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**Literary Analysis of the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings* Using the
Feminist Approach**

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English

Valeria Sevilla Sancho

Catalina Guerrero Troyo

SEDE ARANJUEZ

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Dedication

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Abstract

This descriptive and qualitative investigation aimed to analyze the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings* by Kate Chopin to understand the differences and constraints experienced by women in the late 1800s through a feminist Perspective. The implementation of an analytical instrument was required to accomplish the project results. The devices were a literary analysis chart of the different struggles the women of the book faced versus those of the current time. The second instrument was a literary analysis chart of the impact of social class in society for the women in the book and modern women. The third instrument was a chart of the different literary devices. The previous devices helped the researcher to obtain the project's goals. With the help of these devices, the paper can explain how gender norms and economic constraints in the American Progressive era compare to modern-day and harm Costa Rican women. This is shown through the relationship between gender norms, social class, and misogyny, and how they affect women. This work reveals how the various issues that women face are the result of social, economic, and political oppression that rigid themselves by different gender normed and misogynistic aspects. Therefore, the actions and emotions that women express and, most importantly, the actions reflected by Mrs. Sommers should not be diminished, and instead, they work as a window to learn about women's history their issues and promote change so society can evolve to create a fair environment for women.

Resumen

Esta investigación descriptiva y cualitativa tiene como objetivo analizar el libro *A Pair of Silk Stockings* de Kate Chopin para comprender las diferencias y limitaciones que experimentaron las mujeres a finales del siglo XIX a través de una perspectiva feminista. Para lograr los resultados del proyecto, fue necesaria la implementación de un instrumento analítico. Los instrumentos fueron un cuadro de análisis literario de las diferentes luchas y problemas a las que tuvieron que enfrentarse las mujeres del libro, comparado con las mujeres de la época actual. El segundo instrumento es un cuadro de análisis literario del impacto de la clase social en la sociedad para las mujeres del libro y las mujeres modernas. El tercer instrumento fue un cuadro de las diferentes figuras literarias. Los instrumentos anteriores ayudaron a la investigadora a alcanzar los objetivos del proyecto. Con la ayuda de estos dispositivos, el trabajo puede explicar cómo las normas de género y las limitaciones económicas que tuvieron lugar en la época progresista estadounidense se comparan con la actualidad y perjudican a las mujeres costarricenses. Esto se muestra a través de la relación entre las normas de género, la clase social y la misoginia y cómo afectan a las mujeres. Este trabajo revela cómo los diversos problemas que enfrentan las mujeres es el resultado de la opresión social, económica y política que se rige por diferentes normas de género y aspectos misóginos. Por lo tanto, las acciones y emociones que expresan las mujeres y más importante, las acciones reflejadas por la Sra. Sommers no deben ser menospreciadas y, por el contrario, funcionan como una ventana para conocer la historia de las mujeres, sus problemas y promover el cambio para que la sociedad pueda evolucionar y crear un entorno justo para las mujeres.

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Chapter I

Introductory Framework

This research will portray the different aspects of womanhood in the early nineteenth century. This reality is depicted in the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and compared with the reality that Costa Rican women go through today. These chapters will illustrate how the life of Mrs. Sommer is a clear representation of both past and modern issues regarding economic, cultural, and social matters. Like many other women, Mrs. Sommers is the head of a 5-kid household where daily financial struggles occur. When Mrs. Sommers encounters a large amount of money, she is puzzled between spending it on her needing family or herself. The story develops with Sommers spending her money on accessories and items that seem like a luxury but are common for others; however, their economic and social value opens new experiences for her. This paper will analyze the influence of social status, gender norms, and family dynamics on women's everyday lives and compare it with today's national reality.

1.1 Problem Statement

There has always been a clear division between men and women. It is difficult to part from gender stereotypes as they have been reinforced in society for centuries. They part from less advanced and prehistoric times, where there were different roles men and women would take part in. Usually, men would take riskier tasks, such as hunting and protection, while women would take safer yet not easier jobs, such as planting and weapon manufacturing. Although women seemed to have more relaxed jobs. This did not mean they could not contribute to male-dominated tasks. According to Archeology Newsroom (2012), "There was

nothing to prevent a woman, free of parental obligations, to take part in the hunting of smaller animals, such as deer” (para. 2). These facts stem from women’s maternal role, which was always the decisive criterion for the rest of her activities; however, times have changed, and these roles have evolved into deeper and more complicated interactions. Nowadays, the role of women is still heavily family-centered, often altering their interpersonal relations and self-perception.

This research shows how Books such as *A Pair of Silk Stockings* showcase the issues that women have had to deal with since earlier times, analyzing the importance of women as head of the house and caretakers and its connection to education. Another relevant point of the study is to highlight the role of gender norms in society—the United Way of the National Capital Area. (2023) explains that “gender norms can be particularly detrimental to those living in poverty, as gender norms perpetuate cycles of inequality and limit access to resources and opportunities” (para.2). This demonstrates a connection between gender norms and the economic status of a person. They target impoverished people and influence their financial decisions, keeping them from economic progress.

Although some gender norms can be harmless and bring joy to some, others tend to dictate several negative aspects for both men and women. Gender stereotypes command the way women are perceived and treated by others. According to the United Nations (n.d.), “gender stereotypes compounded and intersecting with other stereotypes have a disproportionately negative impact on different groups of women” (para. 3). This shows how gender norms can harm women regardless of their background; nonetheless, not everyone is aware of the damage they can cause. It is common to assume that gender norms are rules decreed by nature, so there should be no questioning behind them. However, this is not the

truth; as the book's protagonist, many people are unaware of how much gender norms can impact their lives.

Not addressing these issues can result in the perpetuation of violent behaviors, misinformation, poor life choices, as well as abuse and harassment. The book also illustrates the relationship between femininity and social status. The more a woman is in touch with her feminine side, using certain garments and items, the more accepted she is in society. This is a common problem worldwide; nevertheless, it is common to see it in modern society, in urban places like cities, where social status is determined by clothing and fashion. Household, lack of education, social status, economic status of women, and gender norms are all issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible.

The book's protagonist struggles financially, yet she is lucky enough to obtain money. Different gender norms and rules lead her to waste her money on unnecessary things. Likewise, this is the case for many people in the modern world. Besides being ruled by gender stereotypes that dictate the way they should behave, people nowadays are ruled by a capitalist society that heavily reinforces consumerism.

People are told that buying and consuming will improve their lives and make them happier, even though many workers are paid only the minimum wage. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2020), "1.6 million workers, or 1.9% of all hourly paid, non-self-employed workers, earned wages at or below the federal minimum wage in 2019." These numbers have not improved in recent years. Regrettably, people can hardly thrive in a consumerist society with such an economy. It may seem that these issues do not interfere with people's lifestyles; nonetheless, the story shows similarities in how people in the book and real life can be easily manipulated by it; this leads to questioning how gender norms and economic

constraints that took place on the American Progressive era compare to modern day and harm Costa Rican women.

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To analyze working-class women's role in the family and society, as well as their challenges and economic limitations in the novel *A Pair of Silk Stockings* by Kate Chopin versus the modern world we live in, using the Feminist Approach.

1.2.2 Specific Objective

1.2.2.1 To identify the different social and economic struggles faced by women in the book and women in modern times

1.2.2.2 To compare the relevance of the social and economic status of today's women with the female characters of the book

1.2.2.3 To investigate the impact of gender norms in a patriarchal society in today's world and in the time the book took place

1.3 Justification

Based on *A Pair of Silk Stockings* by Kate Chopin, the main character, Mrs. Sommers, debates between spending money on her family or her own needs. At first, she pictures herself using the money to buy new clothes for her children; this is the evident answer. The story reveals that the Sommers family is part of the low-income class. For this reason, she was not allowed to obtain anything for herself for a long time, as most of her income is spent on the

kids, making this a hard and crucial decision. Later, the story tells how the protagonist uses the money on non-essential items.

This research aims to understand and analyze the protagonist's actions and meaning. It also shows how it relates to gender stereotypes, socioeconomic status, and economic awareness, as it can change the way women act and how they are perceived by society. The research will highlight the similarities between the book's protagonist in the 19th century and the modern Costa Rican woman. At the same time, we can compare the advances in social problems that are still a struggle now.

This work is important because it uses the book to portray the understanding of Mrs. Sommers's way of thinking. Her actions may seem selfish or arbitrary at first, but they reflect all her daily work, alongside her selflessness when giving her all to the kids. The story shows that all odds are against the protagonist, and it is clear that there will not be another opportunity to buy important things for the children but also for herself. On the other hand, the author of this research will explain why Sommers was influenced to buy pointless and expensive things that would offer immediate satisfaction yet allow her to fit in society. Her decisions show her challenges in providing for her family while fitting into society's expectations.

This work will benefit Costa Rican women and younger generations of women as it explores the reasoning of Ms. Sommers and the socioeconomic aspects that lead her to use her money in a specific way; said aspects also rule modern women's actions. In the novel, the protagonist initially prioritizes her children's needs. As a woman who is also the head of the family, she is expected to advocate for her children, both emotionally and economically. The Sommers family is quite poor, and just like Sommers, many Costa Rican women of the modern day can relate to her, raising a big family all by themselves and, unfortunately, sacrificing

themselves to meet their children's needs. This research will analyze the role of women in the family, as well as the absence of men leads them to make different financial decisions.

Consequently, this research will investigate women's economic disadvantage throughout the years and how this affects single-income family dynamics. All the events that shape the action of the book's protagonist also apply to modern Costa Rican women. They often tend to be judged for the same things the protagonist did, but all aspects are part of a bigger problem. The heavy influence of gender stereotypes on how women should dress to be at certain places or fit in, as well as the needless exposure to consumerism, go hand in hand with taking part in manipulating women. These aspects are especially noticeable with poor education opportunities, contributing to poor living conditions for modern women, leaving Costa Rican women in a constant state of financial disinformation and self-questioning.

This research will be useful for people who have read the book before and want to have a deeper background on Costa Rican women's struggles. For this reason, the research will focus on highlighting how both them and Mrs. Sommers, regardless of the time difference, still fall victim to gender roles and classist expectations. This paper will help you gain more knowledge on women's points of view on topics such as social status, consumerism, lack of education, and other social issues. It will also benefit anyone who wants to learn about Kate Chopin and her work, as it is today a great representation of women's oppression and progress throughout history. It will analyze how *A Pair of Silk Stockings* uses a likable character who makes poor decisions and tells a story with a meaning that resonates with the past and present. It will also benefit those who want to have an insight into modern and old feminism, addressing popular women's struggles and the microaggressions that lead to deeper problems related to social behavior and its impact on women.

This work will refine the different causes of social issues using the feministic approach. Focusing on a commonly overlooked minority will help the reader understand women's past and modern everyday life and how these issues affect them directly. Thus creating a realistic view of Costa Rican women. Furthermore, employing this feministic perspective will provide a more fitting yardstick for understanding society's evolution and ongoing progression, as well as to analyze how individuals can mold the different norms of what is correct and trendy from what is not.

1.4 Antecedents

The author of this book, Kate Chopin, was a recognized American writer. Her stories were influenced by women's lives and their everyday struggles, often making her a target of judgment. Oyarzun, N (2022) describes her "as an exotic ghost that transits conscious of the discomfort she generates in the living" (para. 2). Although she wrote several children's books, her more popular stories turned the focus on women. Most importantly, the underlying topics of misogyny and discomfort they had to endure were something uncommon at the time, as women's fight still had a long list of achievements to come. However, Chopin is known for writing about these topics as she grew up with mostly women. Her father passed away early on in her life, and her mother raised her and two more generations of women. Her work has been described as modern and is often linked to feminism.

A Pair of Silk Stockings, written in 1896, deals with the life of Mrs. Sommers, a woman of scarce resources who, after getting a big sum of money, spends it on expensive clothes and activities. At first, the story narrates a special day for the protagonist, yet it showcases important details of society. The reader must understand the social and economic background of the character to fully comprehend its meaning, which can go unnoticed since

the events of the protagonist can also be overlooked by society. The book focuses on the influence of consumerism and gender norms on women.

As the book progresses, Mrs. Sommers buys many things: gloves, shoes, stockings, a full-course dinner, and even going to the movies. She was supposed to be careful with the money but quickly becomes drawn to expend. This is the first aspect of understanding Sommers's decisions. Consumerism is a big part of society and one of the main influences in the book. It opens the door to innovation, although it is also the cause of many social and economic issues. Cambridge Dictionary (n. d) describes consumerism "as the state of an advanced industrial society in which a lot of goods are bought and sold." This dynamic evaluates the desire to acquire new products, experiences, or goods, even if unnecessary. Consumerism has become a demanding economic factor in society. The protagonist falls victim to this issue from the beginning. Nevertheless, the American consumerism culture has been introduced previously.

This goes back to the late 19th century. During this period, the economy of the US changed forever, and with this, it also changed society's mentality. Spending money and acquiring new things was highly encouraged. According to PBS (n.d.), "The good purchaser devoted to 'more, newer, and better' was the good citizen" (para. 2). The author of this article explains that the purchasing of goods was rooted in American society. It became a synonym for the American way of life, leading to a wave of nationalism and unity.

The protagonist's purchases are non-essential; the clothes are merely decorative; however, they make her feel special and give her the deep sense of belonging she craves. This leads the reader to understand there is also a clear visual class division, where clothes are used

as a hierarchy statement. Sommers lives her life as part of the lower-income class of society; she must prioritize her children's needs while at the same time neglecting her own. According to PressBook (n.d.), a social class can be defined as a “grouping based on similar social factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation” (para. 1). Social classes not only address titles and goods, but it also takes part in a person's moral and mental state. Depending on a person's social class, their power or relevance can be affected. In this case, Mrs. Sommers seems happier and more confident once she buys more expensive things.

Nowadays, consumption and social classes are similar to those found in the book. Costa Rican women also fall victim to consumption; with globalization's arrival, consumerism has increased. People now have access to all kinds of physical and virtual content. It is common to be influenced by external factors that prolong consumerism, such as social entities whose job is to promote the consumption of unnecessary things. A clear example of modern consumerism is luxury objects or items sold as essentials that will simplify the user's life; however, they are just an impractical addition to people's belongings.

