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The Development and use of Diaries

The inescapable duty to observe oneself: if someone else is observing me, naturally I have to observe myself too; if none observes me, I have to observe myself all the closer.

Franz Kafka, 7 November 1921

Key aims

- To outline the ways in which diary keeping has developed and key features of diaries.

Key objectives

- To define what a diary is.
 - To examine the development and evolution and consider the conditions underpinning the development of diary keeping.
 - To consider the publication of diaries and the different types of published diaries.
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Definition of diaries

A diary can be defined as a document created by an individual who has maintained a regular, personal and contemporaneous record. Thus the defining characteristics of diaries include:

- *Regularity* A diary is organised around a sequence of regular and dated entries over a period of time during which the diarist keeps or maintains the diary. These entries may be at fixed time intervals such as each day or linked to specific events.
- *Personal* The entries are made by an identifiable individual who controls access to the diary while he or she records it. The diarist may permit others to have access, and failure to destroy the diary indicates a tacit acceptance that others will access the diary.
- *Contemporaneous* The entries are made at the time or close enough to the time when events or activities occurred so that the record is not distorted by problems of recall.
- *A record* The entries record what an individual considers relevant and important and may include events, activities, interactions, impressions and feelings. The record usually takes the form of a time-structured written document, though with the development of technology it can also take the form of an audio or audiovisual recording.

The precise form of diaries varies. The simplest form is the log that contains a record of activities or events without including personal comments on such events. Such personal logs are similar to 'public' journals such as ships' log-books which are regular-entry books whose completion is 'a task, whether officially imposed or self-appointed, performed for its public usefulness' (Fothergill, 1974, p. 16). More complex diaries include not only a record of activities and/or events but also a personal commentary reflecting on roles, activities and relationships and even exploring personal feelings. The diarist may explicitly address different audiences. Elliott (1997, para. 2.2) suggests that diaries where the prime audience is the diarist should be classified as intimate journals, whereas diaries with a view to a wider audience and posterity should be classified as a memoir. Such a distinction is difficult to maintain. For example most of the entries which Gladstone, the Victorian politician, made in the diary which he kept for over 71 years were:

Lists of the persons written to, persons seen, places visited, meetings attended and works read. Once a week or rather more often, Gladstone added a sentence of comment about some individual, event or book, or his own reactions. More rarely he wrote a paragraph, usually of soul-searching. (Beales, 1982, p. 464)

The distinction between intimate journals and memoirs implies that it is possible to clearly discern the motivation of diarists. However it is difficult to make a clear differentiation between private or personal and public. MacFarlane suggests that the term 'diary' can be used for all personal documents which individuals produce about themselves, and uses the term:

as an all-embracing word [which] includes autobiographies. Often a 'diary' is nothing more than some personal observations scribbled in the margins of an almanack. (1970, p. 4)

The development of diaries

Diaries in their modern form developed in the early modern period in Europe. However there are texts which have some of the features of diaries that predate these by over 500 years.

Japanese 'diaries' and Anglo-Saxon Chronicles

The diary-like documents which predate the development of modern diaries in sixteenth century Europe were produced by literate elites, members of the Japanese Emperor's court and European monks in mediaeval monasteries.

JAPANESE 'DIARIES' By the tenth century courtiers at the Japanese Emperor's court had acquired sufficient expertise in writing to create a vernacular literature. Amongst the literature which has survived from this period are a number of so-called diaries, including Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book* (Morris, 1970) and Murasaki Shikibu's diary (Bowring, 1982).

Since the original documents no longer exist, the versions that survive were based on copies which in the case of Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book* date from the mid thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries (Morris, 1970, p. 12), and it is difficult to be certain about the original content, structure and purpose. Sei Shonagon recorded how in the year 994 the Emperor gave her a gift of paper which she used to record 'odd facts, stories from the past, and all sorts of other things' (1970, p. 11). In contrast, Murasaki's diary appeared to have been written as a record for a third person. Some sections had a letter-like form and there were also references to a third person.

Both texts contained accounts of events that can be clearly dated. In section 82 of the *Pillow Book* (dated to the tenth month of 995) Shonagon records the behaviour of the young Emperor Ichijo on his return from his first independent visit to a shrine dedicated to the god of war, Hachiman:

When the Emperor returned from his visit to Yawata, he halted his palanquin before reaching the Empress Dowager's gallery and sent a messenger to pay his respects. What could be more magnificent than to see so august a personage as His Majesty seated there in all his glory and honouring his mother in this way? At the sight tears came to my eyes and streamed down my face, ruining my make-up. How ugly I must have looked. (1970, p. 11)

THE SAXON CHRONICLES In Europe writing skills were developed amongst and monopolised by the clergy, especially scribes in monasteries. In England these scribes used calendars to maintain a record or chronicles. When Saxon monks in pre-conquest England had to plot the date of Easter, they produced booklets with a line or two for each year and these were filled with 'what might be considered significant events to the institution or locality in which the document was maintained' (Swanton, 2000, p. xi). For example in a surviving set of Easter

tables drawn at Canterbury Cathedral covering the years 988 to 1193 a scribe has recorded that in 1066 'Here King Edward passed away', and a later hand added 'and here William came' (2000, p. xiii).

In its essence the form resembles a diary whose entries were made year by year instead of day by day. It could serve as a repository of the simplest statements of fact, demanding of the compilers no more than a knowledge of writing and of the facts to be recorded, yet at the same time it offered ample scope for a writer who wished to give a detailed account of the events of his day and perhaps even to make his own comments upon them. (Hunter Blair, 1977, p. 352)

These records formed the basis of the Saxon Chronicles which have literary as well as historical interest. For example the victory of the Saxon King Athelstan over the combined Viking, British and Scottish armies was recorded in a poem in the entry for the year 937 in the Parker Chronicle.

