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Research Methodology

Some Observations

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What is research?

- Dictionaries provide only a vague and inadequate definition of research. To put it in a nutshell, research in literature means
- (a) discovery of a new book and edit it, or (
- b) bring to notice a lost or almost forgotten work, and attempt an appraisal of it. Another kind of research means
- (c) selecting two, three, or several works, and show their relationship, something which had not been noticed before. Nowadays,
- (d) translation of a culturally or historically significant work from a language other than English (not however from any intermediate language) into English with an Introduction and copious notes is also admitted as a doctoral dissertation.
- In any case, research involves something *original*, some valuable addition to the existing store of knowledge, not just a rehash of already existing views.

----- Ramkrishna Bhattacharya

Research and Social Science

Research is equally important for social scientists in studying social relationships and in seeking answers to various social problems. It provides the intellectual satisfaction of knowing a few things just for the sake of knowledge and also has practical utility for the social scientist to know for the sake of being able to do something better or in a more efficient manner. Research in social sciences is concerned both with knowledge for its own sake and with knowledge for what it can contribute to practical concerns. “This double emphasis is perhaps especially appropriate in the case of social science. On the one hand, its responsibility as a science is to develop a body of principles that make possible the understanding and prediction of the whole range of human interactions. On the other hand, because of its social orientation, it is increasingly being looked to for practical guidance in solving immediate problems of human relations.

---- C R Kothari

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Research Methods versus Methodology

At times, a distinction is also made between research techniques and research methods. Research techniques refer to the behaviour and instruments we use in performing research operations such as making observations, recording data, techniques of processing data and the like. Research methods refer to the behaviour and instruments used in selecting and constructing research technique. At times, a distinction is also made between research techniques and research methods. *Research techniques* refer to the behaviour and instruments we use in performing research operations such as making observations, recording data, techniques of processing data and the like. *Research methods* refer to the behaviour and instruments used in selecting and constructing research technique

The Practical necessity of Methodology

- People are still very much sceptical about the necessity of research training in English studies
- This is not surprising in a research environment where the emphasis is on learning by doing, where supervisors themselves have no history of research training as a function of the point in time when they undertook their own postgraduate research, where students and staff work in a discipline that has no significant history of providing and discussing such training.

The Practical necessity of Methodology

- At one point in the West it becomes mandatory for funding
- The applicants for grants were required to discuss the research methods they would employ in the process of undertaking their research.

The Practical necessity of Methodology

- 'It's important to have the discourse so that one can communicate knowledgeably in his/her own subject' .
- Such discourse includes a research methodological one – the demand to be explicit about one's research methods in grant applications and reports requires a meta-discourse on how we do what we do and why, and part of learning about research methods is about the acquisition of that meta-discourse.

Methodology in English Studies

The choice of a Responsive model instead of a Prescriptive one

- It is a **responsive** model in that it focuses on the identification and response to individual needs as they arise from a specific research project; it thus assumes implicitly that the research methods relevant to that particular research project are *the only ones* a research student needs to acquire, presumably because the kind of research conducted at research degree level is assumed to be the kind of research that a scholar will go on to (re)produce throughout the rest of her/his academic life.

Research Skills Methods and methodologies

- **Research skills** are techniques for handling material. They they include search skills in libraries, editorial skills, bibliographic skills, dissertation skills (such as how to structure a book-length piece of writing), IT skills, period-specific skills (such as learning to read secretary script, or how to record variants among different manuscripts) and professional skills (such as how to present papers at conferences)

Research Skills Methods and methodologies

- **Research methods**, are concerned with how to carry out research. The choice of method will depend on the kind of research one wants to conduct. The comparison of manuscripts for authorship attribution purposes, for instance, requires different methods from understanding why listeners to a BBC programme vote for a particular poem or novelist as the best one. Yet both are perfectly valid research projects within the field of English studies

Research Skills Methods and methodologies

- **Research methodologies** are concerned with the perspectives one brings to bear on one's work such as a feminist or a postcolonialist one. This what we commonly attribute as the application of theory. With a new theoretical approach or critical perspectives already overworked texts/areas of study can lend themselves to new interpretations.

Bibliography

- Bhattacharya, Ramkrishna. *What is Research? Lecture delivered at UGB, Malda*
- Griffin, Gabriele (ed). *Research Methods for English Studies. 2nd edn. Edinburgh: U of Edinburgh, 2013.*
- Kothari, C R. *Research Methodology methods and Techniques. 2nd edn New Delhi: New Age, 2009*

Post Script: (to C U M Phil students 2020 batch)

Below I provide the list research methods discussed in Gabriele Griffin's Book. As the research training in our discipline is supposed to be responsive, I give the scope to choose by consensus a few of them that may be of some use to your research needs. We can they start discussing them.

- **Archival** Methods .
- **Auto/biography** as a Research Method
- **Oral History** as a Research Method
- **Visual Methodologies** Discourse Analysis
- **The Uses of Ethnographic** Methods in English Studies
- **Quantitative Methods** for Scholars of Texts
- **Textual Analysis** as a Research Method
- **Interviewing**
- **Creative Writing** as a Research Method
- **Digital Humanities and** English Research Methods

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Thank You**