

## A Feminocentric Reading Of Isabel Allende's The House Of The Spirits

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### Abstract

The present research paper is entitled "A Feminocentric Reading of Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits. The House of the Spirits. This study establishes Isabel Allende is feminist getting reflected in her works. The study examines Allende's women characters and establishes Isabel Allende as a feminist with reference to her novel entitled The House of the Sprits. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the image of women constructed by Allende. In Allende's works her protagonists revamp the gender codes that have been imposed upon them, putting the feminine at the center of their action. Her women defy the patriarchal system that constrains women who do not follow prescribed gender rules. Isabel Allende's women have proud of their sexuality, their sentimentality and their material attributes. Stemming from this feminine dimension, they re-elaborate their identity, incorporating qualities that until recently have been exclusively considered masculine: rationality courage, decision making and a strong will.

Isabel Allende is the most widely translated Latin American women writer today. She is considered a marginal author and much controversy surrounds her work. One of the points of contention regarding her work concerns whether or not her novels present a feminist cosmovision. This study is an examination of feminist strategies evident in the writings of Allende's. The investigation foregrounds the eclectic nature of Allende's feminism as it reflects an amalgamation of post-modern literary, political and social questions.

**(Keywords:** Feminist Strategies, Feminocentric, women's Space, reconstructing self, Family and Community, Anger against Socio-Political Circumstances)

### **Introduction**

The research paper examines the novel *The House of the Spirits* under the light of Feminocentric Reading this paper explores women characters of Allende with reference to her feministic approaches. *The House of the Spirits* recalls the history of four generations of a family along with the national history in a postcolonial Chile, using the literary device magical realism. The novel deals with the binaries of personal and political passions, where the personal passions are overshadowed with the techniques of magic. The political passions take on the struggle between the Marxist and Capitalists along with the Militarist. The novel starts before World War I and spans over fifty years. Historically the beginning of the novel and its progress over the plot traces also the women's movement, its strength and progress. Besides the political battle, the battle of sexes encompasses the rest of the story of both the del Valle and Trueba families. The novel is autobiographical and deals with the experiences of Allende's family and her memories.

The novel is narrated from the viewpoint of Esteban Trueba, Alba the granddaughter of Esteban Trueba and Clara Trueba, with the recorded information of the del Valle and Trueba women's history by Clara her grandmother. Clara states

My grandmother wrote in her notebooks that bore witness to life for fifty years... Clara wrote them so they would help me now to reclaim the past and overcome terrors of my own. (*The House of the Spirits* 488)

### **Structure of the Novel**

The novel can be divided into three sections. The first section deals with the del Valle family, the next section deals with Esteban Trueba and finally of Alba Trueba. Severo del Valle was an atheist, a mason with political aspirations. His wife Nivea, preferred to deal with God without any mediators. They had eleven children and Clara was the youngest. Clara inherited the quality of imagination from her mother's side. Later on, in the novel this imagination of

hers turns out to be the biggest asset for her granddaughter. The del Valle family had grown accustomed to the prophecies of Clara. She could predict earthquakes in advance and at the age of six, Clara had a vision that a horse was going to throw Luis making him to dislocate his hip. Unfortunately, none listened to her prediction and it comes true. The word of their daughter's power passed beyond the walls of del Valle family. Severo was a very agitated man as he felt that his daughter's capacity to foresee would ruin his political career. Meanwhile, Clara's elder sister Rosa started growing as an angel. She caught the eyes of Esteban Trueba and his sister Ferula. Trueba got closer to the del Valle family becoming her official suitor. To work in the Gold and silver mines were the dreams of men in order to elevate their social position and become rich subsequently. Esteban Trueba risks himself promising a good fortune in the future to catch the hands of Rosa. Severo's political ambitions began to take shape. He was expecting for a seat in Congress, as he had no hindrance in convincing the marginal voters of his place to elect him as their promising candidate. Soon Clara announced a death that is going to happen in the del Valle family on Saturday. Her prediction turns true as Rosa dies. Dr Cuevas found that she was poisoned in the autopsy. Soon rumors begin to spread that she had mistakenly been poisoned in her father's place.

