

ACTIVIST ESSAYISM

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By Paul Woolridge
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Never to be yourself and yet always – that is the problem.
(Virginia Woolf, ‘The Modern Essay’)

Any study of the essay is bound to run into the problem of classification, even more modest inquiries like this one which restrict the genre’s range to twentieth-century Anglo-American literary life. To speak of ‘the essay’, in fact, is already to invoke it as a distinct form of writing, a genre to itself, a rubric under which each individual instance engenders some larger, definitive set of shared criteria. We speak in similar presupposing terms about the novel, the lyric poem, the short story and the epic (among the many others) as literary objects, written forms defined and characterised by larger generic categories. The essay, to be sure, has many such distinguishable features which mark it off as at least a minor literary genre recognisable apart from the rest. Spontaneous, brief, sceptical, ambulatory, tentative, exploratory, subjective, experiential, conversational, fragmentary, elastic, unmethodical and free are some of the more common epithets imputed to its form. As Graham Good observes, ‘many good insights into the potentials of the essay form can be gained from the titles of collections’, especially when drawn from critical and self-reflexive characterisations focused on the essay form itself.¹

Thus, for example, Good’s own *The Observing Self*, or O.B. Hardison’s ‘Binding Proteus’, or R. Lane Kauffmann’s ‘The Skewed Path: Essaying as Unmethodical Method’, or Alfred Kazin’s ‘The Open Form: Essays for our Time’, or Edward Hoagland’s ‘What I Think, What I Am’, or Reda Bensmaïa’s *The Barthes Effect: The Essay as Reflective Text*, or Hilaire Belloc’s ‘An Essay upon Essays upon Essays’, or more philosophically-oriented collections like *Situations* by Sartre, *Prisms* by Adorno, *Illuminations* by Benjamin, and *Spurs* by Derrida. Apparent in all these titular formulations is both the overarching sense of the essay’s freedom – the autonomy to observe, shape, pursue, affirm, think, reflect, critique, locate, look through, take up, reveal – and the implicit conception of the essay as an active form. That is, the essay is not simply a

literary object, not merely the end product of the act of writing things called essays, but an intellectual act premised on individual action, and thus reflective of a discursively active mode of ‘engaging’ with the world, an activity of evaluative assaying rightly named ‘essayism’, or what I submit we refer to (non-politically) as ‘activist essayism’.

Theorists like Scholes and Klaus identify this elemental essayistic action as the attempt to persuade, tracing the essay form back to the oratorical tradition of Greek and Roman rhetoric:

Behind the essay lie the traditions of oratory and debate. Behind the written form we are studying lie oral forms of persuasion — forms which are repeatedly used by politicians on the campaign trail, legislators on the congressional floor, lawyers in the courtroom, and numerous other kinds of public figures in public situations. Different as their specific goals may be, all public speakers are alike in that they are seeking to bring an audience around to their point of view on a subject [...]. At the heart of all essays is the idea of persuasion.²

Essays can do many other things, of course, but the general nature of the essayistic act, as Scholes and Klaus suggest, is rooted in this activity of persuasion: ‘In some sense all essays are persuasive because they are, after all, views—ways of looking at a thing rather than a thing itself.’³ The allusion here gestures towards Pater’s reformulation of Arnold in the preface to *The Renaissance*: “‘To see the object as in itself it really is,” has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one’s object as it really is, is to know one’s own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly’.⁴ Pater’s oft-cited focus on gauging his own personal impressions as a way of getting to objects ‘as they really are’ dodges, of course, the more difficult question of defining what any such object *really* is. Ontological difficulties aside, though, activist essayism is, in various ways, just this: the discursive meeting point between subject and object, between critic and audience. That is, the process of realising a point for oneself and then trying to establish it through a series of strategic rhetorical appeals (‘forms of oral persuasion’) deployed to win audience-approval, whether that audience be the individual reader, a large classroom of students, a crowded public forum,

¹ Graham Good, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the essay* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 23. See also *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre*, ed. Alexander J. Butrym (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1989) and *Literary Nonfiction: Theory, Criticism, Pedagogy*, ed. by Chris Anderson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1989). For sustained discussion of ‘the personal essay’ see especially the journal *College English*.