In this year King Athelstan, lord of warriors,
Ring-giver of men, with his brother prince Edmund,
Won undying glory with the edges of swords,
In warfare around *Brunanburh*.
With their hammered blades, the sons of Edward,
Clove the shield-wall and hacked the linden bucklers,
As was instinctive in them, from their ancestry,
To defend their land, their treasures and their homes,
In frequent battle against each enemy. (1977, pp. 88–9)

SUMMARY Both the Japanese 'diaries' and the Saxon Chronicles lacked the full characteristics of modern diaries. Japanese diaries contained both personal accounts and reflections but lacked the clear time structure of modern diaries. While the Saxon Chronicles did form a regular record of contemporary events, they lacked the personal and intimate characteristic of diaries and it is not clear that they were kept contemporaneously.

Box 1.1 Characteristics of early Japanese diaries and Anglo-Saxon Chronicles		
	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon</i>
Regular, time structured	Possibly	Yes
Personal	Yes but possibly written for third person	No
Contemporaneous Record	Yes but reworked Yes, events and personal reflection	Yes but reworked Yes, events

Development of the diary form in the early modern period

Diaries emerged as a recognisable method of keeping personal records in the early modern period in sixteenth century Europe. In England the young Protestant King, Edward VI, kept a *Chronicle*. It appears that he began the *Chronicle* as an educational and formal exercise for his tutors when he was about 12 years 5 months. Within a year or so it became more personalised and informal in style and he maintained it till shortly before his premature death at the age of 15 (Jordan, 1966, pp. xvii–xviii). The *Chronicle* was a record of events and contained little commentary. For example on 2 May 1550 Edward VI recorded the first execution for heresy in the reign, Joan Bocher, an Anabaptist:

[May, 1550]

2. Joan Bocher, otherwise called Joan of Kent, was burned for holding that Christ was not incarnate of the Virgin Mary, being condemned the year before but kept in hope of conversion; and 30 of April the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Ely were to persuade her. But she withstood them and reviled the preacher that preached at her death. (Jordan, 1966, p. 28)

By the seventeenth century, diary keeping had become an established mechanism for keeping personal records and there was a rapid expansion of the form (MacFarlane, 1970, p. 5). An increasing number of diaries survive from these periods. The most famous were those kept by Samuel Pepys (whose main diary covers the period 1660 to 1669) and John Evelyn (covering his whole lifetime from 1620 to 1706). Diaries were also kept by Robert Hooke, the scientist and architect; John Ray, John Locke and Celia Fiennes, who recorded their travels; Anthony Wood, who recorded university events; John Milward and Anchitel Grey, who recorded parliamentary debates; and Ralph Josselin, who recorded the events of a village from the perspective of a Puritan parson (Latham, 1985, p. xxxv).

The development of diaries during this period was underpinned by technological and socio-economic changes. The technological changes included the widespread development of writing skills in vernacular languages and the production of ready-made almanacs. The socio-economic changes included the fragmentation of Christianity in Western Europe and the rise of Protestantism with its greater emphasis on individualism and the changes associated with the rise of capitalism.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS UNDERPINNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIARIES The main precondition for the development of diary keeping in the seventeenth century was improved access to writing. Prior to the development of modern technologies such as mass production of paper and writing implements such as pens and pencils, writing was a complex and expensive technology restricted to an elite who were specially selected and trained. The difference between the

language used for writing and the vernacular language used for everyday communication created an additional barrier to wider access to writing. In mediaeval Western Europe, the written language used by the Church and for international contact was Latin. Reading and writing were taught in schools associated with monasteries and cathedrals, some of which developed into universities (Janson, 2002, p. 168). The changes associated with the Reformation and the emergence of Protestantism in Northern Europe in the sixteenth century had a major impact on literacy. These new churches emphasised the importance of lay access to religious knowledge so that:

the clergy should preach the Christian faith in the languages spoken by the people, and that the central texts should be available in those languages. (2002, p. 168)

This stimulated a related technological development, printing, which was used to produce bibles and other religious texts in vernacular languages. This increased access to written texts in turn increased the opportunity and incentive to learn to read and write. Thus by the end of the sixteenth century writing was becoming an increasingly accessible skill.

An early by-product of the new printing technology was the publication of almanacs, annual calendars of events, which had spaces for individual annotation and facilitated diary keeping (Latham, 1985, p. xxxv). Such early diaries were often extensions of household accounts but also included observations of events or happenings that attracted the diarist's interest or curiosity. There was awareness that such records could be used as a method of systematic observation and learning. Francis Bacon in his *Essayes* emphasised the educational value of travel for young men and the role which a diary could play in maximising the learning opportunities of such travel by providing a systematic record of the diarist's observations. Bacon's *Essayes* evolved over a 30-year period in the early seventeenth century (1597–1625) and were intended to be a guide or 'conduct book' for civil or public business (Kiernan, 1985b, pp. xix–xx):

Travaile, in the younger Sort, is a Part of Education; In the Elder, a Part of Experience ... It is a strange Thing, that in Sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seene, but Sky and Sea, Men should make Diaries; But in *Land-Travaile*, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; As if Chance, were fitter to be registred, than Observation. Let Diaries, therefore, be brought into use. (italics in the original: Kiernan, 1985a, p. 56)

John Evelyn followed Bacon's advice and his diary was designed as a complete record of his life and the events he observed. His full *Kalendarium, My Journal &c* amounts to over half a million words. It covers his whole life from his birth on 30 October 1620 until 3 February 1706, just a few weeks before his death on 27 February (de la Bédoyère, 1994, p. 15). Evelyn's diary records contemporary events in England. In 1688 he records the invasion of William of Orange and the plight of James II:

November 8 I went to Lond: heard the newes of the Princes of Oranges being landed at Tor-bay, with a fleete of neere 700 saile, so dreadfull a sight passing through the Channell with so favorable a Wind, as our Navy could by no meanes intercept or molest them: This put the King & Court into greate Consternation, now employed in forming an Army to incounter their farther progresse. (1994, p. 357)

While Evelyn provided an account of events, his personality and opinions shine through.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS UNDERPINNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIARIES The development and popularity of diary keeping can also be linked to the socio-economic changes associated with the emergence of modern individualism based on the development of capitalism and Protestantism which, as Weber (1976) argued, were linked.