Once the person acquires the item, it can create a sense of belonging or social status; just like Mrs. Sommers, Costa Rican women tend to have a sense of belonging when spending on certain items. Nowadays, things such as designer bags and expensive clothing give women a sense of community in higher social classes, which can alter their perception and self-esteem. Big companies use consumerism to advertise their products, attributing a sense of belonging to them. As Hernandez, F (2018) explains, “Consumption as a repertoire of legitimization, generates distinction and legitimizes underlying inequalities while broad sectors of the population assume these new cultural patterns, anchored in consumption, as a means to generate their identity and belonging” (p. 434, para 1). They explain how the things people buy and

consume may often be used to justify their actions and make themselves stand out from the rest.

There is a noticeable connection between social classes and consumerism, where higher consumerism patterns are shown depending on their social status. A person with a stable job and no debt cannot decide whether to spend on crucial things such as food or clothing; therefore, they can treat themselves differently. Mrs. Sommers's necessities made her overlook items categorized as unnecessary or leisure, as she needed to prioritize her children's needs over other items. Nevertheless, the exposure to consumerism affects her decisions.

Costa Rica is a country where all types of social classes exist, and just as in *A Pair of Silk Stockings*, the higher classes tend to set trends and social norms for other social classes. The book marks a reality that is also true for Costa Rican women. An investigation into consumerism in Costa Rica, based on young adults between 18 and 29 years of age in Desamparados, was conducted. They wanted to picture how consumerism and social exclusion can victimize this population.

After research, the population is divided into groups depending on their influence on consumerism. One of the categories is called resignation; it covers a part of youth who perceive consumerism as unnecessary because of their impossibility to consume and have a sense of belonging to higher social groups. This often leads them to social exclusion. According to Hernandez, F (2018), "the majority of the group is based on women confined to domestic spaces" (p. 446, para. 1). Ulloa explains that many of these women are confined to activities such as unpaid domestic work. Their consumerism habits are lower as they tend to be excluded or held back from the job market. However, this does not mean there is no direct influence since they must navigate the outside world just like their peers, the exposure to any content is

still present.

In the book, the protagonist takes lunch at a fancy restaurant while wearing a nice and fancy outfit. There, she finally felt at ease and included, meaning that the people who usually dine there are high-class persons of society who can afford not only the meals but also the expensive clothing that Mrs. Sommers had just been able to acquire. At first, the book can make the reader wonder why Sommers bought stockings, gloves, and shoes, as these items are unnecessary for her. Social aspects, such as gender norms and the influence of fashion, are the reasons behind her decisions.

Clothing holds meaning, as it is more than a cover for the human body; it is linked to social class, personality, and personal features. According to the European Institute for Gender Inequality (n.d.), gender norms can be defined as “standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a particular society, culture, and community then. ”They explain that gender norms are a series of acts, thoughts, or expectations on how a person of a specific gender should act. It is important to understand gender norms because men and women are governed by these rules at some point in their lives, influencing their hobbies, likes, social relations, and purchases. In the past, these norms were more rigid and clear.

At the time, Mrs. Sommers was influenced by heavy gender stereotypes basing a woman's worth on their clothing and femininity, which means that women would be encouraged to wear feminine and delicate items. However, this, alongside the previous topic of consumerism, would mean that the clothing choices were preferable to expensive materials and would connect to social status. Besides the stockings, the protagonist bought an interesting item: a pair of gloves. Earlier in history, gloves were used by royalty, along with high-quality

gowns. In the 19th and 20th centuries, gloves were used by middle-upper-class members of society. As Cornelia, James (2022) explains, “Victorians developed an obsession with social status, and this was something that could be communicated to one another via clothes and accessories – particularly gloves” (para. 4).

At the time, gloves represented two things. On one side, they represented wealth, as silk-tailored gloves represented high incomes. It was common to see a woman wear expensive clothes with equally expensive gloves. On the other hand, this clothing item was also worn by members of the lower classes. However, it served a different purpose; it was used to cover their hands, commonly altered by hard work. Clothing can show the lifestyle difference in every social class, as higher-income women could wear gloves, showing they did not have to take them off to do work-related tasks, and lower-income women would use cheaper gloves to cover things like callouses and other harms.

Gender norms shape almost every aspect of society. Mrs. Sommers's decisions were heavily influenced by gender norms, whether she knew it or not. Her work and economic state were also influenced by them, as she was quite poor. It is known that women have been denied several rights; the right to work is one of them, and even to this day, it is still one of the bigger gaps between men and women.

The story infers that Sommers has a job; since there is no clear sight of her husband, she brings income to feed her kids. However, she was probably working a very low-paying job or even jumping from one job to another. 19th-century women were employed mostly in home-based jobs, such as sewing, washing, and cleaning. However, the women employed in bigger places as factories were paid less than their male coworkers. *Striking Women* (n. d) explains

that “throughout most of this period, women were paid less than their male counterpart working alongside them, which created great financial difficulties for working women” (para.4). It is clear that the protagonist of the book falls victim to an underpaying job.

At the same time, she falls victim to overwork at home; as a single woman, she was expected to provide financially for her family while taking care of several children and carrying out all the housework. According to the European Institute for Gender Inequality (n.d.), “about 91 % of women with children spend at least an hour per day on housework, compared with 30 % of men with children” (para.2). There is a visible difference between men and women’s accountability for housework. Sommers has to do all the housework by herself. This was expected of her then, yet it shows how women had to carry a bigger weight around the house if there was no husband. The women of the time relied heavily on their husband's income, meaning that their tasks would take over them and their work life if there were no manly presence.

Although gender norms tend to have similarities worldwide, it is important to highlight that gender norms can be heavily influenced by culture. An open-minded country is more likely to bend and go over gender roles than others whose beliefs heavily rely on their culture. A country with more open-minded people follows gender norms; however, these stereotypes may not be as strongly reinforced in society as in other cultures that are more traditional. According to Pappas, S., & Mckelvie, C (2022), culture can be described as “the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts” (para. 1). A clear example is Latin culture, the influence of family and religion makes gender stereotypes more likely to be influenced in society. This is because of the need to preserve different beliefs and ideologies of what is correct and what is not.

A person's culture is so important when talking about gender stereotypes because it goes beyond traditions and shared foods; it also determines the person's values and morals. Latino culture is a clear example of this, where cultural norms influence their behavior and social interactions in a significant way. Latinos tend to be warm and close with their peers; they value family and friendship bonds. In contrast, European interpersonal relationships are more formal; they tend to be more formal with each other, leaving closeness and affection for smaller groups of friends or family. While the significance of family connections remains, their expression of warmth and closeness is shown differently compared to Latino culture. These aspects are deeply rooted in society; therefore, they contribute to the different perspectives on social norms and gender roles of everyone.

The different social and cultural norms that society has established for each gender can determine the way a person behaves. Although identifying with certain gender stereotypes is not necessarily wrong, they can actively damage a person's self-perception and worth. It is key to understand how gender norms work because it will let everyone know when it is being used for manipulation, as it does when consumerism comes along. Consumerism is the need to acquire goods that are necessary or important. When discussing gender and consumerism, it is crucial to understand how these can become damaging if there is no financial awareness or education from the consumer.

1.5 Scope

1.5.1 To assist the reader in broadening their knowledge of the economic, social, and cultural aspects seen in the book.

1.5.2 To help the readers of *A Pair of Silk Stockings* identify the character's struggles in the book and compare them to modern life issues.

1.5.3 To identify issues that may be harming the lives of Costa Rican women nowadays

1.5.4 To understand the repercussions of gender norms in society

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

In the secondary chapter of this work, the reader will learn about the feminist approach and influential women, as well as the different stages throughout history. This will explain the different characteristics and aspects that should be considered when using the approach. This chapter will also tell the reader about the definition of key literary devices, such as motifs, themes, and symbols, which are important elements in analyzing a story. To give a deeper understanding of the book, this chapter will analyze recognizable names of the feminist approach; it will also describe the life of the author of *A Pair of Silk Stockings* as well as her upbringing and life events that shaped her into the writer she becomes. Finally, chapter II will explain the book's development and main character in detail.

2.1 Feminist approach

2.1.1 Feminism

There are different ways to analyze a text. There are different approaches to doing it, and each works as a lens into a specific issue portrayed in a book. In the case of the feminist approach, it is important to highlight that this issue goes beyond the books, as these are just a representation and exemplification of the struggles of real women worldwide. Human Rights Careers (n.d.) explains that "feminism goes beyond basic rights, however, and seeks deeper cultural shifts like an end to sexism and intersectional oppression based on gender, race, sexuality, and class" (para.1). They explain that Feminism's goal is to achieve the same rights

and opportunities as men, done through social changes that otherwise prevent women from having several opportunities. Feminists do not seek to be men or to be treated as such; they seek the respect, opportunities, and rights that men possess.

2.1.2 Categories of Feminism

Feminism can be divided into different categories, but there are three main types. Liberal Feminism is the most basic or common type of Feminism. It focuses on women's access to rights and education. Liberal Feminism often tries to work with the existing systems that govern society rather than trying to change it. It is easier to work around something that has been around for a long time than to remodel society to have a new system. This type of Feminism is often criticized because it does not consider factors like race, social class, or gender, meaning that the fight may be biased or focused only on the benefit of privileged women. This is controversial; thus, women themselves are minorities, and they, along with other disadvantaged groups, have fought for the same goals.

The second type is radical Feminism. It tries to change the standards already set in society, whether they are social issues or systems. They question gender norms and the traditional idea of womanhood and nuclear families. It is known that radical feminists exclude trans women, denying that they are real women. This is also known as trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERF). This decision often comes from a place of misinformation, hatred, or the simple fact that oppression and misogyny have shaped their perception of gender and sex.

The last type is Intersectional Feminism. This type analyzes and validates different aspects, such as racism, sexism, and classism, and how they all relate to women's struggles as a

form of oppression. Intersectional Feminism acknowledges that humans have different identities and can often be part of different minorities. This disadvantage will make life harder for some women than others because it shapes their life experiences and how they navigate those situations.

Overall, intersectional Feminism is an important framework for understanding and addressing the complexities of societal inequality and oppression. It highlights the importance of considering the intersecting factors that shape individual experiences and argues for a comprehensive approach to social change.

2.1.3 History of Feminism

It is important to understand the history of Feminism, as the different events and struggles women have faced influence the feminist approach. It is known that Feminism has revolutionized women's lives, yet it is still an unfinished fight. Women have been oppressed for decades; they were denied vital rights and often confined to house chores, underage marriage, and different forms of misogyny. Consequently, the history of Feminism is both a crucial and brave part of Feminism and women themselves. The different feminist movements and acts were categorized as waves of Feminism. These highlight the different advances of women. The term comes from Martha Weinman, a former writer and editor for the New York Times, who was the first to use this term in the influential magazine "The New York Times" in 1968. Each wave abolished hard issues and accomplished new benefits for women.

It is unclear when each wave starts and ends, yet the first wave of Feminism started in

the late nineteenth century. This wave took inspiration from other movements that were revolutionizing society at the time. Some were the "French Revolution" and the "Abolitionist movement". These movements were important to the feminist movement because they gave the people a sense of unity from each struggle, but also because many of those who fought for these motions also fought for women's rights. This relation shows why Feminism is divided into many different categories, as minorities may belong to different groups to which oppression applies in specific ways. There is a power and privilege difference between white women fighting against oppression and black women fighting against racism and oppression; for this reason, many activists belong to different movements.

One remarkable origin of this movement is the Seneca Falls Convention. This was the first American women's rights convention. This event occurred in 1848 in the Wesleyan Chapel, New York, with approximately 300 attendees. Many were locals who were involved in the abolitionist movement as well. The two-day-long event prevented men from participating on the first day, in which the gathering listened to Elizabeth Cady Stanton give her first public speech. The Library of Congress (n.d.) explains Cady's speech, which said, "We are assembled to protest against a form of government, existing without the consent of the governed – to declare our right to be free as man is free" (para. 3). In her speech, she read the Declaration of Sentiments, this document was modeled after the Declaration of Independence. This paper outlines the different needs and demands of the women at the time, addressing several forms of harm and discrimination they had to go through.

The first wave of Feminism is described by Malinowska, A. (n.d.) as the "New Woman"—an ideal of femininity that challenged limits established by male-centered society" (p. 2, para. 2). The first wave of Feminism tried to educate and interest women on topics such

as education, suffrage, and other social issues. During this time, Cady was not by herself in the movement. Another influential woman was Lucretia Mott, one of the eager members of the abolitionist cause. She was one of the founders of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

This made her get in contact with Elizabeth Cady, which led them to collaborate and, later on, the creation of the paramount Seneca Falls Convention. The first wave of Feminism concluded with women being granted their right to vote; the 19th Amendment finally applied to both men and women. Although women were still fighting for their rights, the wave lost power. Consequently, giving space for the second wave of Feminism. It is important to understand that the feminist movement originated in the French feminist movement, which offered crucial writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, who wrote "The Second Sex," an influential book that set the path for the following movement.

The second wave of Feminism started in the 60s. The status of the world and the most influential countries played an important part during this movement, for they influenced the relevance of the feminist movement. At the time, there were several other motions related to war and alliances; this made the women's movement seem less important than other events. The rejection of society and the new advancements made during the first wave turned this new era into a more intellectually and socially complex movement.

The second wave outlines the arrival of "The Redstockings." This was a radical liberation movement founded in 1969. Their goal, as stated in the "Redstockings Manifesto," was to unify women to liberate themselves from male supremacy. Their thoughts revolve around the acceptance that all men are contributors to the oppression caused by women. Stating the fact that the patriarchy goes beyond harmful men and is rooted in society's social and

economic system. It also highlights that united, women will be heard and respected. This applies to all women, considering the struggles of different types of minorities.

This period also acknowledges the difference between the terms gender and sex. According to The Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (n.d.), the first term refers to “socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people” (para. 2). The latter refers to “a set of biological attributes in humans and animals” (para. 1). Setting a difference between these terms opens a new door to identities, sexualities, and the relation to gender and mental health. Along with this approach, the LGTB+ community comes into play, bringing movements of their own and different art forms. This expression later would become popular and used as a synonym for fashion and pop stars, making it easier for women and queer people to speak about their struggles.

