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## ESSAY READING IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY CROATIAN LITERATURE

### Abstract

History of the essay is the history of relationship between the book and the reader. From Montaigne's apprehension of essayistic writing and reading as a purely cultural matter of a refined human (*honnête homme*, writer as a self-reader), through the periodical exchange of problem codes between the audience and the author in the essays of Addison and Steele (writer as a world reader), to the contemporary conception of essay as a spontaneous creative link between the semantically saturated world and the anonymous donor of an attitude or an opinion (reader as a writer), essayistic discourse stringently reflects Chartier's concept of cultural appropriation in which the act of reading is incorporated into the text, and the normative discursive production is tenably tied with the subversive praxis. This paper will attempt to demonstrate how this concept functions in the context of the contemporary Croatian essay, or in other words it will give an overview and analysis of different phases which the essayistic production goes through in relation to horizon of expectation, from the restrictive attitude towards the radical tendencies of the modern era up to the illusion of authorial and readers tolerance of the postmodern auto-poetic era.

*Keywords:* essay; author; reader; culture; appropriation