

On the Uses of Keeping a Notebook: Autobiographical Narrative Inquiry and Marion Milner's *A Life of One's Own*

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*In 1934, Marion Milner, writing under the pseudonym Joanna Field, published *A Life of One's Own*, reflecting on her seven-year undertaking of keeping a diary aimed at answering the question, what makes me happy? The diary itself is not the text of the work. Rather, *A Life of One's Own* forms a research text that anticipates contemporary autobiographical narrative inquiry. Recognizing narrative inquiry's grounding in John Dewey's 1930s theories of experience, this paper explores the ways in which, first, experience is explicitly valued in the text and, second, the ways in which the text provides evidence that diary or notebook keeping can serve as an important process in autobiographical narrative inquiry. The author concludes the paper by offering reflections on some possible uses of notebook keeping for both narrative inquirers and educators.*

*En 1934, Marion Milner, écrivant sous le pseudonyme de Joanna Field, a publié *A Life of One's Own*, une réflexion sur les sept ans pendant lesquels elle a tenu un journal personnel dans le but de répondre à la question Qu'est-ce qui me rend heureuse? Le journal n'est pas le texte de l'œuvre; c'est plutôt *A Life of One's Own* qui constitue le texte de recherche et qui préfigure l'enquête narrative autobiographique contemporaine. Reconnaisant le fondement de l'enquête narrative dans les pensées de John Dewey pendant le années 1930 sur l'expérience, cet article explore d'abord les façons dont le texte valorise explicitement l'expérience pour ensuite porter sur les façons dont le texte fournit des preuves que la tenue d'un journal ou d'un carnet peut servir de processus important dans l'enquête narrative autobiographique. L'auteure conclut en offrant des réflexions sur des emplois possibles de la tenue d'un journal, tant pour ceux qui entreprennent une enquête narrative que les éducateurs.*

Of all the diaries, journals, and notebooks in all the world, why has the pull of Marion Milner's *A Life of One's Own* (1934/2011) been so strong for me? The apparent reference, of course, to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, a work that catalyses feminist writing practice, has been part of the draw. I have found myself wondering about the move from *A Room* with "a lock on the door if you are to write fiction or poetry," (Woolf, 1929, p. 110) as Woolf famously proclaimed, to *A Life*, as if Milner was immediately stating her intention to attend to experiences outside the writer's room. I, too, have wondered, as Rachel Bowlby noted in her introduction to the 2011 edition of *A Life of One's Own*, about the ways in which each work offers "in its own way, a discussion of what a woman can be—and of the many women that are to be found within or as aspects of any one woman" (Bowlby, p. xxix).

My interest, however, extends beyond the intrigue of the title, recognizing that although the “proximity of the titles (and of their publication dates, *A Life* just five years after *A Room*) makes it appear that Marion Milner must have intended an allusion or some kind of homage to Woolf’s earlier book,” yet “she never actually says so” (Bowlby, p. xxix). Instead, I am interested in examining the ways in which *A Life*, with its focus on experience, resembles a narrative inquiry research text, a text, in this case, written as reflections on seven years of Milner’s collection of autobiographical narrative data through her practice of diary writing. I’m thus also attentive to the publication proximity of *A Life of One’s Own* to John Dewey’s *Experience and Education* (1938), given its use as core to the understanding of experience within narrative inquiry. Though I do not make the claim in this paper that this particular proximity is more than an intriguing coincidence, both *A Life* and *Experience and Education* are interested in the project of valuing and, then, understanding experience.

Admittedly, reading *A Life* as a narrative inquiry research text may seem anachronistic given that narrative inquiry as a research methodology was substantially developed in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century (Clandinin, 2006). However, narrative inquiry is underpinned by Dewey’s theories of experience, “an approach to research that enacts many if not all of the principles of a Deweyan theory of inquiry” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006, p. 42). But it is through the central concern of “experience” that I see strong connections between Dewey’s *Experience and Education* and the ways in which Milner characterizes, expresses, understands, and theorizes experience in *A Life of One’s Own*. Therefore, through a close reading of Milner’s explicit use of the term “experience” in *A Life*, I will demonstrate the ways in which the work can be read as a text that anticipates modern autobiographical narrative inquiry research texts.