Clara witnesses her sister's autopsy that made her mute for nine long years. Esteban Trueba was shattered with Rosa's death. He wanted to come out from the grief of his beloved's death and wanted to focus on his mother and sister. As the only strong patriarch throughout the novel, Esteban Trueba grew up in a ruined home and had witnessed the moral and economic ruin of his father and the slow illness of his mother right from his childhood. From a poor miner, he goes on to make a move in his life by establishing his wealth and power. He decided to go to Tres Marias and work over the land. Soon because of his efforts Tres Marias becomes a beautiful estate and Esteban Trueba elevates himself into the status of a patron. He worked for the welfare of his people at the same time raped many women the first being Pancha Garcia who later delivers his bastard son, Esteban Garcia.

The patron never believed in equality and wanted the class struggle as he felt inheriting equal rights would throw the civilization back to the stone age and he remembered Rosa's mother Nivea, who spoke about woman's equality in her rights to vote, attending the Universities and bringing even illegitimate

children under the protection of laws as ridiculous and weird, and he considered the lady to be sick in her head. Esteban Trueba believed the duty of women is motherhood and home. He felt women's liberation would sow uncertainty and chaos resulting in disintegration within the family and society.

When Europe was facing World War I, the political situation in Chile was disturbed. In the city the upper class had power and wealth were unaware of the danger that awaited to shake their position. In the countryside, Esteban Trueba and the other landowners planned a political game plan for the country's election. The peasants were living an ordinary and subjugated life as it was in colonial times, with minimum wages and no unions. But things faintly started changing, when new formed parties of the left disguised as evangelicals, filtered the minds of the peasants by preaching on one side and by giving pamphlets that had Marxist ideologies behind thereby stirring the Revolution. Soon Esteban Trueba returned to the city to see his dying mother and called for Pedro Segundo Garcia and explained him all the accounts so that in his absence things would move on with ease in the country side. In the del Valle family, Clara the clairvoyant interpreted dreams with the help of her mother Nivea for communication. Despite her solitude and muteness, Clara's adolescence passed quietly at her parent's home. After nineteen years, Clara broke her silence, on her nineteenth birthday.

The first statement that, she uttered was I am going to be married soon. (99) The del Valle family was jubilant in listening to Clara's voice after ten years and they had forgotten about what she uttered and realized it only after two months when Esteban Trueba had come to ask for Clara's hand. Esteban Trueba after many years of his barbarism, especially now being a rich man wanted to take Clara's hand. He was no longer a poor miner who scraped the earth for gold, but a rich landlord in Tres Marias. For Esteban, could not believe his good fortune, but Clara, has already visioned her destiny, and is well prepared to catch the hands of her sister's suitor without any real love for him. Esteban's sister had no real hope for marrying due to her age and with her brother's marriage, she feared that, she would be distanced by Clara. But her fear was no use as she knew that Clara was incompetent when it came to the day to day household works and regarding their decision makings. Clara was inefficient in administering the land and house that Esteban maintained and she required a lot of domestic inputs for which she needed the help of her sister in law.

When Ferula got a chance to speak to Clara, the latter had the capacity to read her mind and made a statement asking Ferula not to worry and they both will make up being good sisters. Ferula was taken aback and wondered the power of Clara that she had heard from others but experiencing it for the first time. Later in the years when Clara became pregnant, Ferula had a motherly affection for her and took Clara and her baby with motherly affection. Esteban expected a son as an authority of power and could pass his family name to the posterities. But Clara, with her power, christened her baby girls' name as Blanca even before her birth. As the family moved to Tres Marias, Clara understood the mission of her family.

