**Lesson 06 : Goals and topics in literary research**

**1-Literary Research Goals:**

Wendy Belcher, in Writing Your Journal Article, identifies two main approaches to understanding literary works: looking at a text by itself (associated with [New Criticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Criticism)) and looking at texts as they connect to society (associated with [Cultural Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_studies)). The goal of New Criticism is to bring the reader further into the text. The goal of Cultural Studies is to bring the reader into the network of discourses that surround and pass through the text. Other approaches, such as Ecocriticism, relate literary texts to the Sciences (as well as to the Humanities). [[1]](#footnote-2)

The New Critics, starting in the 1940s, focused on meaning within the text itself, using a method they called “[close reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Close_reading).” The text itself becomes evidence for a particular reading. Using this approach, you should summarize the literary work briefly and quote particularly meaningful passages, being sure to introduce quotes and then interpret them (never let them stand alone). Make connections within the work; ask “why” and “how” the various parts of the text relate to each other. [[2]](#footnote-3)

Cultural Studies critics see all texts as connected to society; the critic therefore has to connect a text to at least one political or social issue. How and why does the text reproduce particular knowledge systems (known as discourses) and how do these knowledge systems relate to issues of power within the society? Who speaks and when? Answering these questions helps your reader understand the text in context. Cultural contexts can include the treatment of gender (Feminist, Queer), class (Marxist), nationality, race, religion, or any other area of human society. [[3]](#footnote-4)

Other approaches, such as [psychoanalytic literary criticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic_literary_criticism), look at literary texts to better understand human psychology. A psychoanalytic reading can focus on a character, the author, the reader, or on society in general. [Ecocriticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecocriticism) look at human understandings of nature in literary texts. [[4]](#footnote-5)

**2-The topics in literary research:**

What is methodology? Major concerns of literary studies: mimetic, expressive, objective, pragmatic. How to do research? Common problems, research bibliography, review of literature, conceptual framework, research niche.  
The Text and the Mind: Psychoanalytical Criticism: Freudian, Lacanian, Jungian approaches, Affect Studies  
The text and the power of close-reading: New Criticism  
Genre: Structuralism and Genre criticism: The Fantastic  
Space and time in literature: Narratology, Cognitive Approaches and Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope.  
Intertextual studies: Structuralist and Poststructuralist approaches  
Text and the Reader: Reception and Reader-response criticism

Text and Society I: Sociological Criticism: Gender and Queer Studies  
Text and Society II: Feminist Criticism  
 Text and Society II: Rereading the canon: Postcolonial Criticism.  
Literature and technology: Posthuman Studies  
Text and Environment: Ecocriticism  
Literature and the New Media: Reading Digital Literature  
Critical Race Theory. [[5]](#footnote-6)

**3-Conceptual approach to scientific literature review:**

According to Dijkers (2009), the review of scientific literature is itself a research method, whose data are based on inputs or results from multiple

studies that coincide, directly or indirectly, with the subject of research, even though they have been developed using different analysis units, a different reality, different eras, latitudes and different languages. This compilation process has a number of very rigorous literature review procedures. [[6]](#footnote-7)

On the other hand, Reyes (2020) mentioned that a review article should be understood as a retrospective analysis of studies compiled in the literature on a particular topic that is considered of interest to a general or specialized public. For their part, Cué et al. (2008) explained it as a kind of scientific article whose function is to contribute, with an overview and explicit, on a research topic linked to the current state, the evolution of a subject over a period of time, to future perspectives, etc. One feature to consider is that, in such works, by their nature, no original results are presented. In addition, bibliographic sustaining fora review article that is considered relevant and objective must have at least fifty bibliographic references to support it.[[7]](#footnote-8)

The review article is a form of research that is commonly done in a library and not in a laboratory or care unit. The fundamental difference will be the type of information and the unit of analysis and not the scientific principles that apply. In this regard, there are mechanisms that make this process feasibly as a Cochrane collaboration, which, according to Terreros et al. (2019), defines systematic reviews, such as the revision of a clearly formulated issue, using systematic, structured and explicit methods to critically identify, select and evaluate relevant research, as well as an analysis of the data from the studies included in the review. In this regard, the following are considered as functions of the bibliographic review: a) it shows that a researcher has skills in finding information; b) indicates that a researcher handles, analyzes, interprets, and argues scientific information; c) it makes us aware of the repetition of research and the use of outdated or discredited theories; d) they help identify gaps in knowledge and research opportunities; e) provides ideas and theories for new research; f) it provides theoric and methodological foundations or as a starting point for new research; g) it provides evidence in states of art or states of the issue, as well as revision works; h) compare and synthesize divided or fragmented knowledge; i) identify new lines of research. [[8]](#footnote-9)

1. Barry Mauer and John Venecek: **Strategies for Conducting Literary Research/ https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/strategies/** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Barry Mauer and John Venecek: **Strategies for Conducting Literary Research/ https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/strategies/** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Barry Mauer and John Venecek: **Strategies for Conducting Literary Research/ https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/strategies/** [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Barry Mauer and John Venecek: **Strategies for Conducting Literary Research/ https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/strategies/** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. **Methodology of literary research** , university of IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU, Faculty of English/

   https://ects.amu.edu.pl/en/courses/view?prz\_kod=15-MBLIT-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Ocaña-Fernández, Yolvi; Fuster-Guillén, Doris : **The bibliographical review as a research methodology**, Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação, 2021, vol. 14, núm. 33, e15614, Enero-Diciembre, , p01 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Ocaña-Fernández, Yolvi; Fuster-Guillén, Doris : **The bibliographical review as a research methodology**, Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação, 2021, vol. 14, núm. 33, e15614, Enero-Diciembre, , p01 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)