In doing so, I will also make the case for the possible uses of notebook keeping (or journal or diary writing, terms which I will treat interchangeably) for narrative inquirers, whether or not their research is directed towards autobiographical questions or wonders. This builds upon the explicit suggestion that journal keeping is one of the recommended tools for those inquiring into narratives of experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). They have argued,

One of the tools we have found useful is to keep an ongoing journal account of our daily actions and our thoughts about those actions. These journals are ongoing records of practices and reflections on those practices. They certainly do not have to be kept for years or even for a year, but they do need to be kept consistently for a block of time. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, pp. 34-35)

By way of example and in support of this argument, I will share observations from a personal experiment in and experience of daily notebook keeping undertaken in 2018. These reflections add to the growing number of notebook keepers who look back and consider the ways in which the experience of keeping a notebook has shaped their writing and their (written) lives. Most notable for my purposes is Joan Didion, whose essay, “On Keeping a Notebook,” provided inspiration for the title of this paper. In her wonders about her rationale for keeping a notebook, she mused: “*How it felt to me*: that is getting closer to the truth about a notebook” (Didion, 1968/2017, p. 196), reasoning that “your notebook will never help me, nor mine you” (p. 205). In other words, individual experience is foregrounded.

In addition to narrative inquirers engaged in educational research, this paper may also be of interest to teachers and teacher educators interested in some possible uses of learning journals across a range of educational contexts, contexts Jennifer A. Moon carefully details in her *Learning journals: A handbook for reflective practice and professional development* (2006).

(Readers interested in the practices and techniques associated with learning journals in various contexts will find Moon's book instructive.) This paper was initially prompted by a course undertaken during my doctoral studies in 2018, taught by David Lewkowich, in which we explored notebooks and notebook keeping as they figure in both literary studies and in the classroom. Although Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* has been an ever-present text in my adult life, Milner's *A Life*, in contrast, is a text I first encountered alongside the experience of notebook keeping in my own particular educational context. This paper, therefore, also provides an example of work that can emerge from encouraging (or requiring) the use of learning journals in a classroom.

Setting the Context for Reading *A Life of One's Own* as Narrative Inquiry

In 1934, Marion Milner, writing under the pseudonym Joanna Field, published *A Life of One's Own*, reflecting on her seven-year undertaking of keeping a diary aimed at answering the question, what makes me happy? The diary itself, however, is not the text of the work:

This book is the record of a seven years' study of living. The aim of the record was to find out what kinds of experience made me happy.

The method was: (a) to pick out those moments in my daily life which had been particularly happy and try to record them in words. (b) To go over these records in order to see whether I could discover any rules about the conditions in which happiness occurred.

The form of the book follows from the nature of the experiment. I have tried to show the development of the problem by giving actual extracts from my diaries. I have tried always to keep to the facts as I saw them in order to show how I gradually pieced together the hints and clues which led to my final conclusions. (Milner, 1934, p. xxxiii)

That is, the text Milner published is a kind of research text, drawing on diary entries as field notes and source material. The text presents Milner's findings, her conclusions, from the seven-year experiment.

A Life of One's Own was the first of six books published during Milner's career as a British writer, researcher, and psychoanalyst. She began the research for the book—her diary entries—in 1926, a year before marrying Dennis Milner. Their son, John, was born in 1932, while she was writing the text of the book. As Bowlby noted, these experiences, though mentioned, are rare in the text of the book. Their “extraordinary nature only then serves to highlight Milner's deliberate downplaying of their importance, by comparison with what she regards as the real journey” (Bowlby, 2011, p. xv), involving “excursions into the hinterlands of my own mind” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 62, as cited in Bowlby, 2011, p. xv).

