Isabel Allende Essay, Research Paper

Isabel Allende

Isabel Allende was born in Lima, Peru. She moved to Chile when she was three years old. She received her education in England and went back to Chile to work as a journalist. She went into exile after the military coup in 1973. She has written many novels and short stories that have benefited the lives of many women of color. Isabel Allende is considered one of the best Latin American authors.

Isabel Allende is the niece of the assassinated Chilean President. Salvador Allende was the founder of the Socialist party and was the Senator of Chile from 1945 to 1970. On September eleventh 1911, there was a military coup and Salvador Allende died defending the presidential palace- this had a huge impact on Isabel’s life and is reflected in some of her books.

Ms Allende has written many books like: “The House of The Spirits”, “The Stories of Eva Luna”, “Paula”, etc. “The House of The Spirits” tells the fictional story of three generations of an eccentric South American family that resembles her own family. She tells the story of her grandmother, her mother, and all the special women in her life. I really enjoyed this book because she explains the change of social and political ideas that transformed her family from one generation to the next.

In “The House of The Spirits”, Allende tells about a man who was a patriarch and felt powerful, therefore he assumed he had control over everything and everyone that lived on his property. She also talks about the injustices committed to women by men in most of the third world countries. The following paragraph from The House of The Spirits illustrates this concept very clearly:

“…He simply used her as a hygienic method for relieving the tensions of the day and obtaining a good night’s sleep. But the moment came when Pancha’s pregnancy became obvious even to him. He felt repulsed by her. He began to see her as an enormous container that held a formless, gelatinous mass that he was unable to view as his own child. Pancha left the main house and returned to her parent’s hut, where no one asked any questions. She continued working in the main-house kitchen. She stopped serving Esteban at the table and avoided running into him, since they no longer had anything to say to one another. A week after she left his bed, he dreamt of Rosa and awakened on wet sheets. He looked out the window and saw a slender girl hanging up the wash on wire. She could not have been older than thirteen, maybe fourteen years old, but she was fully developed.

Just then she turned and looked at him: She had the expression

of a woman.

Pedro Garcia saw his patron whistling on the way to the stables

and he shook his head in wonder.” (The House of The Spirits, pg. 39).

when I first read this paragraph, it bothered me. I thought about it for a real long time until I realized that I was not angry at the woman for letting Esteban Trueba use her like she was a piece of meat, and I was also not angry at Esteban for using a woman and treating her so badly, but at society as a whole. I was furious at society for letting a man abuse an innocent woman and also for not giving enough power to a woman, so she at least, could defend herself.

Another of Allende’s works “Of Love and Shadows”, is a story that came form her experiences as a journalist in Chile and in Venezuela, where she fled after her uncle was killed.

Her most recent book, “Paula”, is a non-fiction memoir inspired by the illness and death of her 28 year old daughter. Paula was in a coma for a year after becoming ill with Porphyria, an inherited deficiency. Paula died in December of 1992. Allende dealt with her death by writing this book that deals with her daughter’s struggle with the illness. The book is also a journey into the author’s past. She describes her childhood, her youth, her two marriages, motherhood, etc. Allende feels that their daughter has given her the opportunity to look inside herself. “During these long months, I have been peeling away like an onion, layer after layer, changing; I am not the same woman, my daughter is giving me the opportunity to look inside myself and discover interior spaces–empty, dark, strangely peaceful– I had never explored before. These are holy places..” (An author’s transcendence of Grief,7).

Allende utilizes the magical-realism because she combines the super-natural with her reality and we have great stories about sisters with green hair and a girl who is extrasensory and elevates herself around the house. Allende’s works have been translated to more than 25 languages.

From my research, I have found that even though Isabel Allende has traveled extensively and has lived all over the world ( this is due to the fact that she went into exile of a very long period of time) she feels that the United States is a very complex, unique society– multiracial, multicultural and with many languages.

She also feels that there is this spiritual quest, mainly among women. “…You can afford than, because that’s something you can do when you have passed the stages of survival. In other cultures, women are at the stage of survival. There are people in this country who also have that as their first priority, but there are many who don’t. And those people can afford the luxury of searching for their god, and worrying about the body, and vitamins, and organic chicken, and the perfect cappuccino.” (Isabel Allende, Online)

Allende is very optimistic about our society and reflects this view in many of her works. She sees a more “feminine world, a world where feminine values will be validated, the same as masculine values are. A more integrated world.” (Isabel Allende, Online)

Isabel Allende has found a way to make herself heard throughout the world. It is important that we listen and understand what she is trying to tell all the women of color around the world. She is optimistic about our future. She believes in the blending of cultures because that will be the base of women s strength.

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