The evolution of individual identity is perhaps most evident in the artistic sphere in the late fifteenth century when artists began to challenge the control that patrons exerted over their work and claimed ownership over the intellectual content of their creativity. These moves culminated in the development of individual control of intellectual property in modern copyright legislation (Carter-Ruck et al., 1965, pp. 28–9). Albrecht Dürer, a North European artist, played an important role in developments. He maximised the commercial value of his work by using the newly developed printing technology to create saleable reproductions. To differentiate his work from others he created a distinctive personal identifier for each work. He developed his initials into a clearly definable mark, perhaps the first example of a commercial logo.

In 1520 and 1521 Dürer visited the Netherlands, mainly on a business trip. He wanted the new Holy Roman Emperor Charles to confirm his imperial pension, and while he was in Antwerp he wanted to sell his collections of woodcuts and engravings (Goris and Marlier, 1970, p. 8). During his visits, Dürer kept a diary. It was primarily a record of his receipts and expenses including his gambling (1970, p. 8). However he also recorded his reaction to the ‘men, artists, places, monuments and works of art he encountered in the Netherlands’ (1970, p. 9) including his reaction to the news that Martin Luther had been taken prisoner and his life threatened:

On Friday before Whitsunday in the year 1521, came tidings to me at Antwerp that Martin Luther had been so treacherously taken prisoner; for he trusted Emperor Charles, who had granted him his herald and imperial safe-conduct. But as soon as the herald had conveyed him to an unfriendly place near Eisenach he rode away, saying he no longer needed him. Straightway there appeared ten knights and they treacherously carried off the pious man, betrayed into their hands, a man enlightened by the Holy Ghost, a follower of the true Christian faith. And whether he yet lives I know not, or whether they have put him to death; if so, he has suffered for the truth of Christ and because he rebuked the unchristian Papacy, which strives with its heavy load of laws against the redemption of Christ. (1970, p. 90)

Protestantism, especially the development of North European Puritan sects, played a key role in the development of diaries. It stimulated the development of vernacular writing, and provided an incentive for using diaries to record and reflect upon personal actions and activities. Puritans emphasised the importance of the direct relationship between the individual and God. Pollock noted that Puritans had an 'inexorable drive to put their thoughts to paper as a means of cultivating the holy life by techniques of self-examination and self-revelation' (1983, p. 70). Documents such as diaries formed an important part of this self-examination:

The diary-keeping that is so significant a symptom of the new type of character may be viewed as a kind of inner time-and-motion study by which the individual records and judges his output day by day. It is evidence of the separation between the behaving and scrutinizing self. (Reisman, cited in MacFarlane, 1970, p. 5)

Tomalin identified the influence of religious factors when discussing the reasons why Samuel Pepys kept a diary:

At Cambridge puritan divines ... recommended Christian diary-keeping as a valuable exercise, a form of moral accounting that encouraged the individual to watch and discipline himself. John Beadle's *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian*, published in 1656, also approved the keeping of a diary and suggested it should include public events and private experience. (2002, p. 81)

Pepys's diary reflected his Puritan education. He used his diary to confess his sins. He used a shorthand system, which he probably learned as an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge (Latham, 1985, p. xiv). This protection meant that Pepys felt confident enough to use his diary to candidly examine his own motives, emotions and lusts. For example on 24 September 1663 he recorded an illicit liaison with a Mrs Lane in Deptford, making the following entry in this diary:

After being tired of her [Mrs Lane's] company, I landed her at Whitehall and so home and at my office writing letters, till 12 at night almost; and then home to supper and bed and there find my poor wife hard at work, which grieved my heart to see that I should abuse so good a wretch, and that it is just with God to make her bad to me for my wronging of her; but I do resolve never to do the like again. So to bed. (Latham, 1985, p. 311)

Pepys was a self-made man who acquired his wealth and status, at least in part, through his own skill and judgement. Pepys's public career was closely linked to the Restoration monarchy, as is his diary. He started his diary in 1660 when he accompanied his patron Lord Sandwich to the Continent to escort the restored monarch, Charles II, back to England, and stopped in 1669 following his unfounded fear that writing a diary was making him blind. While Pepys's diary is 'primarily a personal journal, [it] was designed also as a chronicle of

public affairs' (Latham and Matthews, 1970a, p. cxv). He recorded his own role in such affairs and also used this record as a resource to protect himself from inevitable political attack (Latham, 1985, p. xxxiii) and to publicly claim credit for his role in state affairs. While his diary remained private in his lifetime, he used it when defending his actions before Parliament and in preparing his *Memoires Relating to the State of the Royal Navy* which were published in 1690 and outlined his role in the development of the Navy.

