

Thinking on Paper: Incompleteness and the Essay

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All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining school-boy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.¹

Would I be wildly mistaken in speculating that the school-boy's snailish pace had something to do with an essay hastily completed as the sun rose that morning? Or perhaps with the prospect of receiving the mark for that essay several weeks later? For the unwilling school-boy or school-girl the essay can seem at best merely a joyless form of assessment and at worst a vicious form of punishment. And university study, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, offers no escape, for the essay retains a central place in the marking regime at universities around the globe. A more positive perspective on the essay probably requires taking it out of the classroom, where its merits and joys can be more readily acknowledged. Virginia Woolf, for example, in 'The Modern Essay', writes that

the principle which controls [the essay] is simply that it should give pleasure; the desire which impels us when we take it from the shelf is simply to receive pleasure. It should lay us under a spell with its first word, and we should only wake, refreshed, with its last.²

Woolf realises that during this rapture readers might experience 'amusement, surprise, interest, and indignation', but judges that, ultimately, 'we must never be roused'. Better this

than the surly response of the student, of course, but Woolf's validation of the pleasure principle raises another criticism of the essay: that it is belle-lettrist, ephemeral, insignificant. She herself recognises the dangers of the overly ornamental work, where 'words coagulate together into frozen sprays which, like grapes on a Christmas-tree, glitter for a single night, but are dusty and garish the day after'.³ But can essays be more than punishment or briefly glittering grapes? Woolf certainly thought so, not surprisingly given her considerable strengths as an essayist. But tellingly, despite the massive academic industry founded on her work, Woolf's essays have received little critical attention. As Rachel Bowlby noted as late as 1992, while Woolf the novelist is accepted as a major modernist figure, Woolf the essayist is 'little known, and often considered merely as an adjunct to the first'.⁴ Woolf's case exemplifies a broad academic neglect of the essay as a distinct form until relatively recently, when the essay began to receive more sustained treatment. Ironically, for a form over four hundred years old, recent critics and theorists have reconceived the essay as inherently subversive, possibly even postmodern.

One means of considering this radicalised, pomo essay lies in understanding that history, an approach which entails considering the essay not so much as a thing, but as a process. Michel Montaigne first brought together a collection of short discursive prose pieces in 1580, and in naming them 'essais', from the French root word for 'attempt', he signals that the activity of inquiry undertaken in the form might be ongoing. In this sense, an essay by its very nature is incomplete. Incompleteness might be seen as an admission of failure, or as a sign of deficiency. Nearly two hundred years after Montaigne, Samuel Johnson's definition of the essay as 'a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly performance' sounds almost dismissive.⁵ Yet Montaigne's modest term carries with it an awareness of the shortcomings of the medieval certainties, certainties which an emerging Humanism was directly challenging in the 16th century. That challenge, too, was an ongoing process, exemplified by the fact that Montaigne repeatedly revised his essays, as well as adding

to their total number. There 'is no such thing as a definitive edition' of Montaigne's essays, explains M.A. Screech, the editor of a recent edition. 'One has to choose,' he adds, the *Essays* being 'a prime example of the expanding book'.⁶ Here, incompleteness connotes an exploratory openness, a refusal to pretend that the last word can be said. Carl Klaus has described Montaigne's essays as 'a means of thinking on paper'⁷, and the same attitude is present on the essays of the first great English exponent of the essay, Francis Bacon. Bacon's first volume of essays appeared in 1597. Further editions, with numerous additions and alterations, appeared in 1612 and 1625, recording Bacon's reflective intelligence over a quarter of a century. Incompleteness, then, can signal the questing mind.

