

An analysis of george orwell's essay "why i write"



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In George Orwell's essay "Why I Write," he gives his answer as to why he and other writers write. His essay follows many tactics described in Phillip Lopate's essay "The Art of the Personal Essay." For example, Orwell starts out his essay not by directly answering the question, but by simply stating that, ever since he was little, he knew that "when [he] grew up [he] should be a writer" (Orwell). He then goes on to write about his childhood and his early connections with writing.

This follows Lopate's statement that an essay tends to "start out in a seemingly directionless or at least open manner," and to "hop onto a narrative possibility and let the storytelling momentum take it home" (Lopate). About halfway through his essay, after his narrative, Orwell begins directly discussing his topic, explaining that he believes that "one can [not] assess a writer's motives without knowing something of his early development".

This is because Orwell feels that although a writer's work is greatly affected by what is happening while he writes, in early life a writer acquires "an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape" (Orwell). Lopate describes a similar tactic, the digression, which a writer uses to "wander off the point only to fulfill it" (Lopate).

Finally, in response to his question, Orwell presents not only one answer, but four: "Sheer egoism," "Aesthetic enthusiasm," "Historical impulse," and "Political purpose" (Orwell), and, after defining each aspect, tells of their responsibilities for his motives. Orwell's technique reflects Lopate's description of an essayist needing to "surround something" "by coming at it

from all angles" (Lopate). Through these examples Lopate's account of the tactics used by an essayist are seen in George Orwell's essay " Why I Write. "