

METHODOLOGY IN LITERATURE: FUNCTIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

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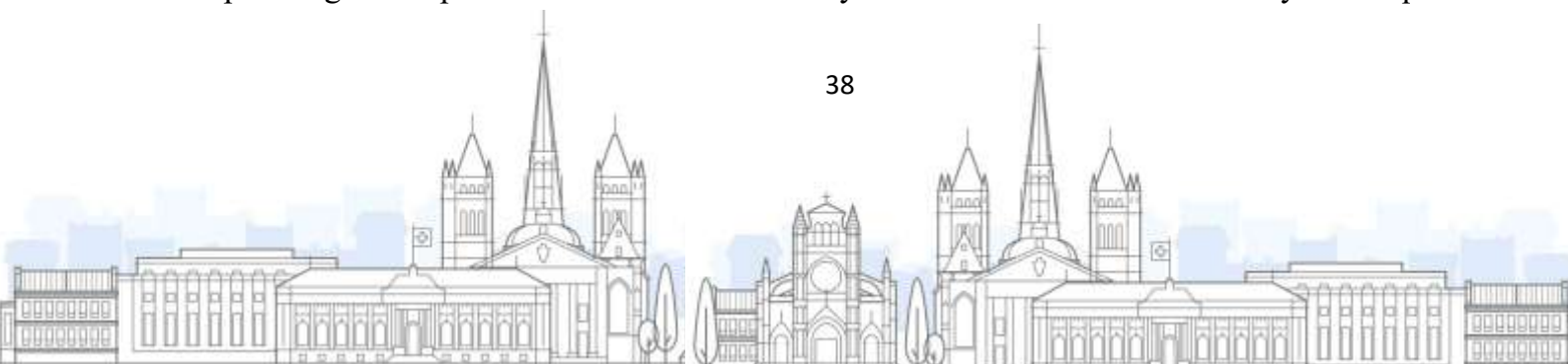
Abstract. *In this thesis, the notion of methodology within literature is considered, along with its main objectives and the evolution it has undergone throughout history. Methodology is an essential tool in analysing literary texts, providing scholars with the opportunity to examine meaning, form, and the socio-cultural contexts in which literary pieces were written. Traditional methodologies such as formalism and structuralism have gradually developed into post-structuralism, feminist, postcolonial, and digital methods. According to this research, the multiplicity of methodologies and their evolution is an effect of a change in epistemologies within the humanities. Through the analysis of both traditional and modern methodologies, the importance of variety within the field can be emphasized.*

Keywords: *methodology, literary theory, interpretation, interdisciplinary, transformation, critical approaches*

Introduction. The idea of methodology in literature is explored in this thesis, as well as its core aims and the changes that it has been subjected to through time. Methodology plays a significant role in literary analysis, allowing for the examination of literary works and their context in the socio-cultural environment in which they originated. Traditional methodologies, including formalism and structuralism, have evolved over time to include more diverse forms of analysis, including post-structuralism, feminist, post-colonial, and digital methodologies. This research suggests that the diversity of methodological approaches and their evolution are a result of a shift in epistemologies in the humanities.

Traditionally, the methodology used to study literature was relatively stable. However, in the last few decades, there have been dramatic changes in terms of methodology. Such transformations are associated with advancements made in other spheres, such as philosophy, linguistics, social sciences, and technology. This means that literary methodology has now become very vibrant and multidisciplinary.

Theoretical Foundations of Literary Methodology. The development of the methods for analysing literature in the contemporary context originated from the early formalist and structuralism approaches. Formalism concentrated mainly on Russian Formalists who placed great importance on textual autonomy and stressed the use of literary techniques



like imagery, syntax, and narrative. The objective of the formalist method was to ensure literary criticism is considered a science and not a subjective process.

Structuralism expanded upon the theories provided by formalism and concentrated on the structures that underlie language and literature. Structuralism borrowed heavily from the theories provided by Ferdinand de Saussure concerning linguistics. According to Selden, Widows, and Brooker, structuralism moved away from focusing on individual texts and concentrated on the universal structures of all texts.

The theorists of the post-structuralism school of thought however, later questioned these methods, since they did not believe in stable meaning. The emphasis on fluid language and the construction of meaning by the reader were among the main tenets of post-structuralism.

Functions of Methodology in Literary Studies. Several functions of methodology in literary analysis should be outlined. Firstly, methodology offers a systematic method that enables scholars to work with literary texts in a more rational and coherent way. The absence of methodology might lead to complete subjectivism and inconsistency in literary analysis.

