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LOVE FROM A FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW IN THE NOVEL LIKE WATER FOR  
CHOCOLATE

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## **Acknowledgment**

I recognized all the learnings that I got in courses such as Oral Expression, Composition, literature, Reading and Conversation, and Grammar Three; because thanks to this knowledge I can write my thesis, how to do a quotation, how to create a reference page, how can I analyze a topic. On the other side, I recognize the work of the thesis corrector, who checked and corrected some mistakes in grammar in the thesis, and my thesis tutor who during the elaboration of my investigation gave me information about how I could work with different chapters, also he gave me advice about how I could do better every detail of the thesis that needed to be changed and helped me in how I could do my investigation. I also recognize God to make it possible choose my thesis tutor, grammar corrector, and reader; also, for allowing me to work with great perseverance on this thesis until the end.

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## Abstract

In 1989 Laura Esquivel wrote a novel called **Like Water for Chocolate**, which also accounts with a film. It is a story of love between Pedro and Tita which begins with a love confession by Pedro; at the beginning, Tita doubts herself, because she is subjected to the command of her mother, which is about take care of her until she dies, and do not build a love link with a man. She is aware that if she transgresses that command, she will have a great punishment imposed by her mother. On the other side, the mother of Tita, Mamá Helena, imposes that command that she calls “tradition” to have the power to control Tita’s life; this means that Mamá Helena makes choices for her, and not Tita. Additionally, Mamá Helena is the person who says what Tita must do because her word is law, but if somebody tries to face her, Mamá Helena would do all possible to create psychological damage to hurt that person who confronts her, no matter if it is somebody of her family like a daughter, sister, parents, or grandparents. Thus, what matters for Mamá Helena is the tradition, and not the love between family members, or better the empathy and comprehension. Considering the tradition, that Tita is subjected to, is one of the main conflicts that she must face. If she wants to enjoy love with Pedro, which would not be easy, in that case, she must face her mother, and transgress the tradition that Mamá Helena imposed on Tita; so, she would not stop struggling for that right that Mamá Helena took from her until to achieves her goal, and it is the right of making choices without a third party. This investigation analyzes the parental conflict from the beginning up to its end.

## Resumen en Español

En 1989 Laura Esquivel escribió una novela llamada **Como Agua para Chocolate**, el cual cuenta con una adaptación cinematográfica. Cuenta la historia de amor entre Pedro y Tita el cual comienza con una confesión de amor por Pedro; al comienzo, Tita duda de si misma porque ella está sujeta a las ordenes de su madre, el cual es cuidar de ella hasta el día que ella muera, y no entablar un vinculo de amor con un hombre. Ella es consciente de que si ella transgrede esa orden, ella tendrá un gran castigo impuesto por su madre. Por otro lado, Mamá Helena, madre de Tita; impone una orden al que ella llama “tradición” para tener el poder de controlar la vida de Tita; esto significa que mamá Helena toma decisiones por ella, y no Tita. Adicionalmente, Mamá Helena es la persona quien le dice a Tita que tiene que hacer ya que su palabra es ley, pero si alguien intenta encararla, mamá Helena hará todo lo posible para generar un daño psicológico para lastimar a la(s) personas quienes se oponen ante ella, no importa quien sea si es alguien de su familia ya sea su hija, hermana, padres, y abuelos. Entonces, lo que más importa en mamá Helena es la tradición, y no el amor entre miembros de la familia, o aun la empatía y la comprensión. Considerando la tradición, a la que Tita está sujeta, es uno de los principales conflictos que ella tiene que afrontar. Si ella quiere gozar del amor con Pedro, el cual no va a ser fácil, en ese caso ella tiene que afrontar a su madre, y transgredir la tradición que Mamá Helena impuso en Tita; entonces ella no se detendrá en luchar por ese derecho que mamá Helena le quitó a ella hasta lograr su meta, y es el derecho de tomar decisiones sin ninguna tercera parte. Esta investigación analiza el conflicto parental desde el comienzo hasta el final.

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## Chapter I

### Introductory Framework

From the beginning of times, men have established their power in society. They have considered themselves as the representatives of God on Earth, as the ones who possess unlimited social, political, intellectual and physical powers. Starting with books like the Bible have always established that men are the creatures created by God and chosen to rule the world, women come from men and they have to obey, they cannot talk, they are not pure, and they are limited to being mothers and wives who serve their husbands. Men have become the pater families or the center of the family. They have established themselves as the center of the world and as the rulers in society creating an ideology that gives them total power over politics, society and even sex. From the beginning of History, women have not been allowed to be part of this society. They have no right to decide, to read and even less to write. Those who oppose and decide to hold any form of knowledge are considered witches, prostitutes or bad mothers and expelled from society or even killed. However, even during Ancient Times, some women have fought against these ideas and they have become writes opposing and showing that all these patriarchal ideas are not realistic. In Latin American Literature, we can also see many examples of this patriarchal power not only in the plot of novels but also in the acceptance of women writers. Little by Little, the triumph of women has conquered all kinds of fields and women have not only obtained the right to vote, but the right to go to school, to high school, and to the university and become competent professionals. The novel *Like Water for Chocolate* portrays the role of women in the Mexican Patriarchal Society of the Nineteenth Century and it is also an example of how women writers are raising their voices in the societal menagerie of literature. This is a novel

that belongs to the category of feminist literature. This literary work was published in 1989 and written by the Mexican writer Laura Esquivel. This novel tells the story of a young woman called Tita, who was born and raised in a kitchen. Her family includes their two sisters, Rosaura and Gertrudis, and her mother better known as Mamá Elena. Tita falls in love with Pedro, and due to that, Tita faces different challenges in the social, emotional, and family spheres.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

How does love become the main theme that leads Tita to become a feminist character, fighting for her fulfillment in the patriarchal society, presented in the novel **Like Water for Chocolate**?

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

To Analyze how love is the moving force that leads all characters to look forward to obtaining their most desired goals in life in the novel.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

To Analyze love as a main theme from a feminist point of view.

To Analyze how the patriarchal principles of Mamá Elena prevent Tita from enjoying the love she feels for Pedro.

To Examine the feminist principles that Tita uses to face all the characters that prevent her from being with Pedro.

### 1.3 Justification of the Study

From the beginnings of History, women have suffered many injustices in a society that has given more importance to men than women. As a result, patriarchy has emerged. This is an ideology that believes that men are more skillful, stronger, and more intelligent than women. Therefore, they are the ones who write books, hold political positions, have been chosen by God to rule the world, have the power to cure and make decisions, and have the right to invent new devices and discover new medicines. Hence, they deserve more rights than women. The patriarchal society implies that women must stay home cooking and taking care of the children while men can give opinions and have rights. On the other hand, women must be mothers and wives. This has been set as a religious principle in a misogynistic society. For example, women are weak and not intelligent. If they want to learn and give their opinions, they are considered rebellious and not feminine. Moreover, women who cure are witches. In addition, women who love more than one man are prostitutes. If women want to hold political positions, they are crazy or dangerous for society. Everything related to men is positive, but everything related to women is considered negative. This perspective has brought many social issues such as inequality, psychological abuse, domestic violence, and the suppression of women who strive to defy this ideology. It also encompasses issues such as lack of voting rights and inadequate legal protections for women. Taking into consideration everything related to patriarchy, literature, and arts have arisen as a breaking point for masculine power. There are different feminist characters; for example, Lisistrata and Penelope. They are both women who seek a strategy to break all masculine control. Lisistrata complains how men prefer to go to war than spend time with their wives, leaving them alone and opposing having sex with them; from the other side, Penelope must use the excuse of weaving a shroud for her father-in-law, before her father-in-law chooses a

man that probably she would not love him as she used to do it with her deceased husband, thus they used feminine characteristics as a resource to face the masculine power.

In the novel **Like Water for Chocolate**, the main character Tita suffers several injustices throughout the plot. For example, Tita's mother prevents her from marrying Pedro, the man she loves. The reason is that the family has a tradition, in which the youngest daughter must take care of her parents, and she cannot get married or have a courtship with the man that she feels love for; thus, Mamá Elena offers Rosaura to get married to Pedro because Mamá Elena says that Tita will not marry him. After all, she is the youngest girl, and her responsibility is with her mother; that means, she must take care of her until she dies. Therefore, Tita must face that tradition, rebelling against herself to enjoy that desired courtship because Tita would like to enjoy love with the person that she only loves, deciding on her own and not on her mother's behalf, and live without somebody taking the control of her as Mamá Elena does it. In summary, this investigation aims to show how the novel challenges the social rules imposed by men concerning women's behavior and the expectations that men have about them. Tita is presented as a different woman. She opposes religion, her mother's power, social expectations, and all that prevents her from being happy and holding the love she wants. This investigation will show how this Latin-American novel has contributed to the fight held by the feminist movements to set women free from all the ties imposed by men. The researcher will use the feminist approach to literary analysis to prove how Tita is an example of a feminist character who fights to be seen not as a sexual object, not as a weak being, but as an individual with the same right to be happy as all other men and women.

Considering that the main theme of the novel is love, the plot of the novel is shown differently from how other novels traditionally show it; in Like Water for Chocolate , in the

courtship of Tita and Pedro, there are characters who prevent them from enjoying that love experience; one of them is Mamá Elena, this is because of a tradition that implies that the youngest woman must care of their parents, and due to that tradition, she cannot marry with a person who feels love. She cannot even have a dating relationship. That is evident in the novel written by Laura Esquivel (1989)

You know very well that the youngest of women, it is up to you to take care of me until the day I die. Having said this, Mama Elena slowly stood up, put away her glasses inside her apron, and repeated an order: -For today, we are done with this!

Tita knew that the rules of communication in the house did not include dialogue, but even so, for the first time in her life, she tried to protest her mother's command.

-But I think that...

-You don't say anything and that's it!

Never, for generations, no one in my family has ever protested this custom, and it won't be one of my daughters who does.

In the previous fragment, it can be seen how Mamá Elena reminds her daughter about the tradition, which is the main factor that forbids Tita from enjoying love with Pedro. Additionally, Tita tries to talk to her mother calmly, but Mama Elena silences her. Here it is where Tita sees that it is not possible to reach an agreement peacefully. If Tita desires to be with Pedro, she must face her mother by adopting feminist characteristics. The feminist part of the plot is where Tita finds the strength to rebel against that tradition, understanding that it is not someone else's

decision about who to start a courtship with, but an independent decision. Furthermore, regardless of whether the character is a man or a woman, no one has the right to be treated in the same way that Mamá Elena has treated her daughter. Briefly, this investigation benefits readers by helping them understand that they do not depend on their parents or anyone else to engage in courtship and get married. This decision corresponds to each person independently.

To conduct this research, information about the plot of **Like Water for Chocolate** and its characters will be analyzed. Once this information is obtained, it is time to read the novel and look for summaries of the book to identify the feminist features that love has in this novel, how love influences the conflicts of the characters, and how it motivates Tita to rebel against family tradition to be with the person she loves most. Afterward, an analysis will be done to show how love motivates all characters to achieve their most desired goals.

## 1.4 Antecedents

The novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, written by Laura Esquivel in 1989, deals with several themes. Those themes are the reasons why some investigations of literary analysis focus on specific subjects such as love, food, family connections, marriage, and more. For example, Nicolas Balutet's investigation analyzes an interview with Laura Esquivel, in which the main topic is the perception of the kitchen as a repressive place in the 70s, according to radical feminism. Balutet (n.d.) says the following "Since the 1970s, cooking has often been associated with the enslavement of women." Taking into consideration the historical change in feminism, it can be said that the kitchen became a prison for women, and remains a repressive prison today. However, Laura Esquivel denies this statement, mentioning that the kitchen is a place that functions as a communication mechanism, in which Tita can express her own opinions and thoughts through food. It is a place of learning, whether creating sauces or recipes for various types of food, and a place of culinary art.

Another example is the investigation of Patricia Ward. She mentions the difference between women's literature and feminist literature. In that research people can see a great difference between feminist literature and women's literature; feminist literature deals with ideals and principles that imply the patriarchy. This is an oppressive system promoted by men whose objective is to silence women, putting women at the service of men just for being women; in the case of disobedience, that woman is considered malfunctioning in every sense; absence of the freedom to decide how to live life, whether freely choosing hobbies, a romantic partner and deciding whether to marry or not. Therefore, feminist literature shows what social problems women must face; for example, everything that implies the patriarchy. On the other side, women's literature does not mention any social problem that women must

face; instead, many stories show how feminine nature is, how the life of a woman free of all types of pressures is, and the freedom to decide without another person deciding for her prevails in this type of literature.

Consequently, feminist literature shows how women are facing all that patriarchy entails, but the women do not mention anything about the patriarchy. On the other hand, it mentions how the patriarchy uses its power to deprive women of the chance to make decisions for themselves. This can be seen in the novel (1990). Patricia Ward (p. 78) states that “the mother takes on her role and takes charge of repressing the will of her three daughters: Gertrudis, Rosaura, and Tita, by deciding on their lives and how they should lead them.” In the previous information, it can be seen how Mamá Elena takes control of the lives of their daughters, and as a consequence, Tita and Gertrudis cannot decide by themselves, but Mama Elena makes choices for her.

On the other side, there is the investigation of Abdel Fattah Radwan (1990) about this issue. Her investigation is about the women translator can recreate the feminist voice than the men translator. Therefore she mentions that women translators have everything necessary to transfer the feminist voice and comprehend it; also in the study, it is mentioned that women have enough knowledge of the feminism as to translate a novel that belongs to the feminist literature; for example, the novel written by Laura Esquivel **Like Water for Chocolate**. In this research, Abdel Fattah Radwan mentions that *Like Water for Chocolate* complies with all that is implied in the feminist literature.

