



A Brief History of Diaries: From Pepys to Blogs (Brief Histories)

Alexandra Johnson

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At a time when journals are staking their territory on the blogosphere, this is a timely consideration of the diary's origins and its long history in literary, political, and scientific realms alike

Be they fearless, candid, naïve, or exhibitionistic, personal bloggers now occupy an extraordinary position—projecting their inner most lives to all those with an internet connection. This is merely the most recent mutation of a unique—and often misunderstood—literary form. Tracing the diary's quirky and compelling history through centuries of writing for and about one's self, this intriguing guide traces the art form back to when the earliest pilgrims and explorers kept journals on their findings, scientists such as Darwin used them to develop their theories, and writers from Tolstoy to Virginia Woolf to Lessing mined diaries for their creative work. Historical and political diaries—most famously that of Anne Frank—are also included in the mix to illuminate what diaries do best: enable a inwards movement so that the troubled mind can find a way outwards into the world.

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