



Henry and June: From the Unexpurgated Diary of Anaïs Nin

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Drawn from the original, uncensored diaries of Anais Nin, Henry and June chronicles one year in Paris in the early 30's when Anais Nin met Henry Miller and his wife June, and the affair that ensued with HENRY WHEN JUNE LEFT FOR NEW YORK."

Henry and June: From the Unexpurgated Diary of Anaïs Nin Details

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From Reader Review Henry and June: From the Unexpurgated Diary of Anaïs Nin for online ebook

Kris Kipling says

Is Anaïs Nin a good writer? Ought we take her seriously? Apparently some do, but the description on the back of the Penguin edition about sums up this book, culled from the "unexpurgated" diaries of Ms. Nin during the period in which writer Henry Miller and his wife June Masefield figure large on her horizon: it is a "compelling account of a woman's sexual and emotional awakening." If you don't groan at that charmless phrase, variations of which are so thoughtlessly used to describe any risqué tome penned by a woman, you may enjoy "Henry and June" here. But what this really is, this diary, so obviously written with publication in mind (so much of it is flowery, "daring" and "conflicted"), is a record of one person's unchecked narcissism, the diary of a spoiled little rich girl and her self-created problems. No one comes off well in this - the husband is the world's most oblivious cuckold, the psychoanalyst a bit of a charlatan (surprise!) who secretly lusts for some Nin, the writer a would-be volcano who's disappointingly a kitten at heart, his wife surely a neurotic Fury who'll end up destroying everyone in the end, alas! - but the narrator comes off worst of all. She loves her husband Hugo, that bland boob, or... wait! she loves Miller, who she's sure will be a great literary genius or... no, maybe she hates Miller and loves her analyst, who can seemingly read her like a book, play her like a violin, or... no, it's June, Miller's wife, absent for most of the time in question, but always present as the object of Nin's lesbian dreams, who dominates all, all! Sigh. Whom she loves depends on the week, really, but most assuredly she loves Anaïs, and one's appreciation of the book depends on how much Anaïs one can stomach. I made it to the end after a stretch, but didn't feel very good about it.

Teresa Jusino says

How does one review published diaries? According to literary merit? Though Anaïs Nin is a beautiful, insightful writer, I feel strange talking about her "writing style" when discussing a section of her journal. What I will talk about instead is the way that books often come into your life at a time when you need them. It happened to me once with 1984 (when I needed to crystalize exactly why writing was so important to me), then again with Everything is Illuminated (when I needed to be encouraged back into writing after I'd stopped for a long time).

I was inspired to walk into a bookstore and purchase Henry and June a week or two ago, because I've been doing a lot of self-examination recently, and having heard a lot about Anaïs Nin I thought her journals would be the best thing to accompany me on the beginning of my journey. Originally, I'd wanted a full volume of her journals, but everything was sold out, so I ended up buying Henry and June...and since I'd never read her before, I thought it would be a good introduction.

I am so grateful that this book came into my life when it did. All I knew about Nin before reading it had to do with the sex she had. People love to sensationalize, and so when one hears the name, Anaïs Nin, one automatically thinks "sexual awakening", "deviance", "erotica." What amazed me was how much we had in common outside of that - the insecurities, the way in which we see men and the world, the positive and negative aspects of a Catholic upbringing, and most importantly: the ongoing battle between loving submission and intellectual assertiveness; how difficult it is to be a strong woman while still holding on to one's emotional vulnerability. I learned so much from her insights...and while I won't be having three or four lovers any time soon (heh), I appreciate the spirit of adventure with which she tried to live her life. It's

something I hope to emulate in my own way.

I cried (wept) as I read the last paragraph of Henry and June, because it magically captured exactly where I am at this moment in my life:

"Last night, I wept. I wept because the process by which I have become woman was painful. I wept because I was no longer a child with a child's blind faith. I wept because my eyes were opened to reality - to Henry's selfishness, June's love of power, my insatiable creativity which must concern itself with others and cannot be sufficient to itself. I wept because I could not believe anymore and I love to believe. I can still love passionately without believing. That means I love humanly. I wept because from now on I will weep less. I wept because I have lost my pain and I am not yet accustomed to its absence."

How did she know?

Molly says

Dear Anaïs,

You think too much. You need to act your age. Get a job. Honor your marriage vows or get a divorce.

You're like a teenager with a tattered, doodled spiral-bound notebook and a Starbucks prepaid account app.