The second wave challenged different gender stereotypes. At the time, gender norms were heavily influential in society. Therefore, the second wave focused on changing how women were perceived, going from a traditional perspective to a more humane and active one. Giving women who did not comply with these norms due to personal beliefs or economic struggles, the liberty to think outside the box and look for changes that would make their lives more fulfilling.

Along with traditional roles, the stigma around working women was challenged as well. The norm denied that women should work, yet this was not the norm for everyone. Low-class women would often have jobs; this made them look undesirable and unfeminine, making them victims of violence and judgment. This was not the only struggle; women were denied financial independence. They did not have the different services and goods men had, which

often were the tools necessary to pull them out of poverty or obtain an education.

Another important topic of the second wave was reproductive rights; women wanted control over their bodies. The ability to make decisions regarding children would allow them to live a better life and avoid being tied to their husbands for financial stability. Although women's reproductive rights are still a debated topic decided by men, the women at the time fought for legal abortions and reproductive rights, which have contributed to today's advances.

During this period, some influential women were Gloria Steinem, a political activist and journalist. She worked to advocate for women's rights and would often speak about reproductive rights and gender equality. She co-founded "Ms. Magazine," a platform for feminist news, women's struggles, and advances. Susan Brownmiller was also a feminist advocate and journalist, best known for writing her groundbreaking book "Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape," published in 1975, and setting the ground rules for the new wave of Feminism and the end of the second wave in the 1980s.

To understand the third wave of Feminism, it is important to look at the technological and social advances of the decade. Women were still fighting for their rights. However, the motion had shifted, and the new wave needed to address more elevated issues. Women went from having few rights to a vote and better life conditions. This statement may be untrue for many women worldwide, which is why the movement is a never-ending fight that can evolve.

The new wave started in the 90s; the world was now connected, and technology advanced quickly. Globalization and pop culture made the third wave of Feminism different from all before. In the past, women had no way of spreading the word for other women to join the movement; this would often set a difference in the social advances from one country to

another. Now, women had the means to reach out to others and educate them about Feminism, while many times they had the exposure to be defamed on television and public means, either way, spreading the word and dealing with opposing people.

The third wave of Feminism that started in the 90s may be considered complex or different, as it tends to go against what the women of the first waves fought hard against. What was initially considered oppressive was being used by women. One must understand that the women of the third wave of Feminism were born into oppression just like all women; nevertheless, they were not raised in the same society as the women of the initial waves, and even though they were still fighting against oppression, they did not experience it firsthand. This made women not equally aware of the oppression that older women were accustomed to. It transformed, and now different aspects challenge modern social norms.

This made the third wave movement seem uncertain, contrary to what was difficult to obtain.

The third wave of Feminism challenges the previous waves as it embraces clothing, actions, and initially oppressive behaviors. This wave focuses on individuality; it is no longer what Feminism is for women altogether but what it represents for each of them. If a woman wants to engage in a traditional lifestyle, being a housewife and depending on her husband, she is allowed to. Suppose a woman feels comfortable wearing revealing clothing or conforming to feminine stereotypes. In that case, she can do it, and it is no longer seen as a form of oppression but a form of empowerment. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines empowerment as "the process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or to control what happens to you." This means that women now use many actions that were an active form of oppression to liberate themselves from the same actions that harmed them initially.

This wave of Feminism relied on irony and self-expression, making acceptable behavior

in Feminism a wide range of actions, all of which had a deeper meaning depending on each woman. In the past, avoiding different gender norms related to clothing and behavior was seen as the reasonable choice to get freedom, yet this oppressed women once again, dictating what not to wear or do. Therefore, third-wave women started using clothing and different manners as a form of self-expression and rebellion, explaining that a woman's image and intelligence were not related and that women were worthy of respect regardless of their looks.

Technology allowed women to use different public platforms to express themselves through art; this led to the popularization of women-related issues and the abolishment of topics that often seemed taboo. This was beneficial as it would help minorities speak against aggression and gain communities, this time online and in real life, which would promote changes. Music was often an easy way to normalize taboo topics; an example is the song "vogue" by Madonna, which refers to a popular form of dance observed in queer balls. Places where people of all genders, ethnicities, and sexualities would join to present different performances and share experiences. The rise of pop culture and celebrities gave women different representations of femininity, as some influential people set trends and beauty norms for other women to replicate or share. This made different views on women's behavior more acceptable. Some women would live traditional lives and be modest, while others would defy gender stereotypes by doing "manly" things, and both would be praised and accepted online.

The last wave of Feminism is still ongoing; it represents the most inclusive version of Feminism known so far. It is easy to spread information and hate; technology is a double-edged sword. The third wave of Feminism had platforms to expand their knowledge. Nonetheless, the fourth wave has the evolution of those platforms into what is known as social media. Society has evolved with these advances; now, social media is not just a platform but the virtual persona

of normal people and influential ones, which means that what is shared online is equally valuable as what is said in real life. What a person preaches has become relevant and non-removable, making sure that the good information is present for everyone to see, while the bad information or actions are of easy access for everyone to comment or hold someone accountable.

This also allows everyone to have a voice. Social media apps like “Tik Tok” and “Instagram” can grant instant fame to anyone. For this reason, women of all kinds can inform others, speak out, and demand a change. With the new technological waves also come new issues, yet this does not mean that the initial requests that women made are a reality for all women. In fact, globalization and social media allow women worldwide to speak up against oppression, informing others about their life situations and lack of rights. Socially advanced countries have modern issues created by the quick advance of artificial intelligence. It is accessible to hurtful people, who can use it to create virtual content of women doing improper acts. Others can use technology to track and manipulate women. The fight never ceases but evolves.

The fourth wave has different activists. However, the relation to technology has changed what is now known as an icon. Previously, feminist activists were writers, journalists, or public speakers; this is still true, but now, since everyone has access to social media, anyone can become an activist, and women of all classes can contribute to the cause, which brings light to issues that were harder to identify before. Also, the arrival of entertainment content has brought feminine icons. These artists, characters, or celebrities may not be active or direct activists for the movement, yet their content and public figures embody all the characteristics of Feminism and women’s empowerment.

The different stages of Feminism have shown that women did not get the respect they deserved through submission and passiveness. The fight for change will last longer than women deserve, but the lost lives and the new lives that will come along are the motor that urges women and society to change.

2.2 Themes, Symbols, Motifs

Literature is often analyzed into different categories and features. Different literary devices will help the reader understand and dissect a piece of literature to analyze a text. The following literary devices are some of the most important ones that help the reader understand the story, and they will be explained and exemplified throughout the paper.

The first device is the theme; according to Oregon State University (n.d.), a theme can be defined as a “central, unifying idea. It’s the bigger issue that emerges as the characters pursue their goals” (para. 3). He explains that the theme is based on deeper topics apart from what seems to be the common issue happening in the story. The theme is the underlying reasoning behind an action or event. It is related to morals and philosophy rather than the story's actual events. A story can have more than one theme. However, most of them have a major theme and other minor ones. Identifying the theme of a story can be challenging because it is inferred rather than stated in the text. A theme is a general idea of a topic and how people perceive it. To identify the theme of a story, one must read the story and understand its plot and other literary elements.

Another important concept is symbols. Literary Terms (n.d.) describe a symbol as “any image or thing that stands for something else” (para. 1). This can be an idea or a belief. A

symbol can have different forms, varying from one story to another. It could be a person, animal, or even more abstract things like songs, thoughts, or feelings. Although symbols can mean different things, some symbols are general, meaning they have a universal meaning.

An example is a dove, which often represents peace and calmness. However, there are more specific symbols whose meaning is related specifically to the novel they belong to.

Several signs let the reader know they have encountered a symbol; these usually have a lot of emphasis and repetition. The symbol also has a meaning in the story, but not outside of it.

Finally, a motif is an important literary device. A motif is a pattern or object; it can be any symbol repeated in a story. Motifs are quite important as they reinforce the author's idea. Oregon State University (n.d.) says that motifs can be "the breadcrumbs that lead us to discover the theme" (para.2). Motifs work by adding images or ideas to the story, strengthening a theme or idea.

2.3 Approaches

To understand the feminist approach, one must learn about its characteristics and features. The feminist approach is an analysis used to examine a piece of literature. It is important to understand literature; it is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) as "written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value." Literature is more than just a book; it is compared to art as it speaks to the reader on a deeper level. The feminist approach revolves around a feminist point of view when reading a book. According to Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.), Feminism can be defined as "the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes." Feminism is a complex concept often divided into different branches or types of Feminism.

This movement is sometimes different; some branches will provide visibility to certain groups of people. However, it is an important movement for society and its development since it usually advocates for women and other minorities. For this reason, when the feminist approach is used to analyze a work of literature, it tends to highlight the underlying struggle and problems of the book—often emphasizing the emotional or psychological side of a story or event.

When using the feminist approach, one must understand its principles; this is how the story will be analyzed. Noel, L. (2010) explains that feminist literature occurs "not because of automatic and ambiguous differences between the writings of women and men, but because of the recent cultural phenomenon of women's explicit self-identification as an oppressed group" (para. 1). The author explains that feminist literature, and therefore, a feminist approach comes from the different cultural and social facts that women face, making it a remarkable category of literature as well as a key factor for Feminism. Feminist literature and feminist approaches bring light to women's issues, it makes them public to the eye, and the analysis of it shows the public the reality of society.

One of the main principles of a feminist approach is the recognition of oppression; this usually happens through misogyny and social systems such as patriarchy. According to Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.) oppression is defined as a "situation in which people are governed unfairly and cruelly and prevented from having opportunities and freedom." Oppression has been the tool that patriarchy has used to manipulate women for decades, being stripped of basic rights, benefits, and a decent quality of life. For this reason, oppression is a big feature of the approach. When analyzing a book through the feminist approach, the author must identify and analyze the oppressor and

oppression inflicted on a character. Oppression is often illustrated through misogyny.

The Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.), misogyny is defined as “hatred Or prejudice against women”. It is a consequence of patriarchy, and the term may be applied to certain individuals and larger systems, societies, or cultures. Misogyny tends to be taught since childhood, and it creates a separation between men and women. However, anyone can fall victim to misogyny and inflict misogynistic acts or comments; this makes it a complex issue because both men and women can spread it. This creates interactions that may seem harmless or small, but in reality, they normalize abuse and keep reinforcing it in society.

Another principle of the feminist approach to be analyzed is the social context. The environment of a persona can determine important factors when it comes to dealing with misogyny and abuse. As Springer. (n.d.), explains that social context can be defined as "the situational circumstances or conditions that exist in the social environment of individuals." Although misogyny can be found all around the world, the culture of a person can determine the way they deal with it and the role it plays in society. Countries with certain traditions and features may condone misogynistic treatments either consciously or unconsciously.

Following these principles, the author must analyze the characters and identify different characteristics of their personality and lifestyle. One must investigate why they make certain decisions. As stated before, the characters' social context may affect their actions; other times, the way they were raised may also play a part. The author must examine the character's background and base their conclusions on it. Just like normal women, the characters in the books act a certain way depending on their environment.

Everyday struggles caused by misogynistic acts evoke emotions of anger, detachment,

fear, and confusion, making female characters act cold, distant, or careless. It is important to research these emotions and find their root. Many times, women's emotions are disregarded and undermined, being perceived as dramatic or dumb. However, the literary analysis using a feminist approach focuses on investigating the reason behind said actions and justifying or explaining them, for they are usually an overload of common reactions.

2.4 Aspects

When analyzing the feminist approach, different aspects dictate different experiences related to women and Feminism. These are usually connected to each other and often influence one another. They are important as they can dictate the character's life.

2.4.1 Social Class

The social class must be deeply analyzed as it shapes the character's life. According to Merriam-Webster. (n.d.), social status is "a group of people sharing the same social or socioeconomic status." Social classes are divided depending on education, income, and occupation. Nonetheless, only one or two of these aspects sometimes determine a person's social class. This status can be categorized into three main positions.

The first category is the upper class. Although many members of this category are situated in it due to inherited goods and influence, there are also several jobs that the members of this social class hold; they can be doctors, lawyers, CEOs, and business executives. These people have higher positions in companies and provide jobs for others. Upper-class members enjoy economic freedom, meaning they have access to essential needs such as education,

health, and housing. For this reason, a woman's social class can determine if there will be difficult patches in their life and how they will overcome them. People from lower social classes must confront hard life events without the advantages of the upper class.

The second category is the middle class. It can be divided into two subcategories: the upper middle class and the lower middle class. This happens because there is a significant income difference for those who belong to each category. What differentiates the upper-middle class is their ability to live comfortably. They do not share the same economic freedom as the upper class, yet they can access high-quality education and health care. These people have higher degrees that earn them comfortable wages.

On the other hand, it is common for the lower-middle class to have lower degrees from community colleges. This division holds lower-paying jobs, making them work for the upper middle class. The income difference makes it hard for them to save money or maintain a sustainable class, such as the upper middle class. Their economic constraints may be the main reason for their inability to scale from one class to another.

The last category is the working class and the lower class, which may be considered the same. These are lower social classes whose members have worse chances of education. They usually have no college education, and sometimes, they can be high school dropouts. People born into these categories have fewer chances of upscaling into better life conditions as they have no economic freedom at all, they often live paycheck to paycheck, and their incomes are unsuitable to sustain a family.

The difference between these two categories is that the working class is not completely

considered poor, yet their financial situation could be more comfortable. Members of this group hold blue-collar jobs or jobs where no skills are required.

Social classes lead to economic inequality. Women at the time did not have the same opportunities as men; therefore, they relied heavily on the male economic contribution to the house. As Mrs. Sommers was part of the lower class, life for her was harder. She lived a life with hardly any luxury or fun. This is illustrated with her thoughts; the protagonist needs clothing for her children. In a lower-income household, it is common to prioritize the most basic needs a person may have, these being food and shelter.

Sommer's kids could have had better clothes. It is probable that the family had to choose between eating or buying new clothes. Secondly, there was no entertainment for Sommers; besides the clothes she bought, she also spent her money on leisure activities, like going to the movies and buying a magazine. Both actions may be considered casual, even at the time. Nevertheless, entertainment is the only goal of watching a movie and reading a magazine. These are activities done to pass the time and have some distraction; they are not vital for a person's well-being.