Along with prayers, she also encouraged people towards revolutionary ideas that her mother had practiced years before and chained the people towards the policies of Congress. Esteban Trueba found the truth behind the prayer meetings and became enraged with his wife and his sister for having such progressive ideas. When Clara became pregnant for the second time, she announced about her twin boys and also named them as Jaime and Nicolas. Esteban was furious, as they were names of foreign merchants, and he wanted to name them with his first name. Very soon Clara gets a dream, where she sees her parent's death. Esteban comes to know about his in-laws death in an accident and tells to his sister asking her not to reveal it to Clara as it might affect her pregnancy. Unfortunately, Clara dreamt again about her mother Nivea walking through the field without her head. She was slowly made understood by Esteban regarding her parents' death which Clara was able to digest. As years passed by Esteban Trueba entered a prosperous period in his business deals. He was pleased with his life, as he was rich and had acquired the concessions for other mines, exporting fruits to foreign countries and also found a construction firm. All that he touched turned gold to him. Even the economic crisis that disturbed the nation left him untouched. In the northern state, thousands of workers were poverty-stricken because of the break of the nitrate fields. Unemployment was common and the families were taken to roads and moved to the capital in seeking jobs. Soon another calamity stroked in the form of exanthemic typhus kind of divine punishment on the poor people. Esteban Trueba wanted to move to the country to save his family. Clara had a different plan of serving the needy. She predicts the death of her sister in law as she comes as a spirit and kisses her

forehead. Evidently, it happens within a week. Clara's daughter Blanca falls in love with Pedro Tercero. Esteban Trueba had an eye on him as he was filled with revolutionary ideas like Sundays off, a minimum wage system, retirement and health plans, maternity leave for women, elections without coercion and peasant organization that would confront the owners|| (155). Clara announces her next premonition stating the country is going to be struck with an earthquake and nearly ten thousand people will die. Esteban Trueba did not believe it. Two days later an earthquake hit the country with the highest recorded catastrophes.

The devastation from the earthquake had put the nation into deep crisis and sorrow. Esteban Trueba nearly had spent four months with major injury and was recovering in impatience. The earthquake not only made Trueba bed ridden but it gave Pedro Segundo Garcia to take charge over the working of the Tres Marias. Pedro Tercero took advantage of this situation and introduced into Tres Marias all that was banned by Esteban Trueba like the revolutionary item's newspapers, political pamphlets, and religious doctrines. Clara felt alone, tired and confused when it came to making decisions. The only person to whom she could relay was Pedro Segundo Garcia. The death of Nana, who was in charge of the del Valle family house made the remaining servants into disarray. Blanca fakes an illness, and Clara takes her to Tres Marias. Blanca learns that her father had chased Pedro Tercero from hacienda because of his revolutionary ideas. A visiting French count to Tres Marias Jean de Satigny asks the hand of Blanca to her father. Esteban Trueba agrees and allows the count to frequently visit Blanca in the presence of Clara. But one night he notices Blanca being disguised and escapes from her window to the river. He follows her half the way but fails to track her path. Soon the count brings the affair to limelight by informing it to Esteban Trueba. With the help of Esteban Garcia, Esteban Trueba locates Pedro Tercero's hiding place and plans to kill him but managed to cut only his three fingers. Clara and Blanca moved to the city and Blanca found herself being pregnant. Esteban Trueba arranges her wedding with the count but soon Blanca moves away from him as she discovers his infidelity.

Clara meanwhile predicts that, Alba will have a prosperous future among all the odds. Esteban Trueba's only relief was Alba. Due to his harsh mannerisms, none of them from the house spoke to Esteban Trueba even Clara spoke to him only in

signs. Esteban Trueba in order to forget his loneliness once again started to focus on politics. For his own fortune, he devoted himself to the favour of the conservative party but dismissed such an idea within himself. He had risked everything for his new career and wanted to know the outcome of it through Clara. Clara through her prediction indicates his victory through sign. Soon the result was announced and Esteban Trueba becomes the Senator of the Republic, just as his wife had predicted.

