

wskazać mankamenty tego tomu. Wydaje się, że zamieszczone teksty, chociaż nie wyczerpują tematu (nie sposób bowiem przeanalizować wszystkie międzykulturowe aspekty działalności mediów), to jednak w sposób dostateczny zarysowują problematykę i wyjaśniają tytułowe zjawisko. Ponadto publikacja dostarcza wielu ciekawych badań i analiz poprawnych pod względem metodologicznym, które mogą stanowić inspirację dla innych autorów.

*Międzykulturowe aspekty działalności mediów w epoce globalizacji* warto polecić przede

wszystkim tym, którzy interesują się komunikowaniem międzykulturowym. Stanowi bowiem ważny głos w dobie globalizacji i oskarżeń o homogenizację kultury, dostarcza wielu pozytywnych przykładów działalności mediów i ich korzystnego wpływu na kulturę. Lektura książki jednocześnie uświadamia, jak wiele jest jeszcze obszarów, które wymagają analizy, dlatego może stanowić zachętę do podejmowania dalszych badań na ten temat.

**Karolina Adamska**



## *La saggistica degli scrittori*

ed. Anna Dolfi

Bulzoni Editore, Roma 2012, p. 458, ISBN 978-88-7870-653-8

The book *La saggistica degli scrittori* (*The writers' essay writing*)<sup>1</sup> edited by the Italian scholar Anna Dolfi provides a remarkable standpoint for scholars interested in the study of essay as literary form conveying both scientific, journalistic, and artistic substance. The book includes a collection of analyses dedicated to some famous contemporary novelists and poets. It examines the manner in which each of them (for instance: Raymond Queneau, Emilio Gadda, Pier Paolo Pasolini or Italo Calvino, which were not only or not chiefly essayists) handled the essay writing. Therefore, the collection of papers gathered by Anna Dolfi apprises the marginal aspects of the creative work of chosen writers and renders crucial what is ordinarily thought as secondary in their artistic lives – the essay writing.

The purpose of this review is to illustrate the most important aspects of *La saggistica degli scrittori* – the book with indispensable elements for the discussion upon media and social status of essay as literary and journalistic genre.

Anna Dolfi is Professor at the Faculty of Languages, Literatures and Intercultural Studies at the University of Florence. Her principal interest regards the contemporary Italian literature. She has written a multitude of introductions and critical comments to works of, among others, Grazia Deledda, Giuseppe Dessì and Antonio Tabucchi. In *The writers' essay writing* her aim is to gather apparently disjointed researches that, as a matter of fact, share a common denominator, that is, the investigation of the approach toward the essay different authors

<sup>1</sup> *La saggistica degli scrittori*, ed. Anna Dolfi, Rome 2012, p. 458.

expressed in their writing. In the *Introduction* she emphasizes that the theme being too wide cannot be exposed properly within a single publication. Indeed, a totalizing research upon the essay writing should include papers dedicated to Dante and Petrarch essays as well, in other words – to every writer or poet who wrote some essays. Considered the objective impossibility to accomplish such a task, *The writers' essay writing* has no pretensions to completeness and covers the 20<sup>th</sup> century writers alone. In her enterprise Anna Dolfi has gathered many Italian researchers. It would not be easy to present such a group as a cohesive academic environment with respect to, for instance, the methodological approach or cultural background. Every scholar has presented a reflection upon the essay writing of the author constituting the main field of his/her scientific interests.

*The writers' essay writing* is divided into five parts. The first one, entitled *Models and declinations (Modelli e declinazioni)*, is the most general one and the most interesting from the theoretical point of view. It regards, for instance, the metaliterature aspects of the essay writing. As it is almost impossible to give a definition of essay upon which all the scholars would agree – this is one of few certainties that the most respected experts of the subject share – it is better, as Enza Biagini, the author of the first chapter, suggests, to use the Claire de Obaldia's<sup>2</sup> formula 'the essayistic spirit', which epitomizes genre's fragmentary and collective nature, its liberty to treat a variety of themes and its implicit reference to the subjectivity of the essay-writer experience. The formula should be comprehended as a kind of methodological basis upon which the building represented by all the other studies edited by Dolfi will be con-

structed. Indeed, only a metaliterature 'definition' of essay is sufficiently wide to embrace the variety of different types of literature approach that the essay as genre contains.

The second chapter of the first part is worth being taken into particular consideration. It presents an attention-grabbing thesis regarding the current place of the essay within the literature studies. This chapter, indeed, allows the scholars the opening of general discussion about the reasons of essay's alleged deterioration. The author of the chapter is Marielle Macé. The French scholar alludes to Patrick Mauriès' diagnosis, according to which in the mid Eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, after the intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault had deceased, the readers created by their essayistic writings were left orphans. What Macé is suggesting between the lines is that the essay as a genre reached its zenith during the second half of the past century. Afterwards we witnessed a period of decadence, given that such a valuable type of writing has not found new interpreters, and nowadays we are still lacking in good essayistic. In addition to that, in an even more veiled manner, Macé seems to suggest that essay as genre cultivates a specific type of reader. On the margin of her reflection, we can immediately ask what are the extraordinary characteristics of such a reader? In other words: what skills are indispensable to decipher the essay and to allow the essay to seduce us? And, in second place, we can also ask what was the reason of a deterioration of the genre? Undoubtedly skepticism, curiosity, aversion to all kinds of predefined specializations, and individual taste is what distinguishes the essay reader. This set of characteristics entails an answer to the second

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<sup>2</sup> C. de Obaldia, *The essayistic spirit. Literature, modern criticism and the essay*, Oxford 1996. Obaldia analyzes critically the secondary status of essay as literary form. She argues that the conception of modern literature is profoundly essayistic and this fact should constitute the contemporary revalorization of essay as genre. She also claims our age to be fundamentally essayistic.