Box 1.2 The preconditions for the development of diaries in the early modern period

Technology

- Written version of the vernacular language
- Paper preferably bound in books or almanacks
- Writing equipment – ink, pens/brushes

Skills

- Schools providing training in writing
- Individuals with the skills, equipment, time and opportunity to keep a private record

Motivation

- Perceived benefits (spiritual/personal, financial, political, social) of keeping a private record
- Means of ensuring the diary is not used to discredit the diary keeper, i.e. personal privacy and security

Development of the diary form

Diary keeping in sixteenth and seventeenth century England developed in a very distinctive social and religious environment that influenced both the motivations for keeping diaries and the forms of diaries. By the nineteenth century diary keeping had become a 'conventional habit amongst persons of culture' (Fothergill, 1974, p. 34):

Faithfully and earnestly penned by hosts of respectable people – ladies and travellers, intellectuals and politicians, clergymen and soldiers, and the Queen – these diaries contain an enormously detailed picture of life within the Victorian social fabric, and reflect contemporary attitudes and values with great fidelity. (1974, p. 34)

These diaries exhibited growing literary self-consciousness as diarists became increasingly aware of the possibility of publication. For example Barbellion

(1919) maintained a diary from 1903 which appears to end with a note on 31 December 1917 recording the diarist's death. Barbellion described his struggle to develop a career as a biologist despite ill-health. However, as Fothergill noted, Barbellion actually prepared the diary for publication before his death in 1919 and intended it be 'an epoch-making work of fearless self-revelation' (1974, p. 35).

This increased self-consciousness is related to surveillance of the self both by the diarist and by others. The prime motivation of the self-surveillance in early diaries is religious; however, with the secularisation of society and the development of psychoanalytical theory, diaries can be used to understand and manage the self. For example Graham Greene, the twentieth century novelist, following his psychoanalysis as a young man recorded his dreams in his diary to monitor his unconscious mind. Anaïs Nin, a novelist who also trained as a psychoanalyst, kept a diary which has been described as a 'record of a modern woman writer's journey of self-discovery' (Stuhlmann, 1974, rear cover). In her entry for the month of April 1935 she described her decision to choose the role and identity of a novelist rather than a psychoanalyst:

There was a meeting of psychoanalysts, and there were seven of us in the train going to Long Beach ... It was that day, at a dinner, with a tag on my shoulder, that I discovered I did not belong to the world of psychoanalysis. My game was always exposed. At the door there is always a ticket collector asking: 'Is it real? Are you real? Are you a psychoanalyst?' They always know I am a fraud. They do not take me in ... I was not a scientist. I was seeking a form of life which was continuous like a symphony. The key word was the sea ... I could not hear the discussion. I was listening for the sea's roar and pulse. It was that day I realized that I was a writer, and only a writer, a writer and not a psychoanalyst. (1974, pp. 45-6)

The role of the diary as a mechanism for surveillance is evident in twentieth century diary keeping, especially in the 'reflective journal'. In human services reflective journals have become one way of monitoring and enhancing the personal development and performance of professionals, especially in initial training programmes. As Bain and his colleagues (1999, p. 52) have noted journal writing is a recognised way of teaching in counselling, psychology, nursing, management, leadership and teaching. Wellard and Bethune (1996, p. 1077) suggested that reflective journal writing has become the road to the Holy Grail in nurse education. Riley-Doucet and Wilson (1997) gave a description of reflective journals used in their nurse education programme and made it clear that such journals have all the defining characteristics of diaries:

All students are asked to keep a journal of their clinical experiences with daily entries throughout the academic semester. The journal is the private property of the student. The student is not required to show the journal to the nursing educator, although this is certainly offered as a means of gaining feedback from the educator regarding their acquisition of critical thinking skills. It is essential that the student is given the option of keeping

their journal private and confidential, so that the journal becomes a safe place for self-disclosure and self-reflection. (1997, p. 965)

While Riley-Doucet and Wilson stressed the self-surveillance role of reflective journals, it is clear from their accounts that such journals were incorporated into broader surveillance. The journals not only formed part of peer group discussion but were also used in the formal evaluation process (1997, p. 965), creating a power imbalance between educator and trainee professional (Wellard and Bethune, 1996). While the use of diaries as a mechanism of surveillance may be seen as relatively benign in this context, in totalitarian states it is more sinister. Sun Yushun, who grew up in Mao's China, described how she kept a diary which recorded her use of Mao's *Little Red Book* and how she read out sections of her diary in class. For example when she was 10 she read out the following entry:

Our great leader, teacher and helmsman Chairman Mao said that unity was paramount: without it, there would have been no victory for the Communist Party. But I fought with my brother today. If I could not even unite with him, how could I do so with all the people in the motherland? If people do not unite, how are we going to realise the goal of communism, paradise on earth? Must read more of Chairman Mao's works, listen to him more attentively, and be his good child. (Yushun, 2003, p. 6)

In the twentieth century new forms of technology created new opportunities for diary keeping. For example relatively inexpensive audio and video recorders have provided the opportunity for audio and video diaries. Ellen MacArthur, during her record-breaking solo round-the-world sailing voyage, recorded audio and video reports which were posted on a website (MacArthur, 2005). The proliferation of technology for recording and communicating sound and image has created the opportunity for mixed media diary. Lynn Redgrave, a British actress, when she was diagnosed as having breast cancer, decided to collaborate with her daughter on a project to record her treatment and recovery. Lynn kept a written record and her daughter, Annabel Clark, a photographic record which they used to produce a journal combining visual images and text, extracts from which were published in a British weekend colour supplement (Redgrave and Clark, 2004). In the extract the final photograph of Lynn Redgrave after her operation is accompanied by the following text describing why she had decided not to have breast reconstruction:

Monday, August 11 [2003]

I had this vision of altering oneself – cutting oneself, not worthy, not beautiful unless ... and I'm thinking, as I sit on my porch with candles and wine – no. My lesson to learn through my long-ago eating disorder, through my cancer, my acting, my life, my loss of youth, my lesson is that the essential core of me is right here – unadorned, single breasted – that's a way to look at it. (2004, p. 20)

The World Wide Web has created a major opportunity for diary keeping. Individuals can record their everyday life and post it on the web. There are a number of websites providing access to 'diaper diaries' recording the experience of bringing up babies (Brown, 2005; Armstrong, 2005) and 'blogs' or weblogs. McClellan (2005) described the University of Warwick Blog project which encouraged students to write online journals or weblogs; the website (<http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk>) hosted over 3,000 weblogs.

