

UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS
VICERRECTORIA ACADÉMICA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

***LITERARY ANALYSIS OF SYLVIA PLATH'S THE BELL JAR
THROUGH BOTH THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL
APPROACH CONSIDERING THE MAIN CHARACTER'S
MENTAL DISORDERS ARE CAUSED BY SOCIAL LIMITATIONS***

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English

STUDENT:

ALESSIA SOFÍA HERNÁNDEZ NAVARRO

THESIS MENTOR:

LICDA. KATTIA MORA RIVERA

SEDE ARANJUEZ

APRIL, 2020

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my professor Kattia Mora, who introduced me to Sylvia Plath's novel and poems, also to Catalina Guerrero and Dinier Amador who also supported me throughout this process. In addition, I want to thank to all my professors who increased my interest and love for English. I cannot thank you enough.

Dedication

First, I want to dedicate this investigation to my mom, my biggest supporter, who taught me how to be a strong woman. Then, to my dad, who showed me how to be a caring person. In addition, to my siblings who supported me in infinitives ways throughout my learning process and life, and this also goes to my nieces and nephews who I love the most.

Finally, to myself, for not giving up even when I thought I was not good enough, because I was good enough.

Contents

Abstract	13
Resumen	14
Chapter 1	13
Introductory Framework	13
1.1 Problem Statement.....	16
1.2 Objectives of the Investigation	18
1.2.1 General Objective	18
1.2.2 Specific Objectives	18
1.3 Justification of the Study	18
1.4 Antecedents	21
1.5. Scope	23
Chapter II.....	25
Theoretical Framework	25
2.1 Literary Theories and Approaches	25
2.1.1 Literary Theory Definition.....	27

2.1.2. Approaches	31
2.2. Themes, Symbols and Motifs	33
2.2.1 Themes	33
2.2.2 Symbols.....	34
2.2.3 Motifs	35
2.3 Biography of the Author.....	36
2.3.1 Childhood.....	37
2.3.2 College years.....	38
2.3.3 Adulthood	39
2.4. Plot of the Novel.....	40
Chapter III	45
Methodological Framework	45
3.1 Research Approach.....	45
3.1.1. Qualitative Approach.....	46
3.1.2. Quantitative Approach.....	47
3.1.3. Mixed Approach	48
3.2 Research Design	48

3.3 Information Sources49

3.4 Analysis Categories50

3.5 Data Collection Instruments51

3.6 Collection data process and data analysis.....52

Chapter IV54

Data Analysis54

4.1. Approaches to the Investigation54

 4.1.1. Psychological Approach54

 4.1.2. Historical Approach57

4.2. Theories vs Literary Work.....61

4.3 Themes, Motifs, and Symbols74

Chapter V84

Conclusions and Recommendations.....84

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion.....84

5.2 Conclusions84

 5.2.1 To describe how the main character’s depression is influenced by social constrains placed upon women.84

5.2.2 To explain the relationship between gender-based violence and the suicide attempt of Esther Greenwood.....87

5.2.3 To identify how the author’s mental condition affected her life her only novel The Bell Jar.....89

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question90

5.4 Recommendations90

References92

Annexes100

Table of Tables

Table 1	61
Table 2. Themes	74
Table 3. Symbols	78
Table 4. Motifs	81

Abstract

The aim of this investigation titled “Literary Analysis of Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* Through Both the Psychological and Historical Approach Considering the Main Character’s Mental Disorders are Caused by Social Limitations” is to analyze how social limitations and gender roles affect women’s mental instability.

The different theories that are used when studying fragments from the book are the Psychological criticism, Feminist criticism and Radical Feminism. The investigator makes a triangulation of the fragments, theories, and own comments in order to analyze each of the objectives.

Resumen

El propósito de la presente investigación titulada “Literary Analysis of Sylvia Plath’s The Bell Jar Through Both the Psychological and Historical Approach Considering the Main Character’s Mental Disorders are Caused by Social Limitations” es analizar como las limitaciones sociales y los roles de género afectan lo estabilidad mental de las mujeres.

Las diferentes teorías que se utilizan para analizar los pasajes del libro son la crítica psicológica, la crítica feminista, y el feminismo radical. El investigador hace una triangulación de los pasajes del libro, junto con las teorías y sus propios comentarios para lograr el análisis de cada uno de los objetivos.

Chapter 1

Introductory Framework

Throughout history, there has always been differentiations among men and women. Some of those distinctions are created by nature and human evolution, and some others, the ones that affect the most, are created by the society in which each person lives. The struggle or process that a woman has to go through, in comparison with that of men, when dealing with stressful situations or problems tends to be different. Mental health is one of the many conditions that does not occur or is presented in the same way for woman or man. According to Fabian, “Women experience depression twice as often as men” (2017, par. 7). Understanding the reason why mental illness affects women differently is significant in order to see how the problem has been approached throughout history. In addition, a great part of society tends to associate women’s frustration and anger with hysteria and even menstrual disorders, which is clearly wrong and unfair.

Before continuing, it is important to define mental illness and how it affects someone’s life. According to MedlinePlus (n.d.), it is the state of mind that will vary depending of internal and external factors. The author mentions that mood, thinking, feeling, and behavior of someone can be affected by a genetic aspect. All this can also alter the way of living of that person (par. 1). Although, the person suffering from this disease is not the only one that can be affected, since his or her family will also have to deal with the condition. Some may even disregard the illness, and some may be afraid of discussing it with other people. It seems that the stigma surrounding mental illness is just another obstacle for a better understanding of the condition.

Mental disorders are caused by several reasons, most of those are related with external aspects that a person cannot control. Furthermore, social expectations related with gender are one of the obstacles humans have to face when growing up in any culture; although, women seems to be experiencing severe situations when trying to develop in society or just when they are trying to find their own identity. In most cases, access to health is also determined by inequality of genres. According to Batres (2001), young girls and women's health is directly affected by social inequalities throughout their whole lives. The differences related with power among man and women increases the chances of unwanted pregnancies and young girls dropping out of high school or even college (par. 19).

By analyzing the novel, *The Bell Jar*, it is inevitable to see how the problem has not been solved. Almost fifty years later, the struggle continues. For this particular reason, there is still a necessity of analyzing the example of Ester, even nowadays, as women have to deal with social beliefs that only limit their development. The awareness of every single example of how this affects women is relevant in a world that is currently working for a more equal environment.

The conflict of social expectations and mental health can be seen in the main character of the novel *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, named Ester Greenwood. Her search for a true self in a world full of standards divided by gender, ideals, repression, and many others, led her to a mental breakdown. Her journey is truly a representation of what a woman has to go through in many instances of her life; even women from different social classes go through the same. Therefore, women have to fight for a more equal society mostly their whole lives. Ester felt the pressure of studying at college or having the life of a married woman, who lives in a suburb with three children, since doing both simultaneously was completely impossible in her mind. Moreover, she struggled with getting to know or explore her own sexuality. She compared her experienced with

the one that the male character, Buddy Willard, had. She was never exposed to any type of sexual education, since her society considered that women should only experience a sex life after marriage.

Also, according to her time and expectations, her life was supposed to have meaning, due to her academic achievements; however, failing into getting in just one class seemed to be like her breaking point in her depression. It left her with a feeling of emptiness, which made her believe she was full of nothing; even when she happened to be an excellent academic student in the past, as if her worth depended on achievements women were not even expected to pursue to begin with.

Ester is just like any other women from any other culture, who deals with a world that is not necessarily easy, better, or the same than men have to deal with. This, in terms of mental health, might be a factor that complicates and differentiates how women see or experience the world, or in this case, it changes what the world wants from them. The struggle of living with mental illness and not being taken seriously, is another aspect that women have to face. Women are seen as the weaker sex, with poor mental stability that is usually related with a change in their temper, associated again, as it was mentioned before, with hysteria.

This book is a representation of the author's life. At one point of her existence, Sylvia Plath dealt with the same expectations, struggles, and fears that Ester Greenwood lived with. Nevertheless, in the case of the writer, the analogy of "the bell jar" managed to appear one more time in her life, when she committed suicide. For this reason, this research will be based on those social restrictions upon women that might lead to clinical depression. According to Hall-Flavin (2017), clinical depression can be defined as the more-severe state of depression, and the

symptoms can really affect someone's life even to make a notice of daily activities (par. 1,), which can eventually develop into a more serious consequence, such as the attempt and suicide of the author and the character of the novel.

1.1 Problem Statement

Mental health is a topic that must be well explained and discussed. For that reason, finding a book that is an honest representation of any mental condition is completely necessary when describing or treating any illness, which is exactly what can be experienced or read through the words of Sylvia Plath in the novel *The Bell Jar*. Her novel is about a real life, her own life. It is also a very rough description of what is like to be depressed for a young woman during the decades of 1950 and 1960. Women used to have more labels or roles to fulfill back then, in addition to hysteria, hormone problems, lack of rest, and with less access to safer medications, women had to struggle to be heard and to be taken seriously. Although it was written in the 1960s, a lot of women can be related or can be seen in the place of Esther Greenwood.

Since the problem remains in our society, the necessity to discuss it is relevant. According to *Mental Health in America* (n.d.), the numbers of depression episodes in young people in the US within the ages of 12 and 17, is increasing from 2012 to 2017 (par. 3). The numbers are just a reflection of why the subject should be still discussed. In the case of Latin America, the Pan American Health Organization (2012) states that out of the one million people who commits suicide every year around the world, 63000 cases are from America (par. 5). This is a clear example of why this topic is still important to be discussed.

In the case of women, the burden is still present; even though, the issue is now openly discussed. According to Erchull (as cited by Fabian, 2017), women are still related with the word

crazy, and in most cases, oppression is highly related with women that experienced depression or anxiety (par. 4, 11). For that reason, the case of Ester Greenwood is a great example to understand the illness from the woman's points of view. A great example of the previous point can be seen in a study on how people perceive certain emotions on a man and on a women. Feldman and Bliss-Moreau (as cited by Begley, 2009) emphasizes how people see anger on a man is usually related with an external factor, something wrong happened while he was sitting on the traffic, but in the case of women, the perception of her anger is related with internal factors; for example, her emotions and her hormones. Although, there is not a lot of scientific proof that this perception is right, people tend to belief that women are more emotional and, for that reason, their anger comes from within (par. 2, 3).

This investigation will use an analysis of the text to understand why this young girl, with such a promising life ahead of her, is completely under what she calls "a bell jar" when talking about her depression. In addition, there will be three major areas that the current research will take into consideration. The first one is the novel; second, references taken from the comments made by scholars; and finally, the knowledge, perception, and own ideas from the author of the investigation. Also, the novel is a great example on how society influences the main character's mental instability, and how the violence represented in the book is highly attached to her attempt of suicide. For these reasons, the research question of this investigation is: How do social constrains are strictly related to mental disorders suffered by the main female character of the novel *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

An important part of an investigation is the objective. It tells us exactly what the investigator wants to achieve, and according to Gonzalez, García and Lopez, (n.d.), it will state the points that will be analyzed in the research (p. 3).

1.2.1 General Objective

To evaluate the limitations caused by mental disorders likely caused by suppressive environment, both at home and society, in the main female character of the novel *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath using the psychological and historical approach.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

To describe how the main character's depression is influenced by social constrains placed upon women.

To explain the relationship between gender-based violence and the suicide attempt of Esther Greenwood.

To identify how the author's mental condition affected her life and her only novel *The Bell Jar*.

1.3 Justification of the Study

Mental health has become a subject of discussions for many years; although, lately there has been some advances in terms of removing the social stigma that carries with it. Although, this is still happening, according to Ahmedani (2011), as previously mentioned, stigma is still an active element of society that can actually obstruct the ability to seek help when it is needed (par.

33). Such situation applies for both, men and women. However, in the case of the latter, its recognition as a disease caused by genetic or external factors, has taken some time to be understood. For that reason, this investigation is focused on how social restrictions upon women have worsened women's mental state of mind, even in our time by taking as an example Ester Greenwood, the novel's main character, and her journey through a major depression disorder during the decade of 1950 in the United States.

During that time, US citizens developed a strong need to form a family, and the majority of women gave up their dreams of studying at college just to stay at home and be housewives. According to Tyler (1999), after the depression, in the decade of 1930 and the World War II, a necessity to maintain stability hit the American society, so this created an increase of married couples during the 1950s (p.14). During the middle of the twentieth century in the US, women silently struggled with a feeling of wanting more from life. According to Friedman (1963), the feeling of dissatisfaction was quite present in women's lives, mostly in the ones that kept themselves at home, taking care of the children, and creating this perfect image of a wife. Actually, most of these women started a career, but dropped out of college just to get married, since education was seen as an obstacle for girls who wanted a husband. Consequently, it was either a professional career or a suburban life (par. 1, 4).

In the novel, Ester Greenwood was 19 years old in 1953, she had a better social position in comparison to other women, and she had the opportunity to study. However, the social expectations of her time made her doubt about her future as a possible writer or mother. This and many other aspects of her life and society, increased her vulnerability to experience depression. All of these events were inspired by the life of the author, Sylvia Platt, who ended up committing suicide after the publication of the novel.

Despite the advances and new studies in the field of psychology and gender related issues, and the openness to loudly discuss it, there is still a gap and a differentiation in our society on how some social aspects can affect women in a different way than men. According to the World Health Organization (2002), “During adolescence, girls have a much higher prevalence of depression and eating disorders and engage more in suicidal ideation and suicide attempts than boys” (p. 1). This is very important, since the main character of the novel is a young girl in transition to adult life. Moreover, beauty is another burden that every single woman has to face and deal with since childhood. The stereotype that women have to fulfill is completely unrealistic and created by software that will never understand that there is not a stereotype; there many types of women, of all ages, sizes, and heights.

