

Journal of Exploration

Approach to Teaching Writing

*By Pete Sinclair
October, 1981*

*This
Project
was
made
possible
through
the
funding
of the*

*National
Endowment
for the
Humanities
and the
Pacific
Northwest
Writing
Consortium*

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Introduction

Mark Twain said that if you had a particularly strong dislike for some young person you should give him a journal. Virginia Woolf begins the entry in her diary for 23 October 1917, "Another lapse in this book, I must confess; but if I do it against my humour I shall begin to loathe it; so the one chance of life it has is to submit to lapses uncomplainingly."¹ My own experience corroborates what is suggested by Mark Twain and Virginia Woolf: only dire necessity should induce a person of sound mind to keep a journal. Nevertheless, for a large number of the people who want, or have to write, the keeping of a journal is a dire necessity.

There is some evidence that the impulse to keep a diary stems from a need less dire. Judging from the number and variety of diaries on display in bookstores--multicolored covers of paper, cloth, vinyl, and leather; bindings more or less fancy; paper of weight, shade, and composition appropriate to the cover and price; some clasped and keyed with yellow metal; some embossed "My Diary" in gold leaf--a person's diary keeping impulses can be marketed to.

I once tried to keep a diary. I purchased an unpretentious black-covered diary with white, lined paper and the dates for a year printed at regular intervals. I began the account that I supposed all diaries kept, shaped by mere chronology, me the subject, me the audience, the theme "who am I and what am I doing?" Whether because the plot, the subject, and the theme were too depressing or too boring, I gave it up. Many years later I was drawn to another section of the bookstore, to the section where there were black, brown, and gray notebooks with titles like "Journal Cash or Day." Next to the journals were accounting sheets, pads, and books. What brought me there is what brought Virginia Woolf to write:

It is all very well, saying one will write notes, but writing is a very difficult art. That is one has always to select: and I

am too sleepy and hence merely run sand through my fingers. Writing is not in the least an easy art. Thinking what to write, it seems easy; but the thought evaporates, runs hither and thither. Here we are in the noise of Siena - the vast tunnelled arched stone town, swarmed over by chattering shrieking children.²

My permanent condition of mind was too sleepy, sand running between my fingers, thoughts evaporating; even thinking what to write was not easy for me. And I was never able to pull myself out of this state by penning an observation like that in her closing sentence. Genius was not going to rescue me. I somehow knew that my proper beginning in bringing order to my thoughts was to rub shoulders with accountants.

What I have to say here is for people who are more like me than they are like Virginia Woolf: students in a composition course, students in creative writing courses, letter-writers, even my physicist friend at JPL writing a report to the Department of Energy about the application of photovoltaics to the nation's energy hopes. I have no new suggestions to make: everything here was discovered and used successfully by other people. All that is new is the way I combine the good suggestions they originated. Part Two provides a form for putting them to use. I will begin by considering the journals of writers of literature.

Writers, all writers, upper and lower case, need to retrieve images and facts from their memories. There are three ways of retrieving past experience from one's memory: free association, sitting and thinking purposefully, and consulting a written record. Many writers who are artists have kept a written record, a diary, a journal, or "Notes." Although there is no generally accepted distinction between these three terms, I will observe the following arbitrary distinction: 1) A diary is personal and private. 2) A journal records personal experiences and observations that the writer, at the time he makes the entry, expects to be of interest to others. 3) The writer's notebook is a step in composition preceding the first draft. Also, it is commonly the case that the subject of the diary is the self, of the journal, the world, of the notebook, one's writing.

Two famous records, which are all three of the above, are the journals of James Boswell and the diaries of Virginia Woolf. James Boswell lived in the Eighteenth Century (b. 1740, d. 1795), and Virginia Woolf was born in 1882 and died in 1941. Boswell began his London Journal when he was 22; Virginia Woolf's published diaries begin when she was 33. As artists, Boswell was a conservative, who emulated the best models of the past and his present; Virginia Woolf was a dedicated and important innovator. Both recorded what they saw and what they imagined. Boswell is thought (by me and others) to be more authoritative in recording facts and Virginia Woolf in recording images.

There are other important similarities between the two. They were both members of the English privileged class, though not of the aristocracy; they had control over their daily schedules and the leisure needed in order to write. They were both intellectuals who believed that self-consciously observing and commenting on their

life and times was part of their work. In these respects then, their lives were like that of a student. Students have time to think and write--and are, temporarily at least, charged with the duties of intellectuals. Finally, since Virginia Woolf and James Boswell regarded the systematic recording of their experience and thoughts a literary rather than a devotional or therapeutic activity, their work can help us to learn to do the same. Our talents are smaller, but our efforts can be as serious even though the world will feel itself less indebted to our effort.

BOSWELL

Frederick A. Pottle, the editor of the LONDON JOURNAL, notes this excerpt from Saturday, 18 December 1762:

1 Citizen. Pray, Doctor, what became of that patient of yours? Was not her skull fractured?

Physician. Yes. To pieces. However, I got her cured.

1 Citizen. Good Lord.

and comments:

No point in it: Boswell knows neither the speakers nor the patient.

But there it is, an authentic bit of the genuine conversation of nearly two hundred years ago, caught in an eternal sunbeam.³

Boswell prefaced this bit of conversation with: "This day I was rather too late in going to Child's so that the politics were over. I have therefore little or nothing from thence worth setting down. However, as I am a man who loves forms, I shall always continue to present (such as it is) my Saturday's 'Dialogue at Child's'." The moment caught in an eternal sunbeam was caught because: 1) Boswell had a method. 2) That was what he happened to remember. 3) He wrote it down.

Here is another sketch for which we can thank Boswell's conscience:

When I went home in the evening, I felt myself quite dissipated by running about so much. I was indolent and careless and

could not fix to anything. Even this my journal was in danger of being neglected. Near a whole week had elapsed without my writing a single page of it. By way therefore of penance for my idleness, and by way of making up for the time lost and bringing up my business, I determined to sit up all this night; which I accordingly did, and wrote a great deal. About two o'clock in the morning I inadvertently snuffed out my candle, and as my fire was long before that black and cold, I was in a great dilemma how to proceed. Downstairs did I softly and silently step to the kitchen. But, alas, there was as little fire there as upon the icy mountains of Greenland. With a tinder-box is a light struck every morning to kindle the fire, which is put out at night. But this tinder-box I could not see, nor knew where to find. I was now filled with gloomy ideas of the terrors of the night. I was also apprehensive that my landlord, who always keeps a pair of loaded pistols by him, might fire at me as a thief. I went up to my room, sat quietly till I heard the watchman calling, "Past three o'clock." I then called to him to knock at the door of the house where I lodged. He did so, and I opened it to him and got my candle relumed without danger. Thus was I relieved and continued busy till eight next day.⁴

That scene has my nomination for the Eternal Moonbeam Award. But is the purpose of a journal to provide the matter of one's life and times for later historians? Providing brief, detailed glimpses of the life and times of the recorder is a minimum requirement of a useful journal. This is part of the method, not the motive.

Boswell had many reasons for maintaining a journal. He says that one is the

improvement of his character, I could postulate others. What is more interesting to me is that he contrived a method and stuck to it. Both what happened and what they imagined, in any interesting sense, are infrequent in the records left by James Boswell and Virginia Woolf. Most of the time, they and not the world is the subject. Given who they were, that's wonderful. Even if deep down we harbor a tiny hope that we will one day be James Boswells and Virginia Woolfs, we can't make that hope the motive for keeping a journal. As dire necessities go, hope for a glorious posterity does not rank high. Boswell, when making the above entry in his journal, could not have known that, two centuries later, we would be fascinated by an account of elegant London life that, to our experience, is comparable to camping out and forgetting our matches. However, once having decided to include these events in his journal, he does not say, "stayed up all night to catch up on my journal, candle went out, got light from the watch." He gives us the tinderbox, the watchman's words, and the watchman's knock. We, his audience two hundred years later, are in that dark becoming grim; we hear the hoped for voice and the comforting knock; we take the light, an imaginary warmth returns, and we get through the night. Boswell, two hundred years ago, would have gotten the same response out of reading his own account. It is just as easy to give the detail as it is to accurately note, abstract, or summarize the experience, and a lot more fun. His motive, I suspect, was simply to answer for himself the question, "How did I get through the night?"