Consequently, since the novel shows the pressure that society exerts on women, it can be said that this novel is feminist. To provide evidence that women understand more the feminist voice than men, Abdel mentions two translations of this novel: one by Nadia Gamal

Eddin Mohammad and the other by Saleh Almani. In the analysis, Abdel Fattah Radwan, S.M (2020) mentions that “By comparing the results obtained, we concluded that the female translator was able to convey the female voice better than the male translator, especially in terms of the use of paratextual elements” For this author, this is the evidence that she has to prove that women translators have enough knowledge to pass the feminist voice to another language better than men because women understand all the ideals of feminism and societal pressures that women must face simply for being women.

On the other hand, there is the study of Bernardo Bolaños and Sandra Cartín in which there is a part that analyzes the novel in the social part which talks about a social order, and that social order is imposed by Mamá Elena which in the research it mentions that Mamá Elena represents the order, but not an order as in our society; in this case, it is an order according to the vision of Mamá Elena which implies that every decision that she takes for their three daughters, their three daughters are obligated to follow them, so in terms of social order who take this role is the character Mamá Elena, however, on the deep of that order there is disconformity from Tita and Gertrudis, so they take the action of taking the power to reveal themselves to that authority, in that situation Bolaños and Cartín (2013) state that “Tita and Gertrudis transgress the order, the authority, the values of their social class and challenge the established”. In summary, it can be confirmed that Tita and Gertrudis have enough power to destroy that order which represses them to be free and not accounting with somebody who makes their minds, and not having someone to make decisions for them.

Sometimes there are consequences when fighting for freedom, and these two authors mention that in the case of Gertrudis, Mamá Elena eliminated all memories about her making know that Gertrudis is not anymore her daughter and she is dead for Mamá Elena only for the

fact of face that authority that oppresses Tita and Gertrudis, this can be evidenced in the fact of the novel where Gertrudis got out from the house with Juan, and the consequence of it is the rejection of their mother in all the sense, destroying every memory of her as photos, clothes, shoes, among others.

In the case of Tita, this price has been even more difficult for her because after Mamá Elena passed away, Tita would be tormented, harassed, and persecuted by the ghost of the mother; this means that the authority of Mamá Elena has not disappeared yet, the order that Mamá Elena imposed before that Tita would be that being her youngest daughter she has to take care of her till the day she dies. From that moment one, there starts a conflict between these two women. Mama Elena wants to impose her patriarchal ideas, and Tita wants to fight against them. Tita, this is an internal fight between the vision, values, principles and moral code of Tita against the ones of Mamá Elena; therefore, Tita was not only fighting against the ghost of her mother but also against what Mamá Elena believed morally, in which Tita must obey their will of taking care for her until she dies and not going out from the kitchen.

However, Tita never agrees with her Mamá Elena because she becomes the main obstacle between her and Pedro. She is to be blamed for Tita not getting married to Pedro, the man that she loves passionately and the one she desires. She is also the only one depriving her of the freedom to be with the man that she loves and have the opportunity on the hand of dating with him. In the beginning, Tita is afraid of the ghost of her mother, owing to Mamá Elena having the power to curse her daughter for not following her will and opt for their ideals, principles, values, lifestyle, and rules.

When Tita disobeys the will of their mother, Mamá Elena treats her daughter as a lustful woman, prompt to debaucheries; however, Tita does not live all the time with fear; there is a point in the plot when Tita takes the courage to chase away this ghost and end this cycle that tormented her even when she slept, as a consequence all the principles of Mamá Elena, died when that cycle finishes forever. Therefore, Tita took that power to make that order disappear; now the old order created by Mamá Elena disappears completely, and it is time to create a new one in which no one is oppressed or deprived of liberty like Tita used to be.

Another investigation of feminism is about Estefanía Sosa (2015) in her thesis, which analyzes two novels in those novels there is *Like Water for Chocolate* and the other is *The House of Spirits* something that this research wants to show is how women are opposed to a patriarchal environment. The research mentions that the facts of *Like Water for Chocolate* and *The House of Spirits* happened in a revolutionary time. A revolutionary time is a time when a certain part of the population of a specific country has a disconformity in the political area and where disconformity is not solved across a dialogue between the government and their citizens, it is time to take the weapons to arrive until the politics that are responsible for that revolution.

In the novel written by Laura Esquivel, the conflict is pointed out Tita; the situation is that Tita would like to get married to Pedro, the man she loves, but the will of the mother of Tita does not allow her because Mamá Elena's order. On the other hand, she must care of her mom until she dies. However, this is not over yet, because there is a point when Mamá Elena touches the limits of Tita, and she takes advantage of revealing herself against the vision of

their mother, who has oppressed her, and forbidden her to get married to Pedro, the man that Tita loves. According to Estefania Sosa (2015, p.16) “For example, Tita, the protagonist, confronts her oppressive mother on several occasions, even after she is dead, she appears to torment her” Therefore, in that information can be perceived that at the end of the day, she was able to confront her mother, and Tita says that she cannot stand her anymore, implying that she will not follow anymore her will because it is very oppressive for Tita.

Tita not only confronts her mother, but also Pedro, telling him that the next time he falls in love and gets married to a woman, he will not be so cowardly as he was at the moment that he got married to Rosaura, the elder sister of Tita, and then she tells him that let her live her life getting married to John; taking in consideration that John the words of John are not empty, instead Pedro he is a man who does not have enough guts to deny Mamá Elena, he will get married to Tita even though that your choice is no. It can be summarized that after that Tita took the chance to reveal to their mother, that she was no longer the woman who was silenced very easily by his mother or whoever, but a woman who took power to confront somebody who had the intentions of oppress her or damage her in any way.

There is an investigation of the novel that talks about the roles in the society of the centuries XIX and XX on the middle class and high class, specifically in women and men in a patriarchal point of view and based on ideologies of that era. The investigation mentions how Mamá Elena dominantly educates her daughters, thus taking control of her daughters and the one who is most affected is Tita, who commissioned her to take care of Mama Elena until the day she died. According to Jimenez (2019, P1) “Throughout history, we see the

break with these moral and social principles by the sisters.” This means that the plot of *Like Water for Chocolate* has characters who break those roles that some characters expect to accomplish. If the character does not assume that role, it is rejected in many senses by society.

The investigation mentions a patriarchal strategy which is about women staying in the kitchen and dedicating themselves to cooking exclusively; like this, women cannot get any strength to opt for revolutionary behaviors, and this is an allusion that shows a woman trapped in the kitchen without any kind of knowledge about what is happening outside. The investigation explains that there is a series of rules called *Carreño Manual*, which is an ideologem that explains what behaviors of a true woman are, Tita breaks those rules throughout the protest, revealing against the tradition and the command that Mamá Elena imposes on her.

Another Thesis is the one of Dayana Guzman,( 2021) in which in that investigation she analyzes how food functions in the novel. Food plays an important role in the plot of *Like Water for Chocolate*, his mission is as a communication method. Guzman (2021, P27) mentions “Food plays a mediating role to express his affections and establish emotional ties with his object of desire, Pedro, a family friend.” This says that the purpose of the food is to create a bond through food with Pedro because the food works to talk with Pedro creating that bond that Tita desires so much.

## 1.5 Scope

In this research is expected to achieve the following objectives taking into account the novel that will be analyzed; one of them is to examine, in the process of reading about the book, how love is that important pillar that makes every event of the plot connect from beginning to end in each chapter. As it knows love is the main theme that makes readers understand better what the plot of the novel, know more about the features of the characters, the reason why some characters change, and the reason for some events that may have relevance in the next chapters. Love, in the novel, makes the characters have conflicts, and those conflicts will help so much to understand more why the novel is considered feminist, and not only the novel but also what some characters have to be considered as transgressors in a patriarchal system imposed by a character who represents a patriarchal authority; and do all possible to a transgressor become weak to do not have any strength to struggle for that rights that transgressor feels that do not have yet.

Another goal to achieve in this investigation is how love is manifested in the plot but from a feminist point of view. One of the main conflicts of the protagonist is that she desires so much to enjoy love with the man that she loves, but some characters do not allow that could be possible having as a strategy a tradition that gives Mamá Helena all the control in the life of Tita; that means that with that tradition Mamá Helena has the authority of do whatever that she wants in Tita; for example, do not marry, do not have boyfriend, do not have a date with a man, do not study, or something that Tita wants to do; but at the same time Mamá Helena refuses to her. For feminism, this is unacceptable because for feminists, women, as men do, can choose for themselves with whom to marry, the person who will be their couple, what to do in the future, and with whom has a date; and nothing or nobody has the right to refuses that choice that women

took by their own will. From a feminist point of view, women have the right to make choices by themselves and nobody must make choices for them.

Within the goals expected to be achieved, there is also what happens when characters get their most desired wishes. As it already knows the main goal of the protagonist is to enjoy love with the person that she loves, but there are some obstacles that she must face, so this investigation is trying to find out what happens after Tita reaches her goal of enjoying love with Pedro, and the question is do Tita get marry with Pedro and have a son or daughter with him? Or even, after the passing of years Tita and Pedro separated, and decided to resume their romantic relationships with other characters? Therefore, with the help of the necessary instruments of analysis, those questions will be answered in the end.

Another of the goals to be highlighted in the research is how the transgression functions as an instrument to struggle against patriarchal authority. As mentioned before there is a presence of a patriarchal authority, which implies an authority that sees women as the most vulnerable human beings in society; and that authority takes advantage of it to control women according to their benefit because Patriarchy believes that his voice is the law and everything that patriarchy put as a command women must accomplish or else, if women do not follow the commands of patriarchy, women will be punished with physical punishment as a beating or a psychological punishment that implies tell horrible things yelling her. However, a resource that my function to fight against patriarchy is transgression, which means breaking all those rules that only promote many injustices such as inequality. In the novel, there are transgressors characters that reject all commands that a patriarchal authority imposes, this is to show patriarchy the strength of women not with beatings, vandalism, or yelling; but also, by expressing their opinion

since their principles. In this investigation will be analyzed how transgression puts an end to the injustice of patriarchy.

## Chapter II

### Theoretical Framework

In the following chapter, the researcher explains the concepts, definitions, theories, and approaches that support the investigation. Mainly, the elements related to the feminist approach that will be the basis of the analysis of the novel **Like Water for Chocolate**. The researcher will also explain the different types of approaches, but the emphasis will be given to the Feminist approach classification and characteristics. After this section, the next one will be about information of different details to take into consideration in literary analysis, for example, themes, symbols, and motifs. Afterward, there will be information about the writer of the novel *Like Water for Chocolate*; to finish the chapter there will be a summary of the plot of the novel.

In this chapter, it will find a short introduction to the definition of literature. This definition will be seen from different perspectives. Besides, the student will examine the three main purposes of literature and how they have influenced on the production and understanding of a literary work. Those three purposes are to entertain, to enlighten, and to encourage. Later on, the origin of literature is also studied from a historical point of view, emphasizing the Greeks as the ones who contributed the most to the creation of literature and in the way how literature is studied. To conclude, in this section of the research will be introduced to what literary criticism is, and how it works in the real world. Some literary approaches are mentioned, and they are given as examples. However, none is fully developed, since the main purpose is to define what is literary criticism. The main objective

of this chapter is to introduce literature from different perspectives, which will be also the whole purpose of the book.

Let us start with the meaning of the word literature. For many, literature refers to the group of books used in the study of a subject matter. Therefore, it is easy to hear professionals talking about the literature used in a specific course. For example, they talk about literature used in Biology, Architecture, and Medicine. However, literature can be defined as the study of letters. In this case, everything that is written would be the focus of literature. This includes books and even letters written by children. Some letters are considered literature; for example, the letters written by Benjamin Franklin, or by Abraham Lincoln. But literature needs more than contain letters and be written to be considered literature.

The utmost component of literature is beauty. In other words, a letter, a story, or a book must be beautifully written to be considered literature. This is the reason why the **Constitution of The United States** is considered an example of American Literature, even though it is a political text. Besides beauty, literature is a social text. What is a social text? Many people think that a text is a book. In this case, it would be a great number of pages bound together by two hard covers; however, the word “text” goes beyond that. A text is a manner of manifestation, in culture or society, that shows the feelings, desires, attitudes, and history of a group of people, a town, or a whole country. Therefore, a text can be a story, produced orally or in written form, it can be a play, a song, a photograph, or a painting. Nowadays, literature studies all these forms of cultural texts as part of its content.

So far, it has been established that literature should be written beautifully and be part of a cultural text. However, there are more elements to be found in literature. Fiction is one of the most important elements of literature. Fiction refers to the fact that something is possible and coherent with our reality, but it is not real, or it has never happened at all. It is practically used to make the reader realize about a situation confronted by his society so he may be critical about it or react against it. There are some cases in which a story may contain many historical facts. The creation of the Historical Novel in Latin American Literature is a good example. Another example is a book named **El General En Su Laberinto** written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, which contains many historical facts; however, it continues to be fiction because the writer modified certain issues to make them fit with his aesthetic views. Writers can use reality, but it will never be our reality. Since the moment it is happening in a book, it becomes fiction.

Nevertheless, we must consider that the word fiction has to be seen as possible and coherent to be accepted by the reader. There seems to be a kind of social contract between the reader and the book. The reader should accept the book if he can consider it as possible. Thus, the book must use a language the reader understands, a background explained by the narrator, and situations that are understandable and possible.