In his adolescence, Esteban Trueba had no capital or family background to support himself. All that he had a greater ambition and pride. During his middle age, he was the successful, honored man and an estate owner. In his sunset, the much - awaited power gave him a supreme position and almost Esteban Trueba's life becomes a completed one. Soon Blanca delivers a girl baby that was considered as a sign of good luck. A tiny star shaped mark that the baby bore distinguished her of born for true happiness. Clara's prediction was that she will be lucky and she will be happy|| (298). The presence of his granddaughter sweetened Esteban Trueba's nature. Age and experience had sharpened Clara's ability to divine occult and to move objects from afar|| (303). Clara's powers were at peak that she had:

...communication with wandering souls and extraterrestrials was conducted through telepathy, dreams, and the pendulum she used for that purpose, dangling it in the air above an alphabet she had arranged in proper order on the table. (The House of the Spirits, 304)

Esteban Trueba had always found it difficult to express his love for the women in his life- his mother, sister, wife and even his daughter Blanca. But all these repressed emotions and love were showered on Alba. She was more worthy of all the other women who surrounded his life. Blanca's world was filled with Alba and she suddenly finds her revolutionary lover Pedro Tercero. Blanca knew well that if she left her present status and follows Pedro Tercero, then she would be dismissed from her social circle and the position that she enjoys as she will not be in a position to adjust to the modest life of a working-class quarter|| (317). Soon Clara's eyes close permanent on Alba's seventh birthday. As she could sense her death earlier Clara decides to make final preparations:

She arranged the notebooks that bore to life from the hidden corners of the house. She tied them up with colored ribbons, arranging them according to events and not in chronological order, for the one thing she had forgotten to record was the dates, and in her final haste she decided that she could not waste time looking them up.|| (The House of the Spirits 328) Clara's death was her wish. Jaime examines her and rightly states that I think she's decided to die, and science has no cure for that (329). "Clara thinks that, dying is like being born: just a change" (329). She graciously and sedately accepts this transformation. As Alba grows, she joins the student political movement, and falls infatuated with Miguel; a guerrilla leader. Later she lands in the hand of Esteban Garcia and becomes a victim of torture as a result of political unrest. In the prison she encounters a fellow working-class woman Ana Diaz who gave her a totality in understanding the torture underwent by women. Ana Diaz was an indomitable woman. She was raped in the prison house in front of her lover's eyes and they were brutally attacked that made her lose her child she was carrying. But she never lost her capacity to smile as she hoped things will change sooner. Alba during her stay in the doghouse had invoked Clara so many times to help her die. Clara's appearance gave her a supreme understanding of life that, the point was not to die, since death came any way, but to survive, which would be a miracle|| (467). Clara made Alba to register all the events in her mind without any paper or pencil, so that these thoughts would themselves made her rejuvenate and to escape from the doghouse and to live in the world making her presence strongly felt. Clara through her appearance also made Alba to be a surviving witness and to write the story of her survival. This would one day make the world look into the horror, that happened parallel to the peaceful scenario that was being projected by the dictators of the land, having the mirage of a peaceful life. With a stroke of the pen the military changed the world history, erasing every incident, ideology, and historical figure of which the regime disapproved (432).

The military coup resulted in the law order issue along with its impact on high prices and the lack of jobs. The labour forces were considered as slaves and were paid only with minimum wages. Senator Trueba realized that the army's action to dislocate the threat of a Marxist rule had turned into annexing of power by the military and were not interested in democracy (people's rule).



Trueba was a mute spectator as he could not save his granddaughter using his wealth or power. When, Alba narrates the events that happened in the doghouse and in the concentration camp, Trueba silently listens and felt that a good world had crumbled. Alba waiting for Miguel, soon discovers that her grandfather was no more. She buried him and started writing down the tale of history and emotions of the multi-generational unending tale of *The House of the Spirits*. Though the order of the world had crumbled, *The House of the Spirits* ends with a positive note on hope and the spirit of reconciliation. The novel depicts the thirst of the society, that is looking in for freedom, equality for races, slaves and laborers and women who are placed in the fringes of the society. Two voices are heard in the novel. First of Alba and another of Esteban Trueba. Alba voices for the underprivileged classes while Esteban Trueba, a landowner and a dominant politician voices the patriarchal perspective of history and socially constructed norms. The novel never projects anywhere the working-class becoming masters for their estates, but the estate owners of the society turn out to be highly influential people termed to be capitalists and later goes on to be even successful politicians in their life like Esteban Trueba. The rights of the lesser privileged were never protected by the capitalist society.