These examples illustrate the kind of experiences that everyone has. Boswell included them because he set out to keep a journal and they were part of what he remembered. Who knows why these particular memories found their way to the pages of his journal. Reasons could be given. But, the fact that Boswell remembered these experiences and wrote them down has turned out to be reason enough.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Virginia Woolf was nearly thirty-three--awaiting the publication of her first novel--before she began, in earnest, the practice of keeping a diary. There are twenty-six of her "books," as she called them. (She did bind them.) Virginia Woolf opened her diaries on 1 January 1915. Early on New Year's morning six hundred men died on the HMS Formidable when it was torpedoed by a German submarine. In the ensuing week, a week of constant rain, Virginia Woolf's major personal concerns have to do with helping a former servant who has been discharged from service because her new employer found her in the kitchen with a soldier, housekeeping, and searching for a new house. The following excerpts reveal some of the other happenstances and thoughts of the week:

Friday 1 January

Half way home we heard "British warship ... British warship" & found that the Formidable has been sunk in the channel. We were kept awake last night by New Year Bells. At first I thought they were ringing for a victory.

Saturday 2 January

This is the kind of day which if it were possible to choose an average sample of our life, I should select. We breakfast; I interview Mrs. LeGrys. She complains of the huge Belgian appetites, & their preference for food fried in butter. "They never give one anything" she remarked. The Count, taking Xmas dinner with them, insisted, after Pork & Turkey, that he wanted a third meat. Therefore Mrs. LeG. hopes that the war will soon be over. If they eat thus in their exile, how must they eat at home, she wonders? After this, L. & I both settle down to our scribbling. He finishes his Folk Story review, & I do about 4 pages of poor Effie's story; we lunch; & read

the papers, agree that there is no news. I read Guy Mannering upstairs for 20 minutes; & then we take Max (a dog) for a walk. Half-way up to the Bridge, we found ourselves cut off by the river, which rose visibly, with a little ebb & flow, like the pulse of a heart. Indeed, the road we had come along was crossed, after 5 minutes, by a stream several inches deep. One of the queer things about the suburbs is that the vilest little red villas are always let, & that not one of them has an open window, or an uncurtained window. I expect that people take a pride in their curtains, & there is great rivalry among neighbours. One house had curtains of yellow silk, striped with lace insertion. The rooms inside must be in semi-darkness; & I suppose rank with the smell of meat & human beings. I believe that being curtained is a mark of respectability--Sophie used to insist upon it. And then I did my marketing. Saturday night is the great buying night; & some counters are besieged by three rows of women. I always choose the empty shops, where I suppose, one pays $\frac{1}{2}$ (d) a lb. more. And then we had tea, & honey & cream; & now L. is typewriting his article; & we shall read all the evening & go to bed.

Sunday 3 January

We went to a concert at the Queen's Hall, in the afternoon. Considering that my ears have been pure of music for some weeks, I think patriotism is a base emotion. By this I mean (I am writing in haste, expecting Flora to dinner) that they played a national Anthem & a Hymn, & all I could feel was the entire absence of emotion in myself & everyone else. If the British spoke openly about

W.C's, & copulation, then they might be stirred by universal emotions. As it is, an appeal to feel together is hopelessly muddled by intervening greatcoats & fur coats. I begin to loathe my kind, principally from looking at their faces in the tube. Really, raw red beef & silver herrings give me more pleasure to look upon.

Tuesday 5 January

After lunch we took the air in the Old Deer Park, & marked by a line of straw how high the river had been; & how a great tree had fallen across the towing path, crushing the railing beneath it. Three bodies were seen yesterday swiftly coursing downstream at Teddington. Does the weather prompt suicide? The Times has a queer article upon a railway smash, in which it says that the war has taught us a proper sense of proportion with respect to human life. I have always thought we priced it absurdly high; but I never thought the Times would say so... I bought my fish & meat in the High Street--a degrading but rather amusing business. I dislike the sight of women shopping. They take it so seriously. Then I got a ticket in the Library, & saw all the shabby clerks & dress-makers thumbing illustrated papers, like very battered bees on very battered flowers. At least they are warm & dry; & it rains again today. The Belgians downstairs are playing cards with some friends, & talk--talk--talk--while their country is destroyed. After all, they have nothing else to do--⁵

There are several connecting images: death, flesh, flesh to eat, flesh to touch, clothed bodies, clothed windows, colors, the appearance of respectability, and water. Then on Saturday 9 January 1915, she makes an entry which stands out from the others:

Saturday 9 January

At two o'clock this morning several barges moored in the river broke loose. One crashed into Richmond Bridge, & knocked off a good deal of stone from one of the arches-- The others went to the bottom, or drifted down stream. All this I mention, not because we saw or heard anything of it, but because we noticed the damaged Bridge as we walked to Kingston this afternoon. The stone is yellower inside than out, which makes it more obvious. We had a very good walk. The purplish fields outside Kingston somehow reminded me of Saragossa. There is a foreign look about a town which stands up against the sunset, & is approached by a much trodden footpath across a field. I wonder why one instinctively feels that one is complimenting Kingston absurdly in saying that it is like a foreign town. On the towpath we met & had to pass a long line of imbeciles. The first was a very tall young man, just queer enough to look twice at, but no more; the second shuffled, & looked aside; & then one realised that every one in that long line was a miserable ineffective shuffling idiotic creature, with no forehead, or no chin, & an imbecile grin, or a wild suspicious stare. It was perfectly horrible. They should certainly be killed. We found a market going on at Kingston, as if it were Marlborough. We bought a pineapple for 9d. The man said they had all ripened on his hands, & as he expected another boatload on Tuesday, he had to sell at a loss. We had a bad tea in a very pretentious place. We came back by train with a working man & two small boys. The working man began to tell us about the Lyons meat contract scandals, & told us that

he was attached to the flying department at Hounslow. He was very clever, & should have been an M.P. or a journalist at least. I see Will Vaughan quoted in the Times to the effect that teachers neglect the grammar of modern languages, & talk too much about style & literature; but nothing fortifies the character & mind so much as grammar. How like him!⁶

The tone of this piece is disturbing, especially her response to the line of "imbeciles." We, knowing (and she imagining) what lies ahead for the English youth of all classes, can easily see a vision of foreign fields with young soldiers on the footpath. Whether she means by "They should certainly be killed." that they are likely to be killed or that they ought to be killed, she seems to have condemned a whole troop of her fellow beings to death on esthetic grounds. (Once a record has been made, and gotten public, her intentions are irrelevant.) Even if Virginia Woolf were as cold-blooded as this remark makes her seem, and she wasn't, this remark is not something that one would want made public.

One reason Virginia Woolf included remarks like this in her diaries is that the writing in her diaries seems directed to different audiences. Sometimes she records thoughts that were, or ought to have been, locked up. Sometimes her remarks seem addressed to her most intimate friends. Sometimes she seems to have the world at large and posterity in view as she writes. Boswell wrote his journal to be read by

his friend John Johnston. This did not prevent Boswell from including in his record thoughts and experiences that he regarded as evidence of a dissolute character, but Boswell always has control of his tone. His recounting of his meetings with prostitutes in the park is as one would relate such an adventure to a close friend. On the other hand, some entries in Virginia Woolf's diaries generate further thoughts, useful to writers, that Boswell's entries do not.

In the minds of many, my colleague, Andrew Hanfman, for one, World War One is still the most traumatic historic event of this century. War between the industrialized western European nations was, to the intellectuals of these nations, inconceivable. Civilized man had become both too enlightened and too powerfully armed to allow himself to be drawn into all-out war. Virginia Woolf's entry for 9 January 1915 can be read as an interesting response to the war that wasn't supposed to be possible.

The entry is a drama in three parts: going to Kingston, at Kingston, return to Richmond. Vaguely, a sense of time past pervades the first part, time present the second, and the future the third--though there are allusions to each in each. There are three strong visual images in the first part, the yellow stone, the purple fields with footpaths, and the faces of a line of men. The sense of time past is heightened by the fact that the narrative of her progress to Kingston runs ahead of her presentation of these images so that she has to "go back for them," as it were. Thus she begins her account oddly with a report of an unseen catastrophe. Not until the fifth sentence does she record what she has observed. We feel, however, that the barges crashing into the bridge were part of her experience, added to the, as one of the philosophers associated with the Bloomsbury group might have said, "sense-datum--a yellow patch." The result of an unseen catastrophe having disembowled an ancient stone is a patch of yellow to brighten "a very good walk." What was good about it, the yellow patch?

She has to back up again to give us more detail about the walk. The next patch of color, purple, puts her in mind of Sargossa, a town in sunny Spain, the ancient capitol of the kingdom of Arragon. By noting only the fields and footpaths outside Kingston, her description is of the place as it always has been. Then she has an almost patriotic thought, "I wonder why one instinctively feels one is complimenting Kingston absurdly in saying that it is like a foreign town." If she was close to a tender sentiment there about her country and her countrymen, she backs off it with a vengeance: "then one realized that every one in that long line was a miserable ineffective, shuffling, idiotic creature, with no forehead, or no chin, & an imbecile grin, or a wild suspicious stare. It was perfectly horrible."