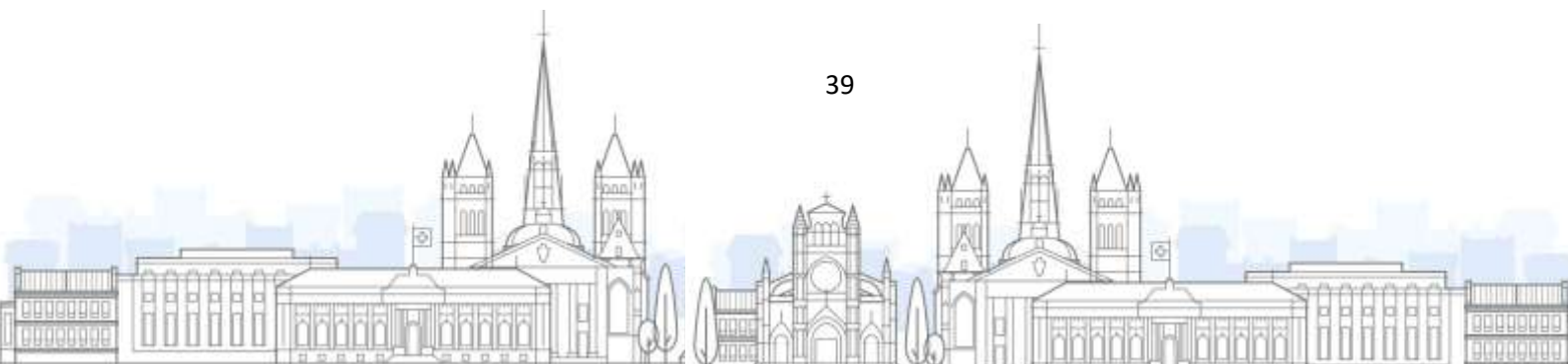
Secondly, methodology mediates relations between readers and literary texts. This is especially true since various theories and methodologies result in different approaches towards reading. According to Peter Barry, any approach will yield different results because all approaches provide their ways of comprehending literature.

Thirdly, methodology also possesses a critical and ideological aspect. Many current methods are aimed at disclosing power relationships and hidden ideologies in texts. In turn, feminist criticism deals with gender representations in literary pieces and exposes patriarchal ideology. Postcolonial criticism criticizes colonial history as reflected in texts.

First, the method helps to establish the credibility of the literary studies as an academic discipline through proper analytical framework and theoretical base. It helps scholars to present their views in a convincing way.

Transformations in Literary Methodology. Transformations in literary methodology can be understood through larger social changes that occur within society and culture. For instance, one of the most significant transformations witnessed has been the increasing use of multidisciplinary methodologies. This has made literary research an interdisciplinary subject, involving psychological, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical aspects.

Psychoanalytical criticism involves the examination of the unconscious aspects of literary works. Marxist criticism focuses on how literature is connected to economic relations. Cultural criticism looks at literature in conjunction with popular culture and media.



Another change in literary methodologies has come about in the area of digital humanities. One example is the distant reading technique suggested by Franco Moretti. In distant reading, scholars analyse texts at a wider scale than in traditional methods such as close reading. As such, distant reading illustrates how technology has influenced literary studies. Moreover, globalization has influenced literary methodology in different ways. Postcolonial and transnational theories look at the global nature of literature.

However, like everything else, there are both pros and cons concerning the development of methodologies in literary study. In terms of positive aspects, an abundance of methods can be a great contribution to the enrichment of the field of analysis. Different views, angles of perception, and theories help develop intellectually while at the same time promote discussions among various fields of science.

At the same time, the diversity of methods in literary criticism can become a challenge for scholars in this sphere. An issue that is related to methodological multiplicity is the complexity of choosing a theory for literary analysis. This fact prompts some serious questions about the future development of the field.

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, the opportunity to choose various theoretical backgrounds when conducting analysis is another feature of modern literary criticism.

Conclusion. Literary methodology is one of the crucial elements of literary criticism, which is instrumental in terms of literary analysis. These functions are as important as ever. However, the change of literary methodology represents the change of time in general. The changing nature of literary methodology represents the ability of the field to evolve. In order to remain relevant, literary studies need to incorporate the use of various methodological approaches and be interdisciplinary in their scope. Further research needs to be done in order to incorporate old and new methods in literary studies.

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