating a portrait of the modern feminine artist. In creating her three characters, she uses Rank's theories about the nature of the artist, but assimilates them into the novels, rather than merely imposing them on her characters. Sabina, Djuna, and Lillian are complex, believable, and interesting as people; they are not just illustrations of a theory. However, Nin is so intent on revealing the

⁵Anais Nin, Essays, p. 29.

feminine artist that she neglects a full portrayal, not only of the masculine artist, but of any male character. She acknowledges that most of the men in the novels are two-dimensional, but excuses this by saying that the female characters do not perceive them as they really are, and that the reader sees only what Sabina, Djuna, or Lillian sees. However, this reasoning does not completely account for the flatness of a character like Rango. Djuna is known for her perceptiveness and insight. We see Rango through her eyes, and even if she is a little blinded by love, it does not seem unreasonable to expect that he should at least be a convincing character. As it is, even his talent as a musician and his romantic "gypsy" image do not make him any more than a personification of some of the worst traits of "masculinity" (aggression, violence, indifference, domination of women, obsessive involvement in politics and refusal to acknowledge inner realities), combined with a certain weakness of character and inability to take charge of his own destiny. He does not change or develop, and is thus not a complete character in his own right; he is only a negative foil for Djuna. This criticism can be applied to almost all the male characters in Cities: they are straw men, unsympathetically treated.

Two possible exceptions are Jay and Dr. Hernandez. Jay is a little more complex and interesting than most of the male characters, with his omnivorous appetite for life and his exuberant, even violent paintings, yet he is not a particularly sympathetic character. His detachment reaches superhuman proportions, and ultimately he is simply someone for Lillian to escape from and avoid imitating. Dr. Hernandez, on the other hand, is more positive -- wise, unselfish, compassionate. We are given enough insight into his life and sorrows that he begins to

be real and alive to the reader, yet he, too, is a background character, not fully developed. He, too, is detached, not because of indifference, but because of his analytical wisdom that keeps him from participating fully in the life around him.

For Nin, the quality of detachment is a particularly masculine trait. At times, it seems as though the men in Cities possess all the negative characteristics and the women embody all the positive ones, in terms of art as well as in terms of personality. In Minotaur, artists of the past and present are compared, to the detriment of modern male "realists" such as Jay, who see ugliness in everything:

The artists of that time had placed their subject in a light which would forever entrance us, their love re-infected us. By the opposite process which he did not understand, but which he shared with many other artists of his time, [Jay] was conveying his inability to live. It was his hatred he was painting....

Jay avoided the moments of beauty in human beings. He stressed their analogies with animals. He added inert flesh, warts, oil to the hair, claws to the nails....He had divorced nature from beauty. Nature was neglect, unbuttoned clothes, uncombed hair, homeliness.(SM, 122-4)

By contrast, Lillian tends to find some beauty in everything, even an old hobo woman who sleeps in the streets of Paris (SM, 124). Her view is, of course, much closer to Nin's. Cities is an illustration of woman's validity as an artist, but because the men are so analytical, insensitive, and/or feeble, there is a hint that women may be, not only equal, but superior as creative human beings.

In a novel where the aim of the characters is resolution of conflict, synthesis between opposites, the polarities of "masculine" and "feminine" remain, to a certain degree, at odds with each other.

True, Djuna does manage to assimilate certain "masculine" qualities. Lillian does not deny her "masculine" forcefulness and assertiveness; she merely channels these qualities more constructively and allows her feminine qualities to develop as well. There is some interaction between masculine and feminine in the characters, but one is left with a final impression that it is the feminine traits (intuition, fluidity, responsiveness, contact with the subconscious) that are most important for the "new" artist and human being. Nin obviously believes in the inherent psychological differences between men and women. But she also feels that, in relationships and even within individuals it is possible to "integrate the differences".⁶ She does acknowledge that men and women are each "endowed with both masculine and feminine qualities"⁷, but in most of Cities, "masculine" and "feminine" are equated with "man" and "woman" respectively. There is no strong indication that a man could participate in the new kind of feminine art evolved by the heroines of Cities.

However, it has already been shown that the novel is an ambitious, multi-purposed work. To expect it to show the integration of masculine and feminine kinds of creativity as well as to illustrate the character of the feminine artist is perhaps asking too much. If any point is to be made emphatically, it must be overstated a little, and certain qualifiers must be left out. Nin has successfully made the point that women can, and for their own sakes must, be as creative as men, but they must create in their own way, without imitating and without

⁶Anais Nin, Essays, p. 53.

⁷Ibid, p. 47.

apology.

In making this point, she has created a continuous novel that shows both the strengths and weaknesses of "feminine" art. The fluidity of Cities verges occasionally on formlessness; it concentrates so intently on the dream that at times it threatens to sever contact with the solid physical world. But this is understandable, given Nin's repugnance for novels that are so intent on describing the sordid details, the chamber pots and cockroaches, that they never transcend the merely literal. To her it was always better to "leave out the details which weighed down the imagination and caused crash landings"(SM, 62). For Nin it is not the artist's business to dwell on the ugly details of existence but to "transform ugliness into beauty"(D IV, 241), and to create a bridge between knowing and feeling. The artist does not merely inform the reader of the literal reality of what he describes, he makes him perceive it a new way, and experiences it more fully. Cities not only reveals a new perspective on the feminine artist, it does so through writing that touches the senses and emotions, and symbols that echo through the subconscious mind. It fulfills one of the major roles of the artist, which is "to reveal the joy, the ecstasy"(SM, 118) inherent in experience.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Nin, Anais. Anais Nin Reader. Edited by Philip K. Jason. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973.
- Children of the Albatross. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1959.
- The Diary of Anais Nin, Volume 1. Edited by Gunther Stuhlman. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.
- The Diary of Anais Nin, Volume 6. Edited by Gunther Stuhlman. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976.
- The Four-Chambered Heart. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1955.
- In Favour of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976.
- The Journals of Anais Nin, Volume 2. Edited by Gunther Stuhlman. London: Quartet Books, 1974.
- The Journals of Anais Nin, Volume 3. Edited by Gunther Stuhlman. London: Quartet Books, 1974.
- The Journals of Anais Nin, Volume 4. Edited by Gunther Stuhlman. London: Quartet Books, 1974.
- Ladders to Fire. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1959.
- The Novel of the Future. New York: Macmillan, 1968.
- "Sabina". Chicago Review. Winter-Spring, 1962.
- Seduction of the Minotaur. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973.
- A Spy in the House of Love. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.

Secondary Sources

- Evans, Oliver. Anais Nin. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- Hinz, Evelyn J. The Mirror and the Garden. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971.

- Jones, Jack. "Otto Rank: A Forgotten Heresy". Commentary, Volume 30, September, 1960.
- Progoff, Ira. The Death and Rebirth of Psychology. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- Rank, Otto. The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings. Edited by Philip Freund. New York: Vintage (Random House), 1959.
- Trilling, Diana. "Anais Nin". The Nation. January, 1946.
- Zaller, Robert (editor) A Casebook on Anais Nin. New York: New American Library, 1974.