This is why Science Fiction may be accepted as part of literature; in other words, it is just because it is coherent with our social and logical expectations.

It has been a topic of discussion since The Ancient Times. Longinus, for example, determined that literature must entertain people. People read because they want to have fun. In this case, literature would not be dangerous, but it would distract us from the real world. Through literature, we can learn about the past and the present, we can know different cultures and the history of our own culture. Literature is knowledge; it is enlightenment. However, if

literature only entertains and gives culture, why it is that tyrants like Hitler disliked literature so much, and made their soldiers burn thousands of books. The reason is that literature is also dangerous for those who promote injustice and pain to others. Literature also makes us react. Literature encourages to change to world and not be passive or indifferent before human injustice.

To illustrate, famous books like **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**, **Uncle Tom's Cabin**, or **Los Cuentos de mi Tia Panchita**, to mention only some. They were not written only to entertain and teach people about certain situations. They made people realize the injustices of human exploitation through slavery. For example, the suffering of Uncle Tom is the suffering of all the black people. One of the most important parts of Huckleberry Finn is when Huck expresses to Jim that slavery must not be bad because it is common and seen as good by everybody. Then, Jim answers him that there are things in life that may be bad even though they are practiced and seen as good by the majority. It is in this moment when Huck realizes that nobody has the right to determine and own the life of another human being. These novels were in fact part of the Transcendental Movement that sought to obtain liberty for those who were oppressed by slavery. At this point, we realize that literature has been the source of many other movements that seek liberty by criticizing those who oppose it. Literature makes us react. It encourages achieve new goals in life. Therefore, the purpose of literature is contained in the following three words: entertain, enlighten, and encourage.

What is Literary Criticism? Different from what many people may think, a critic is not a person who destroys or finds the defects of a play, short story, or novel. A Literary Critic is a specialist who uses different strategies or approaches to help others understand the possible meaning of a work of literature. Each work of literature may be seen from different perspectives, and there is one meaning. Literature is polysemantic, and it has as many meanings as readers give those meanings. Therefore, the literary critic does not impose one meaning on a literary masterpiece. The critic's role is to explain why that meaning is obtained if the reader uses one specific approach, or if the reader considers other elements in a story. Good literary criticism destroys the tyranny of the writer to give meaning to his work. The literary critic makes the reader be also a writer while he is reading. In this case, reading is production, and each reader creates his meaning to the text. This is what Julia Kristeva called the death of the writer. In the past, professors and even specialists would interview the writers to ask them about the meaning of their works. What the writers said was considered in those days the ultimate truth about the analysis of a text. As literary analysis grew with specialists like Edmund Cross, Claude Duchet, and Roland Barthes, and thanks to literary movements like Semiotics, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, and the Socio Critique approach, the writer was considered as one more reader, and his opinions were seen as respectable, but not as the ultimate truth. These specialists and these movements open new doors to see a story from many perspectives. The reader becomes a creator, and it is the reader the one who decides from which perspective he will analyze a literary work. In this way, the reader may decide to take into account the theories of feminism and analyze a story taking into account the roles of gender. Another reader may consider using the same story to analyze it from a deconstructionist point of view, so he may use the theories of Roland Barthes. Another reader may use the theories of Sigmund Freud and Lacan to analyze the

story from a psychoanalytical point of view. Another can consider the use of specific words, phrases, and even punctuation to analyze the story from a semantic point of view. Literary Criticism opens our doors not to limit ourselves to telling a story, but to create a complete analysis that will be well supported by the theories of competent researchers. Good literary criticism always starts with the taxonomy of literature. The reader has to determine what kind of literary work he is reading. Is it a poem? What kind of poem? Is it a short story or a novel? Is it a Play? Once the reader has determined the type of work, he can decide which literary approach he wants to use to analyze the literary work. At all moments, it is essential to read the whole text at least twice and to be sure you understand all the vocabulary. Finally, the literary critic chooses the approach he wants to use. Equally, he must be sure he understands and handles correctly all the theories of the approach. Once the poet Thomas Stern Eliot said that the best critic is the one who also writes and has fame for writing. The best critic of a novelist would be another novelist. The best critic of a poem would be a poet. And the best critic of a play would be a playwright. In this book, we are going to change this perspective. In this case, the reader is also a writer, so all readers can also criticize a book as long as they use their social, and cultural background and support themselves with the specific theories of a literary approach.

## **2.1 Literary Theories and Approaches**

Literature can be defined as any written production that deals with problems, conflicts, and situations of humanity. This social text focuses on themes like feminism, friendship, hate, marriage, love, corruption, technology, mental disorders, fear, arrogance, and others. All these themes are shown in a plot with a beginning, a complication, a climax, and an ending, which could be closed or opened.

Equally, it is essential to understand that literature is divided into different genres. They are short stories, novels, dramas, poetry, and films. The researcher considers it necessary to define each to have a clearer perspective of the words used in the analysis of the novel **Like Water for Chocolate**.

Novel: This is a literary genre in which the plot is more extensive; in some cases, this can be divided by chapters that show different events that happen across the plot. According to Orozco (*Cómo leer novelas en la adolescencia*, 2020, p. 41) “In the novel, it tells specific events and is addressed to particular readers.” The previous information means that the novel tells the facts of the plot more specifically; therefore, readers can detect the day, place, and time in which facts are happening in novels.

On the other hand, a novel account with a high number of characters, and there are moments when these characters have a dialogue during the plot. As mentioned by Saavedra (2019) “They manage to maintain the tension of each story and at the same time make the characters talk a lot and with great irony” (p. 7). Therefore, considering what the information indicates, in some moments novels try to keep the reader's attention through moments of tension, and with the characters. In some of their dialogues, there is a presence of irony. In the novel there are many types of plots and subplots related to history, science fiction, chivalry, or fantasy.

Science Fiction novels: Science fiction novels are characterized by showing readers a different world with different rules of physics that can be based on reality; however, reality is created by the author depending on what he would like to show. A famous example of these types of novels is *Dune* written by Frank Herbert in 1965. As says Montagud (2020)

They usually talk about space travel, aliens, human evolution, the end of the world, and extinction, and they also make use of concepts from the physical sciences, artificial life, and robotic intelligence. It is for all this that its protagonists can be human beings, robots, aliens, or crypto animals. (p. 27)

In the previous statement, it can be summarized that in science fiction novels there is the presence of futuristic technology, living beings of other dimensions or planets, and animals with characteristics very different from those of nature. Science fiction novels also catch the attention of many readers.

Short novel: The short novel is the type of novel that only shows one conflict; generally, novels show many conflicts, but in the case of the short one, this only develops one conflict. The fact that these novels are called short novels does not mean that the plot is developed only in one page. Short novels, like other novels, are extensive in number of pages and characters. Despite that, they develop just one conflict. According to Canaza (2021), “The short novel has four characteristics, which are: It develops the personality of the characters; it develops the main conflict; it has only one conflict; it does not portray a life” (p. 4). Analyzing the previous information, it can be perceived that short novels have similar characteristics as novels in general, but they develop one conflict.

Chivalry novel: The chivalry novel is a novel that deals with the life and adventures of a king, queen, princess, prince, knight, or a strong warrior. The plot of this type of novel is that at the beginning, the novel introduces to the reader the protagonist, in this case, the knight. The knight is characterized for being brave, strong, courageous, intelligent, and morally exemplary. Most of the time, the knight has a partner who helps him during the trip, and the knight accounts with a steed to transport himself to his destination to accomplish his assigned mission, which rescue the princess. According to Tabuenca (2020), “These writings always have a tone of heroism and idealization by showing us a hero who faces a great amount of adversity without losing honor or faith” (par. 13). This means that the knight throughout the novel is idolized. A famous novel that belongs to this category is Don Quixote written by Miguel de Cervantes.

Fantastic Novel: Fantastic novels are those novels in which there is the presence of fantastic beings such as wizards, dragons, goblins, hobbits, monsters, elves, knights, monsters, giants, dragons, dark beings, magic swords, magic bows, and spells in the plot. According to Herrera (2018), “We find stories, characters, and worlds that do not exist in reality but are used and created by the writer to tell these stories.” (par. 8). This means that the stories that these novels show are very far from reality, however, there is another reality that humans know. Some of the most famous fantastic novels are The Lord of the Rings, the Hobbit, and Harry Potter, which have been adapted to film production.

Tale: The short story is too different compared to the novel. In novels, the plot has a certain attachment to reality, but the short story does not have any attachment to reality; however, in the tale, there is a high presence of fantastic creatures, for example, goblins, dragons, monsters, aliens, talking animals, wizards, witches, magical fairies, or any object that

has magic. Tales do not have only fantastic creatures, but also mythological beings such as the minotaur, harpies, gorgon snake, Nemea Lion, titans, chimera, and other creatures of Greek mythology; and different mythologies, but the most famous are Greek, Egyptian, and Nordic mythology.

The plot is developed in a short number of pages, and the number of characters is short, too. According to Lopez (2020), “A Tale is a short story created by one or more authors, based on real or fictional events, whose plot is starred by a small group of characters and with a relatively simple plot” (p. 7). The previous information mentions that it could be understood that a tale is a story that is developed with a short number of characters and pages.

Short stories: short narrations were known as tales during the Anglo-Saxon period, and the Medieval Times, even Chaucer calls his collection of narration the Canterbury Tales, and during the Renaissance, The Age of Reason, and the Romantic Period. It is in the Nineteenth Century, mainly with writers like Edgar Allan Poe, that tales started dealing more with reality and they are known as short stories. Edgar Allan Poe even wrote an essay explaining the characteristics of a short story as having just one plot, few characters, one setting, and one effect. There are different types of short stories.

Horror Short Stories: Horror short stories are characterized to cause fear to the readers. Across the plot, the narrator introduces readers to the environment of fear. The plot is developed based on feelings like despair, anxiety, and stress expressed by the characters because something is tormenting them. According to Muriel (2023) “To do this, the authors use many different resources, such as monsters, ghosts, psychopaths, mad scientists, oppressive atmospheres, etc.”

(par. 13). This information means that to cause fear the author must consider those important details to a horror tale be a horror tale. The horror tale inspires fear in all those who read it.

**Fantastic Short Story:** In a fantastic short story, even though there is the presence of a supernatural being, the objective is not to cause fear to readers as in the horror one. In the case of fantastic tales, the presence of supernatural elements plays a main, secondary character, antagonist, or protagonist character in the story. According to Risso (2022) “One of the characteristics of fantastic stories is that they are aimed at a children's or youth audience. This allows authors to write illustrated story styles and expand their career.” (p. 42). This means that these tales can catch the attention of kids and teenagers, and it is a great chance of growth for some authors who are interested in writing a tale like this. A famous fantastic tale can be Peter Pan, and Princess and Toad.

**Detective Short Story:** These short stories start to present a criminal case, and the corresponding detective, agent police, or police officer has solved the case. At certain points in the plot, these short stories have the essence of mystery and horror. Depending on the crime, this short story may cause some concern to readers. According to Verboonen (2018), “A detective puts together the clues to find the culprit and the way he carries out the crime” (par. 6). The previous statement mentions a characteristic that can be found in all detective's short stories that are the clues as the main resource to take the reader until the climax and ending. Some of the famous detective short stories are those in which the main character is Sherlock Holmes.

Realistic Short stories: This is a story that puts apart everything related to magic beings as in a fantastic story. This type of story has a lot of attachment to real life and without the presence of a magical world and beings, whether mythological or fantasy, but in these stories the characters are real people, and within its plot there is symbolism. It tries to give the reader the feeling that he is living what is being told. It intends to translate a credible picture of everyday life; this representation aims to be objective to achieve its purpose of making a story faithful to reality. According to Ruiz (2018)

It tries to give the reader the feeling that he is living what is being told. Its intention is to translate a credible picture of everyday life, this representation aims to be objective to achieve its purpose of making a story faithful to reality. (Par. 6)

That means that realistic stories connect with their readers considering their attachment to reality; the stories deal with different themes of the daily living of people. That statement mentions something important and that is that if an author would like to do a realistic story, he must consider that this story has so much connection to the reality of humans, and not create another reality as in the fantastic story, or horror one. This story is ideal for those people who are bored of reading stories that are far away from the reality that humans deal with at the time.

Essay: The Essay is a literary genre that does not show a plot with characters and beginning, climax, and ending, but it is a literary genre that depending on the author talks about a topic resorting to criticism. Each essay consists of different main points, and it has an expository-argumentative tone. Instead of telling a story like a short story or a novel, this literary genre tells arguments; but those arguments are according to what the author thinks about the topic that is

developed. According to Vicente (n.d.) “The purpose is to establish your position on the matter, following your argumentative style” (para 1). Thus, that means that the goal of the essay is to show the position of the author about a specific topic. The Essay does not have a beginning, climax, or ending; however, the essay has an introduction, development, and a conclusion. The introduction is where the author talks about their topic in general, but at the end of the introduction, the author shows the main points to be developed. Next, the development section is where the author talks, explains, and provides details on the main points. At the end, there is a conclusion where the author summarizes the main points and finishes with a memorable phrase. There are different types of essays. These are the different types: argumentative essays, academic essays, scientific essays, and literary essays.