Her remarks about being at the market in Kingston are brief and gastronomic rather than visual. She buys an about-to-rot pineapple which is from the sunny south and is also, like the bridge stone, yellow inside. Then she has a bad meal. It has been a week of war, rain, and death. Behind the yellow, the purple, the sunset, the fields, footpaths, and memories of sunny Spanish cities are her experiences of rain, raging icy waters, death, and decay giving "one" a feeling of revulsion that sits in her stomach like a bad meal and tempts her to accede to the death of her fellow beings.

In the third part, on the train homeward, she meets a working man who speaks with wit and intelligence. As if to ameliorate her snobbery, she imagines a happy, productive future for this one fellow being. The subject of their conversation is the Lyons meat contract scandal. (Lyons & Co. was tried, and later convicted, of supplying rotten beef to troops in training.) Should they who should certainly be killed be first fed with rotten beef? And the articulate working man she has met could not be an "M.P. or a journalist at least" unless he can write formally as well as he can converse cleverly. The President of the Modern Language Association is reported in

the Times to have said that teachers neglect the grammar of modern languages. The working man hasn't a chance; his mind and character never got fortified by grammar. The soldiers don't have a chance. What chance does the writer have against the war with grammar her only fortress.

In her diary, Virginia Woolf has kept the day esthetically distant. In the surrounding entries of her diary are thoughts and conversations about ethical issues. It is as if the war has reopened questions she thought that she and her friends had settled. Ethical questions were intensely discussed in her circle; the text for these discussions was often Principia Ethica by their friend and mentor, G.E. Moore. In his work, Moore concludes that the highest "goods" for a person are friendship and esthetic pleasures. Prominent in his argument is the argument that good is as irreducible to further definition as the color yellow. I see this day, Sunday 9 January 1915, as a day in which the words conspired to test the foundation of Virginia Woolf's ethical beliefs. She had the material for a wonderful short story using the technique of stream-of-consciousness, in which a woman, as insulated from the war as any Englishwoman could be, goes about her daily tasks and finds the war impinging on her from every direction.

How "true" are my speculations? If I should go out to the pasture this evening to feed the horse and come upon a spiritual guide, say Dante, and he should take me to the place where Virginia Woolf now resides, I can imagine the following conversation:

P.S. Delightful to meet you. Do you know of my account of your diary entry of 9 January 1915?

V.W. Yes.

P.S. What do you think of it?

V.W. Interesting but not true.

P.S. Not true in what way?

V.W. I had no thoughts of the war at all that day. As for your "recruits," I didn't imagine them being blown up by artillery shells in the fields of Flanders, I thought of them all drowning.

P.S. Aha, like the men on the Formidable!

V.W. No, like a litter of unattractive whelps cast into the river from the Richmond Bridge.

Insofar as truth is concerned, that would be that. Still, I want to keep my thoughts because there is something of the truth in them. A woman like Virginia Woolf could respond as I have said to an event like WWI. I can keep my thoughts if I do not think of them as an account of the causes of her journal entry but as a probable story inspired by her written account of her day. Virginia Woolf could, if she had wanted to, speculate about the causes of her entry. Shortly after this date, she suffered a period of extreme depression. If she had wanted to seek help from Dr. Freud, she could have used her journal while they discussed patterns and forces of the mind. If, after these discussions, she began to feel better, then she and Dr. Freud could have counted her subsequent feelings and actions as evidence that their account of the causes of her journal entry was to some degree true--in the context of psychoanalytic theory. She also might have written the story I outlined. It is the journal entry as inspiration for further writing that makes it useful to a writer, not the journal entry as a symptom. Virginia Woolf used her diary both as a source of inspiration for further writing and as a means to speculate about the health of her psyche--and seemed not to get confused about what she was doing. I find this distinction difficult to maintain. And, from what I have observed of the writing of my students, I am not the only one. To get help in remembering this distinction I have turned to other traditions of journal keeping than that of the writers of literature.

Records of Discovery

Everyday, spacecraft send images back to us of the surface of our planet. They are up there now, endlessly circling, clicking away. An astonishing amount of ingenuity and expense has gone into the making of these images. Yet, it has only been two hundred years since a person could look at an accurate image of the planet and not be surprised by the number, position, and proportions of the earth's land masses and waters. Until the end of the 18th century, the most learned geographers who tried to picture the earth as God sees it got it wrong for more than half the earth. One man set it right. The first man who could draw an image of the earth that put every place on the earth in its correct position in relation to every other place on earth was not, like Odysseus, the great navigator of the ancient world, the son of a king, a politician, a warrior: the man who discovered over half the world was the son of a Lowland Scots farm laborer and a Yorkshire village woman. The gods did not concern themselves with him. Luck had a small part in his life and work, but he accomplished what he intended to accomplish by means that are, in retrospect, simple and obvious. Should we model ourselves on his virtues, as the Greeks did on Odysseus's, the fact that he did what he intended to do by means that are simple and obvious may turn out to be his greatest accomplishment. The man's name, of course, was Captain James Cook, and he kept a journal.

I am, as it may be superfluous to remark, an admirer of Captain Cook, both his work and his virtues. I think they are related; I think they can be emulated; and I think his journals help one learn how.

Cook's accomplishments have been recognized since his return from the first of his three voyages to the Pacific, the voyage of the Endeavor 1768-1771. There are five that I will mention:

1. Cook devised a method of surveying that was so much faster and more accurate than previous methods, and his charts were so carefully and elegantly drawn, as to transform the whole enterprise of making charts for navigation.

2. Cook, simply by close observation, and the judicious use of a strict regimen, solved the scurvy problem a century and a half before anyone knew what caused scurvy.

3. These two, knowing where he was, and keeping himself and his crew healthy enough to get there and back, are obviously prerequisite to his three great voyages.

4. Cook set a new standard of leadership for enterprises of this kind. Two great seamen, Vancouver and Bligh, whose charts are even better than Cook's, began their naval careers under Cook. A remarkable thing about Cook's leadership is that at a time when social rank was a condition to promotion in the Royal Navy, Cook rose on the strength of his professional competence alone.

5. His journals set a new standard of accuracy and breadth of observation.

At the time Cook was elected to the Royal Society Club, Boswell, who had fantasies about making voyages of exploration, contrived to meet Cook. Sir John Pringle, president of the Society, was a friend and advisor to Boswell. Boswell reports his impressions of "the celebrated circumnavigator" gained at a dinner party given by Sir John Pringle:

Cook, as Sir John had told me before, was a plain, sensible man with an uncommon attention to veracity. My metaphor was that he had a ballance in his mind for truth as nice as scales for weighing a guinea. Sir John gave me an instance... It was supposed that Cook had said he had seen a nation of men like monkeys, and Lord Monboddo (a Scottish judge interested in the notion of an unbroken chain between man and the lower animals) had been very happy with this. "No," said he, "I did not say they were like monkeys. I said their faces put me in mind of monkeys." There was a

distinction very fine but sufficiently perceptible.⁷

And of a later conversation with Cook, Boswell reports Cook confessing that because he and his companions could be certain about nothing they found in the South Sea Islands "except as to objects falling under the observation of the senses ... any thing which they learned about religion, government or traditions might be quite erroneous."⁸

We can credit Cook's parents and fellow Yorkshire villagers with planting the seed of his "uncommon attention to veracity." But it was left for Cook to discover exactly how one pays uncommon attention to veracity.

For centuries pilots and navigators were inclined to conceal much of the knowledge they had acquired on their voyages. The great sea powers regarded the information gathered by their navigators state secrets. Individual pilots regarded their knowledge as their stock in trade. All officers of the Royal Navy on voyages of discovery were required to keep personal journals, in addition to the ship's log, that were turned over to the Admiralty immediately upon reaching home port. However, since the days of the Hakluyts, the public was eager for accounts of famous voyages. Ordinary seamen found that they could sell most any account of such a voyage. Officers sometimes kept journals secretly and published them pseudonymously. Naturally, under these conditions, a number of erroneous notions about distant parts were let loose in the world--notions that fired the imaginations of the theoretical geographers. Comfortably seated at their hearthsides, the geographers invented Terra Australia Incognita and the Northwest Passage. Navigators were sent in pursuit of these chimeras. Or, as with Cook, had their otherwise sensibly conceived voyages burdened by these inventions. Partly for these reasons and partly because

the great navigators of the 18th century shared the scientists' view that knowledge superceded nationalistic considerations, the navigators wanted their discoveries published in authorized accounts.

Cook prepared the journal of his second voyage for publication himself. The journal of his first voyage is interesting because he didn't expect it to be printed. His audience, the Admiralty, were people he knew but not intimate friends. His writing to this audience was formal but not as constrained as it might have been had he known he was to become an historic figure. This is exactly the right audience for the kind of journal I think is helpful to a writer.

