

Why the 'Essay' Form?

Although, by the norms of today which are continually decreasing under the influence of social media, our essays are a longer read. They are what now has to be labelled as 'long form' to 'warn' the reader.

This series of Essays seeks to do something 'posts' on social media cannot do. We would like to take a moment to explain why we use this form.

In a way, they are part of the resistance to everything becoming a matter of *information downloading* and also 'fast and easy' so it is just pass-through, there is no delaying - nothing holds, there is no change, we stay the same.

The Keynes Centre is about *Transformative Thinking* and attends to *How We Think*. We do not in any way purport to tell people *What to Think*, as with the dogmatism in so much the attitude today; rather we are about exploring *How We Think* and how we can be better thinkers, in the full sense of that term, including making better judgments.

The 'essay' form fits with that philosophy. The dictionary tells us that the source meaning of the word is from old and middle French *essai/assai* - trial, attempt, endeavour, effort - and Latin *exigium/exigire* - weigh, test - and this conveys the exploratory attitude of The Keynes Centre.

An 'essay' is an initial tentative effort - an experiment, an exploration - from a particular perspective reflecting personal experiences and is expressive of outlook and personality. The point-of-view of The Keynes Centre is that we search for both meanings and truths in our lives and that *how* we do so is more important than *what* we find in any particular time or place.

The essay is an old form of thinking, much abused in our school days, and which, after being set aside for some decades in the public conversation, seems to be enjoying a renaissance today, perhaps as a counter to the superficiality of much social media content. Since essays are thinking *and* experimental, the views change and outcomes vary as the world from which they arise changes. This makes it an attractive form for thinking anew.

So, what are we exploring in this series of essays which gives it a thematic cohesion?

The whole point of the exercise is about increasing our awareness of *how* we think about complex matters of the world in which we live – and, indeed, whether we think – as a basis for holding opinions and adopting positions about matters of importance to ourselves and others.

For this purpose, we are proposing for consideration a simple tool – [Web of Ideas](#) - for exploring *how we think* through a series of exercise for thinking experiences.

It is not our intention and there is no claim to a detailed comprehensive treatment of a topic - the reader should not expect such treatment - because that would be inimical to the self-developmental approach of what we are about at The Keynes Centre. The reader is being invited to join in these thinking experiences as the way to greater awareness and, thereby, to insights that are the movements within ourselves we call 'developmental'.

Only you, the reader, can do that developmental work for yourself – no one else can do it for you since insights cannot be taught or learned. Only you can have *your* experiences of thinking, no one can have them for you, and those experiences are the basis for personal development.

In that spirit, these essays are just points of departure. It is for the reader to take what we offer here as starting points from which to embark on their own thinking as the material for observation about *how they think*. We propose an issue and question to work on and an open way of thinking about it. It is for the reader to develop their way of thinking, to consider further aspects and examples, review objections and possibilities, and, through *intentional and deliberate self-observation*, grow ways of knowing and meaning-making.