The book owes some of its form to her college training and field of study. Having graduated from University College London with a degree in psychology in 1924, it makes sense that Milner shaped her text to be “presented as social-scientific rather than literary experimentation” (Smith, 2018, p. 96). In other words, although her interest was directed towards understanding experience, “her method is described as at once wholly specific (one's own) and as having the potential to assist readers to unearth an equally unique subjectivity” (Smith, 2018, p. 97). Through her attentiveness to the uniqueness of her own experience, the text she crafted reads, to me, very much like autobiographical narrative inquiry. By way of an example that demonstrates

the form of *A Life*, in which Milner moves frequently between her own earlier-composed diary and her observations of that text, she wrote

On the 14th [of December, 1926] I began to have doubts about what I was doing:

I don't think this diary is much good if it only records feelings. It should be a motive for experiment as well as observation. I want—now, while wondering what I want, the patterns and colourings on the vase on my table took on a new and intense vitality—I want to be so harmonious in myself that I can think of others and share their experience.

On the 15th I wrote,

Last night I was sick of mental things and self-observation. I saw the exhibition of Flemish pictures but felt they spoke a strange language and only occasionally could I catch the gist of what they said—a Van der Weyden Madonna and Child, in tones of mellow autumn sunlight, two Rubens figures in a small sketch, irradiating immense vigour and energy, scraps of striking harmonies of colour—I wanted someone to interpret them.

In reading through my diary I can now see what I did not notice at the time, that the effort of recording my experiences was having an influence upon their nature, I was beginning to take notice of and seek ways of expressing occurrences which had before been lost in vagueness. (Milner, 1934/2011, pp. 16-17; italics added to indicate diary text)

Before turning to an analysis of Milner's understanding of experience and how it might be read as a kind of narrative inquiry, I'll next outline some of the key ideas that ground narrative inquiry as a study of experience.

John Dewey's Language of Experience

In his influential 1928 text, *Education and Experience*, John Dewey outlined his philosophy of experience and how such philosophy might be applied to educational theory. "Dewey held that one criterion of experience is continuity, namely, the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2), what Dewey himself called the "experiential continuum" (1938/2015, p. 33). In developing these ideas about the necessity to view experience through this continuum, Dewey observed that "growth, or growing as developing, not only physically but intellectually and morally, is one exemplification of the principle of continuity" (p. 36).

Although Dewey's project was directed towards education, I think it is fair to argue that a multi-year diary project is ideally suited to acknowledge and work with the principle of continuity of experience, recognizing that the act of diary writing and reading engages similarly with the past, present, and future. Specifically, reading the writings of the past, writing in the present, and imagining the future in words contributes to an expression of the continuity of individual experience. As Clandinin and Connelly have offered, "Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future" (2000, p. 2). As such, diaries like Milner's, and texts like *A Life of One's Own*, exemplify the ways in which time and experience are inextricably entangled.

In this way, and through this idea of “continuity of experience,” diarists, narrative inquirers, teacher educators, and teachers alike will recognize the ways in which growth, learning, and teaching are committed and connected to the future. Dewey offered that the “principle of continuity in its educational application means ... that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process” (1938/2015, p. 47). In other words, engaging in these activities requires an orientation towards the future while, nevertheless, working within the present that emerges from the past.

Experience in Narrative Inquiry

At its methodological core, and simply put, “narrative inquiry is the study of experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189). More specifically, narrative inquiry is invested in understanding experience within a Deweyan framework, allowing “for the study of experience that acknowledges the embodiment of the person living in the world” (Johnson, 1987 as cited in Clandinin, 2013, p. 18). Further, and related to the project of ongoing notebook or diary keeping, narrative inquiry acknowledges that experience continues, happening on the edges of any project or any defined text. As Clandinin and Connelly suggested, “experience has a wholeness and an integrity about it that is neither left in the field nor on the pages of a field text but is alive at the end just as it is in the beginning” (p. 189). These constellations of experience align with Milner’s own project, which I will outline below.

Marion Milner’s Understanding of Experience in *A Life of One’s Own*

In the preface to the 1952 edition of *A Life of One’s Own*, Marion Milner wrote, “The deliberate endeavour to find a way of coming to terms with daily experience, which began in 1926, has continued during nearly twenty-five years of living” (1934/2011, p. xii). Though the original preface made clear that the intended project “was to find out what kinds of experience made me happy” (p. xxxiii), she doesn’t mention “happiness” in the updated preface. I read this shift as a signal that the core of her project—at least given the luxury of nearly two decades of reflection—is her ongoing interest in the “real understanding of experience” (p. 159), as she suggested near the end of the original text, in a chapter titled “Retrospect.”