Cook was fortunate in his companions on the first voyages. First was Sir Joseph Banks, to become the pre-eminent gentleman amateur of Science. What a wonderfully happy circumstance that these two, the archetype of the professional seaman and the archetype of the amateur scientist, should have sailed together to the island paradise. With them was one of the foremost botanists of the age, Dr. Solander. Then there was the astronomer Green who, at the most dangerous moment in the entire voyage, calmly completed an astronomical observation. These men helped transform Cook's view of how he should apply his talents. He was selected as command for the voyage because he was the best seaman available in every respect. The major purpose of the voyage was to observe an astronomical event, the transit of Venus, from the other side of the world. Cook, a lieutenant at this time, was recognised for his chart work, navigational ability, and leadership ability; and it was known that he had astronomical interests and abilities beyond those of the average navigator. At the beginning of the voyage, Cook is amused by the mild form of greed that possesses the collectors of specimens for natural history. Given that the Endeavor was a small ship, and the voyage three years, he displayed remarkable good nature about the cluttering of his decks, holds, and even his own cabin. Before the voyage was over, he, too, is recording with pleasure the arrival of a new specimen aboard.

Captain Cook took command of the Endeavor a man who had dedicated most of his professional efforts toward making images of the world more accurately than anyone ever had. He left his ship at the Downs 13 July 1771, a man whose curiosity and professional habits had engaged questions in plant and animal taxonomy, comparative religion, history and ethics. He was there at the beginning of the modern interest in ethnography. He was still a chart-maker, accuracy remained his goal, but he had a new world to chart where the forces at work could not so easily be measured. By birth and by temperament, Cook was a genuinely humble man. Still, when it came to describing the accuracy of his former work he could say:

Sir,

I am greatly obliged to you for the Perusal of the North American Pilot, for Newfoundland, Labrador. I am much pleased to see a Work, in which I have had some hand, so likely to prove useful to Navigation. -- From the knowledge I have of these Parts (which is not a little), I shall not hesitate to declare, that as much Faith may be put in the Charts, together with the Sailing Directions, as ought to be put in any Work of the Kind.⁹

Compare that assessment of his work with the following on the subject he and Boswell discussed:

With respect to Religion I believe these People trouble themselves very little about it. They however believe that their is one Supream God whome they call _____ and likewise a number of other inferior Deities, but whether or no they Worship or Pray to either one or the other we know not with any degree of certainty. It is reasonable to suppose that they do and I beleive it, yet I never saw the least action or thing among them that tended to prove it.¹⁰

The same temperament is at work here on a matter where the requirements of accuracy are utterly different than in chartmaking. Whereas, in the North American Pilot, the location of a rock in a harbor is ultimately traced by an imaginary but certain line to the North Star, here, his belief about what the Mauori's believe has to be traced to what European's believe. The transit of venus can be timed and measured. Terra Australis Incognita can be found if it is there. But how do you survey and sound the thoughts of a new people?

From 30 July 1768 to 21 April 1769, Cook's journal contains only matters of importance or of particular interest to seamen.

This section is called "Remarkable Occurences on Board His Majesty's Bark Endeavor." Some insight into Cook's nature can be gained from the closing words of this section, where Cook, with characteristic modesty and good nature announces that he has defeated the killer of thousands of seamen, scurvy:

At this time we had but a very few men upon the Sick list and these had but slite complaints, the Ships compney had in general been very healthy owing in a great measure to the Sour krout, Portable Soup and Malt; the two first were serve'd to the People, the one on Beef Days and the other on Banyan Days, Wort was made of the Malt and at the discription of the Surgeon given to every man that had the least symptoms of Scurvy upon him, by this Means and the care and Vigilance of Mr Munkhous the Surgeon this disease was prevented from geting a footing in the Ship. The Sour Krout the Men at first would not eate untill I put in pratice a Method I never once knew to fail with seamen, and this was to have some of it dress'd every Day for the Cabbin Table, and permitted all the Officers without exception to make use of it and left it to the option of the Men either to take as much as

they pleased or none at all; but this practice was not continued above a week before I found it necessary to put every one on board to an Allowance, for such are the Tempers and dispositions of Seamen in general that whatever you give them out of the Common way, altho it be ever so much for their good yet it will not go down with them and you will hear nothing but murmurings gainst the man that first invented it; but the Moment they see their Superiors set a Value upon it, it becomes the finest stuff in the World and the inventor an honest fellow.¹¹

(Cook nearly got carried away in making this announcement; his original version of the final phase was "a damn'd honest fellow.")

The next section, the account of their stay in Tahiti, begins on 14 April 1769 and is titled "Remarkable Occurrences at Georges Island." On the 15th, while Cook was walking in the island's groves, an incident on the beach ended in one of the crew killing a native. Cook had wanted to prevent any incident of this kind. In his crew were seamen who had been on the Dolphin, the first European ship to reach Tahiti, and what he had learned from them about Tahitians gave him reason to believe that such incidents could and ought to be avoided. He had to count this incident as a failure in his leadership. He also learned, I think, that only by assiduous study of the behavior and beliefs of these people, could he find out what he needed to know to forestall future occurrences of this kind. His entry for the 21st begins:

Friday 21st. Got the Copper Oven ashore and fix'd it in the Bank of the breast works.

Yesterday as Mr Green and Dr Munkhouse were taking a Walk they happen'd to meet with the Body of the Man we had Shot, as the Natives by signs made them fully understand, the manner in which the body was enterr'd being a little extraordinary I went to day with some others¹² to see it.

Then he gives an exact description of the burial site with, naturally, measurements and concludes:

It was at this time thought that this manner enterring their Dead was not common to all ranks of people as this was the first we had seen except the Skeleton just mentioned, but various were the opinions concerning the Provisions &c laid about the dead; upon the whole it should seem that these people not only beleive in a Supream being but on a futerue state also, and that this must be meant either as an offering to some Deitie, or for the use of the dead in the other world, but this last is not very probable as there appear'd to be no Priest craft in the thing, for what ever provisions were put there, it appear'd very plain to us that there it remaind untill it consum'd away of it self. It is most likely that we shall see more of this before we leave the Island, but if it is a Religious ceremoney we may not be able to understand it, for the Misteries of most Religions are very dark and not easily understud even by those who profess them.¹³

From this point on, the objects of Cook's observations become more and more complex. A part of his long entry, "Description of King Georges Island," entered into his journal upon their departure from the island three months later, will illustrate the point.

Musick is little known to them and yet they are very fond of it, they have only two Instruments the flute and the drum, the former is made of hollow bamboo about 15 Inches long in which are 3 holes, in to one of them they blow with one nostril stoping the other with the

thumb of the left hand, the other two holes they stop and unstop with their fingers and by this means produce four notes of which they have made one tune which serves them upon all occasions, to which they sing a number of songs generally consisting of two lines and generally in rhyme. At any time of the day when they are lazy they amuse themselves by singing these couplets but especially after dark when their candles are lighted which are made of the kernels of a nut abounding much in oyle, these are stuck upon a skewer of wood one upon a nother and give a very tolerable light which they often keep burning an hour after dark and if they have strangers in the house much longer. Their drums are made of a hollow black wood coverd with Sharks skin and instead of drum sticks they use their hands, of these they make out 5 or 6 tunes and accompany the fluits. The drums are chiefly used at their *Heivas* which are a set of musicians 2 or 3 drums for instance as many fluits and singers, which go about from house to house and play and are always received and rewarded by the Master of the family who gives them a peice of Cloth or what ever he can spare, for which they will stay three or four hours during which time his house will be crowded full for the people are extravagantly fond of this diversion.

The young girls when ever they can collect 8 or 10 together dance a very indecent dance which they call *Timorodes* singing most indecent songs and using most indecent actions in the pratice of which they are brought up from their earliest Childhood, in doing this they keep time to a great nicety; this exercise is however generally left of as soon as they arrive at years of maturity for as soon as they have form'd a connection with man they are expected to leave of dancing *Timorodes*. One amusement or Custom more I must mention tho I must

confess I do not expect to be believed as it is founded upon a Custom so inhuman and contrary to the first principals of human nature; it is this, that more than one half of the better sort of the inhabitants have enter'd into a resolution of injoying free liberty in love without being troubled or disturbed by its consequences; these mix and cohabit together with the utmost freedom and the Children who are so unfortunate as to be thus begot are smother'd at the moment of their birth; many of these people contract intimacies and live together as Man and wife for years in the Course of which the Children that are born are destroy'd. They are so far from concealing it that they rather look upon it as a branch of freedom upon which they value themselves. They are call'd *Arney's* and have meetings among themselves where the men amuse themselves with wristling &c and the women in dancing the indecent dance before mentioned, in the Course of which they give full liberty to their desires but I believe keep up to the appearence of decency. I never saw one of these meetings. Dr Munkhouse saw part of one enough to make him give credit to what we had been told.