### **Women's Quest for the Space**

They were denied to form unions or have revolutionary ideas. Example: Blanca's revolutionary lover Pedro Tercero. Isabel Allende's female characters Nivea, Clara, Blanca and Alba- the four generations of women are equipped with political consciousness and create an identity for themselves. Within their social limitations, the ways through which women nurture and bind themselves, along with their posterity in the house for four generations forms the crux of the novel. From Nivea to Alba the female characters possess a spiritual inheritance except Blanca through the matriarch that, allows them to transcend and liberate from the baseness of the society and the patriarchy. They learn to survive in the domain given to them by the conditioned society; they resist within that domain and become finally successful in spite of numerous pains. Their life forms a learning curve for the successive generations thereby making their identity. It all begins with Nivea who talks about politics and who inspires women by talking about equal rights in the society governed by men. Clara who suddenly became mute at the age of nine observed her

mother very carefully. Along with her psychic powers, she was also aware of the prevalent class structure and the position of the women. She blocks the happenings of the day to day world that is supposed to be in order considered by the society and lives in her domain governed by imagination and spirits, that becomes a shield for her to observe both her family history and that of her nation's. Even after her marriage to Esteban Trueba, Clara showed no interest in domestic life. She was never interested to take care of her husband's estate or its accounts, as a traditional wife, but was very much interested in helping the poor to understand their place in the society. Just like her mother she too was involved in educating the women peasants of Tres Marias along with her sister in law. When people like her husband were exploiting the poor, Clara's world was an immaterial place. Her space was different from Esteban Trueba's consciously real world. In her space Clara had the liberty to follow Clairvoyance started gaining strength through communicating with supernatural beings, thereby in her silenced space she took total authority, in turn giving an identity for Blanca and Alba and not to believe upon any distorted version of patriarchy's story. Just like Clara being close with her mother and hearing stories, similarly Clara being mother maintained the amount of closeness with her daughter and finally with Alba keeping alive of the oral tradition of family histories. Her apocalyptic visions are not only a warning for the impending geographic changes but her visions also indicate the political decay of the nation. Art, Silence, Writing, Magic, Dreams and Visions are Clara's space.

The novel opens with the fantastical description of Rosa as —Only a fool could leave fantastic heart (21). The magic begins here. The Del Valle house is really as the title suggests The House of the Spirits because the mystical element started from Rosa, Clara and continued till Alba. There are some experiences that cannot be understood but are real. This forms the mystery. Clara was explicitly known for her magical powers. Rosa too had the mystical power but not explicitly as her features paralleled mermaid. Rosa's character is trivial as she dies by the end of the first chapter. From here the actual plot begins. The relationship between the del Valle family and Tres Marias was thought no more with the death of Rosa but with Clara speaking after nine years the relationship began. Somewhere Rosa's green hair passes on to Alba and thus the magic continued to the next generation. Clara studied Alba's astrological chart after two days of her birth and

noticed the child's first greenish locks of hair (298).

The muteness, that she falls from the age of nine on account of her sister's death, later with Trueba because of his behavior, Clara has filled in her domain with other elements like writing and Visions. Clara maintains a book from her childhood writing the incidents and history of the house and passes to her granddaughter Alba, to have a better understanding of her survival in the world. The exertion by patriarchal society on women through domestic violence, rape, verbal accusations and thrusting limitations are concentrated by Allende in this novel. Speech for women in the patriarchal society is never encouraged. Allende's protagonists use three different modes where patriarchy can never restrict female voice and mind. For Clara it is her silence and writing, Blanca takes up art and Alba through her writing answer the society. Silence is considered a passive medium for woman. But for Isabel Allende's protagonist Clara it gives strength to face Esteban Trueba. Clara in her silence had seen people around her suffering but she never lost her inner vitality. Clara's silence had disturbed and made Esteban Trueba suffer during his last few years of life. He had made several efforts to make her talk with him, but all his attempts went in vain. Writer and critic Sara E Cooper's *Family Systems and National Subversion in Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits*, she states Clara's silence: Paradoxically mirrors society's cowed silence in the face of systematic rape and repression of women and the lower classes...a site of resistance to the oppression. (29)