I shall return to the question of incompleteness later, but before doing so I want to look at the word 'I', for it is central to the vigour and flavour of many essays. The student essayist is often warned off using the personal pronoun, perhaps under the pretence that 'I' is *too* personal, and thus conveys less gravitas than the royal 'we'. Montaigne himself seems to have had no doubt as to the correct approach: 'I myself am the subject of my book', he announces boldly in the 'Note to the Reader'. M.A.Screech declares this 'a revolutionary decision', for, '[i]n the history of the known world only a handful of authors had ever broken the taboo against writing primarily about oneself, as an ordinary man'.⁸ Montaigne understands the implications of this approach:

If my design had been to seek the favour of the world I would have decked myself out better and presented myself in a studied gait. Here I want to be seen in my simple, natural, everyday fashion, without striving or artifice: for it is my own self that I am painting. Here, drawn from life, you will read of my defects and my native form so far as respect for social convention allows. . . ⁹

In placing himself at the centre of the essay process, Montaigne offers himself for criticism. For though he draws deeply from the ancient wisdom contained in books, he does not hide behind

that wisdom, or use it as a false authority for what are, ultimately, his own opinions and conclusions.

The personal viewpoint of the essay, then, can offer the reader an explicitly subjective conception and representation of the world. Compare this to the scientific paper or the political treatise, which purport to give an objective account of reality. The importance and utility of the essay's personal note is evident in the work of one of the major English essayists of the twentieth century, George Orwell. In 'Why I Write', Orwell famously presents four motives that he considers drive the writer: sheer egoism; aesthetic enthusiasm; historical impulse; political purpose. The last three seem to have more a social than a personal aspect, but Orwell explains aesthetic enthusiasm as the individual's perception of beauty and the desire to share this with others; historical impulse as the wish 'to see things as they are', and political purpose as the 'desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's ideas of the kinds of society that they should strive after'.¹⁰ These personal impulses fuse with Orwell's wish to write 'because there is some lie I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention'.¹¹ But this overtly public stance is underpinned by an intensely personal foundation:

I am not able, and I do not want, completely to abandon the world-view that I acquired in childhood. So long as I remain alive and well I shall continue to feel strongly about prose style, to love the surface of the earth, and to take pleasure in solid objects and scraps of useless information. It is no use trying to suppress that side of myself.¹²

For those who view Orwell primarily as a political writer, these statements are surprisingly personal. But, particularly in his essays, the personal invigorates and directly informs the political.

A small selection from Orwell's massive output of essays substantiates the case. One of his earliest pieces, 'A Hanging', published under his real name of Eric Blair, traces the thoughts of an colonial observer at the hanging of a Hindu prisoner in

imperial Burma. Biographers dispute whether or not Orwell (or Blair) witnessed a hanging,¹³ but David Lodge argues that ‘it doesn’t really matter’.¹⁴ For Lodge, the central paragraph of the essay is that in which the narrator comes to realise the implications of executing another human being. The ‘I’ of the essay, seeing the condemned man step aside to avoid a puddle on his way to the gallows, immediately understands ‘the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting short a life when it is in full tide. The man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive’.¹⁵ By reframing the brutal and brutalising death of the prisoner as a moment of personal illumination, shame and horror for the narrator, Rowel manages to humanise the anonymous criminal and to condemn the institution that perpetrates such punishment. While the post-colonial critic would probably explore the shortcomings of the essay’s Eurocentric perspective, the moral force and political critique of ‘A Hanging’ depends on the colonialist narrator’s self-perception and of his place in the imperial system carrying out the hanging.

A very different approach is taken in ‘Some Thoughts On The Common Toad’. In this essay, Orwell’s own experience and observations, sparked by the onset of spring, are fundamental to the general argument that enjoyment of the cycles of the natural world are beyond the control even of bureaucrats and dictators. Here, the link between personal and political is more overt:

I think that by retaining one’s childhood love of such things as trees, fishes, butterflies and--to return to my first instance--toads, one makes a peaceful and decent future a little more probable, and that by preaching the doctrine that nothing is to be admired except steel and concrete, one merely makes it a little surer that human beings will have no outlet for their surplus energy except in hatred and leader worship.¹⁶

Orwell’s individual experience and memory help him to appreciate the natural world, and to make a larger argument rejecting dehumanising social and political forces.