² Robert Scholes and Carl H. Klaus, *Elements of the Essay* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 5 & 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1928), p. x. Note also that this essay will not explore the strand of philosophical essayism running from Lukacs to Benjamin and Adorno. Refer to Claire de Obaldia’s *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

or some specific demographic sector of the culture at large. How such strategies of appeal differ is the point at which the essay splinters off into its many various forms.

In addition to the persuasive essay, Scholes and Klaus also recognise the narrative, the dramatic and the meditative essay, each grounded in its respective activity of narrating, conversing and meditating, and each generically expressed through its correlative literary form: the story, play and poem. Essays incorporating aspects of these forms, needless to say, borrow freely from their diverse structural elements. The narrative essay, for example, roughly employs many of the fundamentals basic to any story: events and characters in chronological sequence, a plot with climax and resolution, descriptive modes of presentation built around some specific event, historical episode, travelling experience or character sketch. Graham Good makes a similar point, singling out four corresponding sub-genres of the essay as activity:

The most useful classification is based on content, or rather on the basic activities which give essays a recognizable and persistent forward movement. I distinguish four principle types: the travel essay, the moral essay, the critical essay, and the autobiographical essay. Of course these are not mutually exclusive categories: many essays contain a mixture of elements from two or more, especially the last. Nor are they exhaustive: other categories could be and are used. But the four seem to me to cover the main activities: traveling, pondering, reading, and remembering. Their four objects are also interconnected: books and places, mores, and memories.⁵

Historically as well, periodicals and names of critical journals are very telling in this regard, both in their suggestion of ambulatory freedom (even if this means the semi-ironic freedom figured as stasis, as in the *Lounger* and *Idler*) and their more nuanced conflation of thinking and doing. Thought in the essay – or more precisely, reflecting on action through the discursive medium of the essay – is often conceived of as a kind of external activity, a cognitive process metonymically linked with its symbolic enactment in the physical world. Hence, for example, some of the more famous journals beginning from the eighteenth century: *Tatler*, *Spectator*, *Rambler*, *Observer*, *Adventurer*, *Connoisseur*, *Mirror*, *Scrutiny*, *Punch*, to say nothing of all the variously named re-views. Appending the definite article to some of these earlier titles, as was the common practice, all the more reifies the activity, the deed – gossiping, looking, rambling, observing,

venturing, consuming, mirroring – in the doer, thus yoking the agent and the action symbolically by way of the essay form. Accordingly, the essay becomes the discursive means by which the Observer observes, the Rambler rambles, the Scrutineer scrutinises and so on and so forth. Its openness and freedom of form make it that much more conducive to engaging actively with the world in so many open ways.

Indeed, ‘there are as many kinds of essays’, E. B. White declares, ‘as there are human attitudes or poses, as many essay flavours as there are Howard Johnson ice creams’.⁶ It is perhaps similar such ‘Howard Johnson’ analogies which prompt a major proponent of the personal essay today like Phillip Lopate to hear in White’s manner and self-positioning an affected ‘folksy humility and studiously plain-Joe air’ which ultimately ‘ring false’.⁷ Good’s comments on the form’s capacity to manifest these various activities and poses are likewise revealing: ‘Freedom is the essay’s essential mood and quality, in that the essayist is free temporally (he has leisure), spatially (he can walk and travel), economically (he has at least a “sufficiency”), but most of all mentally (he is unprejudiced, curious, observant about himself and the world, quick to respond to new experience and new ideas).’ ‘Of course, to use Sartre’s term’, he adds, ‘every freedom is *situated*, but each new “essay” or venture is a *re-situation* of the self in relation to the object or event described.’⁸

But this situating, I hasten to add, is also a way of presenting one’s self rhetorically – that is to say, in public and to some specified audience. The essay is not only an active form, in this respect, but also a mode of positioning discursive thought in a public sphere, a way of thinking publicly in a concrete discourse community. As we will soon see, how to posture the self in relation to a public audience is one of the more pressing tasks every essayist (and critic) must face, one that involves the delicate balancing of ‘the essayist’s authentic self and the self in “costume,” between the actual and the fictional personality’, in Klaus’s words.⁹ This costume trope is a popular one in essays on the essay. It has various layers of nuance in relation to the public and private aspects of ‘personality’ in the mind of the essayist:

⁶ E.B. White, ‘Foreword’ to *Essays of E.B. White* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), p. vii.