Milner’s Experiences

As a complete work, including both prefaces and the afterword, Milner mentions “experience” ninety-six times, of which only six instances are drawn from her quoted diary entries. From what she published as her final research text, or “meta-diaries” (Haughton, 2014, p. 350), the entries themselves were not, in the main, her space for reflection on experience. Rather, the diary entries contain writing about her personal lived experiences, experiences that included the quotidian, like trying on and wanting red shoes (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 16) or making lists of things she hates or loves (pp. 35-36). Her diaries are her stories, lived and told.

When she does turn her attention to “experience” explicitly in the diary entries she cites, she offers a glimpse into the rationale for her interest in understanding experiences as a phenomenon. For instance, early in the text citing a diary entry she wrote,

What I want is, not when I came to die to say, ‘I’ve been as useful as I know how’—I ought to want that

but I don't. I want to feel I have 'lived'. But what on earth do I mean by that? I mean something silly and Sunday paperish like 'plumbing the depths of human experience', or 'drinking life to the dregs'. What nonsense it sounds. (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 3)

As self-skeptical as she seems to be early on in her experience of diary keeping, she came to recognize the diary process again in one of the cited entries, as a place "to discover where one can put one's faith, as shown by experience" (p. 19). As she later acknowledged, her project of diary keeping activity was not primarily focused on the evaluation of her writing, as the diary entries served as records of her lived experiences in the present:

About this time I came upon many new experiences. Up to now I had been determined to examine my experience in order to find out where and why it was inadequate. Now, when new things were beginning to happen to me, I seem to have felt, for a time at least, that the experience was enough in itself and that it was better simply to live it, since looking at it too deliberately might spoil it. So, although the diary continues, somewhat intermittently, it becomes more a simple record of external happenings than a deliberate attempt to evaluate and understand them. (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 26).

That is, the place for evaluation comes later as she began writing *A Life of One's Own*, creating the research text out of the field notes of diary entries. Separating these processes is consistent with her intention to create and live an "experiment," and it's this process that has become intriguing for me as a narrative inquirer.

Milner's Reflections on Writing of Her Experiences

In other words, like all narrative inquirers, Milner is interested in understanding experience, even though she recognized that "I little knew what this apparently simple act of trying to be aware of my own experience would involve me in" (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 5). Throughout the text, she turned to the diary text as a means of better understanding the nature of her own lived experience, developing ideas about, for instance, "what she calls her 'blind' or automatic thinking, her outcast or wandering thoughts (thoughts and feelings kept out of awareness)" (Olson, 2013, p. 1009), or the idea that "wide-attention thoughts are winged thoughts, alighting unexpectedly like Pegasus" (p. 1008). In similar fashion, much of the latter half of the text gestures towards theories she developed as part of her later work as a psychoanalyst (Haughton, 2014; Olson, 2013; Smith, 2018).

Although these budding theories are core to the text, I'm interested here in the ways in which Milner was invested specifically in understanding experience, including the experience of keeping the diary. For instance, she wrote, "Writing down my experiences then seemed to be a creative act which continually lit up new possibilities in what I had seen" (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 23). She repeatedly returned to this idea—that life experiences are shaped and enhanced by the act of writing down those experiences. For instance, within the text, Milner drew attention to the ways in which describing experience changed the ways in which she observed experience: "Not only did I find that trying to describe my experience enhanced the quality of it, but also this effort to describe had made me more observant of the small movements of the mind" (p. 47).

In these reflections, Milner proposed an important description of the main limitation to her experiment, offered through the way she comes to understand experiences. In the chapter titled "Retrospect," she observed,

I had set out to try and observe moments of happiness and find out what they depended upon. But I had discovered that different things made me happy when I looked at my experience from when I did not. The act of looking was somehow a force in itself which changed my whole being. (1934/2011, p. 156)

In Deweyan terms, one might recall the idea that “Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had” (Dewey, 1938/2015, p. 39). In other words, the very activity of writing, of choosing experiences to describe, shifts the experiences themselves. Experiences that are recorded in writing are never outside the act of writing them down.