Still another personal concern, the misuse of words and its effect on public discourse, prompts one of Orwell's most famous and influential essays, 'Politics and the English Language'. Here he attacks the pretensions and sloppiness of writing by intellectuals, arguing that faults in written expression cross-pollinate with similar flaws in thinking. The result is thinking and writing which is poor at best, and corrupt and corrupting at worst. Yet the essay is not simply a catalogue of abuses, for Orwell argues that the decline in expression can be halted: 'one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases'. The rules he offers still merit consideration, but my point here is that Orwell's broad social point develops from a personal feeling that language is being misused. Not that he himself is free from sin. As he admits, '[I]ook back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against'.¹⁷ Like the essay form itself, the process of correcting decadent speech and thought can only be an attempt--absolutely necessary, but never complete. And it requires not only thoughtful writing, but also attentive reading, reading which 'hears' the redundant phrase, the pretentious diction, the meaningless word, and judges the argument accordingly.

These three essays exemplify the centrality of the personal aspect to Orwell's essay output, as well as some of the ways in which he employs the 'I'. They certainly do not exhaust the possibilities, for all 41 of Orwell's essays in the *Penguin Essays* collection are written from the first person perspective. Their titles alone indicative of the breadth of subject matter examined: 'Charles Dickens'; 'Shooting an Elephant'; 'Marrakech'; 'Antisemitism in Britain'; 'Boys' Weeklies'; 'Decline of the English Murder'; 'Reflections on Gandhi'. In each, though in different ways, the 'I' functions as point of reference, as self-critical observer, polemicist, humorist, cultural analyst, political commentator, literary critic. The personal essay offers liberating possibilities, allowing for short targeted arguments on an infinite range of topics. No wonder that when Orwell began his

own column for the Left-wing journal, *Tribune*, he called it 'As I Please'. Graham Good argues that Orwell's politicisation of the essay in fact reinvigorated a form which had (in 1930s England) become cosy and whimsical:

no longer would the old gentlemanly (or ladylike, as Virginia Woolf saw her own early work) tone be available. . . . For him the essayistic attitude, the offering of independent views based on individual thought and experience, came to have an immense *political* significance.¹⁸ [original emphasis]

Orwell was not alone in writing politicised essays in the 1930s,¹⁹ but his essays do counter the criticism of the essay as irredeemably belle-lettrist.

Traditionally, though, the more 'gentlemanly' personal essay has been seen as the highest achievement of the form, and, for some, the only variant truly worthy of the label. Hugh Walker, in 1915, exasperated by the many pieces of literature classified (or classifying themselves) as essays, argues that 'a term so elastic means little or nothing, just because it means anything. If we can call Locke's great work [*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*] and Lamb's dissertation on roast pigs alike essays, we have emptied the word of content'.²⁰ Walker deals with the dilemma by distinguishing between personal essays, or 'essays par excellence', and compositions which are short and relatively incomplete, and which have customarily been called essays. For Walker, such essays 'do not strictly belong to a separate literary form: the historical essay is an incomplete history, the philosophical essay might expand into a treatise'.²¹ Incompleteness clearly is the mark of deficiency, and true essays could 'under no circumstances expand into treatises; they are complete in themselves'. Montaigne and Francis Bacon are given as the representative practitioners of this type, but, as I have already shown, both these writers repeatedly reworked individual essays. To cope with this problem in terms of Bacon, Walker treats his early versions as a kind of apprentice work, in which 'the connexions [sic] are not worked out and expressed, but are implicit and can be supplied by the intelligence of the

alert reader'.²² As with Orwell over three hundred years later, the alert reader is required. But incompleteness cannot be dismissed as easily as Walker might like.