It was clear that those were things she could not afford. However, her inability to do leisure time activities to decompress or enjoy life took over her thoughts the second she had the opportunity, showing that she had a dull and struggling life before the money. Consequently, Sommers only allowed herself to go to the movies once she had money to spare. This is also an example of how class divisions work, making different activities and lifestyles accessible for some but impossible for others.

The garments that Sommers bought for herself were clothing items that, for the women

at the time, were remarkable yet not crucial for everyday work. There is a reason why Sommers switched from cotton to silk stockings; her fitted gloves made her feel better than the one-size-fits-all she bought at a bargain, and her shoes encouraged her to step into a new restaurant. All these items had small alterations that she was not able to afford before, but upper-class women were accustomed to. The clothes made her feel as if she were part of a higher class and all the benefits that come with it—a luxurious life with entertainment and economic freedom. Feeling the silk on her body made her forget the reality of her life and let go.

According to Ostrander, S. A. (1984), the author cites Domhoff's work, which explains that a function of women of the upper class is "the setting of social and cultural standards for the rest of the population to admire and emulate" (p. 8, para.2). This means that others would follow and accept what is being portrayed by them. Unfortunately, this is mostly beneficial for upper-class women only, as they can manipulate the standards to make others do what they want and, in different cases, profit from it. As explained before, the upper-class members of society often own big companies and, most importantly, hold economic power.

Setting trends and social norms can encourage people to buy products owned by other upper-class members and promote their profitability. Consequently, lower-class women who wanted to emulate these actions would end up feeling excluded due to their inability to do so or would end up in debt trying to obtain unnecessary items.

2.4.2. Education

Education is one of the key factors determining a person's success. According to UNICEF (n.d.), "Investing in girls' education transforms communities, countries, and the world.

Girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives." This denotes that women with access to education are more likely to be successful and can more easily confront common women's struggles.

Unfortunately, education is not accessible to everyone. Social classes and gender norms play an important role in women's access to education. All women are subjects of gender stereotypes. However, it is known that economic status will help them avoid or overcome the struggles that come with gender norms. One example is the role of women in the house. Attributing house chores and childcare as tasks only related to women leaves education out of the picture, shifting women's importance as people and leaving them as only helpers. This discourages women from obtaining any form of education. In earlier times, this belief made women unable to get an education, leaving them as their only option to take care of the house and siblings.

Nowadays, this issue persists, yet we can also see it in higher education, where women are discouraged from pursuing a college degree, setting their life focus in a family-oriented manner instead of being encouraged to pursue their personal goals. As stated before, these factors affect all women. However, upper-class women have the means to hire help to do all "female-based tasks"; they also have the education to understand its value and give girls a high-quality education.

Alas, education was not an option for many girls. Apart from the stereotypes, the economic status of lower-class families makes it impossible to give education to one or more children since providing education for a child is not as simple as sending them to school; it also implicates the purchase of materials necessary for them to learn, as well as the provision of

food and transportation. We leave young girls with no option but to serve around the house or find different ways to contribute to the family.

A specific issue that only women face is abuse and pregnancy. Teen pregnancy is one of the biggest factors that stop women's education. There are few resources available for teenage moms to make education more accessible. During their pregnancy, they can be at risk of many complications, especially during their last trimesters, making it hard for them to stay in school. On an emotional side, teenage moms tend to be excluded and isolated from their peers as well as their teachers, making their education process uncomfortable. Once the baby is born, it is quite difficult for them to go through the usual schooling system, as classes are imparted throughout the day for more than five hours. It is unreasonable for a girl to take care of the baby and attend class normally. The facilities are neither fit for a baby nor the mothers, as they are kids before being moms.

Education is one of the key factors that can prevent teenage pregnancy. For this reason, they go hand in hand to avoid this issue. Imparting sex education classes in schools can decrease the percentage of teen pregnancy. However, not every school imparts these classes. Leaving a trail of uneducated girls who many times belong to the lower class.

For the lower classes, education means everything. Even though a good academic history is not the only factor determining a successful life or career for women, it is known to be incredibly helpful, as it works as a tool for them to work their way through life. The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education has analyzed and studied this. After analyzing the dynamics of different groups of students, they found that their levels of anxiety and stress were higher depending on specific gender, race, and geographic-related

aspects. Apple & Smith (n.d.), explains, “Although children expressed anxieties about school achievement across class differences, it was not the white middle-class boys panicking about being exposed as no good through school tracking, testing, and assessment procedures, rather it was the black and white working-class girls agonizing that they would be a 'nothing'.”

These studies show the importance of education, especially for working-class girls. Today, little girls receive way more encouragement to pursue an education than before. This is one of the most important ways to achieve financial stability, putting great amounts of pressure on girls. It shows the relationship between education and women, making it a factor determining social relations, economic stability, and more. For this reason, education can determine a character's actions and behavior

2.4.3 Gender norms

Gender norms can dictate different aspects of women's lives. On one hand, gender norms can affect women's appearance. The importance of gender norms in society will determine how much it influences them. Decades ago, the norm for women was only to wear skirts and dresses. Due to society's closeness to gender norms and femininity, wearing something else would bring social exclusion and, with this, a harder time navigating life.

These rules may not be the direct determinant of women's actions; however, they take part in many crucial aspects of their lives. It has influenced others' perceptions of the importance of education for women. Denying women's education when it should be women's priority. As stated before, education is a crucial right for everyone; therefore, the influence of gender norms on education disadvantages women, even if they are unaware of this.

Nowadays, it still influences women's education, making women doubt their career paths. Little girls are often discouraged from learning specific topics or fields of labor that are men-dominated, for example, job fields related to math and science. MIT Professional Education (n.d.) states, "In 2023, the gender gap in STEM remains significant, with women making up only 28% of the STEM workforce." There is a big difference in the participation of women in these fields. It is important to question why this issue is happening. Both men and women are capable of fitting and excelling in STEM-related jobs.

This can happen as early as primary school, where adult educators and even their own families categorize these subjects as too difficult for girls to learn. All of these aspects form the different struggles and characteristics of women's lives. These are paramount to identifying and understanding a character's background and how life works for women overall. Its events conclude that issues like misogyny are complex and large problems that have evolved and are connected to many other systemic forms of oppression.

2.5 Kate Chopin's Biography

Writer Kate O'Flaherty was born on February 8, 1850, in St. Louis, Missouri. She was the daughter of Eliza Faris and Thomas O'Flaherty. Her mother came from a very poor French Creole family. Due to her financial needs, she marries Kate's father. Thomas was a wealthy Irish merchant who died early in Kate's life. At the time, St. Louis faced the arrival of many German and Irish immigrants. However, the population stayed predominantly French. The city became a great trading center, attracting more people looking for a better life.

During Kate's childhood, she attended the Academy of Sacred Heart and received a high education. It is important to point this out, as not many girls at the time were getting any

education, let alone a good one. It is visible that the author's life events shaped her work since there are subtle similarities in her books. At the age of five, Kate's father passes away in a train accident. This event sets the example for her work in two ways. First, this coincidence also happens in one of her stories, "The Story of an Hour," where the husband is supposedly killed in a train accident.

Conversely, this leads her to live in a predominantly female household. Chopin grew up in a family of widowed or divorced women, which led them all to be quite independent. Her mom, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Victoire Charleville, raised her. She was a big influence on her because they would spend a lot of time together. She taught Chopin French and how to play the piano, but she was also the one who would relate her stories of her mother, who broke the stereotypes of the decade by being the first woman in St. Louis to obtain legal separation from her husband and having kids while being unmarried.

At the age of 20, Kate married Oscar Chopin, who was part of a wealthy family of cotton growers. Together, they had several children, five boys and two girls. They lived for a while in New Orleans. However, due to economic issues, they moved back to Oscar's old home, where they ran a small store and plantation. At 32, Kate faced her husband's death. He passed from swamp fever, a lethal disease at the time carried by horses, causing anemia.

Later, she moved back in with her mother in St. Louis; nevertheless, her mother passed away a year later. It seemed as if Kate had dealt with death most of her life, as she often endured the death of her relatives. Her father passed away too early; her grandmother passed away on Christmas; her stepbrother also perished, and so did her closest family relatives, such as her husband and mother. This can explain many suggestions of Chopin's religious questionings throughout her life, an underlying theme in her work, as the women at the time

were very spiritual. However, her characters did not follow this rule.

Although she had to suffer dearly from her mother's death, the event left Kate completely by herself, with children to feed and debts to pay. To support her family, she began to write. She wrote many short stories about people she knew from Louisiana and many children's books. Most of her work focused on women's experiences, self-discovery, and struggles. Her work was a complaint against gender conformity and social norms. In 1899, Chopin wrote "The Awakening." This was one of her most popular works, as well as one of the most controversial. The public did not react well to the work, which gave Chopin a bad reputation. Unfortunately, she was greatly hurt by the public's reaction. This led Chopin to a time of obscurity and little relevance to her stories. In 1904, late at night, after a day at the fair, a 54-year-old Kate calls for her son, complaining about pain in her head; on August 22, Chopin loses her life due to a brain hemorrhage.

2.6 *A Pair of Silk Stocking's Plot*

At the beginning of the book, the reader meets the main, and arguably the only character of the book, Mrs. Sommers. She had fifteen dollars, which was a big amount then, especially for her. She had not had that much money in a long time, as it felt odd for her to carry it. The protagonist reveals she has several children and plans to invest the money in their needs. Most of the kid's needs are simple but necessary, like garments such as gowns and shirts.

Sommers was very talented when it came to making the most out of anything; she knew how to save money and get bargains. That day, she went to shop for her family with the extra money. However, all her plans went south. When she was sitting on a stool, she suddenly felt something very soothing; she was laying her hand on a pile of silk stockings. She could not

resist and instantly started to examine the material, almost like it was with the final goal of purchasing it. She immediately bought the stockings; she was hypnotized by the feeling of the silk on her skin. The garment made her unaware of reality for a little while. She was too caught up in the moment and the feeling that she was not thinking. After that, she went on to buy a pair of shoes. She had bought a pair of pointed-tipped boots. This excited her; she could not believe the shoes were hers. However, this made her want a stylish fit, and she was directed to her next purchase, a pair of fitted gloves. This was exciting for Sommers because it had been a long time since she had fitted gloves, but also because the gloves were not something acquired at a bargain; they were just hers.

After making other purchases, including some magazines, a full-course meal, and a movie, Mrs. Sommers headed back home with all her new things. She was never told if she had any money left, but the thought of that day made her feel as if she was in a dream she never wanted to wake up from.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This chapter will investigate the importance of presenting clear, concise results to achieve the desired outcome for the research process. This chapter will encapsulate the different aspects, principles, and procedures necessary to have relevant conclusions during the research. Chapter III will highlight the steps taken to answer important research questions. Some methods used are the research approach, research design, information sources, analysis categories, and data collection instruments.

3.1 Research approach

The research approach is a crucial aspect of the chapter because this strategy allows the investigator to conduct the study and determine which methodological research will be conducted. There are different types of research approaches; however, some of the most important are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research.

Quantitative research collects data to understand a pattern, question, or make predictions. This data is usually numeric, which gives a clear view of the number of people who belong to a specific group and the magnitude of an issue. This is often done through surveys and statistics. This research can be seen in topics related to economics, sciences, education, and marketing, and its purpose is to generalize results from populations.

The second method is qualitative research. Its goal is to collect nonnumerical information to understand important concepts, opinions, behaviors, or experiences. It tries to understand aspects from the perspective of the participant. The goal is to gather in-depth

information on a conflict or generate innovative ideas for research. This method is commonly used in social sciences, education, media, and communication. Qualitative research uses both surveys and experiments to obtain information. However, this tends to be more personalized and extensive. The researcher may also turn to information from books, articles, or websites.

Finally, the mixed method combines the qualitative and quantitative methods to facilitate the comprehension of the research problem. This method helps the investigator analyze the issue from multiple points of view.

This investigation will use the qualitative method, which uses nonnumerical data and will give the investigator clear, rich insights about a topic, allowing a deeper understanding of it. The method will help the investigator understand the context of the situation, an important tool for feminism and Mrs. Sommers's life, as it is known that the character's behavior is based on several facts and events that deeply impact women and a complex background.

3.2 Research Design

This part outlines the plan for conducting the research, including the structure, methods, and techniques chosen to approach the research. It also explains the tools that will be used, which refer to the methods that allow the investigator to obtain the correct results. This analysis will be done using a descriptive research method. This method describes the characteristics of a specific population or issue. It helps analyze behaviors and aspects that can be beneficial for an investigation; it answers questions generally rather than explaining why a specific situation happens.

To use this method, it is important to have clear research questions, for it is easier to investigate with a clear goal instead of drifting from one topic to another. This question will

reveal different attributes necessary for the investigation. This method will analyze data through different data collection methods and identify relevant patterns, characteristics, or variables vital to identifying and analyzing a problem.

3.3 Information Sources

Information sources refer to any article, book, or person used to obtain information. They are vital because they give the investigator the important information, characteristics, and data necessary to create an investigation, pinpoint an issue, and analyze it to obtain a clear conclusion. The investigation is real and legitimate with information sources because there is an outside perspective for what is being observed.

In any analysis, different points of view and aspects must dictate the investigation, and then the information sources become relevant. For this analysis, different books, websites, articles, and literary works related to feminism, the economy, and social relations will be used. It is common to divide information sources into different types. Some sources are information that directly strengthens the topic and are necessary to conduct an investigation successfully. One example of this source is the book being analyzed. The investigator must follow the different characteristics and subtopics seen in the book to conduct the analysis without the book, there is no work.

Another source type is any document whose topic derives from the primary information or topic. These sources focus on specific subjects and provide a deeper understanding of them. These can be reports or analyses. Lastly, some information resources work as an addition to the subject; they tend to be sources of information about another type of information, and these tend to explain concepts that may be more challenging to understand

than the main topic.

