

My PhD. thesis “Physiognomy of Writing: In the Folds of Literary Ornament” deals with the relation between literature and ornament. It interconnects the sphere of literary history and literary theory with that of visibility. Ornament is analyzed and interpreted as a theoretical figure which allows an examination of literature from the point of view of its visibility and its movement. This approach, elaborated and applied here, labeled “physiognomy of writing“, offers a possibility of a visual reading of literature; it represents a way to read literary texts not only in terms of their meaning and message, but also from the point of view of their visual and figural performance. In the first part I outline the concept of ornament in its historical, aesthetic and philosophical frames, and explain how to use it in order to interpret literature. The second part offers readings of several 20th century literary texts (Franz Kafka, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Samuel Beckett, Louis Wolfson and Blanche T.) from the perspective of the affinity of their literary speech and particular ornamental manifestations.