Or like one of our modern day hipsters, a trustafarian thinking you're so edgy in your ragged velvet dress with the holes in the elbows, going against convention in dive cafés and being bicurious with the friend du jour.

You're not deep. Or avant-garde. You're just self-indulgent, inconstant, and annoying. You're not sucking the marrow out of life; you're just sucking.

Grow up. Get out in the world. Take on some responsibility. Then you'll have something real to write about.

Sincerely,

A Twenty-first Century Woman

Carmo says

O mundo de Anaïs Nin é um mundo de fantasia, sensualidade e erotismo.

Anaïs era uma figura frágil, física e psicologicamente. Carregava a sombra do abandono do pai, e isso perseguiu-a toda a vida. Procurava a figura paterna em homens mais velhos que a fizessem sentir-se amada e protegida.

Anaïs era insegura, não se sentia atraente aos olhos dos homens, mas sentia uma enorme curiosidade por novas experiências sexuais. Quando conheceu Henry e June, foi por esta que sentiu uma forte atração.

Quando June viajou aproximou-se de Henry, primeiro pela partilha da escrita, depois pelo homem. É com ele que passa de menina a mulher e perde todos os preconceitos e pudores. Rende-se à entrega para de seguida mergulhar na incerteza e no sofrimento.

Anaïs vivia tudo com uma intensidade exagerada. Amava o marido com ternura, Henry com paixão, de Eduardo tinha pena, por Fred nem sei o que sentia. Na verdade, sentia necessidade de provocar os homens e de se sentir admirada por eles. Alternava momentos de exaltação com outros de profundo sofrimento. Fez psicanálise mas acabou envolvida com o terapeuta.

Talvez não quisesse desistir de nenhum deles porque cada um à sua maneira a completava de alguma forma.

Mas era inconstante. Um dia amava Henry, outro dia não amava, tinha ciúmes de June, mas a seguir já amava June e tinha ciúmes de Henry, depois tinha raiva do marido mas logo de seguida tinha pena e virava a raiva para Henry...amava demais, e sofria demais.

Gostei da escrita delicada e emotiva, revela bem a mulher que Anaïs era, deixando escorrer das palavras paixão e dramatismo de forma intensa.

Kelly says

I've read "Delta of Venus" and "Little Birds", which I enjoyed, but until I read this I had not realized what an incredible writer Nin is. I also thought it was really interesting to see Henry Miller through her eyes... I have read Miller's "Tropic of Cancer", which I really enjoyed, which is very harsh and honest, but this sort of gives you a different perspective of him. I truly think she is a brilliant writer and am looking forward to reading more of her work.

Samir Rawas Sarayji says

Oh wow, what a tale this one is and what an amazing personality Anaïs Nin is. The writing is beautiful and her observations and descriptions are top notch. The only reason this gets 4 stars is due to the amount of repetition in the book. I know that this could be construed as unfair since it's a diary and this is probably the way events occurred, but it did get tiring after a while.

Marisa Fernandes says

Anaïs Nin era o que se pode chamar de uma mulher emocionalmente instável, inconstante e demasiado intensa, carente e insegura, mas ao mesmo tempo um espírito livre e curioso que, ao longo deste diário íntimo, se descobre e redescobre sob o ponto de vista sexual (e erótico), através das relações que mantém com vários homens (para além do marido) e também com uma mulher.

Henry & June são Henry Miller e a respectiva mulher June. Anaïs relacionar-se-à com ambos, sendo que estes têm, digamos assim, um papel central na obra, o que justifica o título. A relação com o escritor Henry Miller parece-me ser a mais marcante de todas, na verdade.

Se estão neste momento a pensar que este livro se trata de um diário marcadamente sexual desenganam-se porque também nos é dado a conhecer todo o enquadramento emocional de Anaïs, sobretudo em virtude das visitas que ela faz ao psicanalista e que são abordadas a partir de determinada altura na obra.

O diário mantém um fio condutor interessante e, a meu ver, constante (sem ser monótono), já que se foca marcadamente na intimidade de Anaïs e no turbilhão de emoções que a acompanham. E talvez por isso o estilo de escrita esteja longe de ser superficial...!

E sim gostei do que li. Tendo em atenção o tema, achei o livro bonito. Bem escrito. E em momento algum tive vontade de o deixar a meio...! Talvez também porque, de alguma forma, me revi na intensidade emocional (por vezes em demasia) com que Anaïs Nin vive tudo.