3.4 Analysis Categories

The analysis categories refer to the different themes or sections that will be evaluated. Depending on the analysis, each work will have different themes to be explained. For this research, it firstly is important to understand the following terms:

Feminism is an important underlying topic. It symbolizes the needs of the protagonist, yet she is not aware of it. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), feminism is the "belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests."

Gender norms: These are a big factor in the protagonist's life that led her to make bad decisions. Oxford Reference (n.d.) defines gender norms as "a set of behavior patterns, attitudes, and personality characteristics stereotypically perceived as masculine or feminine within a culture."

Social and economic struggles: This term can be a synonym for poverty. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) describes poverty as "the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions". Economic struggles are often bound to social struggles, in which an individual is rejected or outcasted by others for not having the same opportunities, goods, and experiences, as they cannot afford leisure activities or anything that is not crucial in life.

Socioeconomic status: This term plays an important role in society. According to the American Psychological Association Socioeconomic status (n.d.), "(SES) encompasses not only

income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. SES reflects quality-of-life attributes and opportunities afforded to people within society and is a consistent predictor of a vast array of psychological outcomes”.

3.5 Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments are the devices a researcher uses to collect data for the investigation, such as questionnaires, checklists, and observations. Investigators use a variety of devices to collect data and obtain results, including surveys, questionnaires, observations, and tests. The instruments are paramount in every investigation because they let the writer recollect valid information regarding their investigation topic and validate the different objectives, statements, and goals included in the research.

The researcher will analyze and compare different key points of the book with reality using a comparative chart. Comparative charts are helpful to the reader as they not only compare but also show different similitudes and milestones in the topic used. Using this instrument, the reader can find a comparison between the different struggles portrayed in the book and real-life events that women face in modern times. The different social, economic, and psychological aspects that have been pinpointed in this paper will be used to reference the differences that the evolution of society and globalization have brought. The comparison will be made using three table charts.

3.5.1 Table 1. Socioeconomic struggles faced by women in the book and real life.

The first instrument that will be used is a table. This table is divided into four columns.

The first column shows the divisions into which the comment or quote can be sorted. The categories represent some of the most important and common topics seen throughout the book. The "category" groups in the column are listed as gender roles, economic differences, education, and politics. This column is already prefilled, and the researcher must fill the remaining columns. The first column will help the reader understand the main idea of the comparison, as well as provide a clear order in the table. The second column represents the ideas that the researcher will compare. This column will have different quotes and passages from the book. The sentences represent the events and way of living in the book. It can include the protagonist's thoughts, actions, or parts of the story related to women that have changed in the present day. These sentences follow the category from the first column. The third column, called "Modern life," will contain the evolution of the ideas presented in the second column. However, this column focuses on how the previous idea progressed and how it is portrayed in the present. It will contain quotes, facts, and data supporting every idea.

Lastly, the final column will compare the concepts developed in the second and third columns. The column will explain how both ideas compare or contrast and break down the reasoning behind the changes between the book and real life. The last column will also include comments from the researcher related to each point and its relevance to women. The goal of the table is to portray the struggles women encounter along the way. The chart focuses on highlighting said issues to analyze and understand why women share certain experiences and how it affects them, along with how these issues have evolved and affect women of the present day.

Socioeconomic Struggles			
Category	Book	Modern life	Commentary
Gender roles			
Economic differences			
Education			
Politics			

Table 1. Illustrates a comparison of the socioeconomic struggles in the book and today's society—the researcher's creation.

3.5.2 Table. 2 Influence of the socioeconomic status of women in the book and modern life

A similar table will be the second instrument for the research. This table is divided into four columns. The first column shows the category of each idea. Its categories are health, fashion, economic influence, social influence, gender roles, and leisure. They represent influential topics when speaking of the impact of socioeconomic status on women's lives. The second column of the chart will show scenarios and parts of the story in which the main character's social class shaped her and others' points of view. The remaining columns will work as in the first device; they will have quotes and citations from the book, facts, and events from real life, followed by comments and development of each idea from the researcher's perspective and comment. This table aims to compare the impact of social and economic status on women's lives and explain how certain constraints affected low- and high-class women in the book and how these constraints affect women nowadays. Its relevance relies on

understanding how simple actions can influence several people—making it easier or harder for them to have a good quality of living and a responsible relationship with money. It also helps the reader comprehend why the book's main character makes decisions.

Socioeconomic status			
Category	Book	Modern life	Commentary
Health			
Fashion			
Economic influence			
Social influence			
Leisure			

Table 2. Illustrates a comparison of socioeconomic status's impact on the women in the book and today's society. Researcher's creation

3.5.3 Table. 3 Impact of gender norms on women in the book and modern society

The last table will describe how the impact of gender norms played a defining part in the main character's life, as well as women in modern life. This comparison is important because it not only compares the situation of Mrs. Sommers and real women but also shows how society has evolved, showing the different milestones and setbacks that society has done. In this way, the reader can notice the relevance of gender norms depending on the period, creating a connection between women's life choices and norms.

This table is divided into three columns: t. The first one will describe actions influenced by

gender norms in books from the past. S, showing how norms impacted the way of living in the book. The second column will show how gender norms impact women's way of living today, along with sources that confirm said changes. The last column of the table will contain the researcher's comments and showcase how gender norms have affected women over the years.

Impact of gender norms			
Book Quote	Past	Present	Commentary

Table 3. Portray compares the impact of gender roles on women in the book and today's society.

Researcher's creation

3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

Here, the researcher will read the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings*. Analyzing the book, the researcher can find that the story has an underlying meaning that talks about feminism and social constraints that directly relate to modern feminism and the experience of womanhood, working as a representation of different experiences women go through. For this reason, the researcher will analyze the book by making three different tables that will compare the lives of the main protagonists, Mrs. Sommers, and the lives of modern women.

These tables will explain the book's different social, economic, and cultural aspects of the past and modern women. The chart will include factors about the main character, her personality, and her emotional state, providing a view of modern women's identity. The chart will contain different comments and sources from the author. The charts will provide an

analysis of the main objectives of this research; thus, they will support the investigation and provide accurate information for the reader.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

This work chapter will develop the topics mentioned in the previous chapter. Data analysis is a crucial part of any investigation; gathering, studying, and understanding information to obtain results will support and add meaningful insight to the research. Data analysis uses different approaches to develop the investigation; in this case, the feministic approach is used to create the analysis. This chapter compares and explains meaningful topics of the book, resulting in a deeper understanding of women's struggles and the story itself.

4.1 Approaches to the investigation

This work will use the feminist approach in the investigation. The feminist approach analyses a story by considering not only the events of the story but also the underlying reasons behind the character's actions. The feminist approach validates the daily social, cultural, economic, and oppressive struggles people face and draws different conclusions from said facts to examine the story. This approach takes women as the center of attention. It makes the reader understand that the characters in the story, just like other women, have faced years of struggle; therefore, their actions must be studied meticulously. It is important to use this approach because it lets the reader understand relevant topics of society and helps the reader be aware of the injustice women encounter. This allows them to have a piece of representation and a tool that brings awareness to serious issues.

4.2 Theories vs Literary Work

4.2.1 Socioeconomic struggles presented in the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and its contrast with modern life

This chart aims to understand the social and economic issues that the protagonist of the book goes through, as well as to compare it with the modern changes of today. The charts consist of different categories of recurrent topics throughout the story. The table will have passages from the story highlighting the conduct, patterns, and struggles of the protagonist's actions that will be analyzed and understood. The modern life column will emphasize the current societal changes and how the socioeconomic issue has evolved.

Socioeconomic Struggles			
Category	Book	Modern Life	Commentary
	<p>“a dollar or two should be added to the price usually paid for Janie’s shoes” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p> <p>“The vision of her little brood looking fresh and dainty and new for once in their lives excited her and made her restless and wakeful with anticipation” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p> <p>The needs of the present absorbed her every faculty. (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p>	<p>Women have the opportunity to explore as many interests in their lives as they want; they are no longer focused on just forming a family. In fact, it has become socially acceptable for women not to want children. They can explore their passions and talents or find goals in their jobs; for this reason, it is more common to see women who change their attention from the traditional nuclear family to a self-centered lifestyle.</p> <p>According to Salgado, F & Magalhães, S (2023), “motherhood started to be seen as a choice rather than an obligation” (para. 11). This has benefited women for they now</p>	<p>Gender roles have defined the actions and lifestyles of men and women. In the past, it was common to see people lead their lives by these norms; however, with time, society has come to understand their different downsides. Gender roles normalized the attribution of domestic labor and childcare to women, this has deeply misogynistic and outdated backgrounds, where women were constantly at a disadvantage compared to men. They were always under unfavorable conditions regardless of their capability, making it difficult for them to</p>

		<p>have the capacity to choose the course of their lives, contributing to a better perception of them in society, along with improving their mental health.</p>	<p>focus on different interests or lifestyles.</p> <p>Women were expected to fulfill men's needs, have many children, and desire big families, even if they were not fit for motherhood, they were often judged or even harmed if they tried to follow a different lifestyle. Moreover, there were discouraging facts that made women unable to choose their life course. Most women relied financially on their partners, making it harder to be child-free or achieve a career.</p> <p>Additionally, women were expected to do all the house chores, and take care of their kids and husbands, this left most women with little time for leisure activities.</p>
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			<p>The dehumanization of women portrayed them as beings with no deeper desires than motherhood. Consequently, they were less encouraged in hobbies or school, which led many talented women to conform to dull lives full of dirty diapers and mistreatment. Although opting for a traditional lifestyle is a valid decision, this does not mean that it is acceptable to strip women of their ability to choose a different path.</p> <p>In the present, women have gained many privileges, they can work and pick any path they want for their lives. Nonetheless, this has not revoked their initial tasks, they are still doing more unpaid care than men. According to</p>
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Gender Roles			<p>the European Institute for Gender Equality (n.d.), “about 91 % of women with children spend at least an hour per day on housework, compared with 30 % of men with children” (para. 2). This makes women thrive in different aspects of their lives while facing several obstacles in comparison to men.</p>
	<p>“When she came to think of it, between getting the children fed and the place righted, and preparing herself for the shopping bout, she had actually forgotten to eat” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p>	<p>There is an increase in men who are actively involved in taking care of their children. Although this is not an equal task, men are more engaged in their children’s lives. According to Parke, D (1996), “A variety of technological, economic, and ideological changes in our society are redefining what it is to be a father” (para.1, p.2). Modern men are involved in their kid's lives,</p>	<p>It was common to think that women were nurturers or weaker and that men were cold and strong. Both stereotypes, with the contribution of misogynistic acts, led to the idea that men should only work, and women should serve at home. This has created a burden on women, denying them the support and bases to obtain jobs. Simultaneously,</p>

		<p>this is the result of moral and social changes which many are related to gender roles and the way families emotionally connect. Accepting emotions and emotionally intelligent parents has made men more aware of their impact as dads, allowing fathers and kids to form stronger bonds. Nowadays, men can be active and full caretakers for their kids, a change almost nonexistent not long ago.</p>	<p>these norms made men ashamed of their emotions. Emotionally unavailable men are less likely to take care of their children; however, this does not only harm the children but also men, Wong, J (2016), says “Individuals who conformed strongly to masculine norms tended to have poorer mental health” (para.2). This confirms why many men become negligent to their children and often violent. In reality, both men and women are capable of being parents and can show a wide range of emotions, yet gender stereotypes are responsible for stigmatizing emotions and feelings, creating harmful environments.</p>
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“a young girl who stood behind the counter asked her if she wished to examine their line of silk hosiery. She smiled, just as if she had been asked to inspect a tiara of diamonds.” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)

Gender roles tend to categorize certain actions, objects, and thoughts as feminine or masculine. These norms are taught to children in early childhood, and some stay with them as they grow. Fortunately, society has decreased the importance they give to these norms, allowing each individual to act as they think it is best. In the present, feminine defining traits are still encouraged; however, women are not judged as harshly if they do not conform to them. This is beneficial since this freedom allows women to live their lives without the need of having to fit in. They are aware that many gender norms related to personal appearances, like hair removal, weight, and body image are related to beauty standards

The story shows one prominent gender norm throughout the whole plot, the protagonist desperately wants luxurious clothing. She is not looking for pants or shirts, nothing that is truly useful in her everyday life, she wants garments that are specifically feminine and delicate.