Discussing the representation of Ester’s part on the novel is still relevant, since we have not reach gender equality or a complete openness in our time. According to Batres (2001), women’s role is typically related with or limited to education and family, and when that is fixed in society, that is the way women will see or experience life (par. 7). This statement is represented in Ester’s fear of becoming a mother or a wife, when facing the rejection of getting into a class, and having nothing to do after that. That is the moment in which her depression starts to develop the most.

Furthermore, it is important to investigate the main character and the author’s example and how all the elements, previously mentioned, are combined in their lives, so that at the end suicide was the solution to their problems. This research will continue with previous investigations related with mental disorders, gender gap, feminism, social expectations, and so on, that are represented in the novel, as people should not stop discussing a problem if still exists.

1.4 Antecedents

Although, in every single culture of human history women have been essential for the maintenance of society, mostly for her ability to give birth, there are not many famous women in our history in comparison to the amount of famous men. Women's place was almost never related with law, politics, war, government, or technology, her place was usually close to home and family. This restriction has been represented in almost every culture; however, not all women were the same, so not all of them dreamt with a house in the suburbs and five children. According to Tasca, Rapetti, Carta, and Fadda (2012), the oppression of not being able to become who they wanted to be, or the fear of being socially different caused mental disorders in women. One particular illness, hysteria, has been related with women throughout history. The connections starts ever since Ancient Egypt, and happens in any other civilization that followed like Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Modern Age, and Contemporary Age. During early times, women were treated with specific drugs, and people, mostly man, thought that hysteria was actually related with a demonic entity (p. 1- 2, 4- 5).

The gender gap between men a women is another element that can influenced depression, since the unequal power between the two genders has always been part of the equation. This can be seen in the research made by The Mayo Clinic (2019), which proves that women are more likely to suffer from depression than men. If equality was part of the equation, there would not be such a distinction, except for the internal factors of the natural process of women's body (par.1, 2).

Without getting into all the stages of life that only a woman can go through, such as premenstrual problems, pregnancy, postpartum depression, or menopause mentioned by The

Mayo Clinic, cultural boundaries set up for the two genders are another cause of depression. Women are more likely to be poor than man. This economic status represents an unstable situation in terms of personal grow or care, self-development as professional, and even the opportunity for a better future just by not having control or power over their own lives. This lack of autonomy or self-control is strictly related with a low self-esteem in women throughout most of their lives (par. 15).

Globally, there is a necessity to determine how social inequality is related with mental disorders for either men or women. This can be proved by the study made by Shoukai Yu (2018), in which for the first time in history, there are statistics that can actually demonstrate how social expectations for men and women impact their mental health in a different way. In addition, the study shows how depression is also highly related with gender inequalities, and the results also show that women have the highest levels of suffering from this illness. Another factor is that countries or societies with the highest levels of inequality, have the highest level of depression (par. 24-25).

The United States is a one of the most developed countries in the world. Its undeniable influence can be represented from globalization to education. For this reason, understanding women's position in this nation's history is necessary in order to comprehend their role in society and the differentiations among women and men in a nation with such a level of influence. Moreover, social standards are necessary elements to understand the role of women and men in any culture. A recent study by Maurer, Patrick, Britto, and Millar (2017), on the status of American women in society, showed some relevant information about how women have been seen or how they are related with particular standards in US history. The perception resulted from the report is not surprising, as social standards, in terms of their roles in history, are mostly

related with the topic of household chores than any other topic, activity, or context. It seems that women will always be associated to the term: family. In a second place, voting rights is other topic woman are the most linked to; however, the gap between the two topics is about 23%, and it is mostly used by teachers to teach US History throughout women's perspective. Although, there are not many examples of famous women in the scientific or technological area in US history, there is still an encouragement of telling girls to be part of those areas (p. 6, 12, 15).

Costa Rica is not an exception in terms of the difference among men and women's levels of depression. Data taken from a research made in Santa María de Dota on 47 women regarding depression by Kosmicki, (2017), social roles in their community, anxiety and some others, showed how women who are willing to silence themselves in order to keep peace at home, have a higher tendency of experienced depression. This aspect, and the familiar role imposed to women, can be seen as one of the reasons why women suffer more from depression than men in the Costa Rican society (par. 16-17).

This research also relates the action of self-silencing and *Marianismo*, defined as a gender role, in which women should be the perfect example of spiritualism in the house. Her role is to be under the power of the husband and to maintain her virginity until marriage. The highest level of *Marianismo* is mostly seen in older women within the 47 subjects (par. 1).

1. 5. Scope

1. It is essential for the investigation to reach a deep analysis that shows the relationship of social limitations upon women and mental disorders suffered by the main female character of the novel *The Bell Jar* by using the psychological and historical approach.

2. It is expected to understand how Ester's life experiences, such as her father's death, exploration of her sexuality, rejection of getting into a class, her fear for a suburban life, etc., exposed her to a vulnerability that created a path towards suicide.

3. It aims to create a relationship between experimenting violence or growing up in a violent society for women and the attempt of suicided by Ester.

4. It is also necessary to explore these topics in order to expand or to open the discussion of mental disorders in women in order to reduce the rates of this condition.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

The following segment of the present dissertation is made up of the most important concepts, which are necessary for the analysis that will be carried out in Chapter IV. Lederman & Lederman (2015) mentioned that every research's importance and significance will depend on the usage of a validated theoretical framework (p.597). Later on, the definition and explanation of relevant terms related with each of the objectives will be developed, along with the necessary information from the author to understand the creation of the novel.

2.1 Literary Theories and Approaches

There are two important concepts that need to be defined in every literary analysis, those terms are literature and theory. In first place, the term literature must be fully explained, since the central point of the present investigation stands in a written a work. Lombardi (2019) narrows her first comment on of literature as any written or, even in some occasions, spoken work. In addition, the author mentions creative imagination as one of the important characteristics of this term, which is mentioned in most sources; along with its element of being what represents a particular culture or society in terms of language (par. 1-2). The novel *The Bell Jar* is a truthful representation of a young woman's life during the 50s and 60s, who struggles with breaking the assumptions society makes upon women.

This term has also another peculiar characteristic, which is strongly related with history. About that, Lombardi also marks an important principal of this term, which is that literature is something that is always evolving and finding specific concepts is not that easy (par. 1-3). This

phenomenon occurs in different fields, and it is normal to find a variety of concepts for the same term in different periods of time, and even in some cases, within the same period. Some of those terms are art, philology, culture, politics, and so on.

Another important aspect of this word is that it does not really have a defined concept. Every author or dictionary tends to play with its definition or wording. For example, Rexroth (2019) also mentions that literature's classification may vary according to the historical period, geographical region, genre, subject matter, and so on. However, the author also emphasizes the fact that literature cannot be narrowed or can be seen only as a written work. He compares literature with art, which is also another term that is always evolving, so it is hard to define just with simple words. The author mentions the pleasurable aspect of the words in literature. It goes beyond just reading vocabulary grammatically arranged on a piece of paper, it is something that can be experienced (par. 1, 4). It seems that literature, along with other term, can vary depending of their usage and necessity in a specific period.

The next concept to explain is theory. Just like literature, theory is another term that has a variety of word choices when someone tries to define it. Udo-Akang (2012) exemplifies this aspect when he needed to explain the concept of theory, in which he cited several authors from different fields of study, who tried to defined theory from their point of view, and at the end, the author mentions how the definition will vary depending of the person and his or her background (p. 89-90).

Another definition for theory can be found in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, which starts with the definition of a group of ideas that will explain something, in this case a phenomenon. Moreover, similar definitions can be found in some other online dictionaries, such

as the ones found in the Cambridge Dictionary, in which it is defined as a, “systematic or scientific explanation” for a particular event or situation.

2.1.1 Literary Theory Definition

The last two concepts have to be explained due to the importance of understanding the next definition, which is literary theory. It is fundamental to fully comprehend this term, since that is exactly what the dissertation will be about. Literary theory, of course, has a lot of similarities in terms of its definition with the previous concepts. An example of this can be seen when Brewton (n.d.) defines literary theory as the set of rules, methods, concepts, or even tools applied when reading, interpreting, and explaining literature (par. 1, 2). In the case of the present analysis, the literary theories will be the ones in which each analysis of the objectives will be based on.

There are some other terms that must be mentioned when discussing literary theory, and those are, according to Wellek and Warren (1948), criticism and history. First, the authors mention how literary criticism and literary history try to classify or characterize a piece of written work in terms of its author and period of time, but cannot fully complete it without a generalized set of definitions that only literary theory can provide. They also mention that the three concepts will need each other in order to work properly. In addition, criticism and history cannot be explained without literary theory, and the last one cannot be explained without the other two terms. (p. 7- 8, 30-31).

To fully understand the term, criticism, here is a definition taken from the Cambridge dictionary, “the act of giving your opinion or judgment about the good or bad qualities of something or someone, especially books, films, etc.” In addition, the online dictionary also states,

“Criticism is also a careful discussion of something in order to judge its quality or explain its meaning.” There will be three theories that will be applied and used to analyze each of the objectives of this investigation. Those are Psychoanalytic criticism, Feminism criticism, and Radical feminism.

2.1.1.1. Psychoanalytic criticism

An essential element of the current investigation is the psyche of the main character, and, for that reason, when analyzing the novel, it is relevant to use the psychoanalytic criticism, which is mostly related with Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; although, some other authors mention other professionals on this field.

In terms of this type of criticism in literature, Delahoyde (n.d.) states that in this type of criticism the text is an interpretation of the author’s psyche. It is full of his childhood unresolved traumas, along with his or her fears, desires, or any other emotions, which are usually first represented in dreams. Those dreams can be explained or represented in literary works. In addition, the author will follow some of those conflict throughout the book (par. 1, 3). Moreover, Wellek and Warren (1948) also refer to this, and mention the author of the book as the most important part of this criticism. There is a psychological analysis of the author along with the creativity involved in the writing process. Furthermore, one new relevant aspect mentioned by the two authors is the effects of the written work on readers (p. 75).

The third objective of the investigation is completely related with the author’s life, Sylvia and the creation and construction of the main character, for those reasons the type of criticism that will be used to analyze the third objective will be the is the psychoanalytic one. The life of the author is fundamental when understanding this novel since the novel is an autobiography of

the author. Sylvia Plath went through the same events, processes, emotions, and fears that are described in the book when she was younger. This element is fundamental for the psychoanalytic criticism. Furthermore, modern psychiatry is also taken into consideration, since Freud's statements cannot be fully applied in any other period of time.

2.1.1.2. Feminist criticism

In order to start this section, it is relevant for the full understanding of the investigation to define the term feminism. Burkett & Brunell (2019) defines feminism as an ideology of full equality in the three most important aspects of civilization: society, economics, and politics, without any differentiation in terms of gender. This concept also has the peculiarity that it will evolve depending of the time frame and even the society in which it is presented.

The feminist-criticism started around the middle of the last century, and it has been adapted or refined several times, mostly due to the fact that a lot of types of feminism have been born ever since its first appearance. A broad explanation of feminism can be found in Mehrpouyan (2014), who defines feminist criticism as the opposite of the ideology of patriarchy. It separates itself from all the theories dominated by a male figure, while emphasizing a more equal society. It is fundamental to mention its responsibility to be a model and an image of a female experience, by integrating all the aspects that makes this experience so difficult to deal with, and also to differentiate it from the one experienced by men (p. 200).

The last author also mentions that during that period, in which this type of criticism started to evolve, many female writers were seen as the drivers of the movement. Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, and some others, were fundamental to establish the ground rules and bases for future generations of writers who wanted to represent their experiences for a more equal

literature world (p. 200). This is fundamental for future generations of feminist writers, who found in literature a way of sharing their own experiences and struggle.

Even nowadays, the definitions of this theory keep some important aspects since its inception in society. For example, Napikosky (2019) still defines the theory as a way of mentioning women's experiences and knowledge into the literary world. The author even mentions the basic method of this type of criticism, when stating that it starts by identifying how women throughout history have always been related to or presented as an object in an industry dominated by men, and how that male-dominated world emphasizes in male authors more than in female ones, since what we see everywhere is mostly related with male values. (par. 2-4).

This particular criticism will be applied in the first objective of the investigation, since it refers to on how society can be a limitation that can cause mental instability. Furthermore, in the book, the world is seen through the eyes of Ester Greenwood, as we read how she has been experimenting life and how she has to deal with society during the second half of the twentieth century.

2.1.1.3. Radical feminism

The second objective of the investigation is about gender-based violence, and how it is related with the suicide attempt of Ester in the novel. Therefore, for this analysis, the theory that will be used is Radical Feminism. Just like the last theory, radical feminism focuses on how patriarchal oppression controls society and, hence, women's life. The difference, according to Lewis (2019), is that this theory wants to fully eliminate patriarchy from society. Moreover, this author best explains radical feminism by stating how it opposes male privileges that were born

from the oppression to women. This philosophy believes in creating changes by reaching society in a cultural way, more than believing politics is an agent of change (par. 1-3).

One important element, already mentioned, is how violence is represented in this book, as it is one of the central subjects of this theory. Lewis lists some of the main central issues that radical feminists fight against, such as classifying rape as an act of men power upon women, and understanding how motherhood, marriage, and some other social expectations, are a creations from assumptions of patriarchy (par. 12, 14).