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**Argumentative Essay:** The argumentative essay is an essay that is written based on information that can be found in libraries, and information sources such as the internet, articles, newspapers, and magazines. For these essays, it is important that the author ensures that the information is true. As says Ruiz (2023):

Argumentative essays present a line of argument that supports or refutes a particular thesis. This type of essay is characterized by reducing the subjectivity of the text to a minimum and is based on data (such as theories or statistics) that corroborate your position. (para 5)

From the previous information, it can be summarized that an argumentative essay deals with controversial topics in which there are different positions on a specific topic for example the adoption of pets, legalization of drugs, abortion, political positions, and others. An important detail is that when an author wishes to write this type of essay, he must consider that he must look for sources of information that support his position to use it as evidence.

Literary Essay: When a person mentions literary essays, some people think that these essays analyze literary texts or do literary analysis, but this is not so. These essays are based on topics such as philosophy, politics, and history; an author can understand morality. According to Piliado (2020) “In the essay, the author expresses his impressions and reflections about life; It is and should be personal, subjective” (par. 22). Therefore, the previous statement means that all is related to life, philosophy, and history based on what the author understands following his life vision.

Scientific Essay: A scientific essay is an essay that exclusively focuses on topics about science. These essays do not use an article, book, or magazine of general information as the literary and argumentative essays do but the used information is about everything related to science in all areas of science that can exist. According to Vega (2021) “It is characterized by treating a scientific topic from a creative point of view” (slide 8). In that information, it can be

said that a scientific essay explains topics of science in a way that readers, which may do not have enough knowledge about everything related about science, can understand it better.

Poetry: Poetry is too different from novels, short stories, and essays. In this case, poetry is a literary gender that expresses emotions, situations, and social problems through verses. Verses consist of a group of words that relate to the feeling of what the poem is projecting. According to Medel (2018), "Poetry is the manifestation of beauty or aesthetic feeling through words, in verse or prose" (p. 8). In summary, poetry projects a feeling in an aesthetic way through verses that are written in prose. There are different types of poetry such as ancient poetry, dramatic poetry, epic poetry, and descriptive poetry.

Ancient Poetry: Ancient poetry means poems written during the Ancient Times, mainly written by the Greeks and Romans who used to praise their gods such as Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Ares, Athena, Helios, Apolo, Afrodite, Hephaestus, and Hermes. In some of these poems they describe what their gods are like and also what gods they were, whether Zeus who is the god of lightning and king of Olympus, or Poseidon god of water and king of Atlantis.

In some poems, Greeks used to write poems in honor of some heroes or demigods as King Leonidas, Perseus, Odysseus, Elysium, Achilles, and Hercules. In the case of heroes, the poems mention a historical fact about them, for example, King Leonidas and his army when he defended Thermopylae in the war against the Persians; Perseus who beheaded Medusa the queen of the gorgon snakes; and Hercules, known for accomplish his twelve tasks, including the most notable, killing the Nemean Lion. According to Contreras (2021) "Poetry was used to narrate historical or mythological events, and poets recited it orally at festivals and rituals." (par 21)

Considering the previous information, it could be said that in ancient poems there is a little bit of story of Greek myths. These poems are ideal for people who like Greek mythology.

**Dramatic poetry:** Dramatic poetry is connected with everything related to emotions. One of the most prominent literary figures used in this kind of poem is the hyperbole since these poems always tend to express some emotions exaggeratedly. After lyric poetry suffered a huge decline the dramatic poem appeared, and this type of poetry began to spread throughout all the territories of Europe. According to Alvarez (2022), “The forms of dramatic poetry are tragedy, comedy, and satirical drama. A characteristic of this type of poetry is that it can be expressed in the form of a recital or a song.” (par 8) That information means that the themes that touch this type of poetry are the same that some literary works, which belong to drama, touch and their way to express it across from song. These poems are for those who would like to read different expressions where there are a lot of hyperboles.

**Epic Poetry:** Epic Poetry is a long poem that explains what important warriors did. In other words, it describes their achievements. In spite of that, this sounds like poems that only Greeks can write. These poems were also written in different regions of Europe. According to Ruz (2023,) “Epic poetry describes deeds of famous people, which can be both true and legendary in nature.” (par 19) That means that the characters, which are mentioned in that epic poem, their deeds can be real or can be just legends. These poems are poems in honor of a hero or famous historical character.

**Descriptive Poetry:** This type of poetry describes everything that exists in any environment of human reality. It could be animals, feelings, technological devices, everything material that human beings desire, music, etc. According to Henao (2020) “uses various literary

figures and resorts to the creation of poetic images of objects, persons, animals, and phenomena.” (slide 12) This means that this type of poetry describes animals, people, or things, but the difference is that description is with literary devices. The poems that belong to this type of poetry describe everything using literary devices such as hyperbole, personification, antithesis, anaphora, alliteration, simile, metaphor, caesura, oxymoron, and others.

Over the years since literature appeared, different kinds of literature emerged over time; currently, many readers are interested in ancient literature rather than modern literature or vice versa. Up to this day in the history of literature, several known types of literature will be explained below.

**Children's Literature:** It is characterized to be a good didactical teaching resource to introduce future readers to what literature is. Maybe some children may get bored, but it depends a lot on how their family and the teacher can introduce that future reader to literature. Children's literature is conformed by tales, short stories, or poems that are adaptable to children. The stories that belong to this literature have as their objective to catch the attention of children. In some cases, they include a moral inside of the plot of literature to make kids interested in reading. According to Carrillo (2022), “It is about literature in primary school. It reaches children, at home and school” (p. 11). In this statement, it can be found that the presence of children's literature is frequent in primary schools, and the literature can reach children at home reading something or at school, but mostly in primary school.

**Youth Literature:** Youth Literature is another level, in the case of children's literature there would be fairy tales, fantastic tales, and mythological tales with themes that a child can understand, but youth literature is another concept because youth literature is literature for

teenagers who would like to read different books whether a book that deals different challenges in adolescence, for example, the novel of *The Diary of Greg*, which is about a boy that must face different challenges such as adapting to a new reality, changing of temperament, bullying, conflicts with his friend Rowley, etc.

However, these books do not deal only with those themes, but also themes like passionate love, futurist technology as in the case of *Divergent* or *Maze Runner*, and in some cases different mythologies as the Greek in the *Percy Jackson* saga. Cerrillo & Sanchez (2018) say “It is a literature with a certain literary independence, unlike children's literature, since in juvenile literature the adult mediator has neither the importance nor the influence that it does have in children's literature, even that adult may not intervene.” (p 224). This wants to say that youth literature is made for the reader who once used to be a kid and can read different books that touch different themes that children have not adapted to yet. Despite that the audience of this literature is adolescents, also some adults are interested in it.

**Medieval Literature:** Medieval literature Medieval literature is literature that was born in the Middle Ages specifically throughout the European continent. Some of the most famous books are *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, *The Song of Roldan* by Turoldo, and *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. In the epoch of medieval literature, many books narrate themes of religion, for example, Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*. Cacho (2022) mentions “Like all Medieval literature, Spanish literature offers many more enigmas than certainties.” (p. 7). That means that in all the countries of Europe in Medieval literature the Spanish one is the most cryptic. Even though this literature is ancient, there are readers who like this type of literature.

**Critical Literature:** Critical Literature is literature that is written from human rationing, this type of literature emerged after Homer wrote their two better-known books the Iliad and Odyssey. According to Maestro (2018), “This literature appears in political or state societies capable of rationalism, demystification, Science and Philosophy.” (p. 1245) The previous statement wants to say that this type of literature deals with different themes such as politics, science, and philosophy, On the other hand, in books that belong to this literature are philosophers writing their thoughts and visions. This is a literature for those readers who like philosophy.

**Sanskrit literature:** Sanskrit Literature is a very old literature. It is very ancient literature that has its origins in India and then started to expand to Asia and certain parts of Europe. The Sanskrit Literature is divided into periods, and those are Vedic, Samhita, Brahmana and Upanishads, Sutras, and Post-Vedic. According to Morera & Valverde (2022) “Religion, worship and wisdom form the essential theme of these very ancient writings in which a high poetic inspiration prevails and the evocation of a magical world populated by geniuses and demons that invisibly surround man.” (p. 13). That means that in this type of literature, Sanskrit Literature mentions the presence of a specific god and divine beings, which humans can see with their eyes, but they cannot feel the presence of those divine beings. This literature is where different sacred books of many religions originate.

Gothic Literature: This type of literature offers dark stories filled with ghosts, monsters like Frankenstein, weird creatures such as Dracula or the Mummy, and famous characters such as the Invisible Man. This literature also touches on different dark themes such as murder, fear, mental disorders, tormenting, and entities that come from the underworld. This literature is better known for stories created by different authors such as Edgar Allan Poe with *The Raven*, Bram Stoker with *Dracula*, Howard Phillips Lovecraft with *The Call of Cthulhu*, and Stephen King with *It* and *Christine*. Also, some of these stories have his filming adaptation. Some of them have remakes, but others do not. According to Calvo (2021) “Gothic, which was more of a national literature in countries like England, Scotland and Germany, and had abundant and celebrated development in Mediterranean countries in Europe” (p. 1). That means that this type of literature emerged in the mentioned countries and start to expand to the rest of Europe. This type of literature is for those readers who like to read dark narratives.

Epic Literature: Epic literature originates from the elder civilizations, this literature is about stories of different mythologies, whether Greek or another, and legendary heroes of real life or mythological heroes, and gods. This literature has a somewhat poetic expression since it describes the facts, heroes, and exploits as if it were poetry and that is how the books belonging to this literature tell different stories. Van Hohenhein (2021) mentioned “In these narratives, imaginative elements and real elements are mixed. For the most part, the author uses narration, although dialogue can also occur” (p. 1). That means that in these stories there is a little bit of realism, despite there being mythological creatures such as the minotaur, giants, gods, magic, spells, centaurs, satyrs, demigods, spiritual beings with a feline appearance in the case of the Egyptians, animals with a magic power as the Neman Lion that a weapon cannot injury it, and

beasts on the oceans. In this literature there is a little bit of story of different mythologies, the most highlighted is the Geek one.

Romantic Literature: Many people think that romantic literature is all the literary works that exclusively focus on themes about different types of love, or stories of love as Romeo and Juliette, but that is not like this. In fact, in this case, Romantic means that it belongs to

Romanticism. Romanticism originates in The Illustration era specifically in Europe.

Romanticism is an artistic movement that takes into consideration all that implies the Illustration in all areas of art. Hernandez (2023) explains “The romantics proclaim that sensations, emotions, and fantasies provide light and strength to intervene in the world, to create works less "perfect", less "regular" and less "balanced", but more "expressive", more "intimate" and “deeper” (p. 8.). Considering the previous statement means that romantic literature delves into different themes but in a deep way.

Renaissance Literature: Renaissance Literature is the literature of the era of Renaissance, this historical fact occurs in Europe approximately in the century XV and XVI. The most highlighted author of this era is William Shakespeare with their literary works as Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing, Hamlet, and the most famous Romeo and Juliette; as in Gothic Literature, some of their literary books receive their filming adaptation in the majority the books of William Shakespeare for example Romeo and Juliette where Leonardo DiCaprio is Romeo and Claire Danes is Juliette. According to Martinez (2021), “The main characteristic of Renaissance literature is the return to classical Greco-Latin culture that is experienced throughout the field of arts, thought, and European philosophy.” (p 21) That statement means that Renaissance Literature brought a significant return to classic literature because some of their literary works

have a certain essence of Classic Literature. The Renaissance is an important period in the history of literature.

Contemporary Literature: Contemporary literature started in the year 1940 and continues until nowadays, in this literature what is known as comics emerges. Comics are not necessary to read and imagine the facts because in the comics there are drawings; and in those drawings, there are elements like the plot, characters, protagonist, antagonist, main characters, secondary characters, climax, and ending. The most famous comics are Detective Comics, better known as DC comics, where there are characters such as Batman and Superman, from another side, there is a competition which is called Marvel, famous for their characters such as Spiderman, Captain America, Hulk, and some others.

The comics are not only about superheroes, but also there are different comics such as mystery, horror, comedy, among others. According to Garcia (2023), “It is characterized by technological advances and constant changes at a social, cultural, and political level.” (p. 1). That means that Contemporary literature is not only an era for literature, but it also means a great change in culture, society, and politics in literature. The contemporary literature is the literature of the present day.

When a person mentions theory, people can understand it as information on a specific topic which could be about science, literature, history, politics, and so on. The theory comes from a series of knowledge and principles that conform information with some thoughts about what the person perceives or sees around him, and his way of seeing it. As mention Brailosvsk (2017)

Theory is sometimes thought that orders experience, systematizes it, and makes it more operational. It is an argument; it is a justification. It can also be a kind of ethical code.

The theory is sometimes understood as intellectual gymnastics or training. (p. 53).

The previous statement proves that theory can be defined in different ways for example a kind of intellectual exercise, giving different arguments and justifying it, and others. There are different types of theories such as scientific theory, literary theory, and so on.

**Literary Theory:** Literary Theory is the theory that covers everything related to literature. The objective of this theory is to analyze every literary work for example a poem, essay, tale, or novel. It could be said that thanks to literary theory readers can see their favorite books from other perspectives and understand them better in the sense of how different literary works show the societal discrepancies, different values, social problems, feelings, and situations of the daily life of humans. According to Reyes (2022), “It postulates, for the same reason, that literature is a phenomenon of language that is defined both by its limits and other ways of representing the world as well as by its repertoire of forms and its imaginative freedom. The theory, in short, places literature in the most creative dimension in the world” (p. 7).