The story shows the different valuable ways in which she could spend her money. However, Mrs. Sommers is much more inclined to buy hosiery. These clothes don't hold any real practicality, but they represent femininity and status, two valuable things for the protagonist due to the influence of gender norms in society. A modern example can

		<p>whose purpose is to make women feel bad about themselves, allowing companies to profit off their insecurities. Modern women have stopped viewing themselves from a male perspective and implemented self-acceptance.</p>	<p>be a designer bag, an overpriced item with the same capacity as other bags but holds a higher social status and prestige than its competition.</p>
Economic differences	<p>“Mrs. Sommers was one who knew the value of bargains.”</p> <p>“She could elbow her way if need be.” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p>	<p>One of the most important changes the feminist movement has accomplished is granting women the right to work. Opening the possibility of better wages and professional positions. Just like anywhere else, women in the workplace still fell victim to misogyny and discrimination, which led to an ongoing issue, the wage gap. The wage gap is the difference in salary that women make compared to men, which is often unjustified or validated through misogynistic stereotypes.</p>	<p>Allowing women to work has improved their quality of life, this change worked as a step towards financial, emotional, and physical independence. When looking back, it is clear that changes happened. However, knowing that regardless of the improvements accomplished, issues such as wage gaps still exist shows how long the road to</p>

		<p>Nonetheless, this issue has improved with time, Aragão, C (2023), explains that “while the gender pay gap has not changed much in the last two decades, it has narrowed considerably when looking at the longer term” (para. 3). Luckily, women are aware of this issue and fight to lessen this gap.</p>	<p>equality is. The American Association of University Women (n.d.), states that “at the current rate of progress, the gender pay gap will not close until 2088” This shows that one cannot conform to the current advances, as these are just a small portion of a bigger change. Women must be aware of the reality of these differences in the workplace, as being informed will help them avoid unfair treatment and hold accountable those who discriminate. Unfortunately, Costa Rican women are not left behind; just like many other Latin American women, they face the wage gap to this day. Chacón, M (2023), explains that “the</p>
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			<p>wage gap (which had declined in the last quarters of 2022) increased again since the fourth quarter of 2023” (para. 10). This shows that the wage gap is an ongoing issue, and depending on the time, it can increase or decrease. With this being said, educating people on this issue can help society strive for more.</p>
	<p>“Two hectic blotches came suddenly into her pale cheeks. She looked up at the girl. “Do you think there are any eights-and-a-half among these?” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>Consumerism has become a lifestyle for people regardless of their financial situation. Nowadays, people are not only exposed to several products but also encouraged to consume them, this is done through social media, advertisements, influencers,</p>	<p>The story shows how Sommers falls victim to consumerism. Nevertheless, in the time the story takes place, consumerism was not as imminent as it is today. This highlights the gravity of the protagonist's actions and how important it is to</p>

		<p>and sellers. There is a product for every need in every corner. Everyone is expected to consume; for this reason, many companies mold their products to their demographic. There are very expensive products in the market for those who can afford them and several cheaper versions for those who cannot. Additionally, gender norms are mixed with consumerism culture. Therefore, there are many products promoted specifically for men and women, even if there is no need to mark this distinction. A significant example of this mix is the pink tax. Wakeman, J (2020), describes this as “an upcharge on products traditionally intended for women which have only</p>	<p>understand her background. Higgs, K (2021), says, “The notion of human beings as consumers first took shape before World War One but became commonplace in America in the 1920s” (para.1). During that time, society was not socially or technologically developed enough to incorporate consumerism into their culture. Therefore, asking for clothes and wanting to purchase them made Mrs. Sommers feel uncomfortable, greedy, or selfish. At the same time, it gave her a feeling of acceptance and femininity which impulsed her to buy more. Nonetheless, she was aware that the clothing</p>
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		<p>cosmetic differences from comparable products traditionally intended for men” (para. 5). The pink tax can be seen applied to products like pink razors which have no difference from normal razors apart from their color, these products are targeted at women and often cost more for the same reason. These examples show how quickly companies try to make people consume and overpay for unnecessary products.</p>	<p>added no real value to her life, as it would not change with or without the garments. She had to think about her kids, making the decisions more difficult.</p> <p>Nowadays, it is normal to embrace consumption. The world is based on a capitalist system that profits from it, making it available and desired. Higgs, K (2021), states “Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption” (para. 30). It explains how this way of</p>
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			<p>living has been engrained in society for decades and it mostly benefits others in already privileged positions. Hence, it is vital to create a conscious way of living to avoid consumerism and poor financial management.</p>
	<p>“she crossed straight over to the shoe department and took her seat to be fitted” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>Consumerism is part of society and with the help of the internet and globalization, everyone can now access a variety of different products, regardless of the necessity they meet. Globalization is defined by Peterson Institute for International Economics (2018), as “the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people,</p>	<p>The introduction of the internet has changed the way people purchase things. Technology has been a paramount aspect in the promotion of consumerism. Now, everything is one click away, it is easier for people to spend their money. Websites use different marketing techniques to attract clients, including virtual advertisements and videos promoting things.</p>

		<p>and information” (para.2). It has made it easier for people to buy goods from all over the world. This increases the variety of products available, as well as the options to purchase them, making shopping more enjoyable; as a result, people buy more things because they have more choices and access to these items. Overall, globalization has increased consumption by strengthening markets and reducing the cost of products. Singla, S (2023), explains that “the facts that show a link between globalization and consumerism can be easily established by global accessibility to markets, as well as the manufacturing of products previously unavailable to customers throughout the world” (para.1). Meaning that the</p>	<p>Add campaigns tend to use emotions to advertise a product. In this way, they associate a feeling with the product, which makes people more willing to buy the item, even if they do not need it. When comparing Mrs. Sommers's feelings towards the clothing, it is noticeable that she was acquiring the items for the feeling it gave her, rather than the utility it serves. At the time, she was only able to afford what was available in her town, most of her consumption was local. This has exponentially changed today, as people can purchase anything around the world.</p>
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		<p>acquisition of goods and the normalization of consumerism is directly related to worldwide changes made by globalization.</p>	
<p>Education</p>	<p>“The neighbors sometimes talked of certain “better days” that little Mrs. Sommers had known before she had ever thought of being Mrs. Sommers.” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p>	<p>Nowadays, education is a resource available for many women, they are encouraged to pursue an education and are often helped through organizations whose main goal is to provide high-quality education and better opportunities in male-dominant careers. Prioritizing education for women has been a social change that provides a positive impact, as there has always been a disadvantage for women in the education field. Today, several girls have accomplished primary and secondary education and can</p>	<p>In the past, education was not a priority for women. This happened not only because of the lack of opportunities they had, like the lack of access to education and low-paying jobs, but also because of the lack of support they had from their families and peers. Men were the ones encouraged to pursue an education and be able to have decent jobs. Women were often discouraged from getting an education since it</p>

		<p>navigate their education freely.</p> <p>This change is possible due to better access to schools and universities. The impact of these changes is profound, as it leads to greater gender diversity in the labor market, which is still an ongoing issue, it also contributes to a higher proportion of women in leadership positions, and a more inclusive and innovative society. Consequently, this not only empowers women but also enriches communities and economies by realizing their full potential.</p>	<p>was normal for them to get married young and have their husbands fulfill any financial need, leaving no use for education in women. Unfortunately, this was a behavior that placed women in unfavorable positions. Women with no education often had a lack of awareness and had to endorse abuse. No access to education meant that women were not aware of the things they were missing by lacking this fundamental right. As the UNESCO (N.D.), explains “Education is a basic human right that works to raise men and women out of poverty, level inequalities and ensure sustainable development”</p>
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			<p>(para.1). Allowing women to have an education would help them to obtain their independence, better-paying jobs, and to understand their worth or different struggles they would encounter in life. On the other hand, several women were victims of all types of abuse from their partners; nonetheless, the lack of education and financial independence made it impossible for them to escape these situations. They had children to care for, and most of them did not have any support apart from their husbands. Therefore, they were left with no other solution but to stay in dangerous relationships. Due to the financial and social</p>
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			<p>situation of the protagonist of the book, it can be inferred that she has little to no education. She had several children and was a single mom; not only that, but she was very poor. This shows she probably got engaged fairly young and was dedicated to raising her children. Since the husband is not in the picture, she had to rely on any job she could find to feed her numerous family members. The narrative is an unmistakable illustration of how a lack of education negatively affects women. Nevertheless, this situation is not just confined to stories, this is the reality for many women, regardless of the many advances in</p>
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			<p>education. The UNICEF (n.d.), says that “only 49 per cent of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. At the secondary level, the gap widens: 42 per cent of countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary education, and 24 per cent in upper secondary education” (para.9). Exhibiting how education is not accessible for all women due to different cultural, economic, and social restrictions that need to be addressed.</p>
	<p>“She would get caps for the boys and sailor-hats for the girls.” (Chopin, 1897, p.1)</p>	<p>The arrival of many technological and scientific advances made possible new methods of contraceptives for</p>	<p>The fight for reproductive rights is a lengthy process. Despite the fact that modern women can choose different</p>

Politics		<p>those who want to take care of their sexual health. Today, there is a variety of methods like pills, IUDs, patches, injections, and others. The benefit of these methods is that many of them allow women to impede pregnancy by their own choice. Although condoms have been around for many decades, only the bearer has full control of them. For this reason, the previously mentioned methods are formidable for women.</p> <p>Nowadays, women have further accessibility to these methods due to health services, and pharmacy access; additionally, the destigmatization of sex and reproductive rights also applies to education, as many young women have the privilege of</p>	<p>ways to avoid pregnancy, this does not mean that the contraceptive methods available are fit for everyone. Many of the methods have painful and sometimes harmful side effects. As Mayo Clinic (2023), explains, some side effects of taking the pill are “nausea, headaches, breast tenderness, bloating, and breakthrough bleeding” (para.15). These are mild and less harsh effects, yet they still cause great discomfort for many women. Others may want to use hormonal contraceptives that can be inserted into your system. Unfortunately, these methods bring many side effects. Additionally, they</p>
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		<p>learning about sexual education and awareness in class, which teaches them the importance of contraceptives and allows them to have a safe space for learning.</p>	<p>are implanted through invasive and painful procedures, often performed with no anesthesia. Due to the variation in every experience, this discomfort is often undermined by professionals, which shows the sad side of medical fields, where health resources targeted at women are often not made with them in mind. Furthermore, this also shows underlying misogyny in this field, where female pain is diminished or ignored. With these facts in mind, it is common to wonder why women would go through the trouble of using contraceptives that can harm them. The reality is that</p>
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			<p>women endure these issues to avoid pregnancy, but also because there are no other options for them, not all women have full control of their bodies or their reproductive rights.</p> <p>According to the Center for Reproductive Rights (n.d.), “60% of women of reproductive age live where abortion is broadly legal”.</p> <p>At first, this may seem like a positive fraction; however, it is crucial to highlight that there is another 40 % of women who do not have control of their bodies. At the same time, it is important to understand that not every country with pro-abortion laws allows women to have abortions due to personal</p>
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			<p>choice, many of these countries only allow abortions to preserve health, mostly physical. This dehumanizes women, as it conditions them to have the opportunity of an abortion only if they are already enduring a bigger danger. This makes abortion not truly available; it invalidates women's mental health and control over their bodies.</p>
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Table 1 illustrates the socioeconomic struggles of women in the book and modern life. Researcher's creation.

4.2.2 Impact of the socioeconomic status of women presented in the book *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and its contrast with modern life.

This chart aims to analyze the impact of the socioeconomic status of women in society, as well as to compare it with its relevance today. The charts consist of different categories which are recurrent topics throughout the story. Additionally, it has passages from the story highlighting the impact of this issue on the protagonist, Mrs. Sommers, and commentaries

explaining the contrast between the present and the past. The chart will dive deeper into the protagonist's actions and explore her point of view.

Impact of socioeconomic status on women			
Category	Book	Modern life	Commentary
Health	<p>“She was not going through any acute mental process or reasoning with herself, nor was she striving to explain to her satisfaction the motive of her action. She was not thinking at all.”</p> <p>(Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p> <p>“She seemed for the time to be taking a rest from that laborious and fatiguing function and to have abandoned herself to some mechanical impulse that directed her</p>	<p>The different social and economic advances have improved society's health. Today, both physical and mental health are important parts of people's wellbeing. This change has been possible because there is better access to health care, and there are treatment centers specialized in mental health like hospitals, facilities, and programs. It is common</p>	<p>The story tells what some may see as a normal day of shopping for a woman. For others, it may look like terrible decision-making. A key factor in understanding the truth of the story is the protagonist's mental health. This is not brought up at any time in the story, but there are several factors that can explain that her mental health is worse than she even knows. The first fact is that she is a single mother. There is no trace of a husband in the story, which can mean she lost her husband, or he left; either way, this can emotionally damage her,</p>

	<p>actions and freed her of responsibility.” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>to see schools, universities, and workplaces educating others about mental health, they teach ways to cope with mental health issues like stress and depression and give support to those who need to get help.</p> <p>These changes in common areas have made it easier for people to get involved in mental health topics. The rise of the internet has been another important factor. The internet has been a great tool to find information about mental health, now people can find</p>	<p>as she is now alone and responsible for many kids.</p> <p>The second fact is that she is very poor, she has no economic help from her partner and due to many cultural and social aspects previously explained, she does not have a salary high enough to sustain several kids. When she first obtains a large amount of money, her first instinct is to provide for her kids, this shows that she cares deeply for them and strips herself of any comfort to give them what they need. For this reason, it is known she is a hard-working mother who was not only physically but mentally distressed, so much so that when she finally got the chance to get anything for herself, she was not able to stop from spending all the money. She was most likely living check to</p>
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		<p>information about different facts, solutions, and data about mental health; as well as receiving the treatment they need through the internet. These changes have been possible not only because of the growth in resources available but also due to the awareness and acceptance of mental health. Now, that society knows the repercussions of not addressing this issue, people are encouraged to seek help and share one's stories. This benefits many minorities as their</p>	<p>check, going to work and coming back to more work with her children, trying her best to stop things from falling apart. She was mentally very worn out, so she took any opportunity to treat herself the second she got it. The reason why she purchased the items she chose can be due to the heavy influence of gender norms and social status which rewarded feminine women and created a clear social distinction between members of each social class. Thus, the protagonist decided to go for fashionable items that were worn by high-class women. Afterward, she is seen enjoying herself with new clothes in a restaurant and then a cinema, two common places to kill time; however, due to her financial situation, she cannot enjoy these</p>
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		<p>struggles are finally being validated, resulting in organizations giving more access to benefits for mental health and everyday life.</p>	<p>activities on a normal day. Unfortunately, Sommers had none of the resources available today to help her mentally and financially, she is a representation of many of the women of her time and many women today who struggle mentally but are not able to get the help they need.</p>
Fashion	<p>“Her stockings and boots and well-fitting gloves had worked marvels in her bearing—had given her a feeling of assurance, a sense of belonging to the well-dressed multitude” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>Modern society is still divided into different social classes, for this, fashion companies have made shopping available for everyone. However, there are various brands and items for those who cannot afford real high-priced brands. Fashion changes</p>	<p>The arrival of fashion has made clothing available for each person and their economic situation, this happened due to a big market extension. In the present, there is a great variety of options of clothing, varying in style, fabric, and sizes. Fashion industries have learned the impact of clothing on people; therefore, they try to widen their demographic to avoid complying with only one social class and losing potential buyers.</p>