An important icon for feminism, since the 60s decade, is Gloria Steinem, as her work on improving and defending women's rights has had a major impact on many generations. When explaining what radical means, Steinem (2016) states that it basically means going to the beginning of everything, which, in most of the cases, refers to the control men have over reproduction, and ends up mentioning that every type of feminism will eventually become radical when analyzing it with time (par. 1).

2.1.2. Approaches

Just like the theories mentioned before, there will be two approaches that will be used in the present investigation: the psychological approach and the historical approach. Both, approaches were explained in the Analysis Categories section in Chapter III, but they will be further detailed here, as they are used every time there is a necessity to study or understand a piece of literature.

2.1.2.1. Psychological Approach

The psychological approach will be used in order to link the psychological theory with the experiences of the main character in the novel. Therefore, the term that must be fully explained is psychology. The Merriam-Western Online Dictionary defines it as a “the study of mind and behavior in relation to a particular field of knowledge or activity” (Psychology, n.d.). With that in mind, the usage of this approach will be in terms of understanding the mind of the main character when experiencing mental disorders due to the social expectations suffered in that particular period.

Just like the Psychoanalytic criticism mentioned before, psychology is fundamental when analyzing not only the main character, but also the author of the novel. Salunke (2010) explains that this approach focuses on how any theory that surrounds human behavior finds its way into the literary work (p.27, 28). In the case of the present investigation, it will be interesting to identify how and why psychology is an important aspect in the book, and why the author wanted to represent it by using the main character’s description of life.

2.1.2.2. Historical Approach

Furthermore, this approach is also related with an aspect of the psychoanalytical theory, since as its name states, the historical background is fundamental when analyzing the text. Russel (as cited in Wijaya, n.d.) mentions that the investigator must interpret the written work within the specific period. With that being said, he or she also needs to take into consideration that his or her time frame is not the same as the one lived in the book or novel, so some of the definitions or perceptions might actually change (par. 1-2). The novel *The Bell Jar* is strictly related with was

happening back them. Therefore, there are elements of women's life that started to change, and that are significant for the author and for society, as well.

This approach also has steps to follow when analyzing a text. Wijaya mentions four steps. Firstly, the investigation has to be made in terms of the period in which the author wrote the novel or book. Secondly, the identification of connections between the book and the period. Thirdly, exploring the text in order to find the objects or words that represent an important aspect of that time frame. And finally, the interpretation of the literature work by connecting it with the information found about the objects in that specific moment (par. 5-8).

2.2. Themes, Symbols and Motifs

2.2.1 Themes

An important element of literary analysis is the theme of the written work. Wiehardt (2019) defines theme as a simple as a subject of matter or topics which will be represented in the novel or book. The author also mentions that a theme expresses a broad subject developed in the novel, such as love, friendship, death, morality, and so on (par. 2- 4). Themes are important in order to widely understand the author's purpose of the book, along with the comprehension of the story that is being developed. Scopa (2017) states that every piece of literature will have more than one theme, since it will create a more complex story. Moreover, the relevance of finding the themes focuses on the possibility of the reader to understand the importance and significance of the written work (par. 7).

Asghar (2016) also provides his point of view, as he defines it as general beliefs that are used and studied in a piece of literature. These beliefs are manifested or represented in mostly all cultures around the world, and its usage within a written work functions as a way of

demonstrating the author's perceptions of the world (par. 1). Some of the themes in the novel *The Bell Jar* are sanity, female sexuality, and some others that will be demonstrated and explained in Chapter IV of the current investigation. Some other common themes in literature are war, love, friendship, beauty, youth, death, and some others.

Each of the definitions will be explained in this part of the dissertations, but they will not be put into analysis, as every element found related with the themes, symbols, and motifs will be mentioned in the analysis that will be carried out in Chapter IV.

2.2.2 Symbols

Another important element or device used when analyzing a piece of literature is symbols. Mahler (2017) mentions that the use of symbols in a written work bring a more complex sense to the literary piece. An author will use a symbol as a way to do not say or state something, (a feeling, a fear, a term, a moment in life, a value, and so on) in a direct way. Symbols are always an indirect element used in literature. For this reason, the subtleness when introducing or mentioning the symbol is also important, so sometimes it is hard to identify a symbol in a text (par. 4, 6).

Not all the symbols respond to the same type. Mahler mentions three types of symbols. First, in most of the cases, a symbol can be represented by an object. Secondly, symbols can also be represented by one of the characters of the story; however, it is not necessary to be the main character to be a symbol. And finally, an event or an action that takes place within the story can also be represented by a symbol (par. 9-11). One important aspect when understanding symbols, is that, according to Scopa (2017), symbols does not really have to happen in the literary world, as they can also be found in daily life. For example, a red light on the street always symbolizes to

stop, or the shape a heart is always related with love (par. 10). Moreover, in literature, some symbols are usually related with colors. Rose (n.d.) mentions that the red color is associated with passion, blood, love; black is related to death, dirt, and evil, among others. There are also some natural elements like seasons, such spring that can be seen as a symbol of a new beginning (p. 1).

In the book that is being analyzed, the title states the principal symbols of the entire novel: the bell jar. The importance surrounding this element is explained in the book and is also represented in the author's life. It will be even significant for people who struggles with mental instability and read the book. This aspect will be explained in the fourth chapter of the investigation, along with other relevant symbols that are fundamental for the purpose of the research.

2.2.3 Motifs

A third element of a literary analysis is motifs. According to Scopa (2017), there are two peculiar ways of defining motifs. One of them is that it can be described as a special type of symbol within the story, and the other one, emphasizes an important differentiation between motif and symbol (par. 5). Just like the two other elements, motifs are greatly used in literature when the need of emphasizing something appears. In addition, in order to better understand what a motif is, it is also important to keep in mind the definitions of themes and symbols that were already mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

Some elements that are always related with motifs are repetitions or patterns. Scopa states that a reader is able to identify a pattern along the way of reading the plot and the imagery used by the author, with the major themes developed in the story; that specific pattern is called motif (par. 12). For the current investigation, a motifs that will be analyzed is the shedding blood

related to the main character's cycle of life. For example, a recurring motif in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Julia* is the use of the opposites, such as dark and light, mostly to emphasize how their relationship was doomed since the beginning. The same motif is also used in the *Lord of The Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, when differentiating evil versus good.

2.3 Biography of the Author

The present section of the chapter will describe Sylvia Plath's biography along with important facts regarding her career. It will be divided into her childhood, college years, adulthood, and finally, her death. It seems necessary to fully describe her life, since it is fundamental for the development of the character in the book, and also an important theme of depression explored within the novel.

Sylvia Plath was an American poet, novelist, and short story writer. She has been mentioned as one of the most influential poets of the second part of the twentieth century. Her most famous pieces of literature were her books of poems such as *Ariel* and *The Colossus*, along with her novel *The Bell Jar*. The first one was published after her death. Her importance remains, even today and, according to Dimir (2018), on the way she exposed the struggle that almost every woman has to go through, disregarding her idealism. Every woman will suffer somehow if she belongs to a patriarchal society (par. 1). Sylvia Plath is also known for being a great poet. Tearle (n.d.) takes the challenge of narrowing her job to the best ten poems everyone should read about Sylvia Plath, some of them are *Lady Lazarus*, *Daddy*, and *The Moon and Yew Tree*, among others.

From her feminine point of view, the themes she explored in her work were strongly related with women's struggles or fears back in her time. Although, some of those themes, even

nowadays, can be present in women's life. According to Asghar (2016), some of the themes that appear regularly in her literary work were "death, victimization, patriarchy, nature, the self, the body, motherhood, sexuality, and love" (par. 1).

The next part will recollect Sylvia's Plath most important events through her life that were significant for her process as a writer and the themes she eventually develop.

2.3.1 Childhood

Sylvia Plath's early years were marked by the image of her father. According to O'Reilly (2003), when Sylvia was born in October 27th 1932, in Boston, Massachusetts, her father, Otto Plath, was 47 years old, and her mother, Aurelia Schober, was only 26 years old. Her father emigrated from Prussia in 1901, and eventually pursued studies in the field of languages, and some other sciences. On the other hand, her mother was a high school teacher with an emphasis in language (p. 355). This seemed to be an effective environment to be born into for Sylvia and her future interest in literature. Although, an important event occurred during this time of her life. O'Reilly mentions that at the young age of 8, Sylvia suffered from the loss of her father after a leg operation. Otto did not want any medical help until it was too late, and diabetes was diagnosed (p. 355).

This marked Sylvia for life. O'Reilly mentions how his carelessness in regard to of his own health was a major trigger or influence on Sylvia's perception of suicide. There is even a poem that she wrote in 1962, called *Daddy*, which seems to be fully inspired by this event. It is about a father who decided to leave her daughter, and she just keeps resurrecting him in order to kill him over and over again. The author also mentions how the figure of her father was used as a symbol of never lasting love throughout her literary work (p. 356). Other authors made more

descriptive comments on this event. Schwartz (2011) refers to Sylvia's trauma and usage of it in her work as a crushing father-complex, which haunted her throughout her life (p. 55).

2.3.2 College years

After the death of her father, Sylvia moved to Wellesley with her mother and younger brother, Warren. O'Reilly states how Sylvia's literary personality started to appear during this time. Due to her outstanding academic effort, Sylvia won a scholarship at Smith College, where she worked as an editor while having the normal life of young lady with perfect grades at that time (p. 356).

During this time, an important event took place in her life. O'Reilly describes her entry to the editorship in New York, in June 1953, as part of Sylvia's process to find her own writer's voice at the young age of 19. Experience that will be used later in her only novel ever published (p. 356). After returning from New York, Sylvia realized that she was not admitted to Frank O'Connor's summer writing class at Harvard. Without nothing else to do, she stayed at home in Wellesley. She started suffering from insomnia and inability to continue with her daily routine. This was the beginning of her depressive state of mind. A doctor recommended sleeping pills and Electroconvulsive Therapy, which was not applied correctly. This experienced is said to mark her recurring thoughts of suicide (p. 356). This particular moment of her short life was fundamental in the novel.

After that event, on August 24th, Sylvia ended up trying to commit suicide in the family's basement by ingesting a large amount of the sleeping pills. The author mentioned before, explains how Sylvia stayed for two days in a comatose state all along in the basement. During this time, the police was looking for her as a missing person. She was discovered and brought

into the psychiatric wing of Massachusetts General Hospital, and then transferred to the McLean Hospital in Belmont (p. 356). In 1954, she was allowed to return to Smith College, where she graduated in 1955. Two years later, while studying for a master's degree, she met her future husband, the English poet Ted Hughes at a college party (p.356).

2.3.3 Adulthood

Sylvia and Ted got married in London, only four months after their first meeting. O'Reilly says that in this period, they both traveled to the United States to work as writers, while traveling around the country by car (p. 357). Later in 1959, Sylvia got pregnant with her first child. In the same year, they moved back to London, and then on 1962, their second child was born. Furthermore, her first collection of poems was published in 1960 (p. 357).

In the autumn of 1962, O'Reilly states that Ted and Sylvia separated, after discovering the affair Ted was having with another woman. Sylvia was alone with her two children. This phase in her life is considered to be the most creative of all, as she wrote poems, even two per day, in period frame of three and four months. It is even said that during this time, Sylvia was working in her second novel about the theme of marriage, the manuscript of this work has never been published (p. 357).

In 1963, and under the pseudonym of Victoria Lucas, Plath published her novel *The Bell Jar*. O'Reilly mentions that the usage of another name was due to the fact the novel is a portrait of the author, and it is not the most flatter portrait ever written with the theme of depression as the most developed one (p.357). During this year, O'Reilly states that Sylvia's physical health was not at its best, and that she was struggling with money. This combined with a severe state of depression pushed her to make important decisions. (p. 357).

On the early hour of February 11th, 1963, at the age of 30 years old, Sylvia secured her children's rooms and went to the kitchen's house to kill herself. She died due to carbon monoxide poisoning after placing her head in the oven (p. 357). After her dead, O'Reilly lists that Plath's work got published by her husband and mother, including more poems and short stories. Although some journals apparently were destroyed or got lost according to what her husband stated (p. 358).

2.4. Plot of the Novel

The following section of the investigation deals with the plot of the novel. The information is taken from the SparkNotes Editors (n.d.) and Ross (2014). Both plots are focused on telling the event as they appeared in the book, none of them is an interpretation.

The novel starts with the 19-year-old college student, Esther Greenwood. She is living at a hotel, in New York in 1953, with other eleven girls for a month. All of them were from different places around the US, and they all won different internships to work in a variety of jobs (Ross, 2014, par. 1). Ester works for Jay Cee at the Ladies Day magazine. Her boss seems kind to her, but also quite and strict. During their stay, the sponsors of the internship sent presents to all the girls, such as clothing and accessories. They always go from the hotel to work and then to parties and dinners, where they can meet important people from their field (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 1).

Ester's closest friend from the group of young girls, is Doreen, who is a tremendous beauty and her personality is the total opposite of Ester's. Doreen always knows what to say, and she is really interested in exploring her sexuality. Unlike Ester, who is usually quiet and does not have any experience in the field of sex. There is another girls in the group, who seemed to be

more alike Ester's personality, but did not get along with Doreen, her name is Betsy. Although, the both are quite similar, Ester spends a lot of time thinking on how rigid Betsy seems to be and keeps comparing her with Doreen's personality. The relationship that she has with Doreen, makes Ester to question herself, her perception of life as a women, along with what she learnt from her own mother, and the role of woman in society (Ross, 2014, par. 1).