COMMENT While the early diarists established many of the features and conventions of diary writing, the development of the form reflects changing social context. While the form and context of each diary reflects the specific purpose and motivation of its diarist, it is possible to identify trends, especially the development of increased literary self-awareness reflecting greater awareness of the opportunities for publication. In this context the distinction between a diary and an autobiography is blurred. As diaries are increasingly published or 'made public', so it is possible to identify a surveillance function. The development of an interest in and concern with the development of the self and personal identity that is evident in psychoanalysis can also be found in diaries. They can be used as a mechanism for self-surveillance and for external surveillance and shaping of the developing person as in reflective journal and reflective practice. In modern society an individual's social standing and identity are relatively flexible and fluid and need to be created and protected. Diaries provide one way of creating and protecting such standing and identity.

Box 1.3 Development of the diary form

Technology

- Development of new forms of recording technology, including photography, audio and video recording
- Development of new forms of communication including radio, television and the internet

Access to resources

- In most developed countries, high levels of literacy and relatively low cost of traditional diaries and increasing access to audio and video recording equipment
- Increased personal security
- Increased openness of communication media such as newspapers and internet

Pressures and motivation

- External scrutiny and surveillance
- Increased awareness of self and need to develop and account for self

Publication: diaries and autobiography

While the diary as an individual mechanism for recording and commenting on events and activities became popular in the seventeenth century, public access to diaries did not develop until the nineteenth century when publishers recognised a market for such personal records. For example William Upcott discovered Evelyn's diary during a social call to the widow of the diarist's great-great-grandson and subsequently published it in 1818 (de la Bédoyère, 1994, p. 16). This stimulated moves to transcribe and publish Pepys's diary and the first edited version was published in 1825 (Latham and Matthews, 1970b, pp. lxxiv–lxxxiii). The process of publication can change the status of a diary from a private personal record to a publicly available document or biography. In this section I will explore some types of published diaries.

The diary as a record of facts

The expansion of European power in the sixteenth century was linked to increased knowledge and control of both the physical and the social world. It was associated with both factual and fictional accounts of voyages of discovery (Howell, 2002). By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries public interest in the major scientific discoveries created a market for accounts of such voyages. Captain James Cook's and Charles Darwin's journals provided accounts of their voyages of discovery.

Captain Cook was commissioned to undertake three voyages to the Pacific between 1768 and 1780. The stated aim of the first voyage was to undertake observations of the transit of Venus on 3 June 1769 on behalf of the Royal Society, an important English association of scientists, so that an accurate assessment could be made of the distance from the earth to the sun. Cook also had secret instructions from the British Admiralty to look for and explore the lands that lay to the south of the observation point (Beaglehole, 1988a, pp. cix–cxi and cclxxii). Not only did Cook maintain a journal of all three voyages but other members of his crew also kept diaries. One incident in the journals has attracted particular interest: Cook's death in Hawaii on Sunday 14 February 1779. It seems to epitomise the conflict and mutual misunderstanding between expanding European imperialism and the traditional cultures which it affected. Samwell's journal included the following entry, a graphic account of Cook's death:

Captain Cook was now the only Man on the Rock, he was seen walking down towards the Pinnacle, holding his left hand against the Back of his head to guard it from the Stones & carrying his Musket under the other Arm. An Indian came running behind him, stopping once or twice as he advanced, as if he was afraid that he should turn round, then taking him unaware he sprung to him, knocked him on the back of his head with a large Club taken out of a fence, & instantly fled with the greatest precipitation; the blow made Captain Cook stagger two or three paces, he then fell on his hand & one knee & dropped his Musket, as he was rising another Indian came running to him & before he could

recover himself from the Fall drew out an iron Dagger he concealed under his feathered Cloak & struck it with all his force into the back of his Neck, which made Capt. Cook tumble into the Water in a kind of a bite by the side of the rock where the water is about knee deep; here he was followed by a croud of people who endeavoured to keep him under water, but struggling very strong with them he got his head up & looking towards the Pinnacle which was not above a boat hook's Length from him waved his hands to them for Assistance, which it seems it was not in their Power to give. The Indians got him under water again but he disengaged himself & got his head up once more & not being able to swim he endeavoured to scramble on the Rock, when a fellow gave him a blow on the head with a large Club and he was seen alive no more. They now kept him under water, one man sat on his Shoulders & beat his head with a stone while others beat him with Clubs & Stones, they then hauled him up dead where they stuck him with their Daggers, dashed his head against the rock and beat him with Clubs and Stones, taking a Savage pleasure in using every barbarity to the dead body. (Beaglehole, 1988b, p. 1198)

Cook's mapping of the Pacific was continued by various ships of the British Navy including HMS *Beagle* which was commissioned to complete a survey of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. The *Beagle* set sail in 1826 to survey the shores of Chile, Peru and some islands in the Pacific including the Galapagos Islands. The expedition included a 'scientific person', Charles Darwin. In 1845 Darwin published 'in the form of a Journal, a history of our voyage, and a sketch of those observations in Natural History and Geology, which I think will possess some interest to the general reader' (1888, p. v). The journal anticipated Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1951) in which he fully and explicitly expounded his theory of evolution. In his entry for 8 October 1835 Darwin wrote an extended commentary on the natural history of the Galapagos and commented on the ways in which one bird species had evolved on the islands to fill different ecological niches:

Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, *one species had been taken and modified for different ends.* (italics added: 1888, p. 380)

Such scientific journals purported to record facts whose significance could be subsequently evaluated. In the case of Cook's voyage the value of the facts was both strategic and scientific. All the men keeping diaries aboard had to hand in their diaries to the captain at the end of the voyage and were enjoined to secrecy over their discoveries (Beaglehole, 1988b, p. 1295).