That means that this theory takes into consideration what literature is; it is considered a phenomenon of language, and that language is used to show people how the world is according to the vision of the author. Depending on the literary genre that vision is shown through a plot in the case of a tale and novel or written by arguments as the essay does it; also this theory introduces people to literature in a most creative way. This Literature helps readers to understand more the book(s) that they are reading.

**Philosophical Theory:** The Philosophical Theory is all theories that are around Philosophy. These theories are promulgated by philosophers who express their opinions across their experiences, thoughts, studies, vision, and other details since the conclusions of the philosophers. This theory was so much common in Greece. In fact, in that country appeared one of the greatest philosophers Plato. According to Clemente (2023), “Philosophical theories bring together movements, schools of thought, beliefs, and even scientific laws.” (par. 4). That means that this theory implies thoughts of different philosophers, sometimes scientific laws, and beliefs. Philosophical theory means theory based on what a specific philosopher thinks about the topic that he would like to talk according to his vision, experience, and thoughts.

**Political Theory:** Political Theory refers to the Theories that touch on several topics about politics. When it talks about politics, it means a series of laws or rules that have the purpose of putting order in the society of a nation. This theory can be found in books written by Karl Marx, an important figure in the history of communism. According to Sánchez & Liendo (2018) “More precisely, political theory can be understood as the evaluation of the concepts and beliefs that underpin political decisions” (p. 81). Taking into consideration the previous statement, it refers to the fact that political theory is more about analyzing different choices that political figures can make in order in society.

**Feminist Theory:** Feminist Theory is a philosophical, political, and social theory that explains the existence of a patriarchal society and who are the figures that create and influence a patriarchal society. One of the objectives of this theory is to explain how patriarchy negatively affects women and how patriarchy oppresses all women by depriving them of the rights that man possesses, for example, the right to vote, the right to work, the right to study and to express an

opinion. According to Castro and Bronfman (n.d) “The starting point of this theory is the identification of male dominance over women in practically all periods of history.” The previous information explains that feminist theory wants to expose the patriarchy to everybody to know that people are ruled by people who do not want to establish equality between men and women. Therefore, this theory implies telling people that patriarchy is real and shows how it can negatively affect people creating a society without any possibility of equality.

There are different types of feminism such as radical feminism, liberal feminism, abolitionist feminism

Radical Feminism: Some people believe that radical feminism is when feminists go to the streets to do acts of vandalism; however, it is not like it looks or sounds. Radical feminism emerged in the 60s to combat patriarchy and its connections in different areas. De Leon (2022) mentioned “That is, that type of feminism whose theoretical analysis goes beyond the symptoms produced by inequality between the sexes and whose political action would be aimed at combating the deepest causes of our malaise: patriarchy.” (p. 213). This explains that that radical feminism focused only on the fight against patriarchy.

Abolitionist feminism: Abolitionist feminism has different objectives from other types. Abolitionist feminism looks for the elimination of all sexual exploitation against women and minors, such as excessive prostitution, and sexual violation against women, eliminate all prostitution networks legalized by the government, and raise awareness about how to enjoy sexuality without disturbing dignity. According to Martinez (2023):

“Abolitionism aims to break stereotypes and free both sexes from gender patterns, to make relationships free and equal, without distinction.” (par. 10) This statement also explains that the purpose is to eliminate stereotypes, all types of sexual violation, or all sexual exploitations so that people enjoy healthy courtships, without any mental damage or dignity. This feminism wants to eliminate all crimes related to sexual perversion.

Liberal Feminism: This feminism is characterized to be a feminist group that fights for something that they believe that society, family, or governments take from her. This type of feminism fights for several rights, for example, the right to vote, the right to get a new job, the right to choose by herself with whom that person will enjoy courtship, the right to get independence whether economic or whatever type of independence. Guzman (2018) explains “The proposal at this time is that women's demands have to do with our incorporation into public life, in addition to promoting legal equality.” (par. 4).

This idea expresses that liberal feminism looks to show that women can also stand out in all areas such as jobs, sports, science, literature, and so on. This feminism wants to show the world that the same freedom that men have to choose by their own account, the same women can do, but to fight for it women have to resort to the transgression of a patriarchal society.

Of all the types of feminism that were explained previously, the most highlighted in **Like Water for Chocolate** is liberal feminism. The reason for this is because there is a deprivation of rights in Tita, and that right is to enjoy courtship with the man that she loves caused by a tradition that implies that the youngest daughter cares for her parents until he or she dies, and she can get married neither choose with whom enjoy courtship. In the next fragment of **Like Water for Chocolate** by Laura Esquivel (1989) “Well, you better tell him that if he is going to ask for

your hand, he should not do it” There is an open ban which means a prohibition that was imposed before that law, also this means that before the birth of Tita that tradition exists; in this point is where Mamá Helena deprived Tita of the right of getting married to the man that she loves, so that means that there is a reason of why Tita becomes a transgressor because, in liberal feminism, it is necessary to be a transgressor to obtain that right of which Mamá Elena had already been deprived to her daughter. Later after years of suffering the tradition, Tita takes strength to face all the people who oppose that Tita and Pedro enjoy love as they wish and start to live life as they wish, no matter if that person is the mother, sister, or whomever in the family because Tita, with the strength that she took, has all that she needs to fight for the right of enjoying marriage with the man who she loves.

The time when the events of the plot of the novel **Like Water for Chocolate** are developed is the time of the Mexican Revolution. At that time there were two types of women: the one who cooked the food for soldiers and took care of the kids of the soldiers, and the other side there were women who participated as soldiers to fight in different battles during the revolution. There were other roles that women took during the revolution as military generals, distributors of war resources, and nurses. One of the most highlighted women is General Carmen Veléz better known as “La Generala” who led 300 men during the battles of the states of Tlaxcala and Hidalgo.

Therefore, taking into consideration the definition of what theory and literature are, it could be said that Literary Theory is the theory that studies everything that literature implies. It tries to explain what the symbols, themes, or motifs of each novel, tale, and poem are. This theory is used to do a literary analysis. A literary analysis consists of reading and analyzing a

literary work. This analysis implies studying the characters, what are the themes, what the conflict is, how that conflict starts and finishes; how the characters are, if a character changed and why he or she changed, and how the plot finishes or how the outcome is.

To analyze a literary work, it needs approaches. The approaches help future readers and researchers to analyze a literary work, which could be a novel, tale, or poem, by focusing on a specific area, whether psychological, feminist, mythological, etc. Of the approaches that will be used to do this research, the feminist approach is the main one because the novel **Like Water for Chocolate** has a feminist essence the reason is that during the plot, conflicts that the feminist faces on a social and political level are presented. Of all the theories that were mentioned before, the literary one will be used to do this research.

**Psychological Approach:** The Psychological Approach is a method of literary analysis that studies the behavior of characters, emotions, feelings, and in some cases signals of a possible mental disorder. This approach also analyzes psychologically what the author wants to show to their audience and analyzes the symbols that can be inside of the plot. Ardilla (2022) “Etymologically "psychology" means the study of the psyche, the spirit, the mind, the soul” (p. 4). Considering that information about what psychology is it could confirm that this approach analyzes how the characters are mentally, and emotionally, and their behaviors on a personal level.

**Mythological Approach:** The Mythological Approach is another method to analyze a literary work, but not all literary works because this approach analyzes those novels, tales, or short stories in which there would be the presence of mythological beings such as gods, titans, demigods, heroes, beasts, creatures with similar human aspects as eyes or mouth very similar to

the human, in some cases magic weapons, presence of magic, spells, etc. This approach can be used to analyze literary works such as the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. Maciá (2019) explained “Mythology is the compendium of beliefs in supernatural powers and a culture, in myths the existence of beings different and superior to human beings is narrated, what is considered "gods" (p. 6). Taking into consideration that statement about the definition of Mythology, it could be said that when it talks about Mythological Approach, it means a type of method that implies the presence of gods and beings with supernatural powers in the plot of a novel, tale, or short story. This approach can be used to analyze some books about Homer and other different Mythologies as Nordic Mythology, Celtic Mythology, or Egyptian Mythology.

Feminist Approach: As is already known, feminism is also manifested in literature, which is known as feminist literature. Feminist literature is not literature that shows women enjoying life going to parties and doing whatever they want, but this literature shows stories of characters that face conflicts and feminism leads to arguments in favor of the liberty and rights of women in a society that oppresses them and denies them their rights to study and have the same rights as men free from violence, and maleness, get the autonomy to make their mind without depending to somebody to make choices for that person. Marañón (2018) also expressed, “Feminism is the ideology that defends that women should have the same rights as men” (p. 6).

Considering that information about what feminism is, it could be said that feminism is a social movement that looks for the equality of rights. Thus, in feminist literature; people can see plots about women troubling against the unfairness that women suffer in any environment, it could be in the family, in the marriage, in their friends, sentimental couple, in the job, or maybe in

society. The Feminist Approach is divided into three phases, which are the feminine phase, the feminist phase, and the female phase.

**Feminine Phase:** This is the phase where the injustices start manifesting, but the difference is that the protagonist is aware of the situation but has to comply with what it means to be a woman according to the opponents of feminism, either that she cannot give any opinion, she cannot leave without permission of a character who has characteristics similar to an authority figure, and that the only choice is to follow or obey the rules of male figures. In other words, this phase is where researchers or readers start seeing what the conflict is about, and they become aware of the injustice of the situation.

**Feminist Phase:** The feminist phase is where the injustices are even more and more, and this means that during the plot, more frequently in the climax, the protagonist takes the power to face those injustices that have oppressed her for a specific time, then the protagonist has an encounter face to face against that character who represents a high authority, also here is where the protagonist takes the power of give an opinion and even though her opponent is doing all the possible to silence her, all attempt becomes a failure.

**Female Phase:** This is the final phase where the trouble of the protagonist is already finished. Here the protagonist has her reward for all that she has fought during the plot. Here is where the protagonist has her reward, and that reward is enjoying being free to express her opinion and make decisions without asking permission from somebody. She does not give explanations about where she goes or what she will do, does not suffer any more violence, and does not hold on anymore the injustices that used to suffer before. The female phase makes its presence after the climax of the plot.

Feminism through literature not only shows plots that demonstrate how women deal with different conflicts, including discrimination against women, different types of violence, whether verbal or psychological, fighting for what they desire, such as freedom to make decisions for themselves or the freedom to express opinions, but also in this approach the public can see that feminism raises awareness about different issues through criticism, raising awareness about different issues, whether it is about equality, courtship, and among others.

That can be seen in the books of Coral Herrera, who is better known for books that talk about the reality of the courtship implying that what soap operas, fantasy movies, and cartoons show, make us live in a lie. That can be seen in the next fragment of the book of Herrera (2018) “It is convenient for the patriarchy that we remain chained to this illusion, each one looking for a way to be rescued by a prince charming” (p. 5).

In the previous fragment, Herrera says that the patriarchy wants them to live in the lie shown in soap operas, television programs and sometimes even movies where the woman would appear as the typical lady in distress all the time and the man is the one who must come to her rescue, implying that women cannot assert herself without a man being there to defend her. That book also tries to persuade that it is time to develop self-love and stop believing in what other media shows. The feminist approach is the one that allows researchers to understand more the feminism and what this social movement is looking for at the social level.

## 2.2 Themes, Symbols, Motifs

In literary analysis, apart from explaining who the characters are and what their characteristics are, it also mentions the plot of the book from the beginning, climax, and ending. It analyzes the point of view, whether first person or third person was used. It mentions and explains in which time and place the events of the plot are happening; there are other elements to be analyzed in books, frequently in tales and novels, which are the themes, symbols, and motifs. Next in this part of the chapter, those elements will be explained.

**Symbols:** The symbols are sometimes confused with signs by some people, but something in which symbols differ is that symbols are graphic physical representations that have a meaning, and through that meaning demonstrate something that can be associated with real life, for example, the Cheshire cat who symbolizes the subconscious of Alice, that character appears when Alice is lost because she does not know what way to take to find the white rabbit. In that case, the cat appears to tell Alice where she can go to accomplish her achievement, which is to find the white rabbit. Another case in the same book is the white rabbit which symbolizes the path to arrive in Wonderland. Other examples could be the lightning of Zeus in the first book of Percy Jackson which can mean power and the mission of Percy which is to find the lightning of Zeus, face the lightning thief, go to the Olympus, and return the lightning bolt to Zeus.

Another example is the ghost of the Red Death in *The Mask of the Red Death* written by Edgar Allan Poe, that symbol means the punishment of Prince Prospero, who did not do something to find a solution for their people who were suffering so much and dying because the pest of the Red Death. Other cases of the literary works of Edgar Allan Poe are the Black Cat and the phrase of the Raven that says “nevermore”, which is a phrase that the Raven repeats

whenever the man is talking to it. The Black Cat symbolizes the torment of his owner for having killed him when he was drunk, and the phrase of the Raven means that he will nevermore leave alone the man. García (2023) explains “Symbols are similar to rhetorical devices of comparison and metaphor, but they have their own very particular way of communicating” (p. 10). The previous information means that despite symbols seeming metaphors, the symbols try to communicate something without the use of any literary devices. There are different types of symbols such as cultural symbols.

**Cultural Symbols:** Cultural Symbols are those symbols that function as an identification of a specific culture for example in Costa Rica the cart, which represents the work of Costa Rica, the torch a symbol of freedom, the sloth and whitetail deer that represents the Costa Rican fauna and Manatee, which represents the aquatic fauna. Ricardo (2020) mentions that “A cultural symbol is a physical manifestation that signifies the ideology of a particular culture or that simply has meaning within a culture” (par. 1). This wants to say that these symbols only represent the culture of a specific region. When an author would like to include a cultural symbol, he must not change absolutely anything about their meaning but keep what that symbol wants to mean to a culture.