Although, all this seems to be like every girl's dream, Ester does not feel lucky. She actually feels nothing but emptiness and spends a lot of hours thinking about how she feels. In addition to this, she spends a lot of time thinking about the execution of Rosenberg's couple, which is actually how the book starts, that is by mentioning this event (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 1).

Several events happened during her stay. For example, the food poisoning that all the girls suffered, except Doreen, after going to one of the banquets that they were invited to. Also, Ester shows some interest on a UN interpreter, and thinks about losing her virginity with him, but he does not really see her in that way (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par.1). Moreover, Ester's preoccupation about what will happen after college is always present, along with the fact that she is not sure if the maternity suburban life style is a good fit for her, but feels that she does not really have an option, since every girl seems to make a decision between college and being married and the mother of three children. During this time, she thinks about her mother and the type of role she has a conventional woman (Ross, 2014, par. 1).

Furthermore, she keeps thinking about Buddy Willard, a young boy she used to date. Ester recriminates herself when remembering how much she admired Buddy at the beginning of their relationship, and how many times she found herself thinking about being Buddy's wife.

Although, she then realizes that Buddy had sex with a waitress and gets angry at him for portraying an image of virginity. After that moment, Ester started to be jealous about Buddy having more sexual experience than her (Ross, 2014, par. 1).

On her last day in New York, Ester goes out with Doreen and one of her male friends. They all go to a party, in which Ester meets Marco, who from the start she defines him as a woman-hater. He thinks he is better than women and he is actually in love with his cousin but cannot be with her. He dances with Ester, and after a few moments they go outside to the garden, and that is when out of nowhere he throws Ester to the ground and starts ripping off her clothes, by repeating the word “slut” several times. Ester punched him in the nose and managed to stand up, and leaves looking for Doreen, but never finds her. (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 1).

In the summer, after returning home from New York, Ester finds out that she was not accepted to a writing class, and after that, her mental health started to get worse and worse, leading her to a physical and mental state, in which she was not able to sleep for days, along with an inability to eat, write, and read (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 3).

She gets stuck at home, without sleeping. Every day, she hears her neighbor who was the mother of a bunch of kids, walking outside their house, and the recurrent thought of ending like her or her mom haunts her every minute. She spends every second thinking about options when committing suicide. She thinks about drowning, hanging herself, or cutting her wrists, but nothing seems to be a good option (Ross, 2014, par. 3). During this time, her mother takes her to Dr. Gordon, who barely listens to her in their first appointment, and suggested electric shock therapy. She is scared of the treatment, but sees her mother worried for her, so she decides to do it. Dr. Gordon incorrectly performs the electric shock therapy (Ross, 2014, par. 3). After that event,

Ester finally decides how she will kill herself. One day, after her mother leaves for work, she goes to their basement, in which there a crawlspace. She goes in it and takes 50 sleeping pills (Ross, 2014, par. 3).

She is not really sure about the amount of time that went by when she woke up at the at the city's hospital. Although, she does not stays there for too long, she does no really want to cooperate, and is always messing around with the nurses. Then, she got transferred to another hospital. In a desperate moment, her mother writes to Philomena Guinea, who sponsored Ester's internship in New York, and tells her about Ester's mental state and how hard it was for her promising daughter to write and read again. Philomena helps them by paying for Ester's treatment at a very expensive private asylum, which is the last option Ester has in order to be fine (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 3).

During her stay at that hospital, Ester meets Dr. Nolan, who eventually wins her trust. In addition, she meets; a girl from college, who saw Ester's attempt to kill herself, and eventually ended up coping her. This girl, Joan, was also another girl Buddy dated (Ross, 2014, par. 4). While Ester is making progress during the treatment, she is allowed some freedom to go to the city a few times. She feels better and finds her female force within her along with Dr. Nolan's help. She goes out and buys a diaphragm, and finally has sex with a man named Irvin (Ross, 2014, par. 5).

The day she loses her virginity, she suffers a hemorrhage after having sex. Since she does not have a lot of experience, at the beginning she thinks is normal and then realizes it is not. She hurries to Joan's house, who now has permission to live outside the hospital along with a nurse.

Joan helps her to recover. Unfortunately, sometime later, Joan goes back to the hospital and ends up hanging herself (SparkNotes Editors, n.d., par. 3).

Also, during this time, Buddy visits Ester and says that he was not sure if he was the one with the problem, since Ester and Joan ended up in the hospital. Ester finally finds the closure that she needed (Ross, 2014, par. 5). Moreover, thanks to Dr. Nolan, Ester tries electric shock therapy one more time, which actually, this time, works perfectly for her. The treatment is working, and Ester finally begins to free herself from the expectations and social restrictions that women faced (Ross, 2014, par. 5).

At the end, Ester needs to pass one last interview in front of the board of specialists of the private hospital, to see if they approve her to go back home. The weeks before the interview are fundamental for her recovery. Therefore, she starts to meditate about way she experienced the bell jar, which was what she felt when she was depressed. After months at the hospital, she started to realize that the bell is now above, and not surrounding her. She then understands that it is no longer there; although, it might appear in the future, but not now. She is ready and eager to go back to her life and college. The story finished when Dr. Nolan helps her to prepare, and Ester enters the room where the interview is taking place (Ross, 2014, par. 5).

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

The aim of this chapter is to mention and explain the methodology that will be used in the present research. Furthermore, it also states a very well explained structure on how the research will be developed in order to achieve the objectives. The actual analysis will not take place in this section of the document. Moreover, this section is extremely important, since it is the essence of the investigation in terms of collecting and processing the data in the correct way. According to Kallet (2004), “The methods section should describe what was done to answer the research question, describe how it was done, justify the experimental design, and explain how the results were analyzed” (p. 1). The aspects that will be developed are the research approach, research design, sources, categories, the instrument that will be use to collect data, and the process that will be followed to analyze the information. Each principle will count with a detailed explanation, since they will be fundamental to guide the investigator during the whole research process.

3.1 Research Approach

In this section, there will be an explanation of the three approaches that can be used in an investigation. Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014) explain that these approaches are a systematic process applied to the solution of a problem (p. 37). The three research approaches are the qualitative method, quantitative method, and the mixed method. The one chosen for the present investigation is the qualitative approach.

3.1.1. Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach leans towards a greater subjectivity. Hernández et al. (2014) states that this method is characterized by a less structured process in comparison to the quantitative process. During this method, the consultation of the theory happens throughout the whole investigation; therefore, the research question might change. In most of the cases, the hypothesis will be generated during the research. In this particular method, assumptions are present, and they will define or control part of the results. The investigator will check the facts that eventually will create a theory from the information gathered. He or she will go from a specific aspect to a more generalization of the subject, unlike the quantitative approach, that will go from general to specific (p. 40-41).

The present research, as it is a literary analysis, will be determined by a qualitative approach due to the novel *The Bell Jar* cannot be analyzed through numerical data, only by the words that it contains, as well as what those words represents in an specific context. Words represent more intangible information, which is a characteristics that the quantitative approach does not have. For example, Gunnell (2016) emphasizes the fact that emotions and behaviors are part of the data in this method, along with the relationship of these elements and the environment in which there are presented. This means that a logical approach cannot be used to reach the objectives of the investigations, since human behavior cannot not be measured by numbers. This approach is interested in the analysis of why people act the way they do, and the understanding on how their surroundings conditions people (par. 9).

With that in mind, choosing the qualitative approach for this investigation is strictly related with the objectives of the research, due to the fact that the main purpose is to understand

how mental illness, in this case, depression and the social environment lived by the character in that particular period of time, pushed her to a dangerous mental instability that led her to attempt committing suicide, as well as to her journey for a mental stability while exploring her fears, desires, and traumas while in a rehabilitation center. Statistics or numbers can be mentioned as a way of understanding the importance of exploring the topic of mental illness in our time, but not as a determined element needed to reach the objective.

Another reason for choosing the qualitative method is the necessity of interpreting the role of the investigator. Hernández et al. (2014) states that the investigator is interested in understanding a specific phenomenon, or some characteristics through close observations and analysis of the experiences about this particular circumstance (p. 42). With that in mind, the researcher's interest is to understand the reason why mental illness on young women is produced by social aspects, and how it can be so restrictive for them that, in many cases, can lead to suicide. Furthermore, the researcher's interest relies on a fully understanding the phenomenon of cultural sexist expectations back in the time when the book was written, and how it affects the psychological development of a promising young girl. It is also important to mention the relationship of this bibliographic novel and the writer's decision to end her own life shortly after the publication of the novel. Again, the depth that is needed to understand this context cannot be given by a quantitative investigation, since its purpose usually resides in establishing a phenomenon, but not on its explanation or complete comprehension.

3.1.2. Quantitative Approach

The quantitative research method is, according to Hernández et al. (2014), an objective approach since its major concern is to gather data in a very systematic process that at the end will

prove a hypothesis that was previously established. It follows a lineal process that cannot be altered; for example, and unlike the qualitative approach, the consultation of the theory happens only after the establishment of the problem statement (p. 37-38).

Statistics and measurements are essential in the quantitative approach in order to establish the guidelines or to prove a theory related to the research question and its variables. Hernández et al. (2014) also states that in comparison to the qualitative method, the quantitative one tends to be a more specific and closed, since the problem statement is the one that will be used to limit the investigation. Assumptions are not the main core of the methods; so, for this reason the investigator cannot let his own believe affect the process or results of the research (p. 39).

3.1.3. Mixed Approach

Finally, the mixed approach, as its name implies, is a combination of the two methods. According to Creswell (2004), it will collect qualitative and quantitative information in order to gaining a wide knowledge and a better understanding of the phenomenon under study, since using only one of the other two methods might limit the results (p. 32).

3.2 Research Design

In general, answering the research question or hypothesis is the main purpose of every investigation. According to Dulock (1993), the research design is used as a guidance or way that will be applied in order to accomplish or answer the research question (par. 1). Therefore, the design chosen for the present investigation is the descriptive one. Although this is commonly related and used in the quantitative method, the type of analysis required for this literary criticism demands a descriptive design of the phenomenon under study.

As its name states, a descriptive design demands a thorough analysis of a particular situation or event. Fireman (1985) states that its sense of “exploratory” analysis is fundamental in order to fully understand any phenomenon (p.41). Although the definition of descriptive design might seem a little bit redundant, Fireman (1985) also mentions several definitions, but ends up stating that all the definitions form a better explanation, as each needs the other for a complete definition or a better understanding, since this design is strictly related with a systematic description of a person or a thing that can represent an event, a situation, a state, etc. (p.41).

In the case of the present investigation, the mental and social conditions of the character Ester Greenwood are the elements that will be analyzed along with the theory of each of the approaches mentioned in the general objective and quotations from the novel. According to The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (2001), in a descriptive research, the investigator will collect information, and then it he or she will organize the information gathered in order to understand a situation (par. 4).

3.3 Information Sources

Sources of information are an important element of any investigation. According to the University of Minnesota Crookston (n.d.), these are the sources where the investigator will take the information or data from, so it can be later analyzed during the research. They can be classified as primary, secondary, and tertiary. Such classification will depend on the *originality* of each of source. Therefore, the reader will know if the information used by the investigator is first handed or if it is an interpretation of another source (par. 1).

For this investigation, the primary sources are scholarly journal articles, books, government reports, poems, letters, and theses. This selection is based on the fact that a primary

source, according to the Yale University Library (n.d.), is the one that is completely original, there is not an interpretation of another source in it. On the other hand, a secondary source is usually an interpretation of a primary source. The secondary sources of the present investigation are magazines and newspaper articles, literary criticism such as journal articles, essays, and bibliographies. On the other hand, the tertiary sources that will be used are dictionaries and encyclopedias. Finally, a tertiary source is the one that summarizes, lists, or collects primary and secondary sources (par. 1, 4, 8).

3.4 Analysis Categories

The purpose of the current segment of the investigation is to define each of the categories that will be developed and used when analyzing the data. According to Garcia (2013), a category is a term or definition that will be used throughout the investigation in order to explain or solve the problem statement (par. 4).

The general objective of the present investigation states that such is a literary analysis that considers two fundamental approaches: the psychological and the historical approach, in order to explain the research. For that reason, the definitions of literary analysis, psychological approach, and historical approach will be mentioned as follows.

A literary analysis or literary criticism, according to the Waidner-Spahr Library (n.d.), includes a thorough analysis, explanation, and interpretation of a piece of literature, that it is mostly an opinion of the investigator, but completely based on supported evidence and the theory being investigated (par. 1).

Furthermore, Andres (n.d) defines the psychological approach as an attempt to describe and explain the behavior of an individual in a specific moment, even if a mental disorder is evident or not (par. 10).

Finally, the other approach that will be used is the historical approach. Farzaneh (2016) states how the written work is influenced by the author's personal life and environment at a specific time, so an investigation of the author's time is necessary in order to fully understand the book (p. 333).

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In this section of the investigation, the instruments selected to gather and process the information will be mentioned to have a better idea on how data and theory will be merged, so the objectives can be reached. There are several instruments that can be used depending on the approach that was already selected. Hernández et al. (2014) states that there are different instruments that can be used in a qualitative research; for example, interviews, observations, group reunions, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and document analysis (p. 472). Nevertheless, the instrument that will be used in this research is the document analysis or quotation from the book, as the novel *The Bell Jar* is the primary source.