Khush says

This is the kind of book I love reading. I am delighted to find Anais Nin. She is extraordinary.

Her writing is brilliant or shall I say terrific. She writes short sentences packed with meaning. I trust her voice completely. There are no back thoughts. She is writing for herself. One can easily sense this in short, crisp and beautifully worded sentences. While reading this book, I also felt that this could easily be a novel.

At times, her writing, in certain parts of her journals, reminds me of D. H Lawrence, but soon her style, honesty, the eagerness to tell it all in clear and precise manner set her fiercely apart, not only from Lawrence but from others. She is just being Anais Nin. Just read this, the whole book carries this quality of description and keeps the reader firmly in her world.

"I have just been standing before the open window of my bedroom and I have breathed in deeply, all the sunshine, the snowdrops, the crocuses, the primroses, the crooning of the pigeons, the trills of the birds, the entire possessions of soft winds and cool smells, of frail colors and petal textured skies, the knotted grey-brown of old trees, the vertical shoots of young branches, the wet brown earth, the torn roots."

I suppose I need to read this book again. She explores relationships, sexuality and unconscious, and how all these unfold in her life and impact her. There is much in her journals in terms of sexuality that has most probably been later theorized by the modern-day theorists. For some vague reasons I could not help thinking of 'Gender Trouble' by Judith Butler; these journals show us what it means to be human in a world of rigidly defined categories— man, women, straight, gay, transgender. They all intersect. These categories trouble her because she could be so much more. The 'reality' of human life pushes her to be just one thing. The dreams, the unconscious have other designs, patterns, other 'realities' to offer, and she goes deep into them unafraid.

In her book, 'The Novel of the Future' she emphasizes the importance of dreams, of the unconscious and what lies in there. We must explore the unconscious, if we want to create. Just going after the 'real' or 'concrete' is to impede what really 'real' is, and only pursuing 'this real' has the potential to make us more alive, more conscious of what we do and who we are. The writing itself shows the reality of human life as ever flowing, ever mobile in sharp contrast to the school of 'realism' which she rejects to embrace and explore the 'real' thing.

I strongly recommend her. I am really keen on reading more of work.

Ana says

I can't get enough of her. She is such a complex woman, I identify with so much of her intellect, with her hunger for love and with her powerfully erotic self, every page I read I find something else that applies so well to my life in this moment, my relationships, that it scares me. Reading her diaries is a very personal experience for me.

LATER EDIT: I have very strong opinions on what a woman **should** be like, and I strive to live up to them. More than being a way in which I think the "world" should live, it's a way in which I want to live. Anais is part of one of my favorite literary power-couples (Henry-Anais, Heidegger-Hannah), and I identify with her passion for her relationship and with the strength of her own emotions, for how she feels desperately torn between her sensitive heart and her concrete-like intellect. I have fallen in love with her whilst reading what she has written about sex - how she discovered it and what it meant for her to be a powerfully erotic woman, more like an animal than a human being, following her instinct and instilling death-bearing passions in the men of her life. I discovered her when I was 18, and I believe that was just on time, as it gave me insight into who I wanted to be.

Her diaries show a very strong and intelligent woman, but they also show she was emotionally weak, dependent on men, desiring power and dominance outwardly, while secretly dealing with being sexually submissive. That is a very fine line to walk - and it takes a lot of introspection to be able to never mix the two. I am not just reading her diaries - I am studying them. You can live a much better life if you understand the mistakes of someone who was talented enough to put them on paper.

Marcie says

I love this book more than I can say. I read the entire book from cover to cover in my early twenties and recently have been slowly going back through it with a pencil (something I've never dared do to a book before).

It's not a book for everybody and I can totally understand why many people don't enjoy it. I certainly don't agree with everything Anais says or does, she definitely wallows in self-pity and self-righteousness, and she is frequently a walking contradiction to herself, but it is a journal after all and I kind of always thought that is what journals were for.

To me this book was/is completely, utterly, beautiful. Her word flow, creativity, and sensuality completely enthralled me. I loved reading her view of the world, I loved her ideas, and her many thoughtful questions. She had a very raw and open way of describing things that allowed me to relate to her pain, confusion, loneliness, frustrations, desires, and ultimate growth. She put things in to words for me that I've never been able to describe before. I've yet to read a better book about what it actually feels like to be in love with more than one person & the emotional conflicts that result.