Both sexes express the most indecent ideas in conversation without the least emotion and they delight in such conversation behind any other. Chastity indeed is but little Valued especialy among the middle people, if a wife is found guilty of a breach of it her only punishment is a beating from her husband; the men will very readily offer the young women to strangers even their own daughters and think it very strange if you refuse them but this is done meerly for the lucre of gain.

The Houses or dwellings of these people are admirably calculated for the continual warmth of the climate, they do not build them in

Towns or Villages but separate each from the other and always in the woods and are without walls so that the air could by the shade of the trees has free access in whatever direction it happens to blow, no country can boast of more delightful walks than this; the whole plains where the natives reside are covered with groves of Bread fruit and Cocoa nut trees without under wood and intersected in all directions by the paths which go from house to house, so that nothing can be more grateful in a Climate where the sun hath so powerful an influence.¹⁴

He has come to a strange but beautiful place. His description is in his words. His language reveals the values he has. But the order of the presentation, from music, to dancing, to sex, to the consequences, to a hint of what it might have been like to stroll in the Garden of Eden, ultimately reveals that Cook is more interested in describing what is in the world than what ought to be. That's an excellent view for a writer to have.

Cook had no illusions about his skills as a writer. The Admiralty required only the equivalent of what I have defined as notes. They got more than that from Cook but didn't use the best of Cook's genius. The Admiralty turned Cook's journals over to professional writer, John Hawkesworth, who, as requested, produced Voyages, an adaptation of the journals of Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Cook. Hawkesworth wrote each account in the first person. His commission for this project was greater than the combined salaries of the four captains who made the voyages. Cook was at the Cape of Good Hope, nearing the end of his second voyage, when he first received a copy of Voyages. Beaglehole describes Cook's response:

Cook read them, and was surprised beyond measure; worse, he was 'mortified'. He was mortified because he did not recognise himself--

and could hardly do so when so much of Banks appeared as Cook, with original nautical blunders by Hawkesworth himself; he was surprised to learn from the introduction that the manuscript had been read to him at the Admiralty for his approval, after which it had been given to him to peruse, and such emendations as he had suggested had been made. Hawkesworth, no liar, seems to have been the victim of a vast misconception, but that did not make matters better for Cook.¹⁵

I think the whole of Cook's life and work indicates that Cook wouldn't have been upset because others profited from his work. Voyages secured him fame. Nor would he have been offended because he was portrayed on Banks' model. Cook had unashamedly learned all he could from Banks, especially in the complexities of dealing with native aristocracy. I think that Cook was disturbed at not seeing himself in what purported to be a report of his experiences because the reader is thereby robbed of his means to judge the accuracy of Cook's observations. In the matters Cook had been observing, the observer's voice is part of the data. Cook being Cook, there was but one thing he could do. Hawkesworth had gained Cook an audience; now Cook had to learn to write as best as a person with his background could. Cook made his own account of the second voyage. He worked very hard at it. It was probably easier for him to produce the most accurate and elegant charts ever made. We have an account of what he thought of the results of his labor in the manuscript of his Introduction--before the editors polished it:

I shall conclude this preliminary discourse by publicly acknowledging the Kind Assistance of some worthy friends, in whose hands I left the Manuscript, when I embarked on a third expedition, who were so obliging as to superintend the printing and make such corrections as they found necessary, without altering the stile. For it was judged that it would be more exceptable to the Public, in the Authors words,

than in any other persons, and that the Candid and faithfull manner in which it is written would counterbalance the want of stile and dullness of the subject. It is a work for information and not for amusement, written by a man, who has not the advantage of Education, acquired, nor Natural abilities for writing; but by one who has been constantly at sea from his youth, and who, with the Assistance of a few good friends gone through all the Stations belonging to a Seaman, from a prentice boy in the Coal Trade to a Commander in the Navy. After such a Candid confession he hopes the Public will not consider him as an author, but a man Zealously employed in the Service of his Country and obliged to give the best account he is able of his proceedings.¹⁶

Beaglehole gives us the world's assessment of Cook's work: "The publication of this book was, itself, one of the great events in the history of Pacific exploration." Moral: If the observations are the ones we made, if we pay uncommon attention to veracity, if the style is ours, and if the writing is literate, we may not produce a major event in the history of Pacific exploration, but we can have our say. The observations we made, however, does not mean standing on the corner soaking in the pageant of life. "Made" means systematically recording our observations.

There is a lineage that comes down from Cook's voyages. The conjunction of the journals of the natural historians and those of the navigators, made on Cook's voyages, continued on the voyage of the Beagle in the relationship between Fitzroy and Darwin. The consequences to our image of the biological world have been as dramatic as were the results of Cook's voyages to our image of geography. The age of sail ended in the third quarter of the 19th century. Captain Joshua Slocum, a man who like Cook had risen to the top of his profession from humble origins, found himself on the

beach. He rebuilt an abandoned oyster fishing boat and became the first man to sail alone around the world. His account of that voyage, in which he acknowledges Cook and Darwin as predecessors, has sent so many people to sea in small sailing vessels that making a sea voyage and publishing an account of the voyage has become a minor social movement in the industrialized nations from Japan to Switzerland. Two prominent elements in this genre are reports of observations of nature and reports on the state of one's soul during the voyage. I have never seen a log from one of these voyages, but the excerpts included in the published narratives indicate that the log serves as ship's log, journal, diary, and notes. It is a system that could confuse the writer as to the purpose of the entry and who the audience is.

Two Current Journal Types

At The Evergreen State College, Steve Herman and his colleague, Al Wiedemann, have refined the naturalist's field journal to a point where it is nearly a precision scientific instrument. A detailed account of the system and its uses is contained in The Naturalist's Field Journal: A Manual of Instruction Based on a System Established by Joseph Grinnell, by Steven G. Herman (available from The Evergreen State College Bookstore, TESC, Olympia, Wash. 98505). The naturalist's field journal is to natural history what the telescope was to astronomy. The field journal magnifies the memory--as the telescope magnifies the heavens. The analogy would be more exact if telescope lenses were polished by looking through them: the more you use the naturalist's field journal, the sharper the focus, the wider the field of vision. In developing the journal system described below, I have stolen everything I could get my hands on from the work of Herman and Wiedemann.

But the system of the naturalist's field journal does not provide all that a writer needs because the memory, to a writer, is not only the means, it is also much of the content. So, what I wasn't able to steal from Herman, I stole from Marilyn Frasca. Marilyn Frasca conducts Intensive Journal Workshops according to a form developed in association with Ira Progoff. One interesting feature of this journal-keeping method is that it can be learned only by attending a workshop. It remains, in other words, in the oral tradition--though the main activity is writing. In the workshop, Marilyn gives the participants a form that the participant applies to the content he wants for the purposes he wants. The general purpose of the workshop is to help people sort out their thinking about their own lives. One tradition the workshop comes from is the "human potential movement" of recent decades. It differs from most of the manifestations of that movement in that there are no public confessions and there is no coercion. The product of the workshop is, by my definition,

a diary. It differs from real (as opposed to defined) diaries in that the participant is instructed to keep his writing personal and private and mean it. I have a friend whose wife kept a diary that he was instructed not to read. At night when they were in bed, she kept the diary locked up. The usual daytime position of the diary was on the bed, on her husband's side, open.

The particular content of the journal kept according to the form of the Intensive Journal Workshop is individual but, in general, it will be a journal of the soul's progress. For this, there is a long and venerable tradition in American letters:

It is probable that almost every literate Puritan kept some sort of journal; the number of diaries that remain from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is legion, and the habit became so thoroughly ingrained in the New England character that it remained a practice with various Yankees long after they had ceased to be Puritans, to the great enrichment of our political and literary history, as witness the diaries of John Quincy Adams and Gideon Welles, or the journals of Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne. Henry Adams, dissecting his career in the search for "education," is writing in the true New England Tradition, and undertakes no more than countless Puritans had done when they submitted their lives to microscopic examination to discover if they had at any time found that vision of the unity and meaning of the universe which they called regeneration and for which he endeavored to substitute a dynamic theory of history.¹⁷

It might be interesting to see what a scholar of American letters with experience in using the form of the Intensive Journal Workshop could make of the records left by the Puritans. The record made by the participants in an Intensive Journal Workshop

is, like the journals of the Puritans and the literary progeny thereof, a record of as well as from memory. A record of his memory, made with uncommon attention to veracity, to discover what is in the world as opposed to what one imagines ought to be in the world, is a valuable record for a writer to keep. In Part II, I will describe one way of making a journal that accurately records what one finds in the world and in memory.