		<p>throughout the decades, Magana, E (n.d.) explains that “fashion trends emerged from the Industrial Revolution through the development of factories that could rapidly create clothing” (para.1). After the revolution, it became normal to see fashion trends come and go. For this reason, what once was only for a specific social class, now is shared among all. Nowadays, fashion breaks these barriers with items of clothing like ripped jeans and tops with holes in them. This shows how the</p>	<p>For this reason, this decade brought clothing with lower prices and lower quality. The need for consumption has made fashion companies create a harmful phenomenon called fast fashion, Kelleher, D (2024), describes fast fashion as a “term describing the rapid production of inexpensive, low-quality clothing that often mimics popular styles of fashion labels, big-name brands, and independent designers” (para.1). Fast fashion has been a big contributor to clothing production, waste and trends. With the help of influencers and social media, different trends and styles are introduced to the public, who then buy low-quality clothes that they will have to discard once they go out of style. After a while, the popularity of the clothing</p>
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		<p>most stylish clothes have holes and missing pieces, and even wealthy people are seen wearing said clothes.</p> <p>Fashion has drifted apart from fulfilling necessities like coverage and protection to also being an expression of one's individualism. Clothes are used to express personality and feeling; they can also be used as a form of statement or resilience because clothing often holds meaning. They tend to shape people's perspectives of one another. Therefore, today it is common to</p>	<p>decreases. To contradict this issue, companies will proceed to create new clothes with the same low-quality materials and dull essences. One of the most superficial issues of fast fashion is that it lacks soul and personality. Since it is made for the vast majority of people, it tends to be dull and basic and only relevant to the fashion trends of the moment. This makes people want to quickly get rid of them once it no longer fits their self-perception. In the past, clothes also represented trends and style, however, high-class members were the only ones able to acquire high-quality clothing, and the lower class needed long-lasting items that they could wear in different activities. Thus, it was not suitable to own clothes that would easily</p>
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		<p>see people wearing different styles of clothing to express their emotions, passions, and struggles. Fashion can empower women and at the same time be their enemy. Contrary to the initial waves of feminism, modern women use different items of clothing, varying in a wide range of coverage, style, and shapes to express themselves. For older generations, this may be seen as contrary to what the principles of the initial waves of feminism dictated, but due to the influence of</p>	<p>rip and had holes and patches in them, even they were trendy, fast fashion was not necessary. Furthermore, fast fashion is possible due to the cultural and economic advances of the decades, the arrival of the internet, celebrities, and the impulse of consumerism and work are responsible for this phenomenon; contrary to the past, where these factors were less influential.</p>
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		<p>fashion and the current social changes, many women find empowerment in as little or as much clothing they wear, bringing high importance to fashion. At the same time, clothing can be tied to different prejudices, making women self-conscious or used against their will for moral reasons.</p>	
	<p>“Her foot and ankle looked very pretty. She could not realize that they belonged to her and were a part of herself” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>Clothing represents status, this happens due to the connection of wealthiness with financial stability. People with money can afford luxury brands and expensive items.</p>	<p>Once the protagonist is indulged in her shopping spree, most of her initial clothes are gone. Now she has different stockings, shoes and gloves which elevated her style to a more put together one. She is aware of these changes and is not regretful of the change. The</p>

		<p>For this reason, brands are a social synonym of wealth. Currently, people like to wear expensive brands due to the popularity and status they bring.</p> <p>This can be explained due to human's need to be social, according to Braren, S (2023), "Humans have evolved the basic need for social connection because it is vital to our survival. This need is rooted deep within us biologically" (para.1).</p> <p>For this reason, many people opt to buy recognizable brands of clothing, regardless of the purpose they serve</p>	<p>reaction of the character lets the reader know that she was not able to afford fitted gloves or silk instead of cotton before. These traits are a representation of the higher social classes and how small details draw a line between high class and lower class. Having fitted gloves meant that they were tailored to the user, something that not a lot of people can afford. Silk stockings had a significantly better quality than cotton ones, making them fancier and more expensive. Finally, buying shoes was a treat for Sommers, as this is an item that usually lasts very long, reducing the need to consume, it was likely that she did not have a new pair of shoes in a very long time, but instead she had a loyal, multipurpose worn-out pair.</p>
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		<p>or the quality they have. The most recognizable brands are worn by those part of the high class of society. It is common for people to post on social media with brand clothes for others to consume and admire, this is done both to fit in and influence others. Thus, it can be concluded that fashion is still a symbol of status; however, the need for consumption has made different quality copies of clothing available to society to promote this cycle.</p>	
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	<p>“she exchanged her cotton stockings for the new silk ones which she had just bought.” (Chopin, 1897, p.2)</p>	<p>The influence of technology has contributed to different trends. Today, it is common to see celebrities and influencers be the ones who set fashion trends, this can be done through creativity or with the help of partnerships with different brands. The process starts when the brand picks an influential artist and uses them for a clothing campaign, this usually brings attention to the clothing and makes followers buy them. Apart from obtaining the item, this</p>	<p>The book presents the items of clothing as symbols of social class. For high-class women, it is normal to wear silk stockings, well-fitted gloves, and fancy shoes. They do not need to worry about the price, and their lifestyle allows them to use these items throughout the day. Hence, silk stockings are popular due to the influence of high-class women.</p> <p>The protagonist is eager to fit in with wealthier women, her shopping represents the influence it has on her. For Mrs. Sommers, having silk stockings instead of cotton makes her feel as if she were part of the high class, even when she knows they won't change her life, she still gets them, it increases her self-esteem and perception while allowing her to daydream a romanticize her life.</p>
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		<p>happens to connect or support the artist. For this reason, the high class has been responsible for setting trends over the years. However, today the variety in styles and aesthetics is not always governed by the influence of celebrities. Styles like street or alternative try to go for low-budget items of clothing and often reject dressing with expensive clothes to achieve a look. This happens due to the cultural background of these styles, where those who wear them were never part of the</p>	
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		<p>high class of society, or their beliefs were nonconforming with social standards.</p>	
<p>Social influence</p>	<p>“There was a restaurant at the corner. She had never entered its doors” (Chopin, 1897, p.3)</p> <p>“When she entered her appearance created no surprise, no consternation, as she had half feared it might” (Chopin, 1897, p.3)</p>	<p>Social interactions between social classes have evolved, due to the cultural, technological, and social shifts that the new decade has brought, today it is normal to see members of different social classes interact with each other and have close relationships. One of the changes that have made the mix possible is the public areas; public spaces like parks, malls, and community centers allow individuals from different social and</p>	<p>Mobility, technology, and education are some of the factors that contribute to social interactions between classes. However, an important shift in people’s mindset has impulse this connection even further. Today, inclusivity and acceptance are shared values in society. This cultural and moral shift was not the same in the previous decades, many moral issues like racism, sexism, and classism were openly accepted in the past. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), classism is defined as “unfair treatment of or negative opinions about someone based on their social class”</p>

		<p>economic backgrounds to interact with each other.</p> <p>Another key factor is the internet and the cultural shifts of the new decades.</p> <p>The Internet works as a platform for people to connect based on shared interests and hobbies; therefore, people can befriend others without the need for any activities or actions that they may not be able to do in real life due to their financial situation.</p>	<p>(para.1). This means that those who were part of the lower class were often discriminated against and separated from the rest.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it was common for lower-class members to be minorities like women and POC, making it harder for them to be accepted, as they already had to deal with other struggles.</p> <p>The protagonist was eager to enter a restaurant where had never been before, this was because previous to owning the money, she did not have the financial stability to afford a nice restaurant and also because it was a place where mostly upper-class people dined. It was not normal for her to frequent these places; so, she was excited and scared at the same time. There was a clear division of</p>
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			the places for the upper and lower classes.
Leisure	<p>“between brilliantly dressed women who had gone there to kill time and eat candy and display their gaudy attire. There were many others who were there solely for the play and acting” (Chopin, 1897, p.3)</p>	<p>At present, everyone can enjoy the leisure activities they prefer, there are many affordable options to have fun. In public spaces, community activities are available so people can spend time with their loved ones doing interesting activities. Some cinemas have ticket discounts, community hauls give free classes and public areas like parks are available for everyone.</p> <p>The internet is also an</p>	<p>There are different ways to spend leisure time; some people like to do activities like sports or dancing, while others have artsy hobbies like singing and painting. Today, there are many ways to spend free time regardless of the cost. In the book, the protagonist is not able to have many hobbies, this did not happen due to the time, but due to her financial situation. Sommer was most likely to spend her money on her children and her time working and taking care of them, which made it difficult to find any time for herself. For this reason, simple activities like going to the movies and eating at a restaurant feel like</p>

		<p>important factor for entertainment, it is easy to find games, apps, or free streaming platforms to be entertained for hours. People can find videos of anything, meaning they can watch as much content as they prefer, and they can also learn skills like playing the guitar and dancing without spending money. Going outside is a great way to spend time; however, there are also many cultural sites like libraries or museums that allow free entrance to learn more.</p>	<p>treats for her. When she enters the doors of the restaurant, she thought she was going to stand out from the rest, this means that most people who dine there are upper class and would notice if someone different comes in.</p>
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Table. 2 illustrates the impact of socioeconomic status on women in the book and modern life. Researcher's creation.

4.3 Themes, motifs and symbols

4.3.1 Themes

A theme is the central idea or meaning of a story. Themes often focus on deeper topics related to life and human nature, as well as the behavior of the characters in the book. Themes can be specific to the book or universal. Thus, every aspect of the book can illustrate the main theme of the story.

Gender stereotypes	<p>Gender stereotypes are one of the main themes of the book. It tells the story of a single mother in the late 1800s, Sommers's life is full of gender stereotypes both because of the time and because of the character herself. The reader can notice that throughout the story, many norms related to femininity, opportunities, and behavior are portrayed through the main character. She is unaware of these norms; for this reason, she cannot escape them, her life is bound to the advances and standards of the time, making her not notice how gender stereotypes dictate her life. The main character complies with many norms, she is a single mother of more than four kids, she has a low-paying job, and struggles to make ends meet.</p>
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	<p>This causes her to have a tiring life, where leisure and rest are not allowed in her lifestyle.</p> <p>During this time, there was little to no involvement for women in anything other than housework. According to USHistory organization (n.d.) A woman was seen merely as a servant to her husband. “By the 1830s and 1840s, however, that began to change when many bold, outspoken women championed social reforms” (para.6). Women were far from being included in political matters; however, these small interactions were the beginning for women to be in working positions. Most women contributed to housework while the men were the ones with stable incomes; unfortunately, for Sommers, no husband is involved in her life, she works to maintain her family while also keeping up with all the household chores and raising her children. The book is written with a heavy influence on the social movements and norms of the time, making the story's character live in the same conditions as the women of the decade did.</p>
	<p><i>A Pair of Silk Stocking</i> is a story with a feminist undertone, the reader needs to have social and cultural knowledge to understand the real meaning of the book.</p>

Feminism	<p>The story often shows subtle acts where the protagonist can be misjudged. The protagonist is a representation of women and their struggles, and the book constantly shows underlying issues that women face every day and are often ignored by everyone. It is necessary to deconstruct her actions and analyze the background and the influence of her environment to understand her conduct. The story talks about how Sommers struggles to meet her children's needs, yet she wants to spend money on them. It also talks about how good she is with bargains; one can understand that she has acquired this ability by necessity and not desire. After that, she is off to the market and spends her money on clothing, the reader needs to understand that even clothing garments are seen as a luxury by this woman, as well as the fact that it has been a while since she has been able to afford anything for herself. This shopping spree also shows how easy it is for the protagonist to let go of herself and spend money mindlessly, showing that her mental state is more critical than she knows. Throughout the whole story, the protagonist acknowledges her children; however, she is never called mom, when is in the city, she is never seen as just a mother. She gets to be just</p>
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	<p>herself and not be responsible for anyone else. She does something that may seem selfish to any woman at the time, which is putting herself first. Different feminist topics are hidden in the story; for this, the reader must investigate about women's experiences to empathize with the character.</p>
Consumerism	<p>Consumerism is a relevant topic in the book, throughout the story, the protagonist struggles financially but often finds herself spending money on items that are not a necessity. Consumerism is a lifestyle inculcated in society through the years. This is so common because of the different social and economic advances that exist.</p> <p>Today, consumerism prevails due to the influence of the internet, people are in constant interaction with it, and this allows different ads and videos to influence the consumer. At the same time, the industrialization brought different machines and the need of workers to fulfill the creation of these products.</p> <p>During the time, it was not common for people to overspend their money on impractical things.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Sommers is very manipulative and buys garments that she does not need.</p>

Table.3 illustrates the literary devices of themes present in the book A Pair of Silk Stockings. Researcher's creation

4.3.2 Symbols

Symbols are the ones used to represent ideas in a story. There is no clear shape for symbols, as they can be different depending on the book, they can be ideas, objects, or even colors.

Symbols add meaning to the story and often reinforce the ideas seen in the themes.

<p>The silk stockings</p>	<p>The silk stockings are a representation of the different gender norms that the women at the time lived with. For a woman like Sommers, it was crucial for her to spend money on useful clothes, she needed long-lasting, comfortable clothes that allowed her to move around every day and kept her warm during cold times. However, gender norms changed the way she perceived clothes, making her biased when shopping.</p> <p>Unfortunately, clothing is often confined to gender norms, making items of clothing designated to a specific gender. In reality, clothes are simple fabric but in society, gender</p>
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norms dictate how people dress up to this day. According to Miriam (2023), In the late 1800s, local governments across the United States passed laws against dressing in clothes that politicians saw as “not matching” a person’s gender”(para.3). This shows how much clothing influenced people and how this ideology made Sommers prioritize aesthetics overuse.

One of the items of clothing that society considers feminine is stockings, since it was wrong for women to wear pants, stockings were a feminine garment often used with skirts and dresses.

It was encouraged to follow gender norms, being feminine was the norm for all women, this heavily influenced Sommers to buy the stockings, they were a feminine garment and, it was made out of an embellished fabric.

The material of the stockings also

	<p>represents the differences among social classes. Silk stockings felt better to the touch but were more expensive than cotton. Therefore, silk stockings were associated with wealthier women. Mrs. Sommers was accustomed to cheaper stockings, hence, when she felt the silk, it gave her the excitement of new clothes, along with the feeling of belonging to the higher class.</p>
<p>Fitted gloves</p>	<p>Fitted gloves were a representation of the difference in social classes and their lifestyle. There is evidence of the existence of gloves that dates to the early developmental stages of humans. In the beginning, gloves were made to protect the skin when hunting or for protection from the cold.</p> <p>As time passed, gloves became known for practical and aesthetic purposes, in the 1800s, social class and status were very important in society, and people</p>

used clothing as a form of social distinction. Wealthier women used fitted gloves made out of fine leather and silk. Leather was very durable and polished while silk was nice to the touch which allowed women to wear their gloves for a longer time. The gloves served a practical purpose and the material they were made of created a social distinction in classes.