There will be an extensive analysis of parts and quotations from the book along with the theory of the approach. According to the Amsterdam Public Health (n.d.), "document analysis is based on existing sources, like government reports, personal documents, articles in newspapers, books or medical records" (par. 5). Therefore, for this specific part of the research, the use of a table is necessary in order to organize the information in a better way, so it can facilitate the visualization and analysis of the data.

The design of the table consists in three columns. Each column will have the following information. The first column, from left to right, will have the quotations already selected by the investigator, which represent an important aspect or element from each of the objectives of the investigation. The second column will contain the theory, which can be related or can be used to explain the previous quotation. The third column will have the interpretation or comments by the investigator based on the analysis made from the quotation and theory mentioned on the previous column. On the other hand, three quotations from the book will be selected for each of the objectives, and that will be the amount of the rows in the table.

The section called Themes, Motifs, and Symbols on Chapter IV will also contain a table, with two columns, the first one, from left to right, will mention each of the themes, motifs and symbols from the books, and the second column will have the explanation by the investigator of those elements.

3.6 Collection data process and data analysis

This section contains the exact process the investigator will follow in order to develop each objective, starting from the first approach, and ending with the analysis or interpretation of data. The following steps are the ones that will guide the investigator in the current research.

In the first stage, the investigator will select the topic that will be developed during the research. In this particular case, it deals with the social constrains that cause mental illness in young women. The first reading of the book is mostly to grasp an idea of the central or main topic. After the first reading, the investigator will look for information written about the author, novel, and themes developed in the book. In that way, the selection of the topic that will be developed in the research is based on filling the gaps which surrounds the topic.

There will be a more careful second reading, so the investigator can pay more attention to details, such as words she does not know, new vocabulary, concepts, and so on. This second approach to the book is necessary for a better understanding of the terms that will be mentioned during the analysis of the data. During this phase, the selection of quotes will take place. There will be the quotes related with the main character in order to understand her, as well as quotes that will exemplify each of the main topic for the objectives. For example, in the first objective the quotes will be related to the well-structured life of the main character and her mental instability. Then, the second set of quotes will be related with social constrains affect Ester's depression. And finally, the third set will be about the part of the novel in which gender-based violence is represented. Following the selection of the quotes, the investigator will carefully read the sources that were selected as primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, and will assign them to each of the objectives.

The next step is to use the tables previously mentioned and designed in order to start the analysis of the data and the interpretation of the quotes and theory found on the topic. This the step gives origin to the analysis. The tables help the investigator when comparing the novel to the information found that represents the main topics of the objectives, as well as the characteristics of each of the two approaches. That is the triangle used when analyzing data: objective, theory and instrument. Finally, the last stage is the conclusions that will be based on reliable information already selected in the section of the information sources. Also, the conclusions must be relevant, so the importance of the research can be tangible in terms of a qualitative investigation. There will be a conclusion per each specific objective.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

The next chapter contains the analysis made by the investigator on each of the specific objectives to be analyzed along with the comments made by experts and the analysis of the book. Moreover, it will include the relationship between the novel *The Bell Jar* and the approaches that were already selected. In addition, another relationship that will be explained, is the one in which sections of the novel will be analyzed by using the theories mentioned in Chapter II; this part also includes the table described in Chapter III. Finally, the last section deals with the definition and examples of the motifs, themes, and symbols found in the novel.

4.1. Approaches to the Investigation

Understanding the function of the approaches in literature criticism is important to fully understand the literary text. Literary critics use an approach in order to analyze, appreciate, interpret, and study a book from different perspectives. There are several approaches in literature that can be used in order to fully comprehend what influences the creation of a book. As previously mentioned, the two approaches that will be used in the investigation are the psychological and historical. Both of them are equally relevant for the current research.

4.1.1. Psychological Approach

As previously defined in Chapter II, the psychological approach focuses on the psyche of the author and the characters of the novel. It tries to understand their motivations when acting in a particular way within the story of the book or within the life of the author in order to understand how the characters were created and why they were who they were in the story.

In a way to reinforce the concept already mentioned, Kareepadath (2017) states that this particular approach can be seen as a “free expression by the author,” who tends to base his/her work in childhood traumas and repressed feelings or experiences that affected him or her at a very young age (p. 2). This is a key element when understanding the literary piece *The Bell Jar*. As previously mentioned, the events of the novel are closely related with the events the author went through during her almost twenties. Consequently, even if the names and some parts of the novel are fictional, it can be considered an autobiography. Hence, the psyches of Sylvia Plath and Ester Greenwood are quite related.

One of the most important figures for this approach is Sigmund Freud, who is well known as the father of Psychoanalysis. Most of his theory is based on those little elements, events, acts, situations that tend to happen in our childhood that can be the cause of mental conditions that appear in someone’s adult life. He found in those particular situations or habits the reason why someone acts or feels the way he or she does, and, in most of the cases, it is something that is done unconsciously. With that in mind, when reading the novel, it is almost impossible to detach some very serious events from the novel and the life of the author.

In the summer of 1953, Sylvia worked at a fashion magazine in New York, before she had a breakdown and her first attempt of suicide. This is exactly what happened to Ester in the book. Sylvia took her own experience with depression and suicidal thoughts and placed them on the novel. The trauma of losing her father at a very young age is also another element of her life that she described in the novel.

By taking Freud’s precepts, it is almost obvious that Sylvia’s traumas at a very young age are the reasons or the causes for the creation of the novel and its main female character. Plath struggled with depression her whole life, she tried to kill herself before her twenties, and finally

committed suicide at the age of 30, a month after the publication of *The Bell Jar*. Hence, it is almost unpractical to try to comprehend and study the novel without the psychological approach.

Moreover, one element that is always present in Freud's theory is sexuality. This is another major point in the novel. Although, there is not enough information on the author's sexuality, she chose Ester's in order to present her point of view about sex or maybe how girls struggled with their sexuality. Ester was almost obsessed with losing her virginity and having more sexual partners than Buddy. She even mentioned that at the age of nineteen, she divided the world into two groups; those who had sex and those who did not. Her obsession seemed to be based on the idea of the opposites of purity and hypocrisy. She believed that someone who had sex could be represented to society as someone pure, that somehow, her or his pureness disappeared when she or he became sexually active.

Freud's theory also talks about repression, and how it is another key element of someone's personality or behavior. Here is important to relate sexuality and repression in the novel. Ester's position, when discussion pureness and sex, was just the result of her vision and experience in her society, as maybe she was not able to detach the sense of purity and virginity from sex. Therefore, this could be just a response to how sex was so repressed for women during the 1950s and in mostly every single period. Although, there is a sense, throughout the whole book, that Ester was a cynical young lady who did not take this subject quite seriously; when it actually happened, it could be seen that her major struggle always was to be accepted or to find her place in society.

Alternatively, Erich Fromm, author usually called neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, has a more humanistic perception than Freud himself, since the latter based most of his theory on sex, repression, and unconsciousness. Fromm stated that an individual personality will be based on his

or her need for freedom and belonging in society. He also believed that someone's character is determined by his or her own experiences in life and genetics (Cherry, 2020, par. 1, 2), unlike Freud, who based his theory on irrational forces of the human psyche that were completely controlled by a person.

With Fromm's based on mind, it is also relevant and valid to see Plath's literary work as a way for her to express herself and her experience throughout her life and eyes, in a novel that was such personal story. The struggle that she exemplified with Ester and her depression is the struggle that a lot of women have, even nowadays. Ester had no clue on her place in society. She wanted to write poems, but she did not believe she was good enough. She compared herself with every single woman around her, as she never felt part of anything in her life.

The sense of freedom can be seen in Plath's way to express herself by using Ester as an example of someone who wanted to write poems, to use words to free herself, and to be part of a society who would accept her for who she was. There are even some people that believe that the novel is a suicide note from the author due to the amount of time from the publication and her death, and the time the author took to complete the novel (Jordison, 2013, par. 10). For that reason, the historical approach is also fundamental when studying the novel, since society plays a major role on Ester's mental instability.

4.1.2. Historical Approach

As a way to reinforce what it was already explained and defined in Chapter II, it is necessary to mention that the historical approach seeks to understand the period in which the literary work was written, along with the events lived by the author and how society was perceived in a specific moment in history. For this same reason, the researcher cannot be

judgmental when understanding the behavior or beliefs of a society in another moment of time, when the reality for women can be seen unrelated with the reality nowadays.

In America, around the 1950s, the social scenario needed a new way to project stability to the citizens, and that was the moment in which the ideal of a very well-constructed family was implemented. It does not mean that in the past the concept of family was not important, it was only necessary to lift the American spirit, which was not the ideal one at that moment. This was the period after the Great Depression and the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War. American citizens needed social elements that represented solidness and security.

Gender roles were more established and delimited. A man needed to work and provide to the family, and a woman was mostly confined to house chores and parenting. During this decade, the average age for women to get married was 19 and 20 years old. Although, young girls had the possibility to study and go to college, many of them used this opportunity to find a husband while studying. Once they did it, they never pursued a professional career. Nonetheless, this was not everyone's case. Discontent was the other plate on the table, as many girls felt that there was not another option but to confine themselves into marriage life. They wanted to study, but it seemed easier to follow the path everybody was expecting for them to follow. This is an example of the society described in the book. Plath used Ester and her way to expose the reality women lived during the 50s and 60s. Ester is the representation and the clear voice of how it was to live in a society with strict gender roles.

Throughout many pages of the book, Ester found herself thinking about what to do with her life; as it was either to be someone's wife or to continue her studies. She questioned her role in society and did not seem to find a real answer. Moreover, this disconfirm seemed to only affect those girls who had the opportunity to study at any point of their lives. Consequently, this is

important to mention, as the aim of the investigation focuses on how society repressed women back then. Nevertheless, this feeling of discomfort seems to be only noted in women's history when the affected part was white women from the upper-middle classes, who had the possibility to stay at home and take care of the family. Black girls or poor black and white girls did not seem to have the same struggle, since the option to stay at home was never an option (Fetters, 2013, par. 5). In this way, it is clear that this book focuses on Ester's life, a life full of privileges; in comparison to others, but then again it is not enough to actually fill a stable and worthy of living.

Although, Ester mentioned several times that she came from a family with no money, she emphasized her accomplishments to her intelligence and the scholarships she won. Gender and social roles were a burden that no matter the economic and racial sector you belonged to, as it was still difficult to pursue the life a girl wanted. Such a lifestyle, stressed Ester, so she was not able to see things clearly. She did not make it to the summer course; therefore, she spent day after day overhearing her neighbor and kept her in an overthinking state of mind that only showed her that it was not the life that she really wanted, that there was no other option but to affiliate herself into one of the roles.

Understanding Ester's psyche is understanding the psyche of a lot of white girls or any girl who had the opportunity to study something that they felt passionate about during this period of time. Suicide seemed to be the answer when she was rejected from the summer course, as she felt to be married at the age of 19. As a matter of fact, data from this period showed how women gave up to their aspirations from 1920 to 1950. During the 1920's, women represented the 47 percent of the college student. Moreover, during the 50s, such percentage was only 38, but even if conditions were better, and they had the support from the state, women could actually pursue something else than maternity and marriage (Office of the Historian, n.d., par. 2).

Another aspect of this period strictly related with the psychological approach, is again women's sexuality. As previously mentioned, Ester overthought her own and others' sexuality. She thought that being a virgin when reaching the goal of marriage was not a bad thing, unless you did not want to. She also opposed to her mother's belief in terms of sex. In the novel, her mother gave her a magazine about a woman who was a lawyer and explained that men wanted a girl who was pure, even if he was not. Consequently, women had to maintain pure until marriage. Ester read the article and concluded that it was hard to find a pure man to get married, so she just thought that in order to be even with her future husband, she would lose her virginity, so both would be at the same level.

The above exemplifies a phenomenon that also occurred during this period. During the 1960s, the pill was finally approved, and women started to see that there were more options than just being a mother. This was a huge change in society, as women were able to take control over their bodies. Consequently, even the amount of college graduates increased. Women really wanted to detach themselves from the sexuality of their mothers and grandmothers (Office of the Historian, par. 6, n.d.). This could be the reason why Ester did not really think of her as a mother. She had a more equal understanding of life and rights. Moreover, she aspired to write poems and wanted a man that was her equal, not someone superior. Maybe this was also the reason why Sylvia waited for some years after getting married to have kids. Her priorities were different, and this is also why this book is so relevant. The character of Ester did not fit properly in the role society assigned to her, as she wanted a more balanced treatment at the time of defining gender roles.

4.2. Theories vs Literary Work

The following section contains the analysis made by the investigator. Each of the specific objectives will be studied based on a quotation selected and extracted from the book and the theories already mentioned in Chapter II. The purpose is to add credibility to the investigation by triangulating the quotation, the theory, and, finally, the comments of the investigator, while using the table also described in Chapter II.