PART II

The purpose of this part is to describe a journal that is systematic in form, that helps the writer use his memory, and that a person can keep regularly without the compulsion of genius. The purpose of the journal is to make images and facts available for later writing of other kinds. I think of the process of composition as having three steps: (1) notes, (2) outlines and preliminary drafts and (3) the finished composition. My journal is not a direct step in composition, but a way of remembering and thinking in writing. This distinction would be hard to remember, because I both compose and keep my journal at my desk, with pen and paper, if I didn't remind myself that I am making a record and make that record according to a particular form. What follows is a description of what I record and the form of that record.

Equipment

The Field Notebook

Natural Historians and field scientists use a field notebook to keep notes while they are in the field. A writer can make a field trip out of his or her life, any line of inquiry the subject. If I am waiting in the check-out line at the supermarket and I wonder how Lewis and Clark would manage trading there, I have a subject. The field notebook is especially useful in keeping track of quantities: days, dates, times, distances, number, dimensions, weights and so forth. I find numbers hard to remember. I suspect this is true of everyone except numerologists, whose minds are organized to give significance to numbers.

Brevity is the virtue in keeping a field notebook; otherwise, I would find myself becoming reluctant to reach for notebook and pencil. I use a 6 1/8" x 3 3/4" end-opening notebook. I keep notes on one side of the sheet only and use the flip

side for sketches, lists, addresses, names, bolt sizes, tail light bulb numbers, and other things I need to remember for more than 40 seconds but less than a day or two. One notebook lasts about three months. It doesn't take long to learn how much notation one has to make: the nightly session at the journal quickly tells you if your notes were inadequate.

These uses of the field notebook the writer and the student of the field sciences have in common. But for me, the field notebook has a much more important function to perform. I was born and raised in New England. My ancestors were New Englanders preceded by Scots and Irish. I belong to the Congregational Church. I received an Honorable Discharge from the army. I got a Ph.D. in Medieval English literature. My weight at age 46 is what it was at age 18. I am married to the mother of my children. But I simply cannot keep a promise to myself to keep a daily journal. Now when a man of my character can't keep a promise made to a man of my character, there is something wrong with the promise and not the character of the promiser or promisee. What is wrong is that I am not a professional writer. I write a lot, normally six days a week, but writing is a part of my profession, not it. There are many people like me, people who write as a way to think. The field notebook can be a great help to our consciences as well as our memories. If I make even one entry in a journal, I take on the whole tradition of journal keeping, which is daily. My field notebook is daily, my journal is not. My conscience is clear.

And it works. Sometimes I realize after the fact that I should have used my journal to record the events of a particular day. In my field notebook I have at least the day, what I thought was noteworthy at the time, and, very helpful to the memory, something like an outline of what was going on before and after that day. If I were one of those people who always made a daily schedule and lists, and stuck to the schedule, I might not have to keep a field notebook. If I kept my lists and schedules, I would have a very useful memory aid. The price would be high though;

most of the fun of keeping lists and schedules consists in obliterating the items on them. I wouldn't want to give that up. I have also found that the field notebook tells me if I need to make a journal entry that evening. When I find my notes getting more extensive than usual, I ask myself if what I'm doing isn't more appropriate to the journal. If it is, I make notes to that effect and begin paying closer attention to what's going on. The difference is the difference between items on an outline and notes.

For the journal itself, I use the equipment prescribed by Steve Herman. Since I cannot improve on his excellent description of the equipment and its uses, I include the following in case his manual should be unobtainable. Some of his discussion applies only to the Naturalist's Field Journal; the spirit of those matters is worth ingesting with the prescriptions that do apply to this journal.

Pen

I take notes in my field notebook in pencil but my journal record is in pen and ink. The pen to use is the technical pen used by engineers, draftsmen, and designers. I am now using a Staedtler "Marsmatic 700" technical pen with a .35 mm point. When this pen wears out, I will switch to a smaller point, .30 mm.

The first time I used a technical pen, the experience reminded me of the first time I used a properly sharpened chisel. "So," I said to myself, "that's what it feels like to be a woodworker." It was a surprise to me to discover that I didn't have to be an arm wrestler to carve wood. I spent so many years embedding words in paper with a ball point pen that, though it has been two years since my conversion experience, I still pick up my technical pen anticipating the pleasure of brushing a sentence lightly and neatly across the page.

Ink

The ink I use is the black, waterproof, "permanent" ink made to be used in technical pens.

Paper

The paper is the best paper I can get that is regularly available. It is $8\frac{1}{2}$ " by $5\frac{1}{2}$ " bond paper, narrow-lined in blue ink, with three holes on the left.

Binder

The binder I use is covered in vinyl. A cloth-bound binder would be esthetically more pleasing but I haven't found one with pockets inside the covers.

Straightedge

In one of the pockets I keep an 8" x 60° triangle with beveled edges. The hypotenuse of the triangle is long enough to make a vertical margin; the beveled edge allows me to draw lines without smearing the ink.

Preparing the paper

Every page in my journal is prepared in the following way:

1. I draw a horizontal black line with pen and straight edge over the top blue line on the page, completely across the paper.
2. I draw a vertical black line $1\frac{3}{16}$ " from the left edge of the page, completely down the paper.
3. In the box formed by the two margins in the upper left corner of the page, I write my name and the year.

Titling

My paper comes in packets of 100 sheets. I prepare all the sheets as above. The journal has three sections. The first section is titled "Journal" so I center

that word in the middle of the blank section at the top of the page on fifty or more of the sheets. The remaining pages are for use in the other two parts of the journal and are titled at the time of use.

Preparing the pages for my journal is an activity I enjoy. It is the easiest thing I do that gives me a sense of craftsmanship. And, though easily acquired, that sense of craftsmanship is still there when I remove the page from its storage place in the back of the binder to use in making an entry. Why not prepare the page, then, at the time of use? Wouldn't the sense of craftsmanship be that much stronger? Perhaps. But I usually write in my journal in the evening, when I am tired. I need the little head start that the prepared page gives me.

Procedure

I keep my journal in three sections. There could be a theory about these parts, a story about how the memory works, but I don't have one. As the Wife of Bath says, experience is authority enough for me. Part of that experience comes from reading the journals of writers, part from the journals of explorers, and part from the practice of natural historians. I have mentioned two colleagues whose work has been important to me, Steve Herman and Marilyn Frasca. Most of the form of my journal comes directly from them. Less direct, but just as important have been my opportunities to work with: Robert Sluss, entomologist and interpreter of Darwin's story, Mark Levensky, philosopher and writing teacher, and Richard Jones, dream psychologist, interpreter of Freud, and writing teacher. Finally, it has been seventeen years since Robert O. Payne called to my attention Chaucer's couplet, "And yf that olde bokes were away,/ Y loren (lost) were of remembraunce the key." I've been looking for keys to memory ever since. The journal is one that helps me and may help others .

First Section : Journal

The first and most important section of the journal is the "Journal." I try to make the record in this section true, detailed, fair, and literate. My model for the content of this section is the Remarkable Occurences entries in Cook's journals. The difference is that my experience is not of the newly discovered Tahitian Paradise but like the experiences recorded by James Boswell and Virginia Woolf.

I also have a composite model for my audience. I imagine that I am keeping a journal that will be read by some equivalent of the Admiralty or similar disinterested authority: the Senate committees that received the journals of the Lewis and Clark, Wilkes, and Stevens expeditions to the Northwest, for example. But, since this audience is a little too disinterested, I also imagine that my great-grandchildren will read my journal. This is the right audience for me. Someone else keeping a journal of this kind might find for an imagined audience a different mean between writing an account of their life and times for their twin sister and, the other extreme, writing an account as if it were to be placed in a space capsule and fired at the Andromeda Nebula. The following entries from my journal illustrate form and content:

Pete
Seichelau
1981

Journal

14 June continued:

horses that seemed not true or not applicable to the present case. I had an urge to tell him what + experience I did have with horses, but didn't, thinking I would embarrass myself.

15 June Sailing in S Puget Sound aboard Fragata

Monday

Bob and I left West Bay Marina shortly after 0900. The winds were light air from W to NW. Scattered clouds. The birds were mainly P. Guillemot, Common Murre and R. Auklet; we saw a seal off Dofflemeyer Point. Took on stores at Johnson Point Marina: salmon, flosser, chips, chip-dips, and accompanying requirement for use of same - left at 1330. We watched a Bald Eagle at Devil's Head for ten minutes. He was perched in a snag on the S side of the point, watching us and the rest of the boat traffic. "For any eye is an evil eye / That looks in onto a mood apart." We sailed S around Anderson Island to moor at Eagle Island at 1720. It took most of the day for me to forget about the college. During the cocktail hour, Bob and I

Pete
Sinclair
1981

Journal

15 June

continued:

planned the spring portion of Vancouver and Puget. I told Bob about the life of H.W. Tilman and how pleased I was, and why, that they had given the book (H.W.T.'s biography by J.R.L. Anderson) to Ken Kirk for his graduation. It is a perfect book for him now when he has to think about finishing his work. Tilman did not marry, was not homosexual or a misogynist, died at sea in an attempt to celebrate his 80th birthday in the Antarctic. ~~Then~~ Thus came the premature end of his fourth career. At Kirk's age, it is useful to know the range of options open to him. Nina del Mar, C. McCann + B. Crowe, alongside at 2300; we had been reading T. Capote.