Luís C. says

The fear of reality and its tearing

The writing of Anais Nin has an intoxicating force, it comes from a long daily practice, the keeping of his diary touches closer to his emotions and offers us an "authenticity" that does not have the fiction. She evokes the deception of literature: *"We read books and we expect life to be just as full of interest and intensity. And, of course, it is not."*

She analyzes with keenness, her search for total love, the passion in what she has of destruction and change, the suffering of jealousy, while revolting against the traditional vision of the couple. This "laboratory" of the senses, this revealer of the female body and its desires, precipitates in the "body" of the text a quest for

identity that upsets, even today, the attentive reader. *"The Journal is a product of my illness, it is perhaps an exaggeration, an accentuation. I'm talking about the relief that I feel while writing; but it is also, perhaps, a way of engraving pain in me, like a tattoo."*

It gives Henry the opportunity to be "whole", no longer split into a radiant writer on one side, and a man, with all his excesses and weaknesses, on the other. Is Anaïs a "demon"? A demiurge rather. Some passages are of a sensuality, a crudity, overflowing, yet she makes this admission: *"My words are not deep enough, barbaric enough. They hide, they hide. I will not know the rest until I have told my descent into the heart of a sensuality that was as dark, as beautiful, as wild as my moments of mystical creation were dazzling, ecstatic, exalted."*

Anaïs is a "sexual angel", an angel all the same. She is frightened, but also discovers imprisonment, loneliness in the very heart of her relationship with Hugo, the discovery that love is not enough, that she must now find in herself "all the rest", and that all that could germinate in her henceforth, outside and beyond this sequestration, could no longer stop growing. She looks for the deep love that will be able to reconcile her with her being, to free her totally, to allow her to finally be "at the height of life". From there, a surprising reversal takes place in his relationship with Henry who says in a letter: *"In the hands of any person, the newspaper can be considered as a mere refuge, as a flight from reality, a mirror of Narcissus, but Anaïs refuses to let him fall into this cliché "; "I am not happy, nor am I deeply unhappy; I feel a sort of sad melancholy that I have trouble explaining. I want you. If you leave me now, I'm lost."*

Kelly says

Henry and June is the type of journal that makes me want to highlight passage after passage...since journals so often have the types of personal reflections that are hard to achieve in pure fiction.

I did get bored with it fast, though. Maybe because after the first few instances of lust, jealousy, psychoanalysis, and then more lust, jealousy, and psychoanalysis, it was pretty much the same events and observations repeating themselves in different forms. But then again, journals aren't supposed to be designed to engage the reader—they're designed to be self-fulfilling. So it's kinda hard to complain about a journal from a reader's standpoint.

Which brings me to wonder something about these writings. Nin shared her journal with several people—actually, most of the men in her life who she writes about read her journal at some point, with her permission. So I'm curious about how honestly she really wrote, knowing it could potentially be read by her subjects. It seemed honest/raw, but do we tailor things to the eyes of those who will be reading it? The same way we might be inclined to structure fiction according to a workshop we're in, or which publisher we're aiming for?

Nin says at one point in her journal that she no longer wants to write about her husband because she can't do so honestly—that it's like writing about God. You exalt someone and create a distance between yourself and that person, not wanting to say anything bad about them for fear of being blasphemous. In this case, it seemed to be Nin being attentive to her husband's sensitivity and the tenderness she felt for him, even though her physical passion was found through Henry.

At one point in the journal her psychiatrist said to her: "You do not want weak men, but until they have become weak in your hands you are not satisfied." Though he tended to make annoying generalizations, I think he really nailed that one. I was wondering if her passions were so intense toward Henry only because she couldn't possess him completely. It seems so common, especially if you broaden it to everyday greed.

Because of her greed, Nin's husband also nailed it when he said this to her: "Beware of being trapped in your own imaginings. You instill sparks in others, you charge them with your illusions, and when they burst forth into illuminations, you are taken in."