Mary Hamilton Law also offers a traditional view, based on a hierarchy in which the rather whimsical personal essay dominates. For her, the 'highest type of all, the one that is most certainly to be classed as pure literature among the fine arts is the personal or the familiar essay'.²³ Such essays are defined by their overt subjectivity:

personality is its keynote. . . .The familiar essay conveys the moods, the fantasies and whims, the chance reflections and random observations of the essayist.²⁴

Again, Montaigne and Lamb are taken as exemplary personal essayists. Law judges writing that is 'merely topical, ephemeral, journalistic or technical' as unworthy of the label 'essay'. These pieces are mere 'articles, 'papers', and treatises which burden our current periodicals, both popular and learned, and which flourish today and tomorrow are cast into the oven'.²⁵ One problem with this means of distinguishing between the 'purely' literary and the journalistic is that the whimsy of an essayist such a Lamb has passed its sell-by date; he is little read today. The essay can still be used as a butterfly net to catch chance reflections and random observations of latter-day Lambs, but in the hands of such sophisticated modern practitioners as Susan Sontag, Salman Rushdie and Gore Vidal, essays function as sharp scalpel for the dissection of the body politic.

Take Rushdie, by way of example. The essay collection *Imaginary Homelands*, published in 1991 (when Rushdie was deep in the shadows of a fatwa) records Rushdie's probing critiques of a variety of subjects during the 1980s and early 1990s. Some are primarily literary, or chart the (to use a Rushdie-ism) 'chutnified' histories of India and Pakistan; others refocus attention back to the colonial and post-colonial situation of Britain. Still others try to integrate these apparently disparate topics, as in "'Commonwealth Literature' Does Not Exist", in

which Rushdie argues ‘the folly of trying to contain writers inside passports’.²⁶ That essay ends with the view that

the English language ceased to be the sole possession of the English some time ago. Perhaps ‘Commonwealth Literature’ was invented to delay the day when we rough beasts [the formerly colonised] actually slouch into Bethlehem. In which case, it’s time to admit that the centre cannot hold.²⁷

What is striking, but also representative of many of the essays in *Imaginary Homelands*, is the sense that the ‘end’ of the essay merely marks a point in a larger or longer process of political and social activity, in this case the ongoing construction of a future Britain. That desire for a breaking down of political and cultural restrictions is nowhere more poignant than in the essay ‘Is Nothing Sacred?’, in which Rushdie argues the value of literature’s open engagement with ideas and diversity in the face of religious intolerance. ‘The only privilege literature deserves,’ he writes, ‘and this privilege it requires in order to exist--is the privilege of being the arena of discourse, the place where the struggle of languages can be acted out’.²⁸ Acted out, but not played out, for the ‘arena of discourse’ is a never-ending gabfest. ‘Is Nothing Sacred?’ adds to that discourse, and in doing so keeps it active, or actively incomplete.

Some literary critics have taken incompleteness as a sign of deficiency, but it seems truer to argue for the essay as inherently, and dynamically, incomplete. And it is in this sense that the essay as a form has attracted more recent scholars and commentators. For them, the essay’s incompleteness has a subversive quality, and, to paraphrase Jean-Francois Lyotard, suggests, or perhaps enacts, a suspicion of grand narratives. In fact, Lyotard has stated explicitly (as far as any words of Lyotard can be seen as explicit) that ‘[i]t seems to me that the essay (Montaigne) is postmodern’.²⁹ But the models for much of the recent rethinking of the essay are precursors of both Lyotard and the postmodern. Georg Lukacs and Theodor Adorno separately propose that, rather than a belle-lettrist record of whims and observations, the essay as a form might be better seen as an activity. In considering the judgement made in

the essay, Lukacs suggests that ‘the essential, the value-determining thing about it is not the verdict (as is the case with the system) but the process of judging’.³⁰ And in this process of judging, the essay becomes, for Adorno, the ‘critical form *par excellence*. . .the critique of ideology’.³¹ In this guise the essay is a potentially subversive force for Adorno: ‘the innermost form of the essay is heresy. By transgressing the orthodoxy of thought, something becomes visible in the object which it is orthodoxy’s purpose to keep invisible’.³²

