

Abstract

The PhD. dissertation *Written Voice* examines how Walt Whitman and Henry Miller through books, confined textual products of modernity, strive to awaken the reader to a more perceptive and courageous life, provided that the reader is willing to suspend hermeneutics of suspicion and approach *Leaves of Grass* and *Tropic of Cancer* with hermeneutics of hunger. This is examined from linguistic, anthropological and theological vantage point of oral theory (M. Jousse, M. Parry, A. Lord, W. Ong, E. Havelock, J. Assmann, D. Abram, C. Geertz, T. Pettitt, J. Nohnberg, D. Sölle, etc.). This work thus compares *Leaves* (1855) and *Tropic of Cancer* examining their paratextual, stylistic features, their genesis, the phenomenology of their I's, their ethos and story across the compositions. By "voluntary" usage of means of oral mnemonics such as parallelism/bilateralism (Jousse) – along with present tense, imitatio Christi and pedagogical usage of obscenity – both authors in their compositions attack the textual modern discourse, the posteriority, nostalgia and confinement of literature, restore the body, and aim for futurity of biblical kinetics. It is the reader's task, then, to hermeneutically resurrect the dead printed words of the compositions into their own "flesh" and action. The third part of the thesis discusses The development of the authors' theopoetics is also discussed: orality of their later texts is markedly more stylized while the savage bards become *literati*. Finally, Whitman's and Miller's vitalist and future-oriented theopoetics is discussed from the vantage point of "liquid modernity" (Z. Bauman) or "secondary orality" (W. Ong) of today.