⁷ Phillip Lopate, ‘What Happened to the Personal Essay?’, in *Against Joie De Vivre: Personal Essays* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1989), p. 82.

⁸ Good (1988), pp. 11-12.

⁹ Karl Klaus, ‘Essayists on the Essay’ in *Literary Nonfiction: Theory, Criticism, Pedagogy* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 172.

⁵ Good (1988), p. xii.

As the essayists define personality, it seems to refer to a public aspect of self, something that one can put on as easily as if it were a “costume” or “garb,” whereas a meditative process presumably involves the private aspect of one’s self. Paradoxically, then, the essayists apparently conceive of the essay as somehow conveying a multistable impression of the self, an impression that projects the self in both its private and public aspects, in the process of thought and in the process of sharing thought with others. As Gerould puts it, “An essay, to some extent, thinks aloud.” As Gass puts it, “The unity of each essay is a unity achieved by the speaker for his audience as well as for himself, a kind of reassociation of his sensibility and theirs”... As Hoagland puts it, “the artful ‘I’ of an essay can be as chameleon as any narrator in fiction”.¹⁰

Klaus’s own rhetorical positioning is worth thinking about here. If the essay does indeed convey a ‘multistable impression of the self’, one which blends aspects of public and private thought, then we could very well turn this fact back on Klaus: Where, we could ask, does his private personality lie, and under which rhetorical garb is he presenting these findings to his academic public? The question only seems a silly category mistake if we assume, as Klaus presumably does, a fundamental distinction between the essay and the article, one that entails, consequently, the interplay of a whole series of dichotomies – impersonal/personal, academic/non-academic, critical/creative, objective/subjective, factual/fictive – implicit between the two. Klaus’s implied rhetorical stance – his authorial presence disguised as a paradoxical form of critical non-presence, or what Keith Fort refers to as “hidden omniscience”¹¹ – enacts many of these distinctions from the impersonal article-writing point of view, just as clearly, incidentally, as do many of the essayists he discusses from a personal essay-writing one.

This is straightforwardly demonstrated by looking at the nature of the discourse he employs. The ‘as...puts it’ construction above, for example, is a common distancing strategy not only in Klaus’s essay, but in academic/scholarly discourse generally, a mode of depersonalisation that mediates any direct contact the reader could have with the writer’s personal voice; and yet, by marshalling the evidence of others, interestingly enough, this depersonalised voice maintains a distinct sense of personal authority, drawing on a disciplinary ‘say-so’, as it were, that amounts to an unusual (but very commonly employed) type of scholarly

ventriloquism. That is, he gets his point heard by using the words of another, by placing himself discursively in relation to the many voices within this discourse community; by positioning himself, in this case, around the way essayists view the essay. In general, the psychology of this fact often passes unnoticed in our everyday thinking about citation in academic discourse; this and the similarly forgotten fact that the academic article is, indeed, a type of essay, a mode of essayism – a professionalized form of the genre – and thus also analysable in rhetorically fruitful ways.

A similar muffling tactic is at work in an earlier paragraph, one that defends a process/flow conception of the essay as mimicking the mind’s ‘current’ of thought, as opposed to the more syllogistic teleology of the article, guided as it usually is by an accumulation of movements from premise to conclusion. We merely need scan the structure of the paragraph with an eye on the reporting verbs that introduce each essayist to recognise the pattern behind Klaus’s self-positioning: ‘Kazin *claims*...Hoagland *similarly asserts*...Gass *declares*...Hardwick *refers to*...Lopate, for example, *asserts*...Adorno *shifts* the dramatic focus from the essayist thinking to thought in action *by asserting* that...Lukacs *views* the drama...but *conceives of* the essay instead as enacting the experience of thought itself.’¹² Such use of non-factive, positive citation by example is another familiar rhetorical feature of academic discourse, a common way of positioning oneself in critical relation to a larger disciplinary sphere or area of investigation. ‘The extensive use of citation’, Ken Hyland informs us in his fine study of disciplinary discourses, ‘underlines the fact that, in academic writing, the message presented is always embedded in earlier messages...citation plays...an important role in mediating the relationship between a writer’s argument and his or her discourse community.’¹³