The patriarchal society expects women to be silent and follow their orders, where as in *The House of the Spirits*, Clara voluntarily embraces silence and several attempts of Esteban Trueba in need of making her speak fails. For Clara silence was not imposed on her but it was her choice. Her written accounts of her personal narratives give authentic records of the struggle faced by the Tres Marias women and the society as a whole. Later on, Alba starts to write her history keeping her grandmother's books as records and adds her struggle during the coup. Even Clairvoyance is considered to be an act of the women. Society at large does not accept men prophesying and consider it to be part of women. Esteban too as a father feels the same. When his son Nicolas, tries to acquire the skills of his mother, as a father and man he dismisses it.

Hence the other world that is beyond understanding remains to be in the control of the women characters of the novel. In the work *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf emphasizes the need for a woman to have her own space and financial independence for surviving and succeeding as a writer. Speech and writing are dominant weapons of expression. The patriarchal society tries to silence the medium of expression, where a woman expresses her resilience through writing thereby rewriting the history constructed by the power structure. When a woman is trapped within the four walls, it is her imagination that is free and it can't be chained. Thus, Clara the Clairvoyant becomes more solid in her character as her other world could not be invaded by Esteban Trueba. She writes the happenings in her diaries that serve to be the record for Alba in future to ponder over the position of women of the past. Somewhere it made her present strong.

In the case of Blanca, art 'became the medium of communication and solace during her sad times. Even the very first time, when she falls in love with Pedro Tercero, she does not know to express her emotions through speech to her mother and makes use of insipid water colours, that makes Clara baffling over her daughter's love affair. Later on, in her future Blanca stands on her own foot by making crafts and pottery to earn her living. She does not depend on her father's wealth. Even Clara encourages her to get in the art of making pottery to deviate herself from the sadness of her failed marriage relationship. Unlike her mother Blanca, Alba was able to communicate with spirits, especially her grandmother Clara during the tough times. Alba's testimony through her writing encompasses the life of four generations of women starting from Nivea.

The writing of Alba has no patriarchal influence in it. While analyzing Nivea, Clara, Blanca, and Alba with the three waves of feminism, we can notice that Allende had perfectly placed each woman in one of the waves cementing their place in the society right from the beginning of the novel. Nivea rightly fits into the first wave of feminism that upheld the suffragettes. She along with her husband Severo del Valle entered into politics and she bravely fought for the rights of the women especially for voting. Clara ideally suits the Second wave of feminism where sisterhood was encouraged, as it can be noted with her relationship between Ferula and the other women who are working in Tres Marias. Clara kept silence and

clairvoyance as her identity throughout the novel. She never advocated the capitalist notion of her husband Esteban Trueba and was for the Marxist visions when it came with the working-class people and especially women. Blanca and Alba will rightly fit into the Third wave feminism where they had concern only for their personal liberty.

They never worried about the patriarchal norms and wanted to create a space for themselves and be successful in it. Blanca though very passive she too followed her mother's footsteps in being silent and unlike Clara who gained her power in the spiritual world, Blanca was able to exert her power in the physical world with her knowledge in Art and Craft. She not only was able to take care of herself but also Alba to an extent with the meager income, she earned. Though, she was under her father's control initially, later on, she took control of her life with the income, she earned, with few social activities and thereby she emerges as a New Woman. Alba too emerges as a New woman in her own way. She is the only character in the novel who took some pity with the patron of the Tres Marias. Beyond being raped in the prison by Esteban Garcia, grandson of Esteban Trueba and Pancha Garcia, who was jealous of Alba's legitimacy Alba fights back with the help of her grandmother and tries to revisit her identity by knowing the roots through the diary written by Clara and her mother's letter to her grandmother thus it is the history of four generation women, who emerge to be successful and guide their path to the other generations.