Claudia Serbanescu says

La început am fost cel puțin sceptic în privința cărții, dar m-a cucerit pagină cu pagină. Poate fi citit ca jurnal, așa cum a fost scris de autoare, dar poate fi, la fel de bine, un roman erotic foarte reușit. Încleștările erotice dintre Anaïs și Henry sunt deosebit de explicit reproduse așa că ar putea ultragia priviri și minți prea inocente sau pudice. Unele fragmente ar putea topi zăpada iarna sau ar încinge soarele vara. :)

Oricum, Anaïs Nin pare să fi fost una dintre rarele femei care a descoperit în anii '30 niște trăsături erotice ce rămân încă un mister de nepătruns pentru cele mai multe femei contemporane. Multora poate li se vor părea dezechilibrate peripeziile protagonistei, dar eu cred că a fost doar o femeie care a reușit să-și elibereze sexualitatea de complexe, vinovății, prejudecăți, bariere psihologice, morale și religioase și să caute neobosit împlinirea feminității prin dragoste liberă de toate constrângerile.

Kata says

Anais Nin has been an idol of mine for a long time. There are few women of literary stature which I find relatable. As a young reader I cherished Judy Bloom. As an adult woman, I was thrilled to read Anais Nin. Intelligent, witty and sexually provocative.

I admire her supreme linguistic talent. Her writing, in whatever form, always maintains a powerful poetic lexicon. She made love most fervently when she held the pen in her hand. This excerpt from her personal journal is so very intimate, full with sexuality, but you feel her grace and delicate vulnerability. Something deeply personal left for us readers.

I also admire Nin because she was an uninhibited sexual being long before it was socially acceptable. Is it even acceptable today? "Sensuality is a secret power in my body, someday it will show, healthy and ample. Wait a while." Her thoughts and feelings are confident as she expresses herself, an empowering embodiment of feminism even by today's standards. Her confidence becomes emboldened with lovers.

Nin is the epitome of unbridled lust for life.

Loederkoningin says

It seems almost vulgar to hand out stars to a published journal, especially Nin's. As tends to be the case with journals; you cannot ever get enough of indulging in your own thoughts, dreams, fears and daily struggles for as long as you live. While your self-absorbed musings are, harshly enough, far less interesting for everyone else.

Nin wrote dozens of journals. *Henry and June* covers the ones in which she, in her early thirties, lived outside of Paris with her husband, Hugo, and felt unsatisfied with her life. Although Hugo, as a banker, could afford all the luxuries she wished for, she longed for excitement, self-exploration and sexual awakening. When she came across writer Henry Miller and, later, his wife June Mansfield, she was instantly drawn to the couple.

Nin's writings on her obsession with both Miller and Mansfield are, because of her intense emotions and exquisite writing, mostly a joy to read. *Henry and June* contains many big fat chunks of pure poetry. I found myself eagerly highlighting parts that I thought were moving. And kept falling in love with the way Nin, but Miller too, poured their thoughts into words. When Nin reads Miller from her own notes, she later writes down his response in her journal: *"I could only write like that, with imaginative intensity, because I had not lived out what I was writing about, that the living out kills the imagination and the intensity, as happens to him."* And when she, during their slightly awkward rendezvous, puts down in words how passionately she feels about Miller's wife: *"You are like me, wishing for a perfect moment, but nothing too long imagined can be perfect in a worldly way. Neither of us can say just the right thing. We are overwhelmed. Let us be overwhelmed."*

How I would have gushed about *Henry and June* as a teenager. But even now, despite Nin's self-indulgence and continued confused musings (which can become a bit tedious), the strength of words and how they can out-rival deeds in depth and intensity, is awe inspiring. I think Hugo realizes this when he states that he is afraid to lose Nin to Miller; *"for you fall in love with people's minds"*and that's exactly it! Of course she does, is there any other way?

Yet, for me as a reader, *Henry and June* also became a little tiresome after a while. While Nin tirelessly philosophizes about her affairs and keeps formulating similar answers to her own questions, and her affairs vaguely drag on and play out, her everyday concerns began to strike me as repetitive and dull (criticism that is by no means fair, since this is, after all, an actual journal and not a fancily plotted adventure romance). Although I admired and loved her poetic language, my own, probably more no-nonsense, approach to life sometimes clashed with hers. I therefore could never really relate to her, finding her overly dramatic and calculating. For example, after Mansfield and Nin fitted clothes together and Nin later, in a conversation with Miller, comments on how Mansfield liked her underwear, Miller replies: *"What comes to mind when you say this is how did June know that you wore such underclothing?"* I (Nin) said: *"Don't you think I am trying to make it all more innocent than it was, but at the same time, don't go so directly at ideas like that or you'll never quite get the truth."*

Couldn't she have, every now and then, simply replied something without that whiff of pretension? Something like: "A dirty mind is a joy forever Henry, but June and I just fitted clothes together the other day."