question. According to the scholar, the cultural homogenization and massification, occurred around the late Seventies of the past century, interrupted the cultivation of the figure of essay reader and, consequently, the necessity to publish authors able to satisfy public's needs has decreased. We seem to face here a circular mechanism. There are no readers requiring valuable essayists and, as a consequence, the potential essay reader does not have a possibility to run into more demanding genres. The more readers are unrefined, that is to say, the more they treat literature as entertainment and not as an exercise of thinking, and the more the valuable writers remain without the public. The ethos of knowledge has changed, as suggested by Macé. The scholars' explanation is attractive. The only doubt that it arises regards the author's belief that the literary expression is determined by external circumstances. It seems an absolutely unbearable explanation of a social-literature phenomenon. Given that I am convinced that there is no scientific evidence proving that the number of gifted essayists has decreased during the past thirty years, or that has decreased the number of demanding readers. It is possible that essayists' function has changed, so that essay writers are not considered any more by public opinion and market statistics. Therefore, I would suggest an alternative approach to the matter, which should attempt to verify the different modalities of essay writers 'invisibility', rather than to make coincide, marking it on the axis of time, their 'invisibility' with their disappearance. Macé's concludes her reflection with an exhortative consideration: 'we need to find the contemporary renovation of the essay'<sup>3</sup>. I am strongly convinced that the essay still plays and will keep playing its skeptic role, that is, to examine without bringing readers to a prejudicially estab-

lished conclusion, and to make questions without giving pre-defined answers. Its uniqueness cannot be artificially renewed, since the essay is emanation of the modernity, that is to say, of the perpetual innovation and renewal of the spirit. In addition to that, the more the essay is individual, frank and personalized, the more powerful and long-lasting shall be its impact. We can conclude that the essay cannot be renewed, because its very essence is perpetual self-renovation and the changing of cultural circumstances does not influence the blooming of the genre.

The four remaining parts of the study regard single writers, mainly Italian ones. The content of each part is stressed by the title, respectively: *To think while writing the commitment (Pensare scrivendo l'impegno)* regarding Mazzini's essay writing; *The writers and the commentary discourse (Gli scrittori e il discorso commentativo)* dedicated to, among others, Gadda, Dessì, Meneghello, Manganelli, Calvino, Levi and Pasolini; *In the 'Immediate surroundings' of the poetry (Gli 'immediati dintorni' della poesia)*, concerning the works of Sereni, Salinas, Celan and Luzi; *The applications (Applicazioni)*, containing Anna Dolfi's reflection upon Sciascia as essayist and another article.

Given that it is impossible to refer and comment the content of every single chapter of the book, I would like to describe briefly its final part: Dolfi's paper *Lightness, exactness, quickness. About non codified essay writing's functionality (Leggerezza, esattezza, rapidità. Sulla funzionalità di una saggistica non codificata)* and Luciano Curreri's essay entitled *Two words on lightness (in company of Sciascia the essayist) (Due parole sulla leggerezza (in compagnia di Sciascia saggista))*. Both papers recall Italo Calvino's *Six memos for the next millennium (Lezioni americane. Sei proposte per il pross-*

<sup>3</sup> *La saggistica...* op. cit., p. 59.

*mo millennio*)<sup>4</sup>, considered by now a ‘classic’ of the Italian contemporary essay writing. Calvino believed lightness was the most important literature’s feature. Both scholars try to analyze the meaning of the attribute and to discover its presence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century prose and poetry, and, finally, to develop their effort of comprehension in essayistic form. Dolfi traced back the presence of lightness by quoting numerous passages from the European literature, rendering in this way her text plentiful of erudition, but also impersonal, objective and distant. On the other hand, Curreri carried out a successful essayistic analysis of the subject by combining his personal experience with the reinterpretation of Sciascia’s novels. Although Sciascia treated very heavy subjects, like mafia or code of silence, Curreri managed to prove the ‘lightness’ of his prose. Both papers show what literary criticism can be:

on one hand, an interesting and impressive expertise; on the other hand, a mixture of reflection and knowledge interweaved with peculiar literary form characterized by visible presence of the author, that is to say – a truly essayistic approach.

Finally, I believe that the study edited by Anna Dolfi represents a successful attempt to fight against the secondary position of essay as literary form. The variety of papers included in the book testifies how rich and rewarding the reflection upon essay can be and, moreover, how deep and wide cultural, artistic, anthropological, historical and social knowledge such a reflection requires. I think such a detailed research upon writers’ essay writing should be continued not only on the Italian, but also on the Polish cultural background.

*Paulina Orłowska*



Jean-Luc Chetrit, François Rudel

*La Télévision est morte... vive ma télévision!*

Carat, Éditions SW Télémaque, Paris 2014, 178 pp., ISBN 978-2-7533-0241-9

Dans le second numéro de «Studia Medioznawcze» [Études en sciences de la communication] de l’année 2014 j’ai écrit sur les changements qu’a connus la télévision publique française après le passage de la diffusion analogique à la diffusion numérique (TNT)<sup>1</sup>. J’insis-

tai alors sur l’impact profond de la digitalisation sur l’image de la télévision publique dans la société française. Ce n’est qu’après la publication de cet article qu’est paru ce nouveau livre. Il a non seulement confirmée mes thèses mais les a développés et a élargi leur portée en incluant

<sup>4</sup>I. Calvino, *Six memos for the next millennium*, Cambridge 1988. The Harvard University Press edition was the first, post-mortem, edition of the book. The Italian edition was published later same year.

<sup>1</sup>K. Gajlewicz-Korab, *Le futur du secteur des médias publiques français dans l’ère du TNT sur l’exemple de France Télévisions*, «Études sur les Médias», N°2 (57) 2014, p. 85–93.