The memoir: creating a record for posterity

Monarchs, statesmen and politicians like to construct monuments which highlight their achievements. While Roman Emperors built monuments – for example, the Emperor Trajan built a column highlighting his triumphs – in contemporary society such monuments often take the form of written accounts

or memoirs. Politicians have used diaries to provide immediacy and authenticity to such accounts.

In the United Kingdom, the first politician known to keep a diary with a view to publication was Hugh Dalton, a senior minister in the 1945–51 Labour government. Pimlott (2002) has suggested that Dalton wrote his diary for personal enjoyment rather than for financial rewards. Pimlott notes the ways in which Dalton recorded and commented on his colleagues in the British Labour Party:

When his diaries were published in 1952, Herbert Morrison happened to be dining with Jim Callaghan and his wife, and found a copy in the loo. 'I didn't know the bugger kept a diary like that,' growled the former foreign secretary as he emerged. Callaghan promptly reported the remark to his friend Dalton – who gleefully recorded it in his still-continuing diary. (2002, p. 2)

The 1960s Labour Cabinet included three diarists, Tony Benn, Barbara Castle and Richard Crossman. Crossman died in 1974 and the second and third volumes of his diaries were published posthumously; Janet Morgan had to complete the editorial work. Crossman dictated his diary while the 'memory was still hot' and then prepared the published version (Morgan, 1997, p. 9) in which he recorded events and his feelings about them. The first entry in this diary recorded his first visit to his new ministry:

Monday, April 22nd [1968]

I made my first visit to the collection of huge modern glass blocks that was custom-built for the Ministry of Health at the Elephant and Castle. It is on a ghastly site and Kenneth Robinson [previous minister] told me they chose it for its cheapness. It cost only half as much as normal sites for government buildings but a great deal of the money they saved is now being spent on air-conditioning and double-glazing because the building stands right on top of an under-ground railway which makes the most dreadful din. It's also appallingly inconvenient ... It was hoped that one effect of planking [*sic*] the building down there would be to improve the area and attract other government buildings. It hasn't happened and the Ministry stands isolated and terrible. (Crossman, 1977, p. 17)

Since the memoir-diary form was first used in the 1940s, it has become increasingly popular and profitable. Individual politicians supported by editors can rapidly produce accounts of and commentaries on events and cast themselves as neutral independent observers who are giving readers a privileged access to decisions or events as they happen.

Bearing witness: the diary as a personal testimony of suffering

While public figures and celebrities with a media profile use diaries to 'record' their role and response to public and private affairs, diaries can be used by

individuals to record or even bear witness to events, especially those involving personal or collective suffering. The Second World War and the Holocaust involved intensive suffering and Anne Frank's diary has become particularly well known. Anne was a young Jewish girl who lived in Amsterdam. She started her first diary on 12 June 1942 and recorded events of her everyday life, for example her opinions of other pupils in her class at her Jewish school. However when her father was 'called up' on 8 July 1942 by the German authorities, a euphemism for being sent to the concentration camps, she and her family went into hiding (A. Frank, 1997, p. 19) and her diaries recorded the pressures of her exceptional life in hiding. As her diary moved towards its close, the family were taken into custody by the Nazi authorities on 4 August 1944 and sent to concentration camps where Anne died in a typhoid epidemic (O. Frank, 1997b, pp. 338–9). Just before her arrest, Anne wrote to her fiction friend in her diary commenting poignantly on her situation (A. Frank, 1997, p. 330):

SATURDAY 15 JULY 1944

Dearest Kitty,

It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realize them!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Many recent diaries bear witness to more personal events and experiences such as the impact of illness. Robert McCrum, a journalist, experienced a stroke when he was 42 and both he and his wife kept diaries recording their experiences. He used these diaries to produce an account of the consequences of his stroke. In his book McCrum provided graphic examples of the practical problems he encountered when trying to reconstruct his life and the support he received from his wife. Shortly after his stroke, which happened on the night of 28–29 July 1995, McCrum recorded in his diary some of his practical difficulties and the support he was receiving from his wife:

[Monday 7 August 1995]

I shave sitting in the bath, looking at my reflection in the bath taps. I have not seen my face in a mirror since I fell ill, and I'm frightened at what I might find. (In fact, apart from a slightly drooping left side to my face and an expression of great sadness, I find that I am not a freak.) Afterwards I clean my teeth one-handed with considerable difficulty (*it's surprisingly hard to unscrew a tube of toothpaste one-handed*) and get given fresh clothes. Then I am wheeled back to my room. Now I am sitting in a chair with my headache and Sarah is on

the phone. Sarah seems to have understood my condition very well, and is tremendously organised. She is being quite amazing. (McCrum, 1998, p. 75, emphasis added)

McCrum provided extracts from his wife's diary which indicated that while she was supporting and reassuring him, the stroke was having a major impact on her life and she was experiencing anxiety and fear:

SARAH'S DIARY: SUNDAY 6 AUGUST

I feel so very sad and scared. R. making progress but he is so depressed and so unable to try – the smallest thing tires him out – it's as if he doesn't care. I worry, I worry, that this has changed him, that he is not the same man. We went into the Square, him in a wheelchair, today, and my heart just about broke. What are we going to do? I don't know who he is, who I am, what we've gotten ourselves into. I feel that I have no one in the world to lean on, no one to help me. What if it never gets any better? What will I do then? If I keep his spirits up, I wonder, will I actually be able to do something for him, or is it just hopeless? I feel bone tired and not up to it, and so very, very frightened. (1998, p. 75)

Diaries such as Anne Frank's and Robert and Sarah McCrum's bear witness to suffering. The diarists, or in the case of Anne Frank, her father Otto, were willing to publish these diaries and make their contents public to provide insight into and understanding of the personal consequences of an event such as the Holocaust.