**Themes:** In literature, themes mean that during the plot of a novel or tale or in the verses of a poem the literary work tries to show according to the vision of the author, how it is manifested in society, family, or any environment of the real life. The themes are not only enhanced to what was mentioned before, but also touch on different conflicts that humans are facing; for example, corruption, signals of war, the feeling of being rejected by society, loneliness, and others. On the other hand, there are literary works where the theme can be mental

disorders such as Peter Pan Syndrome, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia, and the like. Additionally, themes can deal with feelings, for example, love in *Romeo and Juliette* or *Me Before You*; fear, for example, in the majority of the books written by Stephen King, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Shirley Jackson, and Bram Stoker. According to Rodriguez (2022) “When we refer to the theme of a story, we focus on everything that encompasses the execution of the narrative and the types of themes, which can be developed using characters, varied settings” (par. 4). That means that a theme can be shown using different elements that literature has, for example the characters, plot, settings, and most importantly the narrator. Summarizing, themes mean what the topic that a literary work wants to show using its literary elements, but not always what is shown in a realistic story.

Motifs: Many people can say that motifs are the reason why the characters are facing the conflict that they are fighting with, or maybe what is the reason why a character changes; however, in the literature that is not a motif, a motif means what the situation is. According to Ruiz (2019) “Motif is also that which drives a plot, that is, that triggers the action” (p. 5). That means that a motif is an important resource to the plot and it could have sense and coherence in the moment that the story or actions are being narrated. The motif is the key to understanding what the plot is about.

### **2.3 Biography of the author**

Laura Esquivel is a writer who was born in Mexico DF. She is not only the writer who created **Like Water for Chocolate**, in fact, before writing novels, she was a theater scriptwriter, who later published **Like Water for Chocolate**. In 1992, based on her experience, she wrote the script of the filming adaptation of **Like Water for Chocolate** with his husband Alfonso Arau as director and Lumi Cavazos as Tita. Laura Esquivel has written two more novels that belong to the canon of **Like Water for Chocolate**, which are Tita's Diary and My past black. Those are sequels of **Like Water for Chocolate** which have feminist themes as the search for freedom, maleness, and other conflicts that feminism delves into.

### **2.4 Plot of the Book**

The story of **Like Water for Chocolate** talks about Tita the youngest daughter of Mama Elena, she is a homely woman who rules over all the members of her family, including the servants and her daughters. Tita is one of the minor daughters raised by a servant, a cook, who teaches her everything she knows and who practically raises her in the kitchen, where she teaches her an enormous skill, cooking. Later, Tita and Pedro fall in love, but across the plot, Tita and Pedro must face hard circumstances, in which the doubt is whether due to those circumstances, they will be together or end up separated from each other.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodological Framework**

The Methodological Framework deals with information about different methods of investigation to use at the moment of the investigation. This chapter explains various methods for seeking and analyzing research data, helping researchers achieve their expected results. The investigation can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed.

A methodological framework explains the procedure to get the expected results in research, which could be based on laws, economy, accountancy, science, literature, health, translation, teaching, social problems, politics, movies, psychology, mental disorders, or other purposes to solve a problem in a specific institution, school, or other fields depending on the method of investigation. According to Azuero (2018), “The methodological framework is mostly the third chapter of the thesis and is the result of the systematic and logical application of the concepts and foundations outlined in the theoretical framework” (p. 113). This means that the Methodological Framework is the part of the thesis where all the information from the previous chapter, which is the Theoretical Framework, passes to the practice of finding the results that are expected to be found.

Even though the researcher may have his or her objectives clear, sometimes in many circumstances, the results are not been expected at all. However, this can be only proved in chapter 4, which is the space where the results pass to an analysis process, imposed by the researcher

### **3.1 Research Approach**

The Research Approach may be confused with the approaches that were mentioned before; however, when it talks about the Research Approach, it is not about literary approaches, on the contrary, it is about what kind of research is going to be done. The purpose of the research approach is that a researcher chooses how he or she would like to carry on his or her investigation showing the results that were obtained. The types of research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. Therefore, these types of research will be explained in this section.

**Quantitative:** This is the type of research where researchers focus on numbers, percentages, and numerical quantity. Therefore, those aspects are the way how the results can be shown considering the objectives of the research and what the investigator wants to achieve mathematically. The results of this type of investigation are collected in a survey, most of them with percentages for the investigation. According to Jain (2023), “Using rigorous statistical and mathematical techniques, this method concludes structured surveys, controlled experiments, or other defined data collection methods” (para 1). The previous information explains that the results of experiments of quantitative research can be shown by statistics with the ideal control. These researchers are made to show the results by numbers, and in literature, the process of quantitative research cannot be used. This type of research answers the question of quantity.

**Mixed:** Mixed research refers to investigations where the information is more detailed because the researcher can use statistics to show numerically, the obtained results and, and create a type of chart that can describe the information that has been proposed to be analyzed in detail using as evidence the results that were achieved at the time of carrying out the research. According to Rus (2020), “The reason is that the human being is a complex entity and, therefore, this type of research should preferably be used” (para 2). That information explains that if a researcher will

like to be involved in complex research, he has to give information about what he or she got as a result at the moment of experimenting with the corresponding instruments or elements. This type of investigation is common in studies of science, economy, and sociology.

Qualitative: This type of research approach is different from the previous approaches because in this one there is no numerical statistical order to show the obtained results. Qualitative research does not focus on numbers, percentages, statistics, or graphic representations to show the results, but qualitative research focuses on trying to analyze the cause and effect of any event. It also explains the development and the objectives. According to Vera (nd), " Unlike descriptive, correlational, or experimental studies, rather than determining the cause and effect relationship between two or more variables, qualitative research is more interested in knowing how the dynamics occur or the process in which the issue occurs" (p. 1). This indicates that the purpose of a qualitative research is to analyze causes, effects, reasons, procedures, and resolutions such as the ending of an event.

An example can be found in a novel using the corresponding approach. For example, the symbols that appear across the plot in *Alice in Wonderland* at the psychological level are the characteristics of a character whether he is a brave character, a character who never changes, or a character who at certain points in the plot changes until he becomes what he is at the end of the story. It shows how the main conflict, in the case of a feminist novel, is manifested at the beginning, how it continues, and how it ends.

Some of the characteristics of the qualitative investigation are the following:

1. It is a method of investigation where the description can be witnessed when trying to explain something, and the results are written according to the researcher's interpretation.
2. The data is not written by numbers as in the quantitative approach.
3. The investigation is sometimes interactive.
4. Every detail on the results, always if is related to the objectives and topic, must be taken into consideration.
5. In every stage of the investigation, until the end, the objectives always are into consideration.

On the other hand, the qualitative investigation has its phases which are the definition of the problem, design of the investigation, data recollection, analysis of data, and informative phase.

Definition of the problem: This phase is the beginning of the research, where the research starts with a question; however, that question is not simple. With this question, you can find the basis for what the research is about, what it is going to focus on, and what you are trying to obtain as a result when the time comes to collect the necessary data, analyze it, and explain the results. According to Guerrero (2016), "one of the tasks of research is precisely to find out if the definition of the problem is correct" (p. 5). The information says what the purpose of this section is, which is to make sure that the research problem is connected with the objectives. Every investigation starts with the researcher's question.

Investigation Design: The investigation design is the next phase after the definition problem. This is the phase in which the investigator looks for resources that are ideal to complement and support the investigation. For example, a researcher can use a survey, an experiment whether social, scientific, or psychological, an interview, reading a novel or a literary composition, among others. According to Rodriguez (1996), “It places the researcher in the empirical world and determines the activities that will have to be carried out to achieve the proposed objective.” (p. 3). Taking into account this information, it can be confirmed that this is the moment in which the researcher is thinking about how to achieve the objectives of the investigation and choose the corresponding resource depending on the area that will be investigated. Here the researcher is looking for the necessary instruments.

Viewing the scope of the study: This phase, which is called viewing of the scope of the study, consists of what the expectations of the researcher are, and what he or she would like to achieve and show as the investigation progresses, considering the established objectives. According to San Feliciano (2023), “It is the limit that the study will have, how far it will go, and to what degree it will be able to answer the research question” (para 15). Taking into consideration the previous statement, there is a limit to the scope of the study. For that reason, the researchers must be sure that all their expectations can relate to the objectives of the investigations. Additionally, those expectations must be about the topic that is being developed. In this stage, the researcher explains and demonstrates the results when gathering the data.

Interpretation of Results. Once the researcher has chosen the necessary instruments, defined his objectives, made the question for the investigation about what he or she would like to do, and collected all the results, it is time to describe the results that the researcher has gotten, and how they were obtained. The researcher must talk about the results since his or her own words and

according to what was seen at the moment of the process of collect data. It is worth mentioning that in this phase, it is defined if the researcher got everything that he or she wants or not. According to Quintana (2006) “This action corresponds to the observable beginning of the research and takes place through the deployment of one or several strategies of contact with the reality or realities under study” (p. 3). With that information, it can be confirmed that the interpretation of the results is the phase in which it is defined if they are the ones expected or not.

Explanation phase: The explanation phase is where the results have been collected with the chosen method, and it is the phase where the researcher says if the results are expected or if he finds different results, if those results connect with the selected topic and objectives, or maybe he did not find any result.

Additionally, in the explanation phase, the researcher explains how he or she finds the results with the comparison of evidence which can be used as support of where he or she gets that result and why the researcher obtains certain conclusions. According to Civalero (2016) “In this way, the researcher not only reaches a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study but also shares that understanding with others.” (slide 7). This means that the results are written for the comprehension of the researcher. This is the final stage of the investigation, the phase where he or she shows if the objectives were according to the expected ones.

The qualitative investigation has its advantages and disadvantages which are the following:

Advantages: The advantages of the qualitative investigation are that it facilitates the process of analysis if the investigation is about a hypothesis, and the qualitative investigation offers the opportunity to have as evidence the information that has been acquired at the moment of the action. According to Shuttleworth (2006), “Qualitative research methods are not as dependent on

sample size as quantitative methods. A case study, for example, can generate significant results with a small sample group” (par. 12). It can be said that in qualitative research, the researcher may deepen more on their results. In this kind of research, there is no presence of numbers or percentages, which means that a researcher is free to express his interpretation of the results from his perspective.

Disadvantages: One disadvantage of qualitative information is that compared with the quantitative investigation, the researcher does not count with a population. A population is the number of people that will answer the questions of the survey, which implies that the results are not accurate because there is not a clear percentage that can give a clear summary of the result. The investigation would count only with the connotation of the researcher. According to Hernandez (2013), “Another disadvantage is that this research method is very time-consuming and can take months or even years” (slide 4). That means that the qualitative investigation demands much time, but it depends on the objectives of the researcher because with more objectives the research will take more time in the analysis and the investigation so that the results connect with the objectives. In qualitative research, the survey cannot be considered to get the expected results.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design consists of the instruments that a researcher uses to get the results, and once he has the results explained, he will obtain the conclusions that come as the result of the data collection process. Those designs are investigation-action, phenomenological design, narrative design, and ethnographic design.

Investigation-Action: The Investigation-action design refers to the necessary actions to get the needed results. This can be put into practice in case the surveys have open or closed questions,

reading a text that belongs to the literature, and in an interview. According to Salas (2019), “In this type of research, people belonging to a group or community actively participate in the research process, contributing to the identification of the problem under study and the identification of possible solutions” (par. 4). That means that in this design we find the presence of social interactions between the researcher and the population, but that depends on the researcher. These designs can be put into practice in qualitative and quantitative.

**Phenomenological Design:** The phenomenological design is used to study different social phenomena. This can be analyzed through psychology or sociology through the behaviors of humans, or reactions in many circumstances at the social level. According to Escudero & Cortez (2018), “It consists of the study of social phenomena taking into account the perspective of the social actors themselves” (p. 51). The previous information means that the study or result of that investigation emerged from the participants that account with the characteristics of the social phenomena which the researcher has focused. This investigation is more common in different areas such as psychology, sociology, social networks, trends, and likes.

**Narrative design:** The narrative focuses on some sources of information such as books, magazines, theses, internet web pages, internet videos, among others. The information source, in the case of narratives, takes its basis from the experiences of people, and those experiences could be about a historical fact such as the civil war of Costa Rica in 1948, foreign immigrants, victims of specific violence or harassment, and military veteran who participated in a war or many of them. According to Batatina (2017), “Regarding its use in the educational context, it allows the researcher to take notes and construct stories about what was observed, talked about or done, to later reflect and make decisions that enrich the study.” (p. 127). That information means that in

this type of investigation, the researcher must reflect carefully on the testimony of the interviewed to conclude. This design is more common in journalism.

**Ethnographic Design:** The ethnographic design is that one touches exclusively on topics related to culture. It can be said that thanks to this investigation people have the opportunity to learn more details about different cultures in the world, which could be the Chinese culture, Afro-descendant culture from some region in America or Europe, indigenous culture, Middle-East culture, European culture, and others. According to Arellano (n.d.) “In this model, the researcher aims to understand the reality of the values, symbols, and concepts represented in a certain culture. An ethnographer seeks to understand the beliefs and practices of a community to observe how they function and describe them” (para. 17). Considering the previous information, the ethnographic design tries to introduce to people the traditions, celebrations, typical food, and everything that can identify that culture in an investigation; however, that depends on what the researcher wants to do. Through this research, people can discover new cultures that maybe they did not know before.