It is in these terms, and often on the basis of the ideas of Lukacs and Adorno, that the essay has come back into some sort of scholarly favour in the last decade or so. There are several reasons for this, including the notion that the incompleteness of the essay harmonises with the postmodern wariness of totalising thought. R. Lane Kauffmann, for example, plays up the subversive and contemporary activity of ‘essaying’, suggesting that ‘the historical conflict between fragmentary and totalising modes of thought--between essay and system’ describes the ‘crisis of contemporary thought’.³³ Or, you could argue, the liberation of contemporary thought from the need to provide totalising answers. The anxiety that might come from open ended questioning also enables the open-ended discourse favoured by Salman Rushdie. And the fact that the essay need not prove its case, in the way that would be expected of the treatise, allows it to be a potent polemical weapon. The ‘complete’ thesis must prove its case definitively, while the ‘incomplete’ essay can make telling points without having to justify each claim. This activity of itself is not, of course, postmodern--the essay has from its inception been a form of active engagement. John O’Neill, writing on Montaigne, argues that the essay from the very beginning has been ‘an experiment in the community of truth, and not the packaging of knowledge ruled by definitions and operations’.³⁴

The view that the essay form challenges totalising authority been taken up by some feminist scholars, who see the essay as an ideal form for presenting subversive views. The editors of the collection, *The Politics of the Essay: Feminist Perspectives*,

argue that ‘unsystematised nature’ of the essay form, ‘its spontaneous and almost accidental quality, its assumed opposition to doctrinaire, disciplinary thinking, its focus on personal experience, its cultivation of diversity, its stress on particularity, its ‘happy inheritance of meaninglessness’ all suggest that the essay is ‘perfectly designed for feminist projects’.³⁵ One such ‘project’, far pre-dating this collection, is Virginia Woolf’s ‘A Room of One’s Own’, first published in 1929. In a recent introduction to a new edition, Michele Barrett argues that this essay, along with ‘Three Guineas’, constitute Woolf’s ‘two major political works’. She adds that the teacher casting around for works on women’s writing can be confident that students will find ‘a solid and well-supported argument that can be discussed on its merits’.³⁶ Oddly, this contradicts Woolf herself, who, on the very first page of the essay, admits: ‘I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer --to hand you after an hour’s discourse a nugget of truth to wrap between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever’.³⁷ Woolf makes clear that the proposed topic for the lectures, ‘Women and Fiction’, lies beyond the scope of easy conclusions. In making this point, and in the subsequent argument put forward, Woolf draws upon the generic conventions of the essay. ‘A Room of One’s Own’ is a highly personal kaleidoscope of thoughts, experiences, research (real and bogus), speculations and observations. And it ends, as one might expect of an essay, by projecting: into a future in which the fictional sister of Shakespeare will be born.

Though ‘A Room of One’s Own’ ends positively, if fantastically, Woolf does not set out to lull her audience. Instead, near the beginning of the essay, having established that she will offer no easy solutions and conclusions, she adopts an approach that is both tentative and provocative, offering up a challenge to her initial listeners and to her eventual readers:

Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping. If not,

you will of course throw the whole thing into the waste-paper basket and forget all about it.³⁸

Again, Woolf draws upon the inherent ability of the essay, and the essayist, to dodge the demand for definitive proof. This freedom the genre offers necessarily involves the reader in active engagement with the text. As I have suggested, the 'experiments in truth' O'Neill considers central to Montaigne's essays determine that those essays 'are unwelcome to the passive reader. They require that the reader share in the author's activity'.³⁹ There are problems with this readerly 'freedom', of course, for as Claire De Obaldia realises, 'the reader's invitation to interpret is an invitation to the deeply 'unsettling' experiences of having his conclusions declared premature or invalid'.⁴⁰ In other words, the incompleteness of the essay, at the same time as it opens up possibilities for readers, offers no means by which the reader might have those conclusions validated. The price of freedom, at least in terms of the essay, is eternal indeterminacy. For some, this can lead to frustration, to a sense that reading essays is not worth the effort required. Whining schoolgirls and boys might feel the same about writing essays. For others, who view incompleteness not as a deficiency, but as a stimulus to further thought, the essay provides one of the most flexible forms by which fresh and invigorating exploration can take place. And who knows what the reader might discover; that is the challenge and the pleasure the essay has already provided for centuries, and will continue to provide for the inquisitive and the adventurous.