16 June

Cagle Island to Olympia

Tuesday

Awakened at 0710 by Robert who had "a dazzling bit of behavior" to describe: 4 P. Guillemot on the beach, one adult instigated necking by first "biting the other on the ass." One youngster missed the nesting cave, crashed into the bank. Robert said he slept exceptionally well. I said my dreams woke me and I was glad that I could remember none of them because they required so much

Pete
Simlair
1981

Journal

16 June

continued:

work to understand. Bob said that while he could work up interest in other people's dreams, he found his own boring. We were underway at 0805, Quia del Mar for Berkeley Sound, Forgetter for home. As we rounded the island, I looked back to see the Quia diminishing in the distance. As time goes on, she looks more beautiful. I remarked that I would even be sorry to see her lose salmon-colored deck and cabin; Bob agreed. It turned out to be an exciting day for weather. First some spectacular towering Q's building at maybe a thousand feet per minute, then a squall line, then continuous gusty, strong breezes. We were overpowered on the pulsating, frequent, gusts with reefed main and lopper up. Docked around 1700. Then at Blussea for dinner that evening with Jan Shaw, Dara and Andrew, Jean and Jerry, Al and Flora, ^{and} a friend of Jean's, Kirsten(!) - remarked about contrast between Bob's interest in "a dazzling bit of behavior" and boredom with dreams. Also, had an interesting exchange with Al about the non-fiction novel stuff.

If I think the hour and minute are important, I use the 2400 hour method of noting the time. But, because I regard place, time, and weather as part of the setting, I also note time by "dawn," "morning," "forenoon," etc. I want every journal entry to have the following:

- Date
- Place
- Day
- Setting
 - Description of place
 - Time
 - Weather
- Purpose or Occasion
- Image
- Other Activities

When I sit down to write in my journal, "full of thoughts," it is hard to remember this resolution. So I have the above list affixed on the inside front cover of my journal. Getting the right balance between "too wordy" and "too sketchy" is a matter of practice that is not so easily learned as notation in the field notebook. Following the form and using the checklist helps. Before I begin the account of the day I have done the following, before or at the time:

1. Drawn a line across the top of the page.
2. Drawn a line down the left edge of the page.
3. Written "Journal" at the top of the page.
4. Written my name.
5. Written the year.
6. Written the date.

7. Written the place.
8. Written the day.
9. Given the setting.
10. Given the occasion or purpose.

Doing this has the salutary effect of putting my account in a wide context and curbing my fulsome thoughts. All this is by way of making my journal useful to a future reader when, as Herman says, "I've become an angel." I find the form and checklist indispensable to maintaining this perspective. For example, in the entry for 15 June 1981, I realized that "Sailing in S Puget Sound aboard Fregata" covered the place but could be misleading as to the purpose. So I added, "It took most of the day for me to forget about the college." There's a difference between sailing as a form of skylarking and sailing as a form of therapy that could effect the accuracy of the day's account.

I rely on the form of the journal page and the checklist to satisfy the requirements of the disinterested audience, the Admiralty and my grandchildren. For the rest of the content, I am the audience. If I asked myself, "Could anybody but me be interested in what I did today?" I wouldn't be able to write much. I am the authority on what is interesting about my life and times while I am writing in my journal. But that authority is based on giving a good account of my life and times. Boswell, beginning his journal at age 22, was nobody in particular. Virginia Woolf beginning her diary at age 33, knew that the world was about to discover that she was an important writer. Boswell had no case to make, didn't know what his opinions were, didn't know what his career was to be, didn't even know what his religion ought to be. The thesis for his entries in the London Journal is simply what did I do, see, and think today. He had, as a matter of fact, published more at age 22 than had Virginia Woolf at age 33. But he didn't keep his journal as a writer, he kept it as an observer of his life and times.

Virginia Woolf sometimes stepped beyond the limits that I think are appropriate to a journal account. She too made many valuable, objective observations about her life and times. She also made many fictional ones. Fiction is as useful a contributor to the world's store of truths as are records of facts. But it undermines the authority of a journal, as Quentin Bell reveals in his Introduction to Vol. I:

Considering the diary not as art but as history, we should perhaps try to answer the question: Is it true?

To this no completely unequivocal answer can be given. Virginia Woolf's reputation for truthfulness was not good. She was supposed to be malicious, a gossip, and one who allowed her imagination to run away with her. At least one of her friends, foreseeing the publication of her letters and of this diary, tried to warn posterity that it must not believe everything that she might tell it.

Sooner or later Virginia's diaries and letters will be printed. They will make a number of fascinating volumes: books, like Byron's letters, to be read and re-read for sheer delight. In the midst of his delight let the reader remember, especially the reader who itches to compose histories and biographies, that the author's accounts of people and of their sayings and doings may be flights of her airy imagination. Well do I remember an evening when Leonard Woolf, reading aloud to a few old friends extracts from these diaries, stopped suddenly. 'I suspect', said I, 'you've come on a passage where she makes a bit too free with the frailties and absurdities of someone here present.' 'Yes', said he, 'but that's not why I broke off. I shall skip the next few pages because there's not a word of truth in them.'*

*Clive Bell, Old Friends: Personal Recollections,
1956, p. 97.¹⁸

Quentin Bell goes on to argue that truth results from the whole of her diaries and letters, but again it is Virginia Woolf we are talking about. I keep a journal because I need help in my writing now. It takes all the talent I have to make sense out of my remembered experiences without also having to make sense out of my fantasies. That does not mean that I can't use my imagination. My hope in keeping a journal is to combine the passionate interest of the divine's in their subject with the rigor of the discoverers and natural historians, both applied to one's everyday experiences. It helps me to make a formal distinction between being objective and being subjective. That's why there are two more sections to my journal.

Second Section: Subjects

Almost every Journal entry records an event or image that I want to write something more about because the event or image is connected to a view I have, a current topic, or a concern. These thoughts do not belong in the Journal section because they are not part of the experience of the day but reflections in the evening about the day. By maintaining this distinction formally in my journal, I get by with only a common attention to veracity. Of course, if these perceived connections are part of the experience of the day--a conversation with a friend about something we both witness for example--then they do belong in the Journal section. I have thought of different names for this section: Matters, Matter, Views, Comments, Reflections, Responses, Sentiments, and have ended by calling the second section of my journal, "Subjects." This section is the record of my first considered responses to the experiences recorded in the Journal section. In the Subjects section I try out opinions and change them. I am willing to risk being wrong but not silly or unfair. I remember that I am keeping a journal and not a diary. The audience is still the Admiralty, with at least one member who does, or could, or ought to have, my view.

I prepare the page as I do the pages for the Journal except that the title of the subject replaces the word "Journal" at the top center of the page. Some titles are like the titles of sections of news magazines: The Economy, The Election, Football, Law and Order. Some titles name categories of my life: Work, Marriage, Home Repair. Some titles are like department store departments: Tools, Ladies' Wear, Furniture, Bargains. Some titles are like titles for movies: Going Home, Freeway, Airport. It has turned out that the eternal verities, Love, Faith, Hope, Charity, Truth, have not found their way into my journal. I can't think of any reason why they couldn't be there but they're not. Many of my titles are the names of friends.

The length of my entries varies from a sentence to mini-essays. When I first started keeping this section, I thought I was going to be overwhelmed with things about which I wanted to write commentaries. I soon discovered that my opinions are neither as numerous nor as well-formed as I imagined.

The following are typical entries:

Pete Sinclair 1981 16 June Tuesday	Work The natural scientist will spend any amount of time watching birds on a beach, some time thinking about a person's dream, little time thinking about his own dreams.
Pete Sinclair 1981 16 June	Robert Sluss I was surprised to find that Bob, who has also worked with Richard Jones, reflects on his own dreams out of duty if at all. I shouldn't have been. It follows logically from what I admire about him: his delightful curiosity about the natural world.

The entries about friends are the ones where I try hardest not to be unfair. My model for the tone of these character sketches is Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. The Narrator does not shrink from mentioning uncomplimentary details, but his attitude is that of a natural historian observing the behavior of birds.

