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LP Recordings of Authors

The Legend of Anais Nin is true. There have been many fanciful distortions of her life and work, but the facts are even more interesting.

Her life has been divided between Europe and America. Her earliest childhood was spent in various parts of Europe until her arrival in the United States at the age of 11. She later returned to live in Paris with her husband, Ian Hugo, noted engraver and movie maker, until the war forced them to leave. She has lived and associated with all nationalities, types, cultural and intellectual levels. So it has been justly said that she is an international writer. Although it is interesting to note that she is of Spanish, Cuban, French and Danish descent, to ask what is her nationality or race is impertinent, for she defies categorization. She writes of the most universal subjects--human character and human relationships.

She won her first laurel for writing at the age of 12, when she was learning English in a public school. It was written by unearthing words from the dictionary with the enthusiasm of an explorer, and it won a prize. She had already learned to love writing, for she had started a diary, in French, on her trip to America with the hopes of luring

her estranged father here.

This diary is perhaps her most fabulous accomplishment, for it has been faithfully kept ever since and is a Proustian reflection of the times. She says that keeping it helped her discover certain basic elements essential to the vitality of writing--naturalness and spontaneity. To the diary she also attributes her ability to follow the inevitable pattern and to obtain a large panoramic view of character. Among the themes she has discussed in it are the artistic life of Paris, psychoanalysis, the transition from romanticism to realism, surrealism, woman in her relationship to the present-day world, etc.

Although she has many other interests, such as psychoanalysis (she studied with Otto Rank in Paris and later practiced for a year in New York under his control); dancing; decorating and costuming; she has found writing is her deepest interest--the others merely secondary activities, always to be integrated into the writings.

Anais Nin has said of writing: "The medium of the writer is the sensitivity of his eyes, ears, and heart... the richest source of creation is feeling followed by a vision of its meaning..."

Photo by Sunami



Anais Nin