Still, secretly I'm glad that she did not.

Rachel says

Having first read this book at the age of 22, I have to say that my perspective on it 7 years later is dramatically different. I did not experience the profound liberation that I did when reading *Henry & June* the second time around. I once considered Nin to be a strong, sexually heroic figure, but now my opinion is that,

during this time of her life, she was mostly confused, self-destructive and pawned her behavior off on the idea of naivety. Don't get me wrong, I feel that the love she experienced for Henry Miller was beautiful, although unfortunately damaging to herself and to the people around her. I also feel that she was indeed naive and that many of her experiences were necessary for personal growth, but she was also fully aware of her behavior and the effects of it. Perhaps my 29 year old self is not able to relate to her thoughts, emotions & behaviors on the same level as my 22 year old self was as an effect of my own sexual experiences and life lessons learned from mistakes made. Hopefully this means I am less confused now than I was 7 years ago. (Side note: If it is true that our cells completely regenerate every 7 years, creating a new physical self, then this could be an epic moment for me.) I will always hold Nin in high regard and I still want to read the remaining volumes of her unexpurgated diaries to see how she progresses (or regresses). If anything, the unbelievably gorgeous tone of her writing is well worth the time spent reading.

Lis says

While reading this I was thinking that Anais is a narcissistic bitch, which I don't really necessarily hold against her. I'm sure it makes reading her journals more interesting than it would be otherwise. On one hand she comes off as so egotistical, spending the majority of her pages on how wonderful other people think she is. "Oh, you are so beautiful... you are so wonderful... I love you more than I could ever love another woman... you are everything to me..." So on and so forth. On the other hand, she is incredibly insecure. She even admits she is constantly striking poses. Considering there are no other hands, you see both sides of her are obsessed over the same thing: herself. I sense this even when she is raving about Henry and/or June.

She's cheating on her poor husband (who we are told worships her) with Henry (who we are also told worships her), and there are a few other men (who also worship her, of course), and she is so worried about her own feelings over all this that she nonchalantly professes how innocent she feels when writing about her infidelities, even while just a few feet away from her unsuspecting (or rather self-blinding) husband. She must be overestimating the promiscuity of others if she sill thinks she's got much more sexual awakening to do. But like I said, all this does help make her journals more interesting.

She is a good writer, though a bit dramatic and tends to over analyze things. She seems open, sincere and honest, but sometimes seems hindered because she does not know what she truly feels. Reading this I can't help but think I know women like her and this is a great introspective view of what drives them.

Gabrielle says

I can't remember the first time I read Nin's short stories; I was probably technically a bit too young for that kind of stuff (my mom left all her books laying around and did not really believe in hiding the R-rated material), but I also feel weirdly lucky I was exposed to her writing early because it clearly influenced my ideas about sex in (what I believe to be) a positive way. Her emphasis on sensuality, her honesty and frankness about the beautiful and complicated emotions that go with sex, the diversity of her characters, her female characters' enjoyment of their bodies; that kind of stuff is not usually what you are exposed to as a teenager, which is a shame. But more importantly, I learnt from Nin that sex is something you can write about shamelessly and beautifully, that you can make literature out of dirty stories and that is a wonderful thing! I'll always have a soft spot for her work.

But "Henry and June" is not fiction; its material lifted more or less directly from Nin's very detailed diaries, and documents the intense year of her life when she first met Henry Miller (whose work I have never read, and must now absolutely get to) and his wife June. Nin becomes fascinated with June at first, but quickly develops feelings for Henry as well, the whole situation turning quickly into a blend of obsession, intense physical desire, intellectual stimulation and search for personal identity. The two writers throw themselves into a passionate affair, while understanding perfectly that neither of them will leave their respective spouses. The affair eventually ended but they remained in touch for the rest of their lives, having left a long-lasting influence on each other.

Nin was psychoanalyzed when the science was still relatively new, and she was an insightful amateur analyst herself; she kept a meticulous and deeply introspective record of her life, spending a long time detailing her inner world and trying to understand it. In this book, she struggles with conflicting desires and ideas, tries to make sense of it all, with varying levels of success.