Down the lane, man has sought to understand and dominate the world that, he had created. Man's history is fraught with examples of his attempts to gain control and create power through the employment of magic. Similarly, within the realm of magical realist texts, authors acquire new liberty to control the portrayal of their individual and cultural identities. Since magical realist texts step outside of the authoritative discourse established by the tradition of the European enlightenment, they can expand the literary and discursive space to include that, which was often excluded by the dominant European tradition, namely the voice of the Subaltern. In addition to providing the marginalized with opportunity to recuperate their voice, magical realist authors attempt to portray the multiple planes of human existence which intersect, overlap and blur between themselves: mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female, these are the boundaries to be erased,

transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts|| (Parkinson-Zamora and Faris, 6). Magical realism is the re-spiritualization, re-mystification, and deconstruction of traditional narrative. Magic Realists address the political, spiritual, ontological, social and sexual aspects of life. Magic realism stems from Latin Americans primitive belief systems.

Magic realism is a literary genre that depicts both the worldly and the other|| realistically, comprising all aspects of human perceptions and experiences and thus developing a new space outside of the usual empirical realist supremacy. Ironic juxtaposition, consistent contradiction and innovation of forms allow the authors of these works to redefine history and identify themselves over the authoritative other. Magical realism as a technique is used by writers across the globe, yet its presence is strongly felt in the works of the Latin American writers mainly because of the nation's histories dealing with the mythological stories and the socio-political unrest faced by the South American nations. Magical realism as a narrative technique opines Geoff Hancock, offers us a way of seeing truth somehow excluded from our vision|| (13). For Cynthia Duncan turning to magical realism is an expression as she feels:

Words, ideas and literary traditions that had given voice to European thought for centuries no longer served to express American reality. Even the concept of reality'seemed to vary from one hemisphere to another, for what seemed a commonplace, practice or belief in indigenous Mexico struck the Spaniard as fantastic or bizarre. (47)

Diverse writers across the globe feature this technique in their works to bring out their personal, social, and political concerns and thoughts regarding their nation's untold stories. Magic realist text does not depend on the fore groundings of the physical world as there are no explanations necessary for the motivations behind the characterizations. In the words of Garcia Marquez, magic text is paradoxically more realistic than a realistic text|| (Scott Simpkins, 148). In a term where two binaries are placed together, magic is beyond the natural law and realism includes the happenings, that can be discussed within the natural law. To overcome spine-tingling disbelief, magic

realism unusually presents familiar things by following the defamiliarization of Russian formalist concept where the elements, that are commonly present which becomes virtually invisible because of their familiarity resulting in gathering illusions making the text more realistic.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the intention of the magical realistic writer is to make the readers concentrate on the crux of the textual reality, its features and functions, thereby defamiliarizing. The inception of magic within the arena of uncertainty, prepares a hope that replaces the realistic text through a corrective means, thereby making it overcome its insufficiencies. As a result of this replacement of realistic texts, the magical texts create a new reality, where the process of creation, merged with magic becomes so real. This real is the merging of two disparate worlds that is the historical and the imaginary. Here vicinity plays a vital role in the structuring of the narration of the magical texts. In the words of Julian Barnes in *Flaubert's Parrot*, contradictions stand face to face, oxymoron's march in locked step and politics collides with fantasy (104).

Thus, magical realism is an elongation of realism within the natural law and its presentation resisting the basic assumptions of the idealism and rationalism. To quote: Mind and body, spirit and matter, life and death, real and imaginary, self and other, male and female: these are boundaries to be erased, transgressed, blurred, brought together, or otherwise fundamentally refashioned in magical realist texts (Zamora and Faris, 6). The writers using this technique tend to extend the interaction between the textual world that represents the characters and the world beyond the text which includes the readers' understanding. The reader's reality and trust are based on the representation of the characters. Through *The House of the Spirits*, Allende tries to recreate Chile, by defamiliarizing it to the readers where the atrocities of the military coup and the patriarchal supremacy are brought out through the narrative technique magical realism. This magical element also forms a concrete in strengthening the protagonist's Clara and Alba in their own ways.

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