Reading *A Life of One's Own* as a Narrative Inquiry Research Text

In addition to making the case that one can read and understand *A Life of One's Own* as a text which resembles a narrative inquiry research text, it is important to ask, If a project isn't intentionally undertaken within the framework of an explicit methodology, what use does it serve to read the text as such? My answer to this question is a cautious but deliberate one. As I read *A Life of One's Own*, I read an example of an autobiographical narrative inquiry research text that uses diary writing as field notes. Although autobiographical narrative inquiries will be as unique as the individuals engaged in their writing, when preparing for and conceptualizing a project, it can be helpful and instructive to read work across the breadth of the autobiographical narrative inquiry genre. For that reason, it's worth considering Milner's *A Life* as such a text.

Like narrative inquiry research texts, as Hugh Haughton suggested of Milner's diary projects, “these books are about returning to diaries, and using diaries to return to the past” (2014, p. 350). As Milner noted, “I saw also how it was that when I had let my thoughts write themselves there had emerged such a swarm of apparently unconnected and irrelevant ideas from the depths of my past experience” (1934/2011, p. 98). So, although the project is devoted to learning something about ways to live in the future, it is through her additional attention to the past, alongside her inner and outer worlds that, I suggest, Milner can be read as thinking “inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49).

At its core, “narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 13). In the year of *A Life of One's Own's* publication, Milner began a research project which led to her *The Human Problem in Schools* (1938), in which she explicitly studied “*narratives* of students, parents and Head Mistresses” (Farley, 2015, p. 438, emphasis added). In addition to the ways in which *A Life* anticipates autobiographical narrative inquiry, she continues to engage in understanding experience through narrative, in ways that I read as consistent with the narrative inquiry impulse and methodology:

Framed within this view of experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only on individuals' experiences but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. Narrative inquirers study the individual's experience in the world, an experience that is storied both in the living and telling and that can be studied by listening, observing, living alongside another, and writing and interpreting texts. (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, pp. 42-43)

As already noted above, though it may be anachronistic to interpret *A Life of One's Own* as an

autobiographical narrative inquiry research text, reading the work as such provides fresh attention into her conceptualization of experience, and a focus on understanding the project as one devoted to a “real understanding of experience” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 159). This reading may also provide an avenue for future research, to consider the ways in which Milner used narrative as field texts in her later research, and the ways in which understanding experience remained part of her project, such as in *The Human Problem in Schools* (1938).

Personal Experiences of Notebook Keeping

Concurrent with the experience of reading and reflecting upon on the nature of Marion Milner's project undertaken in *A Life of One's Own*, I also embarked on a month-long experiment in paper-based, daily notebook keeping. I chose a turquoise Moleskine notebook because I'd always wanted a beautifully coloured Moleskine and had never felt previously that such a purchase wasn't at least a little bit too extravagant. The notebook I chose included adequate room for writing in the lines, demarcated space for headings and marginalia, a table of contents, spaces for dates, and page numbers. As someone who appreciates structure and form alongside creative content spaces, the style of notebook felt perfect for me. I then chose a set of erasable pens in eight colours, which I was able to use except when travelling, fearing the possible explosion of ink on an airplane. So, while I travelled, a simple black felt-tip pen was my companion.

I use the term “experiment” deliberately. Like Marion Milner, I felt that my notebook keeping “should be a motive for experiment as well as observation” (1934/2011, p. 17). As I began, I knew I had questions and wonders I intended to reflect upon (Schultz, 2018), centred around the intersections of personal and professional identity. Although I stated these as “wonders” in the second entry on May 13, 2018, and even though I held these ideas in mind, I didn't return repeatedly to the one single question. The “experiment,” then, was set in motion with the intention, over the month, to discover what I would write with this wonder, knowing that, a month later, I would have stories and narrative to read and to explore.