Fragment	Theory	Researcher's comments
<p>“I started adding up all the things I couldn't do.</p> <p>I began with cooking.</p> <p>(...) I didn't know shorthand either.</p> <p>This meant I couldn't get a good job after college. My mother kept telling me nobody wanted a plain English major. But an English major who knew shorthand was something else again. Everybody</p>	<p>Feminist Criticism</p>	<p>Since the first objective of the investigation dealt with the depression of the main character and how it is affected by social constrains, this first fragment is a clear example of the author's perspective on how women are most of the time thinking on what they can do in order to function in their respective societies. Ester listed all the things she was not good at, as she felt like it was not enough just to have an</p>

<p>would want her. She would be in demand among all the up-and-coming young men.</p> <p>(...) The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters.</p> <p>(...) My list grew longer.</p> <p>I was a terrible dancer. I couldn't carry a tune. I had no sense of balance, (...)</p> <p>For the first time in my life, sitting there in the soundproof heart of the UN building between Constantin who could play tennis as well as simultaneously interpret and the Russian girl who knew so many idioms, I felt dreadfully inadequate. The</p>		<p>English major. Even in that particular period --1950s, when the majority of young women were not even able to opt for a higher education. Despite her privileged life, she was constantly thinking on how she did not fit in any of the characteristics given to a young woman back then. Her future was not clear after college due to her unlimited knowledge, since an English major was not enough.</p> <p>In this fragment, she was not only feeling bad and comparing herself to another woman, she was also adding a man and his accomplishments to the list of things she was not good at. This did not only happen in this section, as in several occasions Ester</p>
--	--	---

<p>trouble was, I had been inadequate all along, I simply hadn't thought about it.”</p>		<p>compared herself to the people that surrounded her. The feminist criticism is based on showing women’s perspectives through their literary work, this is Sylvia’s way of showing her life in that specific period, and how gender roles and expectations from a very patriarchal society can distort someone’s life and own expectations. As a writer and a woman, Sylvia expressed herself in this section by saying she could not see Ester serving a man; this is why this author is important. She might not be the first one on saying women are here just to serve others, but she exemplified and related it with her time and her constant struggle, depression.</p>
---	--	---

		<p>She finished by saying that she was no longer adequate, she no longer fitted, or she just finally realized she never did. With that in mind, it is relevant to point out that most of the time, this is one of the main reasons why depression appears in someone's life, just by simply understanding that there is not an active place for that person in society.</p>
<p>"I also remembered Buddy Willard saying in a sinister, knowing way that after I had children I would feel differently, I wouldn't want to write poems any more. So I began to think maybe it was true that when you were married and had children it was like being brainwashed,</p>	<p>Feminist Criticism</p>	<p>In the next fragment, the patriarchal ideal is present. Buddy represented the male's perspective when birth was discussed. Any man in the world can actually say for sure what Buddy told Ester. Any man can go through the experience of having a child, and seeing his own body and</p>

<p>and afterward you went about numb as a slave in some private, totalitarian state.”</p>		<p>life changing completely. Therefore, men cannot make that type of comment on something that will never happen to him. Ester started to create this idea of marriage based on the thoughts of someone who was not even a woman. This particular subject is discussed throughout the book several times, as Ester struggled with the idea of staying at home while her dream was to write poems. Moreover, she even considered marriage, as she thought she might not be good enough. This is a great example of man and woman’s points of view on the same topic. From a feminist point of view, Buddy is a male and secondary character in the book. Usually, his comments</p>
---	--	---

		<p>were completely destroyed or criticized by Ester, and this might be a way in which Sylvia played with the role of power in the book. This was her way of using Ester as a shield and a weapon against patriarchy and sexism.</p>
<p>“And hadn't Buddy said, (...), "I wonder who you'll marry now, Esther.”</p> <p>"What?" (...)</p> <p>"I wonder who you'll marry now, Esther. Now you've been," (...) "here.”</p> <p>And of course I didn't know who would marry me now that I'd been where I had been. I didn't know at all.”</p>	<p>Feminist Criticism</p>	<p>This other fragment occurred almost at the end of the book. Ester was in the private hospital and Buddy went to see her for the first time. This is proof of psychological violence upon women. Ester was in the process of going back to her old life, as she was struggling with her suicidal thoughts and depression. Buddy came to the hospital and made her doubt, and thus this increased her anxiety and negativity in her progress of</p>

		<p>getting better. In addition, her ideas of being inadequate in society may appear again, just by thinking again on marriage and how someone could fall in love with her after being hospitalized for trying to commit suicide. This also demonstrated that the subject was handled as taboo, and how it could affect the chances of a young woman to continue with her life and maybe get married someday.</p>
<p>“The medical student gave an unpleasant little snicker. "At least your mother loves you," he said.</p> <p>I was so busy thinking how very fat he was and how unfortunate it must be for a man and especially a young</p>	<p>Radical Feminism</p>	<p>The second objective of the research dealt with the relationship between genders based on violence and Ester’s suicide attempt. For that reason, the fragments selected will demonstrate violence from men, either physical or emotional, to women.</p>

<p>man to be fat, because what woman could stand leaning over that big stomach to kiss him, that I didn't immediately realize what this student had said to me was an insult. By the time I figured he must consider himself quite a fine fellow and had thought up a cutting remark about how only a mother loves a fat man, he was gone.”</p>		<p>The first fragment shows how this medicine student thought his opinion was important when making comments on someone else’s physical appearance. The purpose of radical feminism is to reorganize society in order to destroy or eliminate male superiority in society. With superiority comes power, and, in most of the cases, this power comes with oppression and violence.</p>
<p>“I had never met a woman-hater before.</p> <p>I could tell Marco was a woman-hater, because in spite of all the models and TV starlets in the room that night he paid attention to nobody but me. Not out of</p>	<p>Radical Feminism</p>	<p>In the next fragment, the harm upon women by man who had power is evident. Marco was the representation of male chauvinism and misogyny. Ester made a description of how he only was interested on her, even when there were</p>

<p>kindness or even curiosity, but because I'd happened to be dealt to him, like a playing card in a pack of identical cards.</p> <p>(...) I began to see why woman-haters could make such fools of women.</p> <p>Woman-haters were like gods: invulnerable and chock full of power. They descended, and then they disappeared. You could never catch one.”</p>		<p>many “important” people around them. He saw her as a prey, as someone he who could actually dominate. This is another element that radical feminism wants to eliminate.</p> <p>Sylvia used this character to expose violence upon women, and that it not only affected them back in 1950s, but also nowadays. This a common worldwide struggle. This was worse in her society, which kept the idea of manipulating women through violence. Any type of violence is also a trigger for depression and eventually and event that someone like Ester can suffer, and it can even lead to depression and finally, to a suicidal attempt.</p>
---	--	---

<p>““My dress. . .”</p> <p>"Your dress!" The mud oozed and adjusted itself to my shoulder blades. "Your dress!" Marco's face lowered cloudily over mine. A few drops of spit struck my lips.</p> <p>"Your dress is black and the dirt is black as well."</p> <p>Then he threw himself face down as if he would grind his body through me and into the mud.</p> <p>"It's happening," I thought.</p> <p>"It's happening. If I just lie here and do nothing it will happen."</p> <p>Marco set his teeth to the strap at my shoulder and</p>	<p>Radical Feminism</p>	<p>This fragment represents the cruel and realistic description of what a sexual assault looks like, and what the victim might be thinking while being raped. For many radical feminists, oppression upon women is not only social, but also physical, and this part of the book exemplifies it very well. Marco had money and power as well. He was in love with his cousin, but could not be with her. Consequently, he directed his frustration on applying violence to other women, since he could not fulfill his needs. Women were-all sluts for him. The way he approached Ester showed how little respect he had toward women, and that he thought he could control them. This was Ester’s last night in</p>
--	-------------------------	--

<p>tore my sheath to the waist.</p> <p>I saw the glimmer of bare skin, like a pale veil separating two bloody-minded adversaries.</p> <p>"Slut!"</p> <p>The words hissed by my ear”</p>		<p>New York; this was her last memory from the city. Her mental instability, this cruel event, and the severe depression she suffered in her hometown, all seemed like the best formula to wanting to end her life. Even if she was a privileged young woman, the patriarchal society came and took the little hopes she had and created a hostile environment in which the only option Ester and Sylvia saw was to end their lives.</p>
<p>“I thought how strange it had never occurred to me before that I was only purely happy until I was nine years old.</p> <p>After that -- in spite of the Girl Scouts and the piano</p>	<p>Psychoanalytic Criticism</p>	<p>The third objective focused on the psyche of the author and how it affected her own life and the only novel she wrote.</p> <p>This first fragment shows how the book can be considered as an autobiography of the author,</p>

<p>lessons and the water-color lessons and the dancing lessons and the sailing camp, (...) -- I had never been really happy again.”</p>		<p>since there are many events and elements that resembled the life of Plath. As previously discussed, she lost her father at a very young age, and this specific quotation can be even a confession of her trauma at a very young age. This element is key in the psychoanalytic criticism. The novel can be seen as a confession of traumas, starting from her depression, sexual assault, the dead of her father, the relationship she had with her mother, and finally her first suicide attempt. This can be proof of how her mental instability was not something that started when she arrived to New York, as her struggle came from her childhood, and</p>
---	--	---

		she used her only novel to share her story.
<p>“Then I saw my father's gravestone.</p> <p>(...) At the foot of the stone I arranged the rainy armful of azaleas I had picked from a bush at the gateway of the graveyard. Then my legs folded under me, and I sat down in the sopping grass. I couldn't understand why I was crying so hard.</p> <p>Then I remembered that I had never cried for my father's death.”</p>	Psychoanalytic Criticism	<p>The second fragment took place exactly before Ester's suicide attempt. This seems as another confession of the author, who apparently did not have a proper closure when her father passed away. In the novel, she also mentioned that she was her father's favorite child, and after years of caring the mourning with her, she finally looked for a way of closure just before committing suicide. She never even visited his father's grave.</p>
<p>“But I wasn't sure. I wasn't sure at all. How did I know that someday -- at college, in Europe, somewhere,</p>	Psychoanalytic Criticism	<p>This last fragment of the book is essential if the novel is seemed as a suicidal note. This is a way of showing the reader</p>

anywhere -- the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again?"		that depression might appear even if you managed to overcome it at some point in your life. Sylvia finished the novel in Europe, and just a month after the first publication, she took her own life. This can be considered a hint of her suicidal thoughts that apparently were there during her whole life.
---	--	--

4.3 Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

The next section contains the major themes, motifs, and symbols found in the novel *The Bell Jar*. Their definitions were already presented in Chapter II. The first table contains the themes found in the novel that, as it was previously mentioned, will make the reader understand the purpose of the author.

Table 2. Themes

Themes	Explanation
Female sexuality	One of the major themes throughout the whole novel is Ester's assumptions on

	<p>sexuality. Ester had several female figures in her life, starting with her mom and Buddy's mother, who represented a conservative point of view in terms of sexuality. Both seemed to agree that men and women had different interests and needs when it came about sex. They did not really take into consideration women's needs or likes in this subject. Buddy's mom believed that purity was a female characteristic, as it was fine for a man not be pure when getting married. However, it was necessary for young women to be pure for their future husbands. This was not really Ester's position or belief, but then again as previously discussed, it still influenced her.</p> <p>On the other side, there were some female figures in her life that encouraged her own sexual empowerment such as Doreen and Doctor Nolan, who were more aligned with Ester's needs and desires. This empowerment came closely related with Ester's recovery. She finally had sex with a</p>
--	--

	<p>man almost at the end of the book. This was actually something that Ester really wanted, not only for the “competition” she had with Buddy, but also as her journey to experience sexuality.</p>
<p>Social expectations</p>	<p>This theme has been developed throughout the entire investigation. This is one of the major subjects. Ester’s society, just like any other, demanded a specific role for women, that usually did not fit into women’s own expectations. Ester struggled with this demands in terms of her career and a future family. Apparently, there was not an option or a way in which she could actually experience both harmoniously. The debate on whether she pursued only her literary career or she found a man willing to marry her, was a constant struggle and kept her always in a low mood and depression.</p>
<p>Mind vs Body</p>	<p>Along with social expectations, mental instability is another theme developed in the novel. It molded Ester’s life from the</p>

	<p>moment she realized that there was something wrong with her, but she could not really describe it. She started by feeling depressed, excluded, and different from anyone else, and then it developed into losing control over her own body when she could not sleep, read, or write. The last theme, losing control of her own body is also represented when she discussed the act of giving birth and understood how men did not have an idea of what was like to go through that experience, and how that area was somehow controlled by men.</p>
<p>Medicine</p>	<p>There is always a connection in the book with some specific areas of medicine in the 1950s. It started with Buddy's career as a doctor. He took Ester to see corpses and the birth of a child. Next, Buddy's sickness which led Ester to visit him and see him recovered from TB. Then Ester's experience with Doctor Gordon, who was not a good psychiatrist and barely understood Ester's issues. He finally performed the shock</p>

	<p>treatment in the wrong way, so this eventually escalated into a trauma for Ester, who ended up in several public hospitals, before going to the private hospital, where she managed to recover and even had another shock treatment with a doctor that she trusted.</p>
--	--

The next table deals with the symbols found in the novel. As previously described, a symbol can be an idea introduced by the author, but in an indirect direct way. Symbols are used by the author in a way to state or represent something that she or he might not want to specify directly, but that it is important for the story.