Third Section: Memories, Dialogues, and Letters

The third section of the Journal of Exploration has been shaped by my having attended Marilyn Frasca's Intensive Journal Workshop. I have for several years recorded my early memories in my journal. I thought of this writing as an excursion into deep memory. During the course of the Intensive Journal Workshop, I realized that my deep memory is not merely stories of the past; it is also an accumulation of patterns of thought and models of action. I now keep a third section in my journal in which I do one of three things:

1. I record a deep memory.
2. I have a dialogue with someone not here either because the person is dead or because the person is distant.
3. I write a letter to someone I would not normally write a letter to, in the manner of Herzog in Saul Bellow's Herzog.

I find, in making entries in this section, that what I am doing feels very personal and is often accompanied by strong emotion, like Wordsworth's definition of poetic writing, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity." These entries have the feel of direct communications with an intimate audience. I have promoted Conrad's Secret Sharer to the Admiralty.

In a way, every writer has but one audience, the populace of his or her memory. This populace includes people the writer has not met. Because I am a teacher, I sometimes write as if Socrates were looking over my shoulder. Novelists sometimes find that literary critics and letter-writing readers have intruded themselves into their imagined audience. Suppose that a writer decided that he has to compromise his integrity and write for crass commercial purposes. How does he know what the people are like who would read his writing? He has met them, or met parts of them in other people and in himself, or read stories about them in which he has found part of himself.

So, my entries in the Memories, Dialogues, and Letters Section are direct communications with distant important people including, in the case of deep memory, myself. All of these are part of my present self. And, although the impulse to make these contacts is personal and frequently accompanied by strong feelings, the form keeps the record from becoming merely personal or inappropriately emotional.

The dialogue with Virginia Woolf is an example of that form from my journal. Here is an example of a letter:

Pete
Sinclair
1981

Letter to Irvin "Bunny" Yerkes

29 July
Wednesday

The last time we talked was while having dinner together in that restaurant near Fort Dix. You were still dating showgirls then. Did you marry one? What has made me remember you is ~~that~~ a piece I've been writing about a mountain-climbing incident. When I finished, I wondered if ~~it was true~~ I'd ever been scarader. That's when I thought of you. Do you remember, when you were a senior and Roger Greene and I were freshmen, that we visited you in your room to hear about the difficulties you had in keeping your showgirl faithful to you while you were away at school in the North Woods? We all were having the same difficulty, but you did what we only wished to do - you hired a private detective. You lived a high-risk life in those days. You fell in love with a showgirl and wanted her to be as faithful as the girl next door. ~~But~~ What I remember particularly is a time you scared the wits out of me, an incident you have probably forgotten. It was three o'clock in the morning. We'd been studying all night. You invited me to join you for breakfast at that diner in White River Junction. There

Pete
Sinclair
1981

Letter to Bunny Yeckes

29 July continued:

was a cold wind coming off the river; the rain was turning to snow. I was ~~wishing~~ wished that I dared defy convention enough to wear long-johns. In the warm diner over the wonderful aroma of pepper on scrambled eggs and homefries, buttered toast, and coffee, you talked about your girl. You were sort of talking to yourself. I was sleepy, my attention wandered a bit. Then you ~~stopped~~ looked at me, not talking, for a moment and said, "Gee - yes, I think you could handle it, I'm going to do it." "What?" "I'm going to take you to New York with me and have my girl fix you up with a showgirl. It'll be good for you. Most of these kids around here would make asses of themselves but you're pretty cool. Just watch, keep the conversation going but don't say anything more than you have to. When we get back to the apartment, she'll help you out." There went my sleep for the rest of the night. I have a confession to make to you. All the nights after that, when I was sympathizing with you about your broken heart, I was secretly glad that the detective found out what he did. If we had gone to New York, and if I had ever gotten back to that apart-

Date
Seidman
1981

Letter to Bunny Yecker

29 July continued:

ment, the first task that poor show-
girl would have had would have been
to change my diapers.

Wednesday 29 July 1981 was the day of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. My Journal entry for the day describes a bit from the television coverage of that event about the training of London taxi drivers. That led me to recall my involvement in an effort to set up a certification system for mountain guides--to a recollection of a particular climb I'd been writing about--to Bunny Yeckes. I could have opened a page in the Subjects section titled "Rites of Passage," or a page titled "Aristocracy in America," but I wasn't in that kind of a mood.

The memory below is a response to the Journal entries of 15 and 16 June 1981. There are obvious connections to thoughts about my son having to find his work, to Truman Capote's invention of the phrase "non-fiction novel," and to thinking about writing this account of the Journal of Explorations but the connections were not obvious when I was making my journal. I did not think of the connections or remember the chain of reflections before, or during, or soon after I wrote the entries in the Journal section, the letter, or the memory. Again, a method, what I remembered, and writing it down is all there is to keeping a useful journal.

Pete
Sindair
1981

Advice, September 1954

16 June
Tuesday

Because it was Freshman Week and school hadn't really started yet, the Dean of Freshmen wore sweatpants with his Harris Tweed jacket instead of gray flannels. Me too. He was young. I didn't know that they made jeans that young. "Your scores in reading are very high: in the upper three percent in speed and in the upper one percent in comprehension. Your high school grades don't reflect that," he said. "I know," I said, "I spent most of my time in high school reading library books under my desk." "What kind of books?" "Mostly non-fiction. I don't much like novels." Unless they're sexy, I didn't ~~add~~ add. "Oh, I prefer good fiction, Hemingway, James, Faulkner. Have you read any Faulkner?" "Yes," I lied, "the one about the bear." What I had done is to read enough to learn the names of the characters for the quiz - like the rest of the kids, Irish, Italians and Polish, I went to school with. ~~Like~~ That place, Dartmouth, was full of prep school kids. I determined to read "The Bear" that night - or maybe next week. "Well, you'll read some good fiction in English 1 and 2, I think you'll find there's truth in fiction too. Have you thought about what you might do after college?" I want to be

Pete
Lincoln
1971

Advice, ~~of~~ September 1954

16 June continued:

an explorer." He laughed "There isn't much demand for explorers anymore." "Oh, there's a few places left to explore," I said. The Dean was right about fiction. I was right about exploration - when I learned a new meaning for "places".

Conclusion

I will conclude this account of the Journal of Exploration by an aside to my brethern, college teachers of composition--not all of whom are in the English Department. One of the best writing teachers I know about, in addition to the ones I've already mentioned, is Peter Misch, a geology professor at the University of Washington. But most of the responsibility for the teaching of writing in colleges is assigned to composition teachers, the only teachers who have to teach form in writing without the content that comes with teaching a subject. The Journal of Exploration will do little to help students improve the form of their writing. However, students are willing to work harder on the form of their writing if they have content that interests them--doing it, not writing about it. The problem is to find a content that interests you. If you don't, it's another Sunday evening with twenty-five almost-five-hundred-word essays due back in the morning. Writing authored by an authority has a better chance of being interesting than writing without authority. The student is the authority about his own experience, but he or she has to be taught what responsibilities go with that authority. "The unexamined life... etc." Nothing could induce me to read a student's account of falling in love, but it seems cruel not to allow students to write about the classic experience of going home for the first time. The classic experiences are by definition the most commonplace, and hence, require the most skill of the writer. This journal is designed to help the writer make discoveries out of common experiences. An account of a discovery requires less skill of the writer to be interesting. If you are tempted to try having your students use this journal system, heed this warning: Don't relent on the form of the journal. You cannot order a student to be smart, witty, humane, humble or imaginative; you can insist on the form. A journal kept according to the form I have described will help the student produce a useful record of his or her experience, including the experience

of reading an old story, such as the Iliad. Helping the student write something interesting out of his or her record is where the hard work, for teacher and student, begins. At least you could have a written record of facts and images with which to begin.

- ¹Virginia Woolf, The Diary of Virginia Woolf, ed. Anne Oliver Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), Volume One, 65.
- ²Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1953), p. 156.
- ³Frederick A. Pottle, ed., Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), p. 12.
- ⁴London Journal, p. 224.
- ⁵V W Diary, I, 4-8 passim.
- ⁶V W Diary, I, 13.
- ⁷James Boswell, Private Papers of James Boswell, ed. G. Scott and F.A. Pottle (Yale, 1928-1934), XI, 217-18. Cited in J.C. Beaglehole, The Life of Captain James Cook (Stanford: 1974), p. 451.
- ⁸Boswell, Papers, XI, 256-7.
- ⁹Beaglehole, p. 454.
- ¹⁰James Cook, The Journals of Captain James Cook, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge for the Hakluyt Society: 1955), I, 286.
- ¹¹Cook, I, 74.
- ¹²Cook, I, 83.
- ¹³Cook, I, 84.
- ¹⁴Cook, I, 127.
- ¹⁵Beaglehole, p. 439.
- ¹⁶Beaglehole, p. 471.
- ¹⁷Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, The Puritans (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), II, 461.
- ¹⁸From his "Introduction," V W Diary, I, xiii, xiv.