The context for this particular wonder about professional and personal identity is relevant, so I wish to briefly describe the person I understood myself to be while undertaking this project. Although I am a first-generation university-goer, I am also, what some might call, a mid-career university administrator, undertaking a doctoral degree. Thinking forward, I expect to work professionally for another twenty years or so, which will mean that my doctoral degree should be of some formal use for the second half of my working life. But, at the time of undertaking this notebook keeping experiment, I was in-between, transitioning from yet another before to another after, and beginning again.

Further, at the beginning of this experiment, I was aware that part-way through I would be beginning a three-month leave from my place of work in order to study full-time. I haven't had the luxury of studying full-time without also working (at least part-time) for twenty years. As a result, I also knew that my time during the first few weeks of notebook keeping would also be filled, intensely, with work I needed to do to enable as smooth a transition into this leave as possible. I wasn't sure what impact this might have on what I would write.

What I did know, however, is that I would approach the writing as a narrative inquirer, recognizing “the importance of the temporal dimensions, social dimensions, and place-based dimensions of my work” (Schultz, 2018, p. 2). Accordingly, I used the demarcated header spaces to note not only the dates of writing, but also the time, place, and people of the writing time,

reminding myself to attend to these dimensions as part of my writing practice—and, a month later, part of my reading practice. Like Milner, I am now motivated to understand these experiences after the fact.

Remembering and Forgetting

Reading the notebook a month later, I was surprised to experience that some of the moments I'd recorded had slipped from my immediate memory, almost as if I'd forgotten that some events had taken place. The experience of "remembering" while reading, perhaps especially given the temporal proximity between writing to reading, was unexpected. For instance, until I re-read the notebook, I'd not remembered telling a story about my mother's mother, a grandmother I never met, when I participated in a doctoral research study about food and food experiences (Schultz, 2018), but there it was on page seventeen. I know the story about my grandmother, of course, but I don't recall telling it to others or writing it in my notebook. This is similar to the ways in which Milner also observed of one of her entries upon reading it years later: "When I had written this I immediately forgot it. Several years later I remembered the sense of understanding from that afternoon but not what I had understood" (1934/2011, p. 61). It strikes me that I've had this experience reading my own childhood journals as well, recognizing the words and described events, but not sensing I'd have any other access to such memories.

Identities

As mentioned above, I set out to deliberately write about my wonders about my personal and professional identities at a time of transition into a period of full-time study as a doctoral student. What strikes me as I read the 75 pages of notebook writing produced over the month is that very little of the text delves into the wonder directly or repeatedly. Instead, mostly, I wrote around these questions, dwelling instead with "everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.)" (de Certeau, 1984, p. xix), including notes recorded on public transit and notes recorded before, after, or about cooking and eating.

Yet, with a specific question in mind, I did turn my attention to my educational leave at intervals, discussing mostly the timeline and practical issues, rather than the identity questions. For instance, I wrote about "8 more days in the office" (p. 9) and about saying farewell (for a time) to colleagues. The identity question didn't really emerge directly in writing until after I'd stepped away from the day-to-day routine of my workplace. While travelling on May 27, I turned to Erin Manning's *The Minor Gesture* and recorded these words in my notebook: "Transition doesn't mean pure unconstrained becoming. It means flow and cut, discontinuity and difference. Transition is the swerve of experience through which continuity expresses itself" (2016, p. 40). Later on the page I wrote, "Transition is always a traveller's theme. But it's rarely the shifting of place that fully explains the 'swerve'" (p. 47). Beginnings and becomings are embedded in these transitional identity experiences—but they exist, at once obviously and surprisingly, within the whole continuity of my experience.