**Descriptive Design:** The descriptive design is an investigation that has its purpose of explaining, with the acquired information, different theories, phenomena, features of characters, and so on. In the case of literature, the plot of a novel or tale, the symbols, themes, and all the elements that imply a literary analysis. According to Salomao (2023), “The primary goal of descriptive studies is to provide a detailed and accurate account of a phenomenon or population, typically through the use of various data collection techniques such as surveys, interviews, and observations. (para. 2). This means that descriptive design gives information about what the researcher analyzed considering the results. Descriptive designs are more used in literature.

### **3.3 Information Sources**

On the internet or in libraries, the researcher can find different information sources, which have the function of supporting the information of the researcher, however, an important detail to take into consideration is that the information must be related to the topic that is being investigated. The types of information sources that exist are primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

**Primary Sources:** The primary sources are the ones found in libraries or on digital library platforms on the internet. According to Silvestrini & Vargas (2008), “They can be found in traditional printed formats such as books and serial publications; or in special formats such as microforms, video cassettes, and compact discs” (p. 2). Considering the previous information, sources have different ways that can be found. These sources are common in informative books

**Secondary Sources:** Secondary sources refer to information that is compiled in a thesis, or document. These types of sources, as the primary sources, can be found in physical libraries or digital libraries, but the difference is that those sources have quotations from the original author. According to Miranda & Acosta (2008), “They are based on pre-prepared data, such as data obtained from statistical yearbooks, the Internet, the media, and databases, processed for other purposes, articles and documents related to the disease, books, theses, official reports, etc.” (p. 1). That means that secondary sources are used as evidence of other different information written by other authors. These sources, despite having an author, may permit other authors to use them as supporting details.

**Tertiary Sources:** The tertiary sources are those sources that are easy to find compared to the previous two, because these sources, instead of being found in libraries, can be found in other web pages exclusive for articles. The articles can be used as a secondary or tertiary source or as

supporting details. According to Coll (2021), “Simple academic works, such as a final degree project, could also be considered a source of tertiary information” (para. 2). In other words, these sources are often found in academic essays. In summary, the tertiary sources are a mix between Primary and Secondary sources.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

**Feminist Approach:** This is the approach that permits the researcher to analyze different literary works that belong to feminist literature

**Literary Analysis:** Literary Analysis has the purpose of letting the readers understand more about a novel, tale, or poem.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

**Analytic Chart:** The analytic chart is the instrument that is mostly used in literature. It is about a chart in which there are columns to analyze different details about literature. Those can be themes, motifs, symbols, conflict, characters, and other information. In the chart, there are sections where a researcher can include information about what he is showing with a quote included. This instrument is more used in descriptive design investigation. The analytic chart will help a researcher to analyze across some fragments of the novel how the conflict is developing in *Like Water for Chocolate*, also where patriarchy is manifested, how Tita transgresses the tradition, how Tita finds that strength that pushes her to face those who oppose to enjoy love with Pedro considering that dialogues inside of the novel will be used to analyze what researcher is looking for in the novel to achieve the objectives of the investigation.

### **3.6 Collection data process and data analysis**

The process of collection of data will be done in the following manner: first, on the internet, the researcher will find summary videos that talk about the plot of the novel to understand the story of the novel and how it is developed; once those videos have been seen, the next step is to read the novel, analyze, and investigate details about themes such love as a main one and how it differs from each character if analyzed with feminist complexes, why Tita cannot marry Pedro, why Mamá Helena prohibits that Tita to marry Pedro, how Tita empowered herself to be with Pedro and assert her claims to impose her desires by her own account; it is also important to investigate how she reaches the point of not depending on anybody to choose how to live and the most important, how to break all control that Mamá Helena used to have in Tita. Finally, as the researcher moves along with the investigation, he or she includes all the information in an analytic chart where he or she will compare themes like love with the situations and dialogs found in the original text. In this way, the researcher can find results on how love is important in the plot, the reason why Tita and Pedro cannot marry, and how Tita empowers herself and faces all characters who oppose her courtship with Pedro.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis**

This chapter is the part of the analysis of an investigation. In this case, some details will be analyzed in an analytic chart, where that analytic chart contains three spaces; one of them is the space that will be placed the theme that can be found in the novel, a quote about the corresponding theme, and the space of description, which in that place will be written the personal interpretation of the researcher. Before making use of the analytic chart, the process of analysis, using the

analytic chart, is the following: first, in the novel will be sought the quotation of the corresponding that the researcher wishes to talk about could be love, control, transgression, and others. In sequence, the quotation will be analyzed, or if necessary; the researcher will consult with his teacher in case there are doubts about it, and at the end, the analytic chart will be placed with the theme, quotation, and description with the interpretation of the researcher included.

#### **4.1 Approaches to the investigation:**

Approaches in literature can be defined as what is emphasized to be analyzed in a specific literary work, however, before choosing the approach, it is important to analyze the themes present in the novel, tale, or poem; once that researcher chooses the approach, it is time to do the analysis. When the literary work has already been analyzed, and the researcher has chosen the approach; it is time to do the analysis taking into consideration the objectives that the researcher wishes to achieve. In this investigation, the selected approach is the feminist one, thus the novel **Like Water for Chocolate** has a feminist essence because the plot is about the struggle that Tita must deal against a tradition that has given the power of Mamá Helena to control the life of Tita according to her commands. On the other side, Tita cannot get married to Pedro due to Mamá Helena wants to conserve the tradition and make it last for all generations, but Tita opposes it transgressing all commands of Mamá Helena to enjoy love with Pedro by her own choices. The feminist approach helps the researcher to emphasize that part of the novel and find the reasons why the novel is considered as feminist, also understand more about what implies patriarchy and feminism. In case of this investigation, this helps in understanding better the change that Tita has during the novel, which that change may help in how love is that important element that push characters to get their most desired wishes.

## 4.2 Theories vs literary work

Themes/Motifs/Symbols	Quotation	Description
Censure	<p><i>-But I think that</i></p> <p><i>-You don't have any opinion and it's over, Never, by generations, no one in my family has ever protested and it's not going to be one of my daughters who will</i></p>	<p>In that fragment, it can be seen that Tita attempts to discuss with her mother about marriage because Tita would like to enjoy love with Pedro; however, when Mamá Helena sees that Tita tries to oppose, the defense of Mamá Helena to preserve tradition is censured, telling Tita, "You don't have any opinion and this is over."</p>
Verbal Aggression	<p><i>-Congratulations, she said, the stitches are perfect, but you didn't tack it, did you?</i></p> <p><i>-No, said Tita, astonished that she I would have lifted the law of silence.</i></p>	<p>In this fragment there is verbal aggression, Mamá Helena uses the verbal aggression to weaken Tita because Mamá Helena sees on Tita all the necessary to the tradition can finish forever considering that</p>

	<p><i>Then you're gonna have to undo it. You Tack it up again and then cometo have it checked for you. To remind you that the lazy and the mean walk double their way.</i></p> <p><i>-But that's when one is wrong and you</i></p> <p><i>You said yourself a moment ago that mine was...</i></p> <p><i>- Are we going to start again with the rebellion?</i></p> <p><i>You had enough with the one who dared</i></p> <p><i>Sewing by breaking the rules</i></p>	<p>Tita disagrees with that tradition thus Tita cannot enjoy love with Pedro because the tradition</p>
<p>Cowardice</p>	<p><i>-Why did you do this, Pedro? We met at ridiculous accepting</i></p>	<p>This part demonstrates Pedro's cowardice, as he is unable to confront Mamá.</p>

	<p><i>marriage with Rosaura.</i></p> <p><i>Where the love you swore to Tita remained? What You don't have a word?</i></p>	<p>This is considered because Pedro was not able to face Mamá Helena and say “I will marry with Tita even you ar not agree” Instead, Pedro accepts getting married to Rosaura. Of course, this damages Tita so much, but Pedro thinks that with infidelities against Rosaura, it is the only way to enjoy love with Tita.</p>
<p>Love</p>	<p><i>-Miss Tita, I'd like to take the opportunity of speaking with you alone to tell you that I'm deeply in love with you.</i></p> <p><i>I know this statement is bold and hasty, but it's so difficult to approach that I took the decision to do so tonight. He only I ask you to</i></p>	<p>That dialogue shows the love confession of Pedro to Tita; here it is where the plot begins, and a series of conflicts that different characters must face.</p>

	<p><i>tell me if I can aspire to your love.</i></p> <p><i>-I don't know what to say; give me time to think.</i></p> <p><i>-No, I couldn't, I need an answer in this moment: love is not thought, felt or not feel. I am a man of few, but very words. I swear that you will have my love for always. What about yours?</i></p> <p><i>You too</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel for me?</i></p> <p><i>-Yes!</i></p>	
<p>Lack of Empathy</p>	<p><i>-I won't allow your misdeeds - Mama Elena said-, nor will I allow you Ruin your sister's wedding, with your attitude of a</i></p>	<p>Even though Tita is injured psychologically, Mamá Helena does not stop herself of releasing more destructive comments and</p>

	<p><i>victim. From now on, you will take care preparations for the banquet and I take care that I'll see you in a bad face or a tear, you hear?</i></p> <p><i>I'll see you in a bad face or a tear, you hear?</i></p>	<p>aggressive commands; however, more than this Mamá Helena does not have enough empathy to understand how the mood of Tita is, instead of empathy, Mamá Helena lacks empathy.</p>
Threats	<p><i>Listen to me, Tita, you're running out my patience, I won't let you start with madness. This is the first and last! or I assure you will regret it!</i></p>	<p>Mamá Helena, more than being a character that does not have empathy or compassion, is evidence of how verbally aggressive she is, this that she treats her daughter with a possible heavy punishment for transgressing her commands.</p>
Sadness	<p><i>And so, hugged, they stood crying until Tita had no more tears left in her eyes. Then she cried dry and they</i></p>	<p>Here is where Tita releases all the sadness that she was containing herself during the wedding. Also, there is</p>

	<p><i>say that it hurts more, like dry birth, but at least</i></p> <p><i>She did not continue to soak the cake dough, being able to continue with the next step, which is filling.</i></p>	<p>a weak version of Tita, but it does not mean that she has the will of facing her mother for the love that she feels for Pedro; the problem is that Tita is vulnerable to all the verbal aggressions done by her mother.</p>
Seduction	<p><i>Pedro did not resist, let it into the last corner of their being without being able to take their eyes off each other. He said:</i></p> <p><i>- I never had tasted something too exquisite, thank you very much.</i></p> <p><i>It is that truly this dish is delicious. Roses provide a taste of the more refined.</i></p>	<p>Even though Tita and Pedro are separated, and do not talk so much, Tita, without speaking, find a way to seduce Pedro and provoke that desire to be with Tita and not with Rosaura, and as this makes Pedro feel more attracted to Tita than Rosaura to keep alive the love.</p>
First Sight love	<p><i>Dr. John Brown looked at Tita in rapture, and he</i></p>	<p>The first sight of love occurs when someone falls in love simply by seeing</p>

	<p><i>couldn't take his eyes off her.</i></p>	<p>another person, without having any conversation. This kind of love is evident in the fragment, but Tita does not yet realize that, sooner or later, Dr. John will become her refuge, helping her gain the strength needed to fight for everything Mamá Elena has taken from her.</p>
<p>Rejection of Ideals</p>	<p><i>-How well this child looks, next to his a beautiful aunt!</i></p> <p><i>-Thank you, doctor.</i></p> <p><i>-And that's not your own son, I can only imagine how pretty you'll look when the child is yours.</i></p> <p><i>A cloud of sorrow crossed the countenance</i></p>	<p>In the first conversation between John and Tita, it is evident how John rejects the ideals of Mamá Helena, saying that this have “nonsense”. A big difference between John and Pedro is that John rejects the tradition, but Pedro accepts it despite he mentions that he loves Tita even though he is married</p>

	<p><i>Tita. John spotted her and said:</i></p> <p><i>- Sorry, I think I said the wrong thing.</i></p> <p><i>-No, it's not. The thing is that I don't</i></p> <p><i>I can get married, or have children because I have to</i></p> <p><i>Taking care of my mom until she dies.</i></p> <p><i>-But how! That's a nonsense.</i></p> <p><i>-But that's right. Now, please excuse me, I'm going to attend my guests</i></p>	<p>to Rosaura and not to Tita as it should be.</p>
<p>Courage</p>	<p><i>-Look what I do with your orders! Now</i></p> <p><i>I'm tired! I'm tired of obeying her!</i></p>	<p>After so much time obeying Mamá Helena, for the first time, Tita takes action to transgress the tradition, which caused so much</p>

		<p>damage, saying “I’m tired of obeying you” but there is something that Mamá Helena does not know which is that this is the end of the tradition.</p>
<p>Refuge</p>	<p><i>Well, John, against what Mama Elena told you had asked, instead of depositing it in a madhouse took her to live with him.</i></p>	<p>After Tita taking the courage of face strongly to her mother, Mamá Helena qualified her like a mad girl, and she made her mind to send her to an asylum because for Mamá Helena Tita is a danger; but John created a place that would work as a refuge for Tita, his house.</p>
<p>Transformation</p>	<p><i>Then with the hands of John, grave and loving, taking off his clothes and bathing her; then taking care of her whole body the dirt of the pigeons, leaving</i></p>	<p>It is well known that when people clean himself/herself, a new version is released, a person with good hygiene, and well-performed. However,</p>