The artistic journal

Given the skills which writers display in producing fiction, it is hardly surprising that they should use these skills in recording and commenting on their everyday life and the ways in which they produce their fiction. Some writers have seen their diaries as a purely personal record and have ensured their destruction. Philip Larkin, the English poet, wrote over 30 volumes of his diary which were shredded shortly after his death (Motion, 1993, p. 522). However such destruction appears to be the exception and writers' diaries form a substantial body of literature in their own right.

Virginia Woolf, a major twentieth century writer, kept a diary for most of her life and the publication of her diaries provided a record of her struggles to write. The final published volume of her diary covered the last five years of her life and started with her struggles to complete one of her major works, *The Years*, and ended four days before she drowned herself on 28 March 1941. In her diary Virginia Woolf documented her continued struggles against depression and her feeling about the war. For example on Sunday 26 January 1941 she outlined how she responded to the rejection of a story by a magazine and the political situation:

This trough of despair shall not, I swear, engulf me ... Sleep & slackness; musing; reading; cooking; cycling; oh & a good hard rather rocky book – viz: Herbert Fisher. This is my

prescription ... There's a lull in the war. 6 nights without raids. But Garvin says the greatest struggle is about to come – say in 3 weeks – & every man, woman dog cat even weevil must girt their arms, their faith – & so on.

It's the cold hour, this, before the lights go up. A few snowdrops in the garden. Yes, I was thinking: we live without future. That's what's queer, with our noses pressed to a closed door. Now to write, with a new nib, to Enid Jones. (Olivier Bell, 1984, p. 17)

The Czech writer Franz Kafka also kept a diary. This was very much a sketch-book in which he recorded his thoughts and ideas. Indeed the link between his diary and his other fictional work is so strong that his diaries are included as part of a compendium of his work. Like Virginia Woolf, Kafka recorded his personal struggles. In his case these included tensions over his Jewish identity and the challenges to his mental wellbeing (Kafka, 1976, p. 849).

Artists' diaries can be treated both as a record of the creative process and as a product of the creative process having the same status as their other writing. It is therefore hardly surprising that there should be blurring between fact and fiction, with some writers using the diary as a fictional form. As the introduction to Kafka's collected work noted: 'In Kafka the autobiographical and the fictional are so intertwined that it is futile to try to unravel them' (1976, p. xi).

The diary as fiction

The narrative structure of the diary provides a 'natural' form which can be used for narrator-centred fiction and was extensively exploited by Daniel Defoe in the early seventeenth century. Three of his major works exploited the form: *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) (Backsheider, 1992), *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720) (Boulton, 1991) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (Shinagel, 1994). The original title page of each work clearly signals Defoe's narrative form, for example:

A JOURNAL OF THE **Plague Year**: Being Observations or Memorials, Of the most remarkable OCCURRENCES, As well PUBLICK as PRIVATE, Which happened in LONDON During the last GREAT VISITATION In 1665. Written by a CITIZEN who continued all the while in *London*. Never made publick before. (Backsheider, 1992, p. 3)

Gogol, a Russian writer, also used the form in his *Diary of a Madman* first published in 1834. In the diary Gogol chronicled the increasing delusions of his diarist and especially his diarist's conviction that he was the King of Spain. The 'diarist' exhibited his madness and his 'rational' irrationality in the following entry:

No date: The day didn't have one

I walked incognito down Nevsky Avenue [St Petersburg]. His Imperial Majesty drove past. Every single person doffed his hat, and I followed suit. However, I didn't let out that I was the King of Spain. I considered it improper to reveal my true identity right there in the middle of the crowd, because according to etiquette, I ought first to be presented at court. So far, the only thing that had stopped me was not having any royal clothes. If only I could get hold of a cloak. (Gogol, 1972, p. 36)

Although Defoe's and Gogol's writing are clearly fictional, commentators linked them to historical research. For example a critical edition of Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* included other plague narratives as well as Foucault's sociological analysis of surveillance and the 'panopticon' as a response to plague (Backsheider, 1992, pp. 244–50). In an article in the *British Medical Journal*, Altschuler argued that Gogol's fictional work is 'one of the oldest and most complete descriptions of schizophrenia' (2001, p. 1475).

Comment

Publication changes the status and nature of diaries. The 'original diary' has to be prepared for publication. Anne Frank rewrote her diary in response to a radio broadcast from Gerrit Bolkestein, a member of the Dutch government in exile who asked for letters and diaries so that he could collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering imposed on the Netherlands by the Nazi regime (O. Frank, 1997a, pp. v–viii) and her father edited the published version. Unpublished and published diaries share features in common, especially the diarist's/author's use of a time framework to create a record and narrative structure. However they differ in terms of their readership: the readership of unpublished diaries is restricted to those who have access, in the first instance the diarist, whereas published diaries are targeted to a wider audience.