Primarily, the fabric was a visual indicator of wealth, compared to handmade gloves from the lower classes, wealthier people were able to afford expensive fabrics to create their gloves. Secondly, gloves represented the social class due to the purpose of the gloves. Upper-class women were able to use fitted gloves because they did not need to take them off to do any type of house chore or work, this meant that they had a husband and a high income. Women who had to do

	<p>chores like washing dishes, changing diapers, cleaning, and sewing were unable to do their tasks with the gloves on while keeping them clean. Thereby, they needed to put them on and take them off through the day. At the same time, gloves were also a way to disguise social class, women whose hands showed signs of hard work, through scars or callouses could hide them using gloves to pretend to be a different social class.</p> <p>Lower classes used gloves for different purposes, these were not worn for fashion or status but for protection, to keep workers safe when doing specific hard labor, or to ensure hygiene.</p> <p>Another important fact is that gloves were often used to protect the skin from the sun, creating a relation between darker skin and lower class, these was a subtle indicator of</p>
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	<p>racism, where people would purposefully wear gloves to avoid tanning, concluding that for many, dark skin was not desirable, and it was often related to hard work and lower social classes.</p>
Restaurant and cinema	<p>In the late 1800s social class was a noticeable aspect of society and many public places contributed to this division. Although restaurants were not specific establishments reserved for the higher class, many dining places, especially expensive ones, were frequented by upper-class members, as they were the ones able to afford it. This would draw similar people to it and eventually create a separation between the classes, members of the lower class who entered were not able to buy anything, and even if they were, they would not be welcomed in the establishment.</p>

	<p>This division is noticeable by the reaction of Sommers, she had never been to said restaurant, and it was likely that she wasn't able to go to any restaurant for a long time. Then when entered, she expected an unpleasant reaction from the customers.</p> <p>The restaurant is described as a spotless and expensive place, it represents the gap between fancy places and the everyday life of the protagonist.</p> <p>When Mrs. Sommers enters the restaurant, she does not create any reaction to the people inside, indicating that her appearance does not immediately betray her lower social standing. This acceptance into the restaurant suggests that social boundaries can be blurred through appearance and demeanor, demonstrating the importance of her clothing, and at the same time,</p>
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	<p>emphasizing the exclusion she faces in her normal life, as she only gains this acceptance by stepping out of her usual social sphere.</p> <p>The restaurant symbolizes an escape from her daily struggles and responsibilities. In her mindless state of mind, Mrs. Sommers indulges herself in the luxuries of a higher class, which provides her with a sense of comfort and satisfaction. However, this escape is temporary, highlighting the constant reality of her lower social status.</p>
	<p>The cable car is a subtle but important symbol. It symbolizes her journey, it not only transports her physically but also mentally, she leaves behind all the joy and happiness she experienced that day. When she comes back, she has her clothing as a reminder of the life she desired and had for a few</p>

Cable car	seconds; at the same time, she has to go back home and face the consequences of her actions; there is no more money, but her kids still have needs, the house still needs cleaning, and her responsibilities are still there. It is not certain when she is going to have this amount of money again, or if it will ever happen. The car represents reality and the separation between her and her wishes. Sommers wishes that the car would go on and on because she knows that what is waiting for her on the other side is a life full of struggles. She knows she will have to put herself in second place again. Now that she knows what it is like to treat herself, this becomes even harder.
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Table. 4 illustrates the literary devices of symbols present in the book. Researcher's creation

4.3.3 Motifs

<p>Need for luxury</p>	<p>Mrs. Sommers is represented as a character with a very low income, her life lacks the commodities that most people have, and she often finds herself being aware of this need.</p> <p>Mrs. Sommers experiences moments of luxury and commodity, such as her shopping spree and dining experience. These actions are only possible because of the money she was given, most of the time, she is not able to indulge herself in this lifestyle.</p> <p>Subsequently, these moments highlight not only the difference between her normal life and the upper-class life that others have but also her deep desire for comfort and pleasure. This motif emphasizes the theme of social class and economic differences between classes.</p>
	<p>Sommers's actions seem like she is desperately trying to escape from her responsibilities and struggles, in other</p>

Escape from Reality
and
Need for change

words, she tries to escape from her life. She does this through shopping and dining. For someone with economic stability, these actions may bring pleasure, but are still normal and not seen as a luxury. Yet, Sommers finds incredible joy in these actions, making her daydream about a temporary life that she cannot have. This motif underscores the nature of her relief and the inevitable return to her reality, reinforcing the struggles she faces related to financial stability, poor mental health, and constant labor, as well as the constraints of social class. This need for escape is a sign that she wants to change her life.

Sommers was not always a struggling woman; the story mentions who she once knew better days. This means that Sommers was able to enjoy the benefits of upper-class life once, but due to her life choices, she struggled deeply. This shows how Sommers wants to change from her tired and busy life

	to a more self-centered and luxurious life by spending money on herself.
<p style="text-align: center;">Discrepancies between Appearance and Reality</p>	<p>The protagonist finds that through her purchases, she can appear as a well-off woman with no issues. She uses her clothes and money to allow her to fit in with the rest, something that would not be possible with her normal clothes. This highlights the superficiality and influence of appearance. It reiterates the connection between social class and fashion. It is a clear example of how Sommers's life changes just because of her looks.</p>

Table.5 illustrates the literary devices of motifs present in the book. Researcher's creation

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the final chapter, the researcher will encapsulate the research result and the various resolutions and important ideas explained throughout the paper. This chapter provides the reader with an overview of the findings in the paper, highlighting its main points. This conclusion allows the reader to analyze after learning about the triad formed by the literary work itself, the theories proposed and used by the researcher to analyze it, and the researcher's thoughts on the topic. Finally, it will describe important aspects or recommendations related to the most relevant topics of the book.

5.1 Purpose of the conclusion

The purpose of the conclusion is to recapitulate the research results, ideas, or discoveries by providing a concise and related summary of the most important parts of the research. In this way, the reader will remember the work's key factors and understand the research's outcome. The conclusion synthesizes the different elements of the study by combining research questions and theoretical frameworks with the findings and methods explored throughout the paper. This helps present a coherent story and shows how different parts of the study are related. This chapter is paramount as it allows the reader to contemplate the content of the work. This builds on existing knowledge and creates enthusiasm to learn more about the topic. The paper's conclusion should leave the reader feeling confident about and excited about researching the topic.

5.2 Conclusions

The different objectives of the paper will be explained to show how the evolution yet not deletion of these issues reveal that literary works such as *A Pair of Silk Stockings* are a powerful and important representation of strain and change through the years and why works like this are important in society to mark the differences between times additionally to being used as a protest against the unheeded struggles faced by women.

5.2.1 Specific objective one: To identify the different social and economic struggles faced by women in the book and women in modern times

Since the story's main and only character is a woman, most of her conduct is related to struggles that they only understand. Gender roles, economic differences, and lack of education are the most important struggles that Mr. Sommers and modern women face. Even though there is a time gap between the present and Mrs. Sommer's time, the researcher has found that these issues have transformed along with society, making all women relate in different scales to the same situations. One can understand that these issues go beyond specific people and reside in big political and social systems that govern society.

Gender roles are a dominant factor throughout the novel; they represent society's expectations and representations of women. They determined the course of the book, as these were the main reasons the protagonist chose clothing instead of other items. Her actions in this bitter story highlight the oppressive nature of gender norms that impose sacrifice and frugality on women, confining them to roles centered on domestic

responsibilities and motherhood and stopping them from having fulfilling lives with them as their center of attention. Mr. Sommers challenges this narrative by having brief moments of joy and luxury, helping the reader reevaluate gender roles; this is also a calling for society to recognize and value women's individuality and autonomy.

Economic differences and lack of education played an important role in the book, which influenced Sommers's fixation on luxury. Additionally, lack of education was a factor that stopped her from obtaining her desires. It was a factor that allowed the reader to understand their life restrictions, as education is a fundamental right for people, and having it stripped away from women left them with fewer choices to exhale in life. Since many women had to take care of their families, they were still bound to other obligations even if they had the economic means. This made education a luxury instead of a right.

Economic differences and social status were paramount topics at the time because they greatly influenced society. Lower classes were often overlooked, ignored, and neglected, making it harder for them to improve their financial and living conditions. Higher classes had a financial and social advantage over everyone else. For this reason, a person's social class would determine many of their trajectory in life and relationships with others. Understanding her economic status is necessary to empathize with her situation and analyze the reason behind her status. Lack of education is one of the reasons why she is in a struggling position. This is a right that can change women's lives. Therefore, the constant fight for women's education and improvement of the same are crucial for social change.

The political state at the time influenced and reinforced the previous issues. The waves of feminist movements had to fight harder to obtain benefits that had never been given to women before. At the time, there was no shame in mistreating women and other minorities; thus, changing people's mindsets and social systems was extremely difficult. Being part of the movement often meant social exclusion and aggression, yet this movement, along with other influences, helped expand the political inclusion of women, allowing suffrage, land ownership, and improved job opportunities.

5.2.2 Specific objective two: To compare the relevance of the social and economic status of today's women with the female characters of the book

A Pair of Silk Stockings represents the differences in social classes of the time by contrasting the initial state of Mrs. Sommers and her journey in the city, where social status dictated women's lifestyle, worth, and crucial life decisions. This emphasis shows her deep need for a change in her life. Economic limitations constrain her; she knows that to overcome them, she needs to spend most of her life working to provide for her children and raise them at the same time, but by doing so, she slowly loses her sense of self and neglects her own needs. The relevance of social status is shown in the empowerment and self-respect she earns once she is wearing her new clothes.

She has the life she dreams of for a few hours, and her garments help her idealize this idea. This is true for her and those around her; she fits in and does not raise any concerns when entering places where higher-class members visit. In comparison, modern women are also confined to economic status; they look for social status and approval from others by purchasing trendy clothes and items. However, the rejection faced by modern women is often

constrained to embarrassment and mocking but not full social exclusion as is the case with lower-class women of the book.

5.2.3 Specific objective three: To investigate the impact of gender norms in a patriarchal society in the world and in the time the book took place

Gender norms have a big impact on society regardless of the time, and unfortunately for Sommers, she had to experience them at a time when there was no escape or flexibility from them. She had given up her life for her children without hesitation, but she was not aware of her potential or the different obstacles in her life. Gender norms set an order, and she had to follow them unthinkingly. Modern women are not free from these norms.

Just like the protagonist, women today follow different gender norms to some extent. The difference lies in how they impact the present and the past. How each person lets gender norms mold their lives will determine many struggles and character traits. Regardless of the time, gender norms reveal an obstacle to women's autonomy and equality in society.

Gender norms can impact their relationships, work, image, and self-worth. Complying strongly with gender norms can be detrimental to their physical and mental well-being. It is important to find a balance between things that are accepted by gender norms and actions that go beyond these so that women can live the way they want. Gender norms will not be exterminated; therefore, it is important to understand them and not comply with extremes while at the same time trying to strive for a more inclusive and accepting society.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

How can the reader understand how gender norms and economic constraints in the American Progressive era compare to those in the modern day and harm women?

This involves examining different topics and approaches. Feminism is a crucial topic for understanding these norms' impact and the book's core. Feminism is a belief that encapsulates different economic and cultural aspects of society and strives for equality between genders. This belief has had several stages in which women have fought for different rights. Understanding each feminist movement is a paramount step because, with this, the reader can picture the social and political states of the world and the issues and advantages women had at the time.

The feminist movement talks not only about women but also explains the history of the movements of other minorities like POC and queer people. It explains how systemic racism, hate, and discrimination have harmed minorities to the extent that even privileged cisgender white women would receive backlash from these treatments. The feminist waves contextualize the lifestyle through the decades, this allows the reader to understand the point of view of the character along with the goals of the movement at the time. Overall, understanding the movement helps the reader empathize with women and their struggles in a way that is not biased with misogynistic or uneducated ideologies.

It is important to understand this comparison by learning about gender norms- the different ideas, stereotypes, and beliefs about gender in society. Norms are based on what is acceptable or not acceptable in society; these ideas often come from misogynistic or outdated concepts. Since they change with society, gender norms affected women differently in the past. The protagonist lived in a time when only wealthy women could study; those who could not access education had to rely on their partners or hard work to survive. This created a harsh division between classes. Women were expected to fulfill all house chores and care for their husbands; it was not acceptable for them to have a child-free life and pursue other passions. These

gender norms made women confined to simple and dull lives, given that they would be greatly judged or stopped if they tried to live otherwise. Today, gender norms have lessened due to women's ongoing fight, which made women seem more human and deserving of rights. Norms are still present, but their impact on women is smaller, allowing them to live without fitting into the traditional idea of what it is like being a woman.

5.4 Recommendations

The book gives subtle details along with the events going on. Be mindful of them; small facts help create the bigger picture of Sommers's life. It can go unnoticed how many things she experiences in little time. Details like texture, feelings, or emotions can be overlooked as these may be normal when shopping; however, together, they build up an image of all the repressed feelings she had experienced and the dynamics in her environment.

When creating the charts, make sure to separate the ideas clearly. Many of the quotes and explanations can be intertwined because many issues affect each other or are the leading cause of another issue. Dividing the research tables into groups will give the reader a clear idea of which specific topic is being discussed.

The initial reading of the book is to learn the story and the events in it, the second reading is done to highlight the noticeable issues happening in the story and the character's life. Finally, the last reading is done to profoundly understand the causes of the initial issues and the reasoning behind Sommers's actions. At the same time, in this reading, the analysis of details and symbols must be deconstructed, and the cultural and historical background must be investigated.

When explaining important concepts, research the concept or issue being explained deeply. Topics like social status, clothing, or gender may be unknown to the reader, and if they

are not explained correctly, the point of the study can be missed. Try to give clear definitions for this topic. Additionally, acknowledge the book's emotional tone, as many of the most relevant issues are expressed through feeling, and not all of them are explicit in the book but implied. This will help the reader feel kin to the protagonist, the only vessel to understand the story. Another approach in which the book can be analyzed may be historical, for it is rich in subtle clues about the historical political state of the world.

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