¹ *As You Like It*, II.7, 139-147.

² Virginia Woolf, 'The Modern Essay', in *A Woman's Essays. Selected Essays: Volume One*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), p. 40.

³ *ibid*, p.43.

⁴ Rachel Bowlby, 'Introduction: A More than Maternal Tie', in ed Bowlby, p.ix. Leila Brosnan's *Reading Virginia Woolf's Essays and Journalism*, the most extensive treatment of Woolf as essayist, was not published until 1997.

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- ⁵ E.L.McAdam and George Milne, eds, *Johnson's Dictionary: A Modern Selection* (London: 1963), p.167.
- ⁶ M.A. Screech, 'Note on the Text', in ed. Screech, *Michel de Montaigne: The Complete Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993) p.xlix.
- ⁷ Carl Klaus, 'Essay', in Robert Scholes and Carl Klaus, eds., *Elements of Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.4.
- ⁸ Screech, p.xv.
- ⁹ Michel Montaigne, 'To The Reader', in Screech ed., plix.
- ¹⁰ George Orwell, 'Why I Write', in *The Penguin Essays of George Orwell* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), pp.3-4.
- ¹¹ *ibid*, p.5.
- ¹² *ibid*, pp.5-6.
- ¹³ Michael Shelden, *Orwell: The Authorised Biography* (London: William Heinemann, 1991), p.113, argues that 'everything about. . . 'A Hanging' suggests that it is based on facts'. Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), pp. 589-90, is sceptical.
- ¹⁴ David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p.11.
- ¹⁵ George Orwell, 'A Hanging', in *Penguin Essays*, p.16.
- ¹⁶ George Orwell, 'Some Thoughts on the Common Toad', in *Penguin Essays*, p.363.
- ¹⁷ George Orwell, 'Politics and the English Language', in *Penguin Essays*, p.356.
- ¹⁸ Graham Good, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (London: Routledge, 1988), p.174.
- ¹⁹ See, for example, the essays of Aldous Huxley collected in *The Hidden Huxley*, ed. David Bradshaw (London: Faber, 1994).
- ²⁰ Hugh Walker, *The English Essay and Essayists* (London: Dent, 1915), p.2.
- ²¹ Walker, p.3.
- ²² Walker, p.18.
- ²³ Marie Hamilton Law, *The English Familiar Essay in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1934), pp. 7-8.
- ²⁴ Law, p.8.
- ²⁵ Law, p.7.
- ²⁶ Salman Rushdie, 'Commonwealth Literature' Does Not Exist', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1991), p67.

- ²⁷ Rushdie, p.70.
- ²⁸ Rushdie, 'Is Nothing Sacred?', p.427
- ²⁹ Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'Answering the Question; What is Postmodernism?' in Thomas Docherty ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Harvester, 1993), p.46.
- ³⁰ Georg Lukacs, 'On the Nature and Form of the Essay', in *Soul and Form* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1974), p.18.
- ³¹ Theodor Adorno, 'The Essay as Form', in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O'Connor (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.106.
- ³² Theodor Adorno, 'The Essay as Form', in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O'Connor (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.110.
- ³³ R. Lane Kauffmann, 'The Skewed Path: Essaying as Unmethodical Method', in *Essays On The Essay: Redefining the Genre*, Alexander J. Butrym ed (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p232.
- ³⁴ John O'Neill, *Essaying Montaigne: A Study of the Renaissance Institution of Writing and Reading* (London: Routledge, 1982), p.9.
- ³⁵ Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres and Elizabeth Mittman, 'An Introductory Essay', in Joeres and Mittman eds, *The Politics of the Essay: Feminist Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp.19-20.
- ³⁶ Michele Barrett, 'Introduction', in Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own. Three Guineas*, Barrett ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), p.ix.
- ³⁷ Woolf, p.3.
- ³⁸ Woolf, p.4.
- ³⁹ O'Neill, p.20.
- ⁴⁰ Claire De Obaldia, *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.34.