In Anaïs Nin, I have found something of a kindred spirit: a pervert* and an iconoclast, but also a feminist (yes, you read that right) who felt very strong - and deeply vulnerable at the same time, and who had a really hard time reconciling those parts of herself. That wonderful quote: "I, with a deeper instinct, choose a man who compels my strength, who makes enormous demands on me, who does not doubt my courage or my toughness, who does not believe me naive or innocent, who has the courage to treat me like a woman" perfectly captures how I felt in my search for a partner. I read that sentence and I wanted to scream: "This! This is what I looked for my whole life!", and eventually found in my husband. It felt like such a huge contradiction to be happy to "submit" to someone and still be assertive and living on my own terms; Anaïs clearly struggled with that conundrum - though I understand she never truly resolved it.

No, she is not perfect, not always likable, or even moral; the idea of all that lying and cheating actually grosses me out. I wouldn't want to hang out with someone that selfish and fickle. But it is a complete mistake and egregious simplification to reduce this book to simple erotica, or dismiss it because its author is not a very nice person, because there is a lot more going on there than smut. The honest attempt at untangling her feelings, reactions and at understanding herself are fascinating, the prose is absolutely stunning and to be honest, it makes me feel dreamy to read about people who had such strong bonds, intellectually and physically. Most people forget that the brain is where most of the arousal happens, after all...

It was also interesting to find what is clearly the seed of some of her short stories in the anecdotes she wrote in this journal. Anyone familiar with the "Little Birds" collection (<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>) will find a few sentences, a few events that very obviously inspired Nin's fiction later down the road.

5 stars for pure reading pleasure and for the entrancing journey in the mind of a very unique writer.

*I use the word pervert here for lack of a better one: I can't find a word that means "someone who shamelessly enjoys sex and refuses to be judged as a human being based on that aspect of themselves" and doesn't mean deviant or into alternative sex (whatever the fuck that means).

Hannah says

Holy. Crap. For lack of better words.

This book took me (what?) three months to finish? Maybe more? It all muddled together in one mess of hot emotions...and after having finished it just a moment ago, the only time between being me turning on the computer in a flustered rush and logging in. And I'm shocked I finished it even *that* quickly. I felt possessed in reading this, dominated and entirely taken over in Anaïs Nin and her life...a life which is certainly unlike others, to say the least.

Throughout this diary Anaïs Nin had three lovers and one husband (four lovers if you'd like to include June.) Yes, all at the same time. And while it mainly focuses on her violent and all-consuming relationship with Henry Miller, it also revolves around her fleeting love with her own husband, her experimental one with her psychologist, angry and often passionless escape of Eduardo, and her deep, connecting feelings to Henry's very own June. It reaches levels of intensity in her honesty of feelings and her own quickly shaping moods that I felt almost sickened while reading it...sick, hungry, desirous, and very much turning into a little Nin myself.

I had first become interested in this diary after becoming an ardent D.H. Lawrence fan and reading a bit of Henry Miller as well, admiring and marveling at his crude genius. When I learned of Anaïs Nin, I was at once excited at the thought of it. D.H. Lawrence greatly affected her as well as Henry Miller, and I could picture in my head the three of them, sitting in a close circle, enveloped in intimacy, speaking in hushed whispers of things us mortal minds could never fathom, but they so easily and brilliantly took on. They are sexual creatures like none other, each so different, and yet so similar that I feel one can only truly respect this diary if you have read, experienced, and loved all three of their writings.

Throughout reading this, I would often fling it away, pressing my hands to my temples, and cry out to whoever was near me to hear it: "I can't take this anymore...I'm quitting, I'm putting the book down. Yes, forever this time. She's crazy, she's mad. They all are--I can't do it..."

And moments later, I would be seen away, painfully reading through this, as though I wanted nothing more than to be at peace, relieved and finished. Though once I *did* finish, I wanted nothing more than to be in her world once more...to let her poetry sink into me like a nightmare and sweet dream all at once. She is not for everyone--I find that very, very few could appreciate her. And I'll say the same for Henry Miller and D.H. Lawrence, but I personally feel a certain liberation, an excitement and oozing feeling bordering on insanity upon reading from them. And that's what you're supposed to get from them--you're supposed to melt, drown with their own feeling, and thus creating your own. It's not enjoyable, it's not easy, and if you're willing to let yourself run wild into their world, then by all means...I beg of you, for from now and forever, I shall answer the question of "Whose your favorite writer?" with the certain answer of, "Lawrence, Nin, and Miller."

Floripiquita says

Muy interesante, aunque a veces sea un poco lento.