Living While Notebooking

After a week of notebooking, I began to notice that I was experiencing life and the world around me differently. I was unusually attuned to sounds and scenes that I thought might prompt

writing, even when I wasn't within easy reach of my notebook. On May 19, 2018, I noted the following:

More than anything, since beginning this notebook a week ago, I find myself in a heightened state of observation, looking for moments that spark ideas, hearing words that cause me to want to write. The experience of this awareness reminds me of when I wrote food reviews for a magazine. When I was writing about food, I tasted and felt food differently. I would remember morsels, scents, textures ... sweetness, salt, and bitterness ... in ways otherwise unavailable to me. (p. 30)

Though I'd not yet finished reading *A Life of One's Own* at the time of this entry, I notice that Milner, too, experienced a similar effect:

Particularly was I struck by the effect of writing things down. It was as if I were trying to catch something and the written word provided a net which for a moment entangled a shadowy form which was other than the meaning of the words. Sometimes it seemed that the act of writing was fuel on glowing embers, making flames leap up and throw light on the surrounding gloom, giving me fitful gleams of what was before unguessed at. (1934/2011, p. 47)

Drawing on my perspective as a narrative inquirer, I continued to observe in my own writing the shift in both the quality and character of my lived experiences—as well as my narratives about those experiences—owing to the very act of writing things down. For instance, while writing and resting from a perch near Ferguson's Cove while visiting Nova Scotia, Canada, I wrote the following:

The breeze seems to pause for just a second and I can suddenly smell sea air. The woman behind me on the plane yesterday said that she could always smell the salt air the moment she landed in Nova Scotia. My nose needed to be 10 ft. from water, in still air. (p. 55)

Although I can't be certain what this experience might have been like otherwise, I suspect it is an experience I wouldn't have had at all, had I not been engaged in notebook keeping. In other words, living while notebooking can be an altered experience, for better or for worse.

The Possible Uses of Notebook Keeping for Narrative Inquirers

On keeping a diary for an extended period of time, Marion Milner cautioned in her preface to *A Life of One's Own*: "let no one undertake such an experiment who is not prepared to find himself more of a fool than he thought" (1934/2011, p. xxxviii). I, too, have noticed silly or trivial writing in my notebook, writing that seems unremarkable and of little or no use for my inquiry or reflective purposes. However, as I continue to think about the ways in which Milner's diary keeping led to *A Life* and how my own notebook keeping experiment has provided me with insights in as little as a month, I suggest that there are several uses of notebook keeping which may be of use to narrative inquirers, especially autobiographical narrative inquirers.

In autobiographical narrative inquiry, "a special form of narrative inquiry [that] is somewhat similar to autoethnography" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 177), it is not unusual to "inquire into a range of field texts (such as photographs, journals, or memory box artifacts) that allow us to understand who we are, and are becoming, in relation with potential participants and particular phenomena" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 43). So, although notebook keeping is not new to the narrative

inquiry process, the way in which Milner composes her research text, drawing from seven years of personal data, provides an example to narrative inquirers looking to begin keeping a notebook for possible future use.

For researchers themselves as notebook keepers, and reflecting upon a reading of Milner's *A Life*, I see researcher notebook keeping as useful in three main ways: first, the notebook keeping may serve as the creation of field texts for a defined autobiographical narrative inquiry project, documenting one's own experiences as they are lived and told; second, notebook entries may provide researchers with additional field texts of their own experiences when living alongside participants over the course of a research project; and third, notebook keeping can become a practice that links ongoing storytelling and life telling—and retelling—across and between projects.

It's this third possible use that I find myself thinking about deeply, wondering if or for how long I will continue my experiment alongside and as part of my own experiences as a doctoral student and a narrative inquirer. Thinking again about the ways in which narrative inquiry practices are connected to ideas of education and learning through the continuity of experience, I wonder further about the ways in which teachers and teacher educators might be able to take up this kind of notebook keeping as part of their professional or teaching practice, inside and outside of classroom contexts, with an aim of deliberately creating mindful connections between education and experience.

Part of the appeal of Marion Milner's text, of course, is that it draws from seven years' worth of diary accounts. As Bowlby acknowledged, "while the happiness happenings are short term or small-scale phenomena, the 'seven years' study', on the other hand, seems to freight the project with history of its own and also with a traditional kind of significance" (2011, p. xiv). I do imagine that, for narrative inquirers and others who take up the journey, notebook keeping has the potential to create unexpected delights, insights, and records of experience—as both an inquirer and as a person in the world.

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