Table 3. Symbols

Symbols	Explanation
The Bell Jar	<p>This is the main symbol of the novel. It represents Ester's constant depressive state. She felt like she was inside of this bell with her insanity. In addition, it distorted her perspective of her surroundings and isolated her from everyone else. In her deepest moments, the bell jar surrounded her and it</p>

	<p>never let her to think in a positive way. At the end of the book, when she was recovering, she mentioned how the bell jar did not contains her anymore; she felt it hovering over her, but no longer surrounding her.</p>
<p>The Fig Tree</p>	<p>Ester read at short story about a fig tree, and she used it as a metaphor for her own life. First, she related the tree with her relationship with Buddy, since the short story was about the love story of a couple who was not meant to be together. Then, she used the tree to describe her life options; each of the branches was is an option for her to follow. One can be her writing poems career, and the other one was her future husband and kids.</p>
<p>The Beating heart</p>	<p>This symbols represented the opposite reactions of Ester's mind and body. Her mind was always looking for ways to end her life, for ways to isolate her; on the other hand, her body seemed to react differently,</p>

	<p>and it seemed to have its own hope in Ester.</p> <p>There was is a constant battle between her mind and her heart. The latter still wanted Ester to leave, she felt so when she tried to drown in the ocean and repeated the phrase “I am, I am, I am”, then again she repeated it in Joan’s funeral.</p>
Headlines and media	<p>Another symbolic element is the media. Throughout the story, there are several symbolic headlines that Ester reads. The first headline was about Rosenberg’s execution; even though, it was not presented as a headline Ester commented on how that was the only thing that she could see in the newspaper and hear in the radio. The second one was about a man who was trying to jump out of a building, but eventually decided not to do it. Finally, the third headline was when Joan showed Ester the story of her suicide in the news. All these three moments were related with dead. The latter not only presented Ester’s mental breakdown, but also the way in how the</p>

	<p>world saw her disappearance and her attempt to end her life. In addition, it appeared several times in tabloids, magazines, and articles. Moreover, in many of those cases, it was evident that they were used as a way to expose the superficiality in the city, as it happened in New York and all the fashion magazines in which Ester could not find herself, she saw the girls on the photos and did not consider it as her representation.</p>
--	---

The last literary element used by Sylvia when writing the novel is motifs. As previously explained, a motifs is usually mistaken with a symbol, but it is used to make emphasis on an idea and tend to appear as a pattern or several times in the literary work. The next table contains the motifs from the novel.

Table 4. Motifs

Motifs	Explanation
Blood	<p>Blood appears in several important moments in the novel. It appeared when Marco tried to rape her and used his own</p>

	<p>blood on her body. In addition, when she tried to cut her wrists by testing the method and cutting her body. However, at the end, she decided not to do it that way. Then, the first time she had sex, she bled a lot and her friend helped her. It is evident that bloods represented changes and violent events in her life, as it somehow showed that she knew she had to bleed in order to transform herself.</p>
<p>Mirrors</p>	<p>Several times, Ester saw her reflection in different surfaces, but could not really see herself in any of the mirrors. It represents how distorted the image of herself was. Those moments in which she could not recognize her own face, were related with traumatic or uncomfortable moments in the novel. For example, the first time she met Lenny, Doreen's boyfriend, she could not recognize his face in the elevator. Moreover, when she went to Doctor Nolan's office after her first and only shock treatment with him, and after her attempt of</p>

	<p>committing suicide, she asked a nurse for a mirror to see her face, but again she was unable to recognize herself in the mirror, so she broke it.</p>
<p>Electricity or shock treatment.</p>	<p>The novel starts with Ester's recalling Rosenberg's execution that was on the newspaper's headlines. She even kept hearing about it while living in New York, and then, her shock treatments with Doctor Gordon and finally with Nolan. Sylvia used the story of the Rosenberg's couple to show her fear of the procedure, and her traumatizing experience with electroshock, as well as her obsession with death.</p>

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

This chapter includes the concluding ideas of the investigator based on the analysis made in Chapter IV by studying the quotations from the novel *The Bell Jar* along with the approaches and theories already selected. The aim of the current investigation is to analyze how society affects or creates an unhealthy environment for women to live in; this by studying a novel based on the life of a young women in 1950s, who struggled with her own and social limitation. This section does not merely summarize the main point of the research, as it is for the investigator to present the result taken from the triangulation made in Chapter IV. Furthermore, this section contains any recommendations the researcher found interesting and relevant to mention to look for a new perspective when discussing the major subjects of the investigation.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 To describe how the main character's depression is influenced by social constrains placed upon women.

Every objective was reached through the analysis of fragments form the novel and each of the theories selected. Additionally, Sylvia Plath's psyche and 1950s society were also important and studied to have a better picture of what it was to live in her time, and the struggled every women had to face. In the case of the first objective, the purpose was to demonstrate how the society in which the author and the main character of the novel, Ester Greenwood, lived, limited and determined their roles. The dictations of those roles have been present throughout history for

either men or women. Both genders were always put on boxes that represented how they needed to be seen by others, no matter if they wanted to be seen like that or to be seen at all.

The results from the first analysis showed how humans are always molded and determined by the society in which they live in. Sylvia was ahead of her time, just like many other women in every single period of history. She had the ability of writing about her own experience with mental health; therefore, she knew it was important for her to share her story with other women, so they were able to identify themselves with it, and did not feel lonely in such a restricted period. In addition, Sylvia used Ester to convey her message, to show readers that every girl, even the ones with a promising career ahead of them, could also be affected by social expectations. Moreover, the way Ester saw herself was a reflection not only of society, but also of how damaged her mental instability was.

The own perception of each individual predisposes how they will eventually interact with others. Ester had a blurry vision of herself, and for that reason she was not able to communicate or transmit what she really wanted. She tended to compare her own characteristics to others, men or women, which seemed to figure it out and to know what to do with their lives or how to function socially. However, Ester was not able to see her life in such way.

Ester's depression isolated her in a way that she was not even able to accept help or ask for it. She kept thinking on her faults and desires, but she never managed to follow her own path according to her own instinct. Hence, her lack of confidence took the little hope she ever had and propelled her to a state of madness, in which, according to Ester, the only option to end her struggle was by taking her own life. This obsession with death came from a very young age. It can be said that it all might have started after losing her dad as a child, and the reaction and

relationship with her mother affected her in a way that as a young adult, she was not going to be able to make her own way in society.

The first fragments of the book selected to analyze this objective demonstrated the low self-esteem of the main character by listing all the things she was not good at. Consequently, this not only showed her inability to see the good things in her personality or accomplishments, but also the fact that she saw herself as a human being located in a lower category, usually related with an educational status, which was an area that she discussed and criticized throughout the story.

The second fragment discussed the role of men, who generally had a higher level than women. Patriarchy can be seen in most cultures worldwide. This has been a constant in society ever since the beginning of history, but recent centuries have demonstrated how this is actually a serious issue that tends to control every single angle and perspective from civilization, even the ones that are related with male characteristics. An example can be seen when Buddy thought he knew what Ester would feel after having her first child. Buddy was a young man born and raised in a patriarchal society. Men who were raised in this type of society tended to believe that women were less than man, as women had no idea what they wanted, and they could not make proper decisions by themselves.

Moreover, Buddy wanted to be a doctor, so he was studying in Yale. These simple characteristics hunted Ester when thinking about him. In addition, she compared herself to Buddy's achievements and sexuality. Her image of Buddy changed when she knew he slept with a waitress several times, and he pretended to be pure in her eyes. This was how resentment started in their relationship. Ester seemed to hate him because he presented many old-fashioned

ways of perceiving women and men. Although, she never really shared those feelings with him, even after she went to see him, when he visited her at mental home, or even when she offended her and put her in another state of insecurity by asking her, who would marry her after being hospitalized for a suicide attempt.

The third fragment demonstrated the stigma associated to the mental instability suffered by women. Women were hysterical; they were full of drama and insecurities. Moreover, those who born with good genes might be able to be seen by other, but only through their appearances, never because of their personal achievements in their careers or areas of expertise. Buddy's comments unsettled Ester instability, but she did not get angry or correct him when saying that. She never defended herself from Buddy archaic comments or statements about women. This aspect would create the idea that maybe Sylvia took those words that might have appeared at the end of her life. In the book that was the last time Ester saw Buddy, and perhaps that was Sylvia's plan, in other words, to portrait a very abusive image of the male character.

5.2.2 To explain the relationship between gender-based violence and the suicide attempt of Esther Greenwood.

This second objective was completely based on how violence influenced suicide attempts. In the case of Esther Greenwood, she was exposed to violence from men in the sections already mentioned in Chapter IV. First, she heard the offensive comments made by the medical student, who believed she had the right to make that kind of remarks. Additionally, Esther was not a very confident woman. She had low self-esteem issues. Consequently, this type of comments, even though she did not really talk-or develop-much about it in the book, could be seen as the types of comments that women were usually exposed to by men and women alike. The mental power that

men thought they had, allowed them to believe that they could do or say whatever they wanted to women.

The second fragment was about how Marco, the representation of male chauvinist and misogynist in the book, approached Ester and payed all the attention to her. She was able to recognize those negative characteristics in him, so she played along with the attention that he provided; however, she then realizes how manipulative he was. She described him with caution. Sylvia wrote about Marco and described him so well that any reader would be able to identify someone who behaves in the same way.

Thirdly, the exact women of the sexual assault is just a common representation of what rape looks and feels like. Readers can see by themselves what Ester felt like, if they had gone through the same experience. Sylvia had her own way of describing the situation. It was ~~is~~ not quite clear the first moment in which Marco oppressed, hits, or threw her to the ground. Somehow, Plath managed to narrate the moment in a very confusing way, maybe to demonstrate how confusing it was for her or, in this case, for Ester to understand what it was actually happening with a man who seemed to be a gentleman and that out of nowhere started to be abusive and violent and tried to rape her, just because he hated women.

Data demonstrate that women who experience any sexual abuse or violence from their partner, are more likely to suffer from a mental illness, which eventually would lead to a suicide attempt. Sylvia did not really describes how Ester felt about it, and maybe that was just an example on how women were no able to express themselves during the 50s and 60s, not even in cases of violence and rape.

5.2.3 To identify how the author's mental condition affected her life her only novel The Bell Jar.

The last and third objective discussed how a mental condition or instability affected Plath's writing and her own life. As previously mentioned in the analysis made in Chapter IV, the way in which Sylvia wrote the book, and the way she described Ester's traumas could be seen and read as a confession. The first fragment was a major indicator of Sylvia's depression. She spent years writing her novel, and it was published when she was 30 years old. The first quotation selected showed how she never managed to be happy, not since she was 9 years old until she was 19. Although this could be seen as another confession and her state of mind, it is stated that even at the end of her life she did not find happiness.

The second fragment analyzed, demonstrated how Sylvia wrote that she never understood why she did not cry when she lost her father as a child. Although, she was using Ester's life, her way of writing indicated a more personal and confessional feeling as she was not only describing a character's life, but also, she was describing her own suffering. Furthermore, according to her poetic writing, her father was an important figure in her life. She did not have a closure and, thus she did not go through the normal stages of grief.

Another point related to violence and her suicide was the psychological violence she received from her husband, the poet Ted Hughes, who always disregarded the accusations that he cheated on her when they were together. However, when as she died, he finally confirmed the cheating allegations. This type of violence from her husband at that moment, could be seen as a proof of how violence was strictly related with depression and suicide attempts of the victims. Moreover, it is also said that Ted not only cheated on her, but also destroyed many of her poems

because she used to describe how he abused her psychologically. Consequently, this is another example that even dead, Sylvia was silenced by the power a man had over her.

The last fragment was probably the most relevant declaration of the author in the book. She was in the private hospital receiving her treatment. She was confused and anxious about going out to the real world again, but she managed to realize that the bell jar was no longer surrounding her anymore. Although, she understood how fragile her mental instability was, and she received the best treatment. She knew that another breakdown could happen in the future by mentioning that it might happen in Europe. She was writing the novel in Europe at the time; for that reason, the book and that part of the novel could be seen as a suicide note from the author, who, unfortunately, lost her battle against depression.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

According to the analysis made in Chapter IV, there is not a necessity to make a restatement of the research question, since the information taken from the analysis of the objectives, the fragments from the novel, and the theories selected, proved that social expectations and gender roles were related with mental instability. In other words, the research question should remain the same as previously stated in Chapter I: How do social constrains are strictly related to mental disorders suffered by the main female character of the novel *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath?

5.4 Recommendations

After concluding the investigation, recommendations are given in order to provide suggestions in a way that future readers or investigators can look for more information on the main subject of the current research. While doing the investigation, the name of H el ene Cixous

came up several times, along with other names of contemporary feminist writers. After a few moments of debating if either to change the focus point of the investigation to the one provided by Hélène with the literary genre *Écriture féminine*, or "women's writing, the researcher decided to continue the investigation as it was planned since the beginning, and then mentioned Hélène Cixous's literary theory.

Women's writing, as well as Feminism or Radical Feminism, focuses on written work related only to women, and how the social and psychological background are closely related with how women perceive their roles in society and how they communicate or bond with other women. This can be a good approach for a future investigation related to the same novel or maybe the poems wrote by Sylvia Plath.

Another term that appeared during the investigation was Gynocriticism, which can be defined as way in which female writer can find new roles of models to use when writing literature, that will only respond to women's characteristics and nor men's. In other words, this is another way in which the book can be studied or analyzed.