Box 1.4 Some forms of published diaries

Diary as scientific 'record'

- Author absent or presents self as neutral observer
- Narrative of discovery in which the strange and unfamiliar are recorded
- Reader offered experience and insight

Diary as memoir

- Author is an 'important' person who claims privileged access to key events and decisions
- Narrative based on author's role and contribution to events and decisions
- Reader offered opportunity to see events 'through the eyes' of the author

Diary bearing witness

- Author presents self as 'ordinary person' experiencing or surviving extraordinary events
- Narrative of suffering and survival
- Reader offered access and insight into 'how it feels'

(Continued)

(Continued)

Literary diary

- Author claims status as a 'writer'
- Narrative of author's struggle to create
- Reader offered insight into the creative process as well as a product of that process

Fictional diary

- Fictional narrator who claims status of an independent often scientific observer
- Narrative of discovery and revelation
- Reader offered insight through fictional world

Summary and comment

The development of diary keeping was a product of technical changes which increased access to the resources needed to write diaries, and the social and religious changes that provided the stimulus and motivation for maintaining a personal record. With the reduced cost of publication, an increasing number of diaries have been published and made accessible to the public. It is possible to identify within these diaries a diversity of form and function ranging from 'factual' accounts of discoveries to fictional accounts of insanity. While the purpose and structure of diaries vary they provide a rich source of data for social researchers, and in the next chapter we will consider how diaries can and have been used in research.

KEY POINTS

Diary keeping

- Diary keeping is a recognised form of social activity.
- Diary keeping can only develop and flourish when certain conditions are met: there is a written vernacular language; there are lay groups within society who have the skills and resources to use this written language as a medium for keeping a personal record; and the incentives for these groups to keep a diary outweigh the risks.
- It is possible to recognise diary-like documents in some premodern societies but diary keeping in its modern form developed in Europe in the early modern period.
- While religious developments were an initial stimulus to diary keeping, diaries in contemporary society are kept for a variety of reasons and take a variety of forms.

Publication

- Given the interest in and market for diaries, there are now a substantial number of published diaries.
- Published diaries vary in form and structure from factual/scientific journals to fictional diaries.
- It is possible to identify distinctive conventions in the different forms, related to the role of the narrator, the nature of the narrative and the role of the reader.

EXERCISE

The best way of developing an understanding of the ways in which diaries have developed and the conventions that underpin diary writing is to read some diaries. This should not be a great chore as most published diaries are both interesting and in some cases beautifully written. While most of the more popular diaries are in print, often in abbreviated forms, and can be purchased, they are also widely available in libraries. So I suggest that you access one of the diaries from each of lists A, B and C. Read the introduction to each diary and at least 10 pages of the main diary and then consider the issues raised.

Diaries which can be used in the exercise

The diaries are grouped into three categories: historic, contemporary and fictional.

List A: historic diaries

Japanese

- Bowring, R. (1982) *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoir*, trans. and ed. R. Bowring, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
 Morris, I. (ed.) (1970) *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon*, trans. and ed. Ivan Morris, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

Early modern

- de la Bédoyère (ed.) (1994) *The Diary of John Evelyn*, Headstart History, Bangor.
 Goris, J.-A. and Marlier, G. (1970) *Albrecht Dürer: Diary of his Journey to the Netherlands 1520–1521*, intro. J.-A. Goris and G. Marlier, Lund Humphries, London.
 Jordan, W.K. (ed.) (1966) *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI*, Allen and Unwin, London.
 Latham, R. (ed.) (1985) *The Shorter Pepys*, selected and ed. R. Latham, Bell and Hyman, London.

(Continued)

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Voyages

Beaglehole, J.C. (1988) *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery: the Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768–1771, Part One*, Kraus Reprint, Millwood, NY.

Darwin, C. (1888) *A Naturalist's Voyage: Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited during the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle' round the World*, Murray, London.

Political

Foote, M.R.D. (1968) *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. 1 (1825–1832)*, Clarendon, Oxford.

Foote, M.R.D. (1968) *The Gladstone Diaries, vol. 2 (1833–1839)*, Clarendon, Oxford.

Helps, A. (1868) *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands: Victoria, Queen of England*, Smith, Elder, London.

Social

Hudson, D. (ed.) (1972) *Munby, Man of Two Worlds: the Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby 1828–1910*, Murray, London.

Stanley, L. (ed.) (1984) *The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick, Victorian Maidservant*, ed. with intro. Liz Stanley, Virago, London.

List B: contemporary diaries

Literary

Bond, M. (ed.) (1948) *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910–1913*, Secker and Warburg, London.

Bond, M. (ed.) (1948) *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914–23*, Secker and Warburg, London.

Olivier Bell, A. (ed.) (1984) *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Volume 5, 1936–41*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell, Penguin, London.

Social issues

Frank, A. (1997) *The Diary of a Young Girl: the Definitive Edition*, ed. Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Presler, trans. Susan Massotty, Penguin, London.

McCrum, R. (1998) *My Year Off: Rediscovering Life after a Stroke*, Picador, London.

Political

Castle, B. (1980) *The Castle Diaries 1974–76*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London.

Crossman, R. (1977) *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister. Volume Three, Secretary of State for Social Services 1968–70*, Hamilton and Cape, London.

(Continued)

List C: fictional diaries

Defoe

Backscheider, P.R. (ed.) (1992) *Daniel Defoe: a Journal of the Plague Year*, Norton, New York.

Shinagel, M. (ed.) (1994) *Daniel Defoe: Robinson Crusoe*, 2nd edn, Norton, New York.

Gogol

Gogol, N. (1972) *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, trans. with intro. R. Wilks, Penguin, London.

Shields

Shields, C. (1994) *The Stone Diaries*, Fourth Estate, London.

Issues which you should consider

- 1 For each of your three chosen diaries, when and for what purpose was the diary written?
- 2 Is there any information on how each published version relates to the original text?
- 3 How is each narrative structured and presented?
- 4 Can you identify the ways in which authenticity of each is claimed and established?
- 5 What are the similarities between the three texts you have read?
- 6 What are the differences between the three texts you have read?