Citation is itself a kind of dialogue, in this regard, a mode of interaction which displays allegiance to a community (or discursive sphere) by acknowledging debt and generating a disciplinary context in which one’s own stance will invoke larger issues of importance in the field.¹⁴ What is more, many of the reporting verbs commonly utilised in article/scholarly citation simultaneously affirm and dissociate commitment in relation to the same implied stance. In other words, they assert the

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 172.

¹¹ See William Zeiger’s ‘The Personal Essay and Egalitarian Rhetoric’, in Anderson (1989).

¹² Ibid., p. 169.

¹³ Ken Hyland, *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), p. 29.

¹⁴ For more on citation in an academic context see Amy E Robillard, ‘Young Scholars Affecting Composition: A Challenge to Disciplinary Citation Practices’, *College English* (Urbana: Jan., 2006), Vol. 68, Iss. 3, p. 253.

propositional content of the citation by way of attributing it to another source. As Hyland rightly points out, though, this type of attribution also entails various modes of self-posturing:

Writers can vary their commitment to the message by adopting an explicitly personal stance or by attributing a position to the original author. Thus, the writer may represent the reported information in one of three ways: as true (*acknowledge, point out, establish*); as false (*fail, overlook, exaggerate, ignore*); or non-factively, giving no clear signal. This last option allows the writer to ascribe a view to the source author, reporting him or her as positive (*advocate, argue, hold, see*); neutral (*address, cite, comment, look at*); tentative (*allude to, believe, hypothesise, suggest*); or critical (*attack, condemn, object, refute*).¹⁵

How, then, an essayist or critic positions herself around her own citations becomes a very telling feature of the writing, one which not only reflects the attitude of the writer, but of the larger discourse community in which one writes. Most such disciplinary communities have very distinct though usually deeply entrenched conventions that regulate just how much personality makes its way into the prose.¹⁶ This last fact is crucial in determining just how ‘activist’ (by which I mean rhetorically and discursively ‘engaged’ in the disciplinary community) an academic essayist/critic can potentially and realistically be in broader public spheres.

Klaus’s rhetorical voice in the above passage is again telling in this regard. Any recognisable personal stance is completely subsumed by the many voices he summons to reinforce his position. His personal voice – for he does at times use the first person – appears casually as one among many. The crucial point to realise, however, is not that Klaus is hiding behind the words of others – wrapped in another’s critical garb, as it were – but that the cited voices actually asserting the content of the message Klaus wants conveyed are given more emphasis than the hushed voice (or personality) summoning them as evidence. By reporting his sources ‘tentatively’ and/or ‘non-factively’, each example retains its evidentiary status as one more possible truth without belying the sense of an intrusively ad hoc authorial perspective. For in the article the personality of the essayist/critic merely *pretends* to disappear in this way, but never really vanishes. The orientation towards the propositional content of the message appears neutral, but is always collected and framed discursively by some hidden mind. The mode of address appears formal and detached, but is always

and necessarily an after-thought of a priori meditation. The rhetorical presence of this seeming non-presence the article conveys, in short, is but one more costume the essayist (and critic) uses – in both article and essay alike – to affect a certain rhetorical posture.