References

- Ahmedani, B. K. (2011). *Mental Health Stigma: Society, Individuals, and the Profession*. *U.S. National Library of Medicine*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3248273/>
- Andres, S. (n.d.). *Approaches to Literary Criticism*. Retrieved from <https://salirickandres.altervista.org/approaches-literary-criticism/>
- Asghar, S. (2016). *MAJOR THEMES IN SYLVIA PLATH'S POETRY*. Retrieved from <http://myenglish61.blogspot.com/2016/04/major-themes-in-sylvia-plaths-poetry.html>
- Batres, G. (September, 2001). *La salud de las mujeres y el género*. *Medicina Legal de Costa Rica* Vol. 18 n.2. Retrieved from https://www.scielo.sa.cr/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1409-00152001000300004
- Begley, S. (June, 2009). *How we Perceive Male and Female Emotions*. Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/how-we-perceive-male-and-female-emotions-80559>
- Burkett, E, & Brunell, L. (February, 2019). *Feminism*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism>
- Brewton, V. (n.d.). *Literary Theory*. Retrieved from <https://www.iep.utm.edu/literary/>
- Creswell, J. (2004). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). Retrieved from <http://englishlangkan.com/produk/E%20Book%20Research%20Design%20Cressweell%202014.pdf>

Criticism. (n.d.) Cambridge Dictionary. [Online]. Retrieved from

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es-LA/dictionary/english/criticism>

Delahoyde, M. (n.d.). Psychoanalytic Criticism. Retrieved from

<https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/psycho.crit.html>

Dimir. (2018). Sylvia Plath: Her Life and Importance to American Literature and History.

Retrieved from <https://owlcation.com/humanities/Sylvia-Plath-Her-Life-and-Importance-to-American-Literature-and-History>

Dulock, H. L. (1993). Research Design: Descriptive Research. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology*

Nursing, 10(4), 154–157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104345429301000406>

Fabian, R. (August, 2017). Why Mental Health is a Feminist Issue. Retrieved from

<https://www.talkspace.com/blog/mental-health-feminist-issue/>

Farzaneh, S. (March, 2016). A Short Introduction to Literary Criticism. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* ISSN 2356-5926. Retrieved from

<file:///C:/Users/Alessia/Downloads/814-2301-1-PB.pdf>

Fireman Kramer, R. (1985). A Overview of Descriptive Research. *Journal of the Association of*

Pediatric Oncology Nurses, 2(2), 41–45. Retrieved from

<https://doi.org/10.1177/104345428500200208>

Friedman, B. (1963). The Femenine Mystique. Retrieved from

<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.100.9.1582?journalCode=ajph>

- García, S. E. (November 1st, 2013). Cómo construir categorías de análisis. [Power Point Slides]. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/silegarva/docs/c__mo_construir_categor__as_de_an__
- González, T. García, I. & López, A. (n.d.). Módulo 2: Alfabetización Científica. La definición de los objetivos de investigación. Retrieved from https://bib.us.es/educacion/sites/bib3.us.es.educacion/files/poat2016_2_3_1_objetivos_de__investigacion_presentacion.pdf
- Gunnell, M. (December, 2016). Research Methodologies: A Comparison of Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/research-methodologies-comparison-quantitative-mixed-methods-gunnell/>
- Hall-Flavin, D. (May, 2017). Clinical depression: What does that mean?. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/expert-answers/clinical-depression/faq-20057770>
- Hernández, R. Fernández, & C. Baptista, P. (2014). Metodología de la Investigación (6th ed.). ISBN: 978-1-4562-2396-0
- Kallet, R. H. (October, 2004). How to Write the Methods Section of a Research Paper [PDF file]. *The Respiratory Care Journal*. Vol 49 (10) 1229-1232. Retrieved from <http://rc.rcjournal.com/content/49/10/1229/tab-pdf>
- Kosmicki, M. (December, 2017). Marianismo Identity, Self-Silencing, Depression and Anxiety in Women from Santa María de Dota, Costa Rica. *Cuadernos de Investigación UNED* vol.9 n.2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22458/urj.v9i2.1895>

Lederman, N. & Lederman, J. (2015). What Is A Theoretical Framework? A Practical Answer. *J*

Sci Teacher Educ (2015) 26:593–597. DOI 10.1007/s10972-015-9443-2

Lewis, J. J. (September, 2019). What Is Radical Feminism? Retrieved from

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-radical-feminism-3528997>

Lombardi, E. (August, 2019). What Literature Can Teach Us. Retrieved from

<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-literature-740531>

Mahler, A. (2017). Symbolism. Retrieved from [https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/symbolism)

[terms/symbolism](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/symbolism)

Maurer, E. L. Patrick, J. Britto, L. M. & Millar, H. (2017). Where are the Women? A Report on

the Status of Women in the United States Social Studies Standards. [PDF file]. Retrieved

from [http://www.womenshistory.org/sites/default/files/museum-assets/document/2018-](http://www.womenshistory.org/sites/default/files/museum-assets/document/2018-02/NWHM_Status-of-Women-in-State-Social-Studies-Standards_2-27-18.pdf)

[02/NWHM_Status-of-Women-in-State-Social-Studies-Standards_2-27-18.pdf](http://www.womenshistory.org/sites/default/files/museum-assets/document/2018-02/NWHM_Status-of-Women-in-State-Social-Studies-Standards_2-27-18.pdf)

May, E. T. (1999). Homeward bound: American families in the Cold War Era [PDF File].

Retrieved from

<https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=115404&kod=JMM02>

0

Mayo Clinic Staff. (January, 2019). Depression in women: Understanding the gender gap.

Retrieved from [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression/art-20047725)

[depth/depression/art-20047725](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/in-depth/depression/art-20047725)

MedlinePlus. (n,d). Mental Disorders. Retrieved from

<https://medlineplus.gov/mentaldisorders.html>

Mehrpouyan, A. (2014). Feminism and feminine culture in modern women writers' works: with special reference to Anne Sexton and Audre Lorde. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 158 199 – 205. Retrieved from <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S1877042814061667?token=A142AA7B3D9CDAB6AB09FB381C31707CBBBEB100E66B4BE109B3193AC2EE39284CC63F605D3C9F3428CA8F0E370BE47B>

Mental Health in America. (2019). *State Of Mental Health In America Report*. [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2019%20MH%20in%20America%20Final_0.pdf

Napikosky, L. (2019). *Feminist Literary Criticism*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/feminist-literary-criticism-3528960>

O'Reilly, C. (2003). *Sylvia Plath*. [PDF file] Retrieved from http://laidinen.ru/pictures/o_rayly_catriona/o_raily_14.pdf

Pan American Health Organization. (October, 2012). *World Mental Health Day: Depression, the Most Common Mental Disorder*. Retrieved from https://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7305:2012-dia-mundial-salud-mental-depresion-trastorno-mental-mas-frecuente&Itemid=1926&lang=en

Psychology. (n.d.). Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/psychology>

Rexroth, K. (February, 2019). Literature. Retrieved from

<https://www.britannica.com/art/literature>

Rose. (n.d.). Conventional Symbols in Literature. Retrieved from

<https://www.dvusd.org/cms/lib/AZ01901092/Centricity/Domain/2891/Gawain%20Symbols.pdf>

Ross, M. (April, 2014). The Bell Jar Plot Summary. Retrieved from

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-bell-jar/summary>

Salunke, V. (July, 2010). Basics of Literary Criticism. Retrieved from

<https://books.google.co.cr/books?id=M45LDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Schwartz, S. (2011). Sylvia Plath: A Split in the Mirror. *Plath Profiles* An interdisciplinary journal for Sylvia Plath studies. Volume 4 [PDF file]. Retrieved from

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/plath/article/view/4437/4064>

Scopa, S. (2017). Motifs. Retrieved from <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/motif>

Scopa, S. (2017). Theme. Retrieved from <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/theme>

SparkNotes Editors. (n.d.). Plot Overview. Retrieved from

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/belljar/summary/>

- Steinem, G. (2016). How does Gloria Steinem see radical feminism and third wave feminism? [Quora comment]. Retrieved from <https://www.quora.com/How-does-Gloria-Steinem-see-radical-feminism-and-third-wave-feminism>.
- Tasca, C. Rapetti, M. Carta, M.G. & Fadda, B. (October, 2012). Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health. *Clin Pract Epidemiol Ment Health*. 2012;8:110-9 Doi 10.2174/1745017901208010110
- Tearle, O. (n.d.). 10 of the Best Sylvia Plath Poems Everyone Should Read. Retrieved from <https://interestingliterature.com/2017/06/05/10-of-the-best-sylvia-plath-poems-everyone-should-read/>
- The Association for Educational Communications and Technology. (2001). 41.1 What Is Descriptive Research? Retrieved from <http://members.aect.org/edtech/ed1/41/41-01.html>
- Theory. (n.d.). Cambridge Dictionary. [Online]. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es-LA/dictionary/english/theory>
- Theory. (n.d.). Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/theory>
- Udo-Akang, D. (September, 2012). Theoretical Constructs, Concepts, and Applications. [PDF File]. American International Journal of Contemporary Research. Vol. 2 No. 9. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/96ac/3dd833d3607b983634f7b4edfa2325f7d175.pdf>
- University of Minnesota Crookston. (n.d.). Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources. Retrieved from <https://www.crk.umn.edu/library/primary-secondary-and-tertiary-sources>

Waidner-Spahr Library. (n.d.). *Criticism: Literature, Film & Drama: Literature Criticism*.

Retrieved from <https://libguides.dickinson.edu/criticism>

Wellek, R. & Warren, A. (May, 1948). *Theory of Literature*. Retrieved from

<http://sosinglese.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/theoryofliteratu00inwell.pdf>

Wiehardt, G. (2019). What Is a Theme in Literature? Retrieved from

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-theme-means-in-literature-1277140>

Wijaya, A. (n.d.). Historical Approach to Analyze Literature. Retrieved from

<http://awinlanguage.blogspot.com/2012/03/historical-approach-to-analyze.html>

World Health Organization. (June, 2002). Gender and Mental Health [PDF File]. Retrieved from

https://www.who.int/gender/other_health/genderMH.pdf

Yale University Library. (n.d.). Comparative Literature: Primary, secondary & tertiary sources.

Retrieved from <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295913&p=1975839>

Yu, S. (May, 2018). Uncovering the hidden impacts of inequality on mental health: a global

study. *Transl Psychiatry*. 2018; 8: 98. Doi 10.1038/s41398-018-0148-0

Annexes

Tribunal Examinador

Esta Tesina fue aprobada por el Tribunal Examinador de las Carreras de Inglés de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, como requisito para optar por el grado de Bachiller en Inglés.

Licda. Kattia Mora Rivera
Tutora

M.Sc. Yanith Delgado Chacón
Lectora

Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés

Carta de Director de Carrera

San José, lunes 13 de abril de 2020

Señores
Universidad Internacional de las Américas
Estimados señores:

El suscrito Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora, Director de las Carreras de Inglés, hace constar que ha revisado la Tesina de la estudiante, Alessia Sofía Hernández Navarro, portador(a) de la cédula de identidad no. 1 1518 0059, que ha titulado: *Literary Analysis of Sylvia Plath's_The Bell Jar Through Both_the Psychological and Historical Approach Considering the Main Character's Mental Disorders are Caused by Social Limitations.*

La mencionada Tesina, responde a los requisitos exigidos en la Guía que nuestra carrera tiene para estos casos. Por tanto, se autoriza al autor para que lo presente ante el tribunal examinador nombrado para esta ocasión.

Atentamente,

Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora
Directora de las Carreras de Inglés

Carta del Lector

San José, lunes 13 de abril de 2020

Licenciado
Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés y Enseñanza del Inglés
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Estimado señor:

La estudiante Alessia Sofía Hernández Navarro, portadora de la cédula de identidad no. 1-1518 0059 ha presentado para su lectura y corrección de estilo la tesina denominada Literary Analysis of Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar' Through Both the Psychological and Historical Approach Considering the Main Character's Mental Disorders are Caused by Social Limitations. He revisado y corregido la coherencia de los objetivos con el marco teórico, instrumentos y resultados, la calidad del trabajo y la relevancia del trabajo. Por lo tanto, hago constar que este se encuentra listo para ser presentado a la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

Atentamente,

.....
M.Sc. Yanith Delgado Chacón
Lectora de Tesis



Universidad Internacional de las Américas Código de Ética

La suscrita Alessia Sofía Hernández Navarro, número de carné: 1-1518 0059 graduada del grado de Bachillerato en Inglés de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, se compromete a cumplir, durante el ejercicio profesional, con el Código de Ética de la Institución, que se rige por los siguientes principios:

PROBIDAD: actuar siempre con rectitud y honradez.

PRUDENCIA: actuar con pleno conocimiento de la materia sometida a su consideración.

JUSTICIA: permanente disposición hacia las funciones de la profesión, bajo los lineamientos legales que debe respetar todo profesional.

RESPONSABILIDAD: cumplir con los deberes, tanto en calidad como en oportunidad.

DISCRECIÓN: guardar respeto sobre los hechos o informaciones de los que tenga conocimiento con motivo del ejercicio profesional, sin que esto perjudique las funciones y responsabilidades.

INDEPENDENCIA DE CRITERIO: no involucrarse o comprometerse con situaciones, intereses o actividades contrarias a la moral, a la sana crítica y que, por ley, sean incompatibles con las funciones profesionales correspondientes.

DIGNIDAD Y DECORO: actuar con sobriedad y moderación.

TOLERANCIA: evidenciar una actitud paciente y de comprensión ante las opiniones divergentes que puedan expresar otras personas.

EQUILIBRIO: desempeñar las funciones profesionales con sentido práctico, buen juicio y equidad.

ACTUALIZACIÓN: comprometer parte del tiempo en actualizar los conocimientos y adaptarlos en el desarrollo de la actividad profesional.

VOCACIÓN: mostrar siempre apego al trabajo y a la educación recibida, como fundamentos para el desempeño laboral.

BUENA FE: toda conducta o comportamiento, criterio emitido y labor desempeñada debe basarse en los más altos principios éticos y tendrá como fundamento la buena fe.

Nombre de estudiante

Cédula