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Diary (The Margellos World Republic Of Letters)



Synopsis

Just before the outbreak of World War II, young Witold Gombrowicz left his home in Poland and set sail for South America. In 1953, still living as an expatriate in Argentina, he began his Diary with one of literature's most memorable

openings: "Monday Me. Tuesday Me. Wednesday Me. Thursday Me." Gombrowicz's Diary grew to become a vast collection of essays, short notes, polemics, and confessions on myriad subjects ranging from political events to literature to the certainty of death. Not a traditional journal, Diary is instead the commentary of a brilliant and restless mind. Widely regarded as a masterpiece, this brilliant work compelled Gombrowicz's attention for a decade and a half until he penned his final entry in France, shortly before his death in 1969. Long out of print in English, Diary is now presented in a convenient single volume featuring a new preface by Rita Gombrowicz, the author's widow and literary executor. This edition also includes ten previously unpublished pages from the 1969 portion of the diary.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The retired literature professor who recommended the Diaries to me commented that they may be superior to any of Gombrowicz' fictional accomplishments. Certainly it's hard to imagine a novel or play of equal scope, or more provocative than these ruminations on culture, society, art, existence, and history, to name some principal themes. I confess I'm only halfway through Volume I and have found it so dense, provocative and wise that if the rest were total bilge I would consider it a

wonderful find. To call Gombrowicz' observations and reflections "ruminations" is to reflect their seeming off-handedness but not their cogency or profundity. I have encountered no other writer of equal penetration, eloquence or insight on these subjects; in fact, in my experience, no one writer has Gombrowicz' compass. One would have to tether together Santayana, George Steiner, William Irwin Thompson, Aldous Huxley, Ad Reinhardt, Wallace Stevens, Agnes Martin and any number of other diarists and intellectuals to create even a straw man for comparison. This is dense thought, beautifully expressed (even in what is supposedly a bad translation!), but never so abstract as to lose the personality of the author. I confess I've underlined or flagged three or four passages on practically every page, remarkable enthusiasm in a student but even moreso in a sixty-something artist like myself. Gombrowicz is equally effective describing his life in exile in Argentina, the Argentines, the cities and countryside, and sprinkles observations on the minutÃfÂ of his everyday life that are equally winning. When he reviews the work of a fellow Pole or discusses the literary politics of Polish exiles, his insights are accessible and worthwhile even to those of us a hemisphere and half-century away.

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