

CALL FOR CHAPTER PROPOSALS

DOGMAS IN LITERATURE and LITERARY MISSIONARY: TEXT, READER AND CRITIQUE

This book project aims to examine the existence of dogma in literature and some cult texts, and how dogmas in literature are conveyed to various audiences as a mission by some literary readers, experts and academics. The questions leading up to the volume are varied and their answers require lengthy examination and interpretation. So, this project investigates; Is literature dogmatic? What about literary theories? Can they be dogmatic, too? The answers to these questions are open to clarification, but the responses can also initiate an extensive discussion and manifestation. However, above all, literature does have an aspect that drags the readers, habitually burying them in its pages, and blindly attaching them to itself. Blind devotion stems from the factors that are effective in determining the readers' faith. Theories of literature, similarly, might bring about the generation of blind adherence and dogmatic approaches. Frank Ritchie, in his revealing essay 'Literary Dogma' defines pure belief underlining "A creed, so long as it is merely the expression of the genuine belief of an individual, is innocent enough,"¹ and he continues, "but when it is put forth with the sanction of a well-known name, and when its promulgator is inspired with a missionary spirit, it is apt to exercise an unwholesome influence."² Do the dogmas in literature then begin precisely 'with the sanction of a well-known name'? Do literary readers and critics turn to literary missionaries after this 'blind devotion'? While the philosophies fashioned by some well-known literary theorists are typically accepted, very few scholars participate in speculative inquiries and discursive criticisms towards them. Here we, as one of the few scholars, will survey the dogmas in literature in this study.

Generally, dogma is a word related mostly to religion. In this frame, Mathew Arnold's "Dogma in Religion and Literature" is of great importance as long as religion is concerned. However, there are dogmas in every field, literature being no exception. Virginia Woolf, for instance, wrote stupendous works, turned out to be well-known, and in 1928 she delivered a lecture at Cambridge University, where women were once not allowed, that formed the basis for the celebrated *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Her metaphorical wit "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction"³, which she ingeniously expressed in her work, has been recognized as a cult by various people, especially suffragette writers and women, and practically everyone seems to be blindly attached to the idea that 'a woman without room and money cannot write'. But does this 'blindly' acceptance have to do with the fact that Woolf was already a famed writer when she proclaimed this history-defying motto? So, if any woman had said that, would the literary world have reacted in the same way? Undoubtedly, Woolf is quite right when she claims that a woman writer if she desires to be an authoress, should have a room of her own and a salary or money of

¹ Ritchie, Frank (1990). 'Literary Dogma'. *Longman's Magazine, 1882-1905*; London Vol. 35, Iss. 210: 535-540, p. 535

² Ibid.

³ Woolf, Virginia (1935). *A Room of One's Own*. London: Hogarth Press. p. 4.

her own. However, it does not mean that otherwise female writers cannot write. There are a huge number of examples to claim the opposite. The Bronte sisters, Jane Austen, to mention but a few, never had a room of their own. Even Simone de Beauvoir herself confesses that “I didn’t have a room of my own. In fact, I had nothing at all.”⁴ Interestingly, even those who could afford a room of their own, preferred other ways of “accommodation”. Maya Angelou, for instance, wrote mainly in a hotel room; Tony Morrison wrote with a paper on her lap. Fortunately, there are recently a number of notes against this statement. One of them is by Ida Rae Egli titled *No Rooms of their Own*.⁵ The most poignant is Asja Bakic’s “Not all Writers Can Afford Rooms of their Own”.⁶ She rents a flat and that’s what she says: “Had Virginia Woolf been forced to walk Mayor Bandic’s gravelly paths in search of inspiration, her cult essay would’ve sounded quite different.

Roland Barthes’ 1967 ‘La mort de l’auteur’ (‘The Death of the Author’)⁷ essay might be another text that some of its literary readers have developed a dogmatic commitment to. It seemed so unfair and unjust towards writers. In the same vein, some scholars vehemently protested against those who applied this conflicting theory to Shakespeare. “Does it matter who wrote his works”⁸ exclaimed some critics considering the opposite view sceptically. And that is what is dangerous: to consider all the literary theories by prominent critics and philosophers unchallenging. Recently, even very reputable writers and critics do not consider the theory very reliable and state that “the time for the dead author is over. Now is the age of Living Dead authors.”⁹ After all, one shouldn’t forget that theory does not mean ‘it is’, rather it means “it might be’. This theory is good for experimenting. Several academics used it at the exams giving students modernist or realist texts without mentioning the writer. and having them determine the literary movement and genres.

Examples abound. Indisputably, one of the most vital hitches that arise is connected to the ‘reader’s intention’. In a way, it is the reader who undertakes the missionary role of the literary text. To put this in two examples, does every text in which Western writers treat Easterners have an Orientalist point of view? Or does the reader produce it? Does the work of every woman writer have feminist elements? How exactly do biases work in the interpretation of a text? How does the reader's intention affect the fate of the text? Or how accessible is the idea that a text, whether lyrical or prose, is shaped entirely or indirectly by the reader’s emotions? So, the question is, are

⁴ Qtd in Madeleine Gobeil. ‘Simone de Beauvoir, The Art of Fiction No. 35.’ *The Paris Review*. Issue 34, Spring-Summer 1965 <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4444/the-art-of-fiction-no-35-simone-de-beauvoir>

⁵ See Ida Rae Egli. *No Rooms of Their Own: Women Writers of Early California, 1849–1869*. California: Heyday. 2013

⁶ Bakić, Asja. ‘Not All Writers Can Afford Rooms of Their Own’. *Literary Hub*. March 21, 2019. <https://lithub.com/not-all-writers-can-afford-rooms-of-their-own/>

⁷ See, for instance, Edmonson, Paul. ‘Who wrote Shakespeare’s plays – and does it matter?’ *The Guardian*. 5 Sep 2011 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/sep/05/shakespeare-anonymous-roland-emmerich>

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⁹ Erikson, Steven. ‘The Author as the Living Dead.’ October 26, 2020 <https://steven-erikson.org/the-author-as-the-living-dead/>

fallacies fallacies? These and similar questions will gather possible answers in this book.

Possible topics to cover but not limited to:

Dogma(s) in literature
Literary dogmas
Dogmatic literary theories
Dogma, literature and author relationship
Dogma and the literary reader
Dogma and literary text
The relationship between dogma and fiction
Dogma and creativity
Readers as literary missionaries
Reader's bias and intention
Author's intention
Literary fallacies

A renowned international publisher (US based) with peer-review system has already expressed their interest in this collection. The project is currently under contract.

The anticipated completion deadline for this work is December 2022. The deadlines are scheduled as follows:

Deadline	Processing
28 February 2022	Call for chapter proposals of 500 words along with CVs
15 March 2022	Announcement of the accepted proposals
15 July 2022	First Drafts of Full Papers
15 August 2022	Announcement of Revisions of First Drafts
01 October 2022	Second Drafts of Papers Revised
01 November	Announcement of Final Revisions
01 December 2022	Completing the materials and submitting them to the Publisher

Please send your 500-word proposal along with your recent CV and all your other inquiries to ondercakirtas@bingol.edu.tr

Editor: Önder Çakırtaş,

Bingol University, Department of English Language and Literature, Bingol TURKEY

ondercakirtas@bingol.edu.tr