	<p><i>it clean and perfumed.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, he had brushed her hair tenderly and laid down in a bed with starched sheets.</i></p>	<p>in this case, the old version of Tita dies, and new version is born from psychological injuries</p>
<p>Revenge</p>	<p><i>John took Tita by the hand on the way back to the ranch, and Tita in turn, took him by the arm emphasizing that there was more than a friendship. He wanted to provoke Pedro the same pains that she had always felt watching him.</i></p>	<p>The actions talk more than words, and this is a clear evidence; this lovely gesture between Tita and John is the action of Tita saying “Now I will make you feel the same pain that you put me through”.</p>
<p>Female empowerment</p>	<p><i>-Pedro, you’re no one to tell me what I have to do, or not. When you got married I didn’t ask him not to do it, even though that wedding</i></p>	<p>In this conversation, there is another Tita, this is a woman that knows how to say no, a woman that has dignity, self-love, self-respect, a strong woman emotionally and psychologically, brave, and a woman that is not afraid</p>

	<p><i>shattered me. You made your life, now</i></p> <p><i>Let me do mine in peace!</i></p> <p><i>-Precisely because of that decision I made and of which I am completely sorry,</i></p> <p><i>I ask you to reconsider. You know very well what was the reason that brought me together with her sister, but it turned out to be a useless act that didn't work,</i></p> <p><i>Now I think it would have been better to run away with you.</i></p> <p><i>-Well, you think too late. Now there is no remedy. And I beg you never again in life to bother me again,</i></p>	<p>of facing to somebody who oppose to her new ideals. If it were not enough, he called "coward" to Pedro and would make him understand that he is a man with empty words</p>
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	<p><i>dare not repeat what I just said, my sister could listen and there doesn't have to be another unhappy person in this house. With permission...!</i></p> <p><i>Ah. And I suggest that for the next time you</i></p> <p><i>Fall in love, don't be such a coward!</i></p>	
<p>Fear</p>	<p><i>I told you many times that not go near to</i></p> <p><i>Pedro. Why did you do it?</i></p> <p><i>-... I tried, Mommy... but...</i></p> <p><i>-But nothing! What you've done has no name! You have forgotten what morality is, respect, good manners! You are not worth</i></p>	<p>Despite Tita has known her strength, a new menace arrived, it is about the ghost of Mamá Helena. There is a speculation in which ghosts have more powers than humans; thus, Tita is afraid of it because the ghost has the power of cursing. Now, Tita must face a new menace which is the Ghost of Mamá Helena.</p>

	<p><i>You are a whore who is not respected herself. You have muddied the name of all myfamily, from my ancestors to the one of</i></p> <p><i>That damn creature you keep in your guts!</i></p> <p><i>-No! My son is not cursed!</i></p> <p><i>-Yes, he is! I curse him!</i></p> <p><i>Him and you, to always!</i></p> <p><i>- No, I'm sorry.</i></p>	
<p>Rebellion</p>	<p><i>-You see what you're doing? Pedro and you are shameless. If you don't want that Blood run in this house, go where you don't you can hurt anyone, before it is too late.</i></p> <p><i>-You should be going. I'm already tired of being</i></p>	<p>At the beginning, Tita was afraid of Mamá Elena's ghost. However, Tita finds the strength to stand up to her mother. Now that Mamá Helena wants to silence her, she cannot do it because Tita is empowered. Therefore, Tita shows her strength through words that</p>

	<p><i>tormented by you. Leave me alone</i></p> <p><i>Once and for all!</i></p> <p><i>-I won't do it until you behave as a good woman, that is, decently!</i></p> <p><i>- What's being decent?</i></p> <p><i>Like you used to?</i></p> <p><i>-Yes.</i></p> <p><i>-Well that's what I do! or didn't you have a daughter unlawfully?</i></p> <p><i>- You'll be damned for talking to me like that!</i></p> <p><i>-No more than you are!</i></p> <p><i>-Shut up! What do you think are you?</i></p>	<p>defend her from the censure of Mamá Helena, and everything that Mamá Helena does for silence her, she cannot. As a result, Tita is freed from the aggression she once suffered.</p>
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	<p><i>-I believe what I am! A person who has</i></p> <p><i>All right to live life as best I wish. Leave me alone once and for all,</i></p> <p><i>I can't stand you anymore!</i></p> <p><i>In fact, I hate her, I always hated her!</i></p>	
<p>Blackmail</p>	<p><i>Is not for fear, but it would be very unfair treat John that way, he deserves all my respect and I have to wait for the best</i></p> <p><i>Time to talk to him.</i></p> <p><i>- If you don't, I'll do it myself.</i></p> <p><i>-No, you're not going to tell him anything; in the first place,</i></p> <p><i>Because I don't let you</i></p>	<p>This is when Pedro blackmails Tita because he told the truth to John, and the truth is that Pedro and Tita had sex before.</p> <p>However, Tita defends herself saying "No". This means that absolutely nothing can intimidate Tita.</p>

<p>Transgression</p>	<p><i>-I think we have a conversation to discuss, don't you?</i></p> <p><i>-Yes, I do. And I think it was since you married my boyfriend.</i></p> <p><i>- All right, if you want it, let's start with there. You had a boyfriend improperly. Don't it was appropriate to have.</i></p> <p><i>-According to who? Mom or you?</i></p> <p><i>-According to family tradition, you you broke.</i></p> <p><i>-And I'm gonna break it as many times as necessary, as long as that damn tradition doesn't take into account. I</i></p>	<p>In this confrontation, between Tita and Rosaura, it is manifested how transgressor Tita is. She does not care the people who remind her faults, because Tita disagree with the tradition of Mamá Helena considering that this has patriarchal principles. For example, controlling the people's life, and do not let that a person takes choices for her own will.</p>
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	<p><i>had the same right to get married</i></p> <p><i>-And you were the one who didn't have the right to get in the middle of two people that wanted deeply.</i></p>	
Confession	<p><i>-In the time you were away I had relations with a man who always I had in loved and I lost my virginity.</i></p> <p><i>That's why I can't marry you anymore.</i></p>	<p>In that moment, Tita confesses to John that she had been intimate with Pedro. She understands that this revelation means she will not marry John, despite his love for her, which he has shown through both actions and words.</p>
Equity	<p><i>-Tita, I don't care what you did, there are actions in life that shouldn't be given so much importance if they don't change the essential.</i></p> <p><i>What you said did not change my way of thinking</i></p>	<p>Equity involves recognizing that humans are not possessions. In this context, instead of yelling at Tita, John chooses a compassionate approach, acknowledging that she is a</p>

	<p><i>and I repeat that I would love to be the companion of your life, but I want you think very well whether that man is me or not. If your answer is yes, we will celebrate the wedding days. If not, I will be the first to Pedro and ask him to give you the place that you deserve it. '</i></p>	<p>human being, just like himself. In an act of love, John decides to let Tita go.</p>
Achievement	<p><i>Without words they took their hands and headed to the dark room</i></p>	<p>This fragment shows that Tita finally achieves what she has longed for and struggled to attain: enjoying love with Pedro.</p>

**4.3 Themes, Motifs, and Symbols**

**Themes:** In themes, it can be seen how love is important in the plot because this is the pillar of the story, and it is the element that makes all the events of the plot make sense and connects since beginning and ending. On the other hand, with the passing of the plot, another type of love emerges which is about first-sight love; this love appears when John Brown sees for the first time Tita, and as an art of magic John falls in love with Tita, and even when she

confesses the truth that she has sex with another person, John shows his love letting her go understanding that Tita is not her property and considering that she is a human as him. In this novel, it appears also confessions, which indicates people telling the truth. It could be confessing a feeling that a person has, or a fault committed before. The confession appears two times, the first time is when Pedro talks with Tita in a Christmas meeting, in this case, Pedro tells Tita that he is in love and the second moment is when Tita confesses the truth to John which is about how she had sex with a man, Pedro.

**Motifs:** Analyzing the plot, it can be seen that the main motif that the characters to character obtain their most desired goals is the desire, but that desire is not just a mere insignificant desire; it is a desire that means living the love with the person and not to whom others have decided. Another motif that appears in the novel is tradition, tradition implies that the youngest daughter of the family cannot get married, however, she must care for her parents until the day of their death, and this is the reason why Mamá Helena has patriarchal characteristics. There is another motif which is infidelity, for Pedro infidelity is the only way that he can be with Tita and enjoy love with Tita, no matter whom he hurts. If the goal is to be with Tita, the morality of the action becomes secondary.

**Symbols:** Reading the novel, it could be said that food has so much symbology, and the recipe that represents seduction is the chicken with rose sauce, in which Tita awakens deep desires in Pedro of life and everything that love implies. Sometimes characters are symbols too, and in **Like Water for Chocolate**, there is Mamá Helena who represents a patriarchal society because she forbids Tita to live life as she wishes and make her mind by her will; from the other

side, there is John who represents a refuge for Tita, that refuge allows her to regain strength after being mistreated by her mother and enduring her verbal aggression.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion**

The purpose of the conclusion is to summarize the main points and results of the study. It is also important to analyze the achievement of the objectives, draw conclusions, and evaluate unexpected results. In addition, a researcher can determine if the research question should be restated to extend the studied topics and obtain better results.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

##### **5.2.1 Analyze how love is the moving force that leads all characters to look forward to obtaining their most desired goals in life in the novel.**

In the novel, it can be perceived love is the force that drives characters to pursue their deepest desires. These desires often revolve around being with the person they love. Throughout the story, many difficulties are present; however, the protagonist, Tita, at the beginning does not have the strength to overcome those difficulties, but she gets that strength by finding refuge with John because John is her comfort zone since he treated her as a human, and not as a possession

that can be controlled according to their benefits. Later, Tita gets the courage to overcome everyone who opposes her relationship with Pedro. Ultimately, her love and determination prevail over societal expectations.

### **5.2.2 Analyze love as a main theme from a feminist point of view.**

From a feminist point of view, love can be seen as the struggle for some characters to make choices on their terms, rather than relying on others to decide whom they should be with. It emphasizes the importance of being the one who chooses how to experience and enjoy love. Additionally, from a feminist point of view, it can be seen how Tita fights for the right that Mamá Helena took from her, considering that in liberal feminism women fight to get a right that was taken from them; this is manifested in the novel. The patriarchal society, represented and assumed by Mama Elena, has denied Tita the right to choose with whom she may get married; Tita fights against it, and no matter the difficulty Tita becomes a transgressing character who opposes those expectations and changes them at the end.

### **5.2.3 Analyze how the patriarchal principles of Mamá Elena prevent Tita from enjoying the love she feels for Pedro.**

Mamá Helena is a character that represents the Mexican patriarchal Society of that time. Her obsession with tradition drives her to control Tita's life simply because she is her daughter and a woman. This reflects a key principle of patriarchy, which wants to impose control and restrictions on women. Although Mamá Helena is a victim of a patriarchal system, she also becomes a representative victimizer from that same patriarchal society. She repeatedly mentions

that Tita cannot get married because, as the youngest daughter, she must remain in her care according to tradition. In summary, Mamá Elena uses tradition as a control method over Tita.

#### **5.2.4 Examine the feminist principles that Tita uses to face all the characters that prevent her from being with Pedro.**

One of the principles of feminism is to achieve equality in rights between men and women. Consequently, in previous years men had more rights than women such as getting a job, voting, and assuming high-ranking positions in different areas of politics, among others. In *Like Water for Chocolate* Tita did not have the right to marry anyone she wanted; this is unacceptable and unfair because feminism believes that women deserve the same rights that men do. Thus, considering the injustice that Tita suffers, she fights for that right to enjoy freedoms and choices denied to her by Mama Helena's commands.

#### **5.3 Restatement of the Research Question: How does love become the main theme that leads Tita to become a feminist character, fighting for her fulfillment in the patriarchal society, presented in the novel *Like Water for Chocolate*?**

Love becomes the main theme that leads Tita into becoming a feminist character, fighting for her fulfillment in the patriarchal society. As it is presented in the novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*, love is the key point that makes Tita fight against the injustices committed against women in her society. Before falling in love, Tita obeys and complies with all the rules of that society. However, in the moment that Pedro tells her that he loves her, she is willing to fight against her mother, against her sister Rosaura, and even against Pedro himself. However, love manifests with a confession, and then Tita is injured psychologically by her mother; later she lives with John to recover her force, and she returns back to face her mother, and Rosaura to achieve that goal that she desired.

#### **5.4 Unexpected Results**

Some of the unexpected results are when Pedro accepts to marry Rosaura and not Tita because he loves Tita, not her sister. It is generally expected that marriage should be based on love to ensure a fulfilling and joyful relationship, rather than a source of torment.

Another one is that Tita did not marry John. This is an unexpected result because Tita should be with a man who is not of empty words, and a cowardly person like Pedro, but Tita deserves to be with a man who loves her, not only because he mentions this, but also because he shows it with love gestures as John did it.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

The researcher has reached several conclusions and suggests the following topics for further investigation:

First, continuing the feminist approach. It is recommended to further analyze the character Nacha. Nacha plays an important role as a maternal figure for Tita. When Tita is sad, Nacha is the only character who is at her side as a mother and supports her emotionally.

Second, it is important to examine the character, Gertrudis. Like Tita and John, Gertrudis also challenges the traditional norms. When Tita is uncertain about her impending wedding to John, she provides Tita with empathy and guidance. This support contrasts with the lack of empathy from Mama Elena.

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