Needless to say, it does not follow that the information the article conveys is therefore also a fiction – a mere rhetorical affectation – as subjective and rhetorically constructed as is the presence of critical and fictive personality in the essay (a leap of logic sometimes made by poststructuralist theorists). But it certainly does mean that the relation between content and form in any species of prose (especially the essay with its nuanced relation between fictive self-representation and factual truth-reporting) involves various levels of mediation, various ways of discursively representing a self in relation to all the people and things and ideas that constitute the domain in which that self makes its voice heard; various ways, indeed, of presenting itself to its implied public. Nor does it follow that, since the essay and article both rely on mediated degrees of rhetorical self-positioning, there are therefore no meaningful differences to speak of between the two. To be sure, the portrayal of a distinct personality in fictive garb is overwhelmingly more ‘there’ in the personal essay than the article. Charles Lamb is a telling instance, an essayist who ‘writing in the persona of Elia’, as William Zeiger notes, ‘a charming, curious, and talkative London bachelor...proposes one opinion only to replace it with another...never seriously advancing a thesis’. ‘One effect’, Zeiger maintains, ‘is that the reader, after “conversing” with Elia, is so well entertained as not to notice, or mind, the absence of a point. Elia’s personal charm is the whole essay’.¹⁷ The contrary effect, of course, is irritation with Lamb’s intolerable self-indulgence (especially from a modern point of view so much more impatient with the leisurely wiles of belletristic prose), intensified further by his unwillingness to take a definable position that actually ‘states’ something.

The article, in obvious contrast, tends in most cases to convey information like a well-wrought machine, with an inhuman efficiency that makes its appeal strongly utilitarian in positivist-based fields like the sciences, not to mention positivist-mimicking ones like the social sciences. Research is ‘written up’, as the idiom has it, charts are drawn, graphs are displayed, findings are systematised; and all in due course since writing in article-governed disciplines is simply meant to convey the plain facts, ‘data’ that is presented as

¹⁵ Hyland (2000), p. 28.

¹⁶ For data from Humanities and Sciences see Hyland (2000), Ch. 2.

¹⁷ William Zeiger, entry in *Encyclopedia of The Essay*, ed. Tracy Chevalier (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), p. 458.

empirical and conclusive, impervious to personality and without voice. The investigations of discourse analysts like Norman Fairclough and Ken Hyland tend to suggest otherwise, as does close attention to reporting strategies in critical discourse, as we have witnessed with the Klaus article above.¹⁸ Conversely, ‘a personal essay is like the human voice talking, its order the mind’s natural flow, instead of a systematized outline of ideas,’ Edward Hoagland retorts. ‘Essays’, he continues, ‘don’t usually boil down to a summary, as articles do, and the style of the writer has a “nap” to it, a combination of personality and originality and energetic loose ends that stand up like the nap on a piece of wool and can’t be brushed flat.’¹⁹ An article-writer or critical essayist (both designations seemingly interchangeable in most academic parlance) like Klaus would never indulge in the flamboyance of that last simile (effective though it may be), even though he does, interestingly enough, quote that exact phrase to make the very same point, a move which frees him, unsurprisingly, from committing himself *personally* to its expository existence.

We could surely go on to list the many other real differences between the two forms, as Klaus, Zeiger, Good, Hoagland, Lopate, and many others effectively do; however, juxtaposing two passages which typify both the nature of each form and the type of prose each tends to engender seems preferable at this stage. Both examples, moreover, are thematically focussed on the differences between the two respective types of essayism in question – the first one again from Klaus, the second a parody piece from William Gass:

The point of contrast that arouses modern essayists more than any other, however, is the distinction they make between the personal orientation of the essay and the factual orientation of the article. As Weeks puts it, the essay “does not deal in statistics or belabour an argument as does a magazine article... The essay is an experience which you the reader share with the writer—you share his laughter, delight, pity; you share a deepened understanding or a quickening of the spirit in a style that does not date” ... In one form or another, this particular dichotomy is discussed more intensely and at greater length than any other issue they engage... The essayists’ quarrel with the article... seems to be rooted in their opposition to the fact-dominated conception of knowledge they perceive in the article... it allows no room for the

personal experience, personal thought, or personal voice of the essayist.²⁰

William Gass, on the other hand, provides us with the satirical enactment of this quarrel in ‘Emerson and The Essay’. Notice how the over-indulgence of all three ‘personal’ factors pointed to by Klaus – experience, thought and voice – verge toward self-parody in Gass’s prose (at least in direct conjunction with its more straight-laced Klausian equivalent), an irony that tends to undercut his own stance by reinforcing, however faintly, the reader’s desire for the ‘plain facts’ by passage end:

The essay is obviously the opposite of that awful object, “the article,” which, like items picked up in shops during one’s lunch hour, represents itself as the latest cleverness, a novel consequence of thought, skill, labor, and free enterprise; but never as an activity—the process, the working, the wondering. As an article, it should be striking of course, original of course, important naturally, yet without possessing either grace or charm or elegance, since these qualities will interfere with the impression of seriousness which it wishes to maintain; rather its polish is like that of the scrubbed step; but it must appear complete and straightforward and footnoted and useful and certain and is very likely a Michelin of misdirection; for the article pretends that everything is clear, that its argument is unassailable, that there are no soggy patches, no illicit inferences, no illegitimate connections; it furnishes seals of approval and underwriters’ guarantees; its manners are starched, stuffy, it would wear a dress suit to a barbecue, silk pajamas to the shower... Articles are to be worn; they make up one’s dossier the way uniforms make up a wardrobe, and it is not known—nor is it clear about the uniforms either—whether the article has ever contained anything of lasting value.²¹

Amidst much else, we see the clothing trope once again used to characterise the essay as a discursive costume or guise that the essayist somehow wears, though given a slight twist with the pun on ‘article’ (a term commonly used in the idiom ‘articles of clothing’). Worn here like a ‘uniform’, a word which literally means ‘one-form’ and, according to its French etymology, ‘clothing of a fixed style’, it parodies the monistic assumptions and narrowed perspectives implied in the article’s epistemological deference to professional, institutional authority. In other words, a sense Gass no doubt intends his implied reader to infer, it is the product of a

¹⁸ See Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Edward Hoagland, ‘What I Think, What I Am’, in *The Tugman’s Passage* (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 25.

²⁰ Klaus, ‘Essayists on the Essay’ in Anderson (1989), pp. 161-162.

²¹ William Gass, ‘Emerson and the Essay’ in *Habitations of the Word* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 25-26.

subservient bore, whose mannered voice and stuffy dress simply do not mesh with any context outside the institutionally sanctioned space in which s/he habitually speaks.

The difference between each type of prose speaks for itself, the latter, personalised style pushing towards parody and bombast, the tone of the former restrained, orderly, impersonal – namely, academic. Somewhat surprisingly, however, Gass declares that the article never represents itself ‘as an activity’ because it ignores ‘the process, the working, the wondering’ of an active mind. Yet surely Klaus’s piece, assuming it is more characteristic of the academic article than the personal essay, does not, in fact, ignore any of these activities. Though his personality is certainly more subdued, and the self-reflexive play of his prose definitely more tempered than Gass’s, his ‘mind’ is by no means less active in the discursive process of writing, the actual working or wondering involved, be it in hiding, revealing or altogether recreating a sense of self and manner of voice distinguishable here in the respective context of its own essayistic (and thus rhetorically mediated) act. The issue, in truth, is not one of ‘activity’ at all – the essay being at root an active form, a persuasive gesture in all its many modes (both personal and impersonal, as both essay and article) – but one of ‘personality’. To put it another way, personality *is* the rhetorical manner – the voice – with which one situates one’s self and one’s words in a broader discursive sphere.

In some sense this merely amounts to the same old truism: ‘finding one’s voice’, as it were, is a difficult and perennial struggle for most writers, especially those writing for a variety of publics. To fully explore ‘the problem of personality’ through all the recent critical trends which incorporate personal, autobiographical and reflective elements in academic criticism would require an effort far more ambitious in scope than the comments sketched here.²² Suffice it to say now, that any future study interested in the discursive structures which frame the way critics engage with their variegated publics (a study which would ideally ascertain precisely how ‘activist’ a critic, essayist or scholar both can and cannot be in relation to any given public, field or sphere of engagement) would benefit from a thorough look at the various ways the essay as a medium works to

²² Critics like Jane Tompkins, Elizabeth Abel, Jane Gallop and Douglas Atkins can all be characterised in this vein of essayism. See also Anne Fernald’s critique ‘A Room of One’s Own: Personal Criticism, and the Essay’, in *Twentieth Century Literature* (40:2) [Summer 1994], p.165-189.

clothe and denude the variety of ways we position ourselves – essayistically – around the words we use.

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