

## **I. Allende's Female Characters: Tolerance and Desire for Freedom**

The primary goal of this research is to focus on the problem of females, their endurance and hope for freedom in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* with a view of revealing the female protagonist's role in this great literary masterpiece. So far the female characters in the text are concerned, the writer has glorified, particularly the female characters, to the extent of endurance and hope for liberation and this endurance exhibits the Latin American socio-political structure and the concept of cultural tradition.

The main intention of this research is to study the female issue by the means of feminism. The novel primarily focuses on the female characters and their situation. This research also aims at finding the problem of women in the then Latin American society. Latin America was not quite developed and the people were following the unscientific blind faith. By this the main problem came between male and female. Then, the women suffered a lot and were treated as a non-human being by the males. Even though, this study also shows the women's endurance, courage and their hope for liberation. Somehow they react against the male domination which was not allowed in the then society. Despite this they dared to resist for their freedom.

Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* was published in 1982 and it is written in various languages. This novel became worldwide popular and an instant best seller when published in Barcelona in 1982. The novel was also critically acclaimed around the world. That the same year of publication, the novel was named Best Novel of the year in Chile. The book was first conceived by Isabel Allende when she received news that her one hundred year-old grandfather was dying, and she began to write him a letter that ultimately became the starting manuscript of *The House of the Spirits*. This is a novel like the novels no one writes any more: thick with plot and

bristling with characters that play out their lives over four generations of conflicts and reconciliation. A novel to be read for its brilliant craftsmanship and its narrative of inescapable power.

Spanning four generations, Isabel Allende's magnificent family saga is populated by a memorable, often eccentric cast of characters. Together, men and women, spirits, the forces of nature, and of history, converge in an unforgettable, wholly absorbing and brilliantly realized novel that is as richly entertaining as it is a masterpiece of modern literature. Announcing a truly great read: a novel thick and thrilling, full of fantasy, terror and wit, elaborately crafted yet serious and accurate in its historical and social observations.

Isabel Allende (August 2, 1942) is a Chilean American writer. Allende is one of the best known novelists in Latin America. She is the daughter of Francisca Llonca Barros Tomas Allende: the Chilean ambassador to Peru. Her father was a first cousin of Salvador Allende, president of Chile from 1970 to 1973; so Salvador is her first cousin once removed. Many sources cite Allende as being Salvador Allende's niece (without specifying that the relationship is that Tomas and Salvador are cousins); the confusion

Stems from Allende herself often referring to as her "uncle" in her private life and public interviews, because in Spanish a "first cousin once removed" is translated as "second degree uncle".

In 1945, after Tomas had disappeared, Isabel Allende's mother relocated with her three children to Santiago, Chile, where they lived until 1953. While living in Chile, Allende finished her secondary studies and met engineering student Miguel Frias whom she married in 1962. Reportedly, "married early, into an Anglophile family and

a kind of double life: at home she was the obedient wife and mother of two; in public she became, after a spell translating Barbara Cartland, a moderately well-known TV personality, a

Dramatist and a journalist on a feminist magazine."

Beginning in 1967, Allende was on the editorial staff for Paula magazine, and from 1967 to 1974 for the children magazine Mampato, where she later was the Editor. She published two children 'stories', Panhchita and Lauchas Y Lauchones, as well as collection of articles. She also worked in Chilean television production for channels 7 and 13 from 1970 to 1974. As a journalist, she once sought an interview with Pablo Neruda, a notable Chilean poet. He suggested Allende learned that her grandfather aged 99, was on his death bed, she started writing him a letter that later evolved into a book manuscript, *The House of the Spirits* (1982).

Allende's book Paula (1995) is a memoir of her childhood in Santiago, Chile and the following years she spent in exile. It is written in the form of a letter to her daughter Paulo. Allende's novel have been translated into over 30 languages and sold more than 456 million copies. There are three movies based on her novels currently in production - Aphrodite, Eva Launa and Gift for a Sweetheart. Her 2008 book, *The Sum of Our Days* is a memoir. It focuses on her grown son, Nicolas: second husband, William Gordon; and several grandchildren. A novel set in New Orleans was published in 2010, *The Island beneath the Sea*.

Despite or perhaps because of her commercial success and "being compared to Gabriel Garcia Marquez." Allende has been then subject of negative criticism from other authors and literary critics among them Roberto Bolano and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In an article published in *Entre Parenthesis*, Bolano writes that Allende's literature is anemic and compares it to a person on his death bed. Despite all these, it

has been noted that "Allende's impact not only on Latin American literature but also on World Literature can not be overestimated" (20). The Los Angeles Times has called Allende "a genius,"(20) and she received many international awards, including the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize , granted to writers "who have contributed to the beauty of the world" (20). She has recently been called a "literary agent" by *Latino Leaders Magazine*, which in its 2007 article named Allende as the third most influential Latino in the world.

As illustrated above in the hypothesis female suffering and their struggle for existence in the text is a consequence of culture of female endurance cultivated by patriarchy. The characters Pancha Garcia, Alba and Blanca are female and they suffered a lot because of male domination and socio-political structure that is against the female wish and desire. Despite all these the female characters in the novel go against the male domination and socio-political structure of the then situation. Such presentation heralds a bundle of a literary, social, political issues and implications.

Even the greatest novel writers around the world may have written many novels in their life time, Allende's contributions place her amongst the most prolific literary figures in the history of Latin American Literature. In all of her novels, as well as in her other articles, Allende, in her novel, has based upon her own personal experiences and often pay homage to the lives of women, while weaving together elements of myth and realism. She has lectured extensively, and also toured many American colleges to teach literature. Funny and tragic, magical and nightmarish, extravagant and cruelly realistic. A novel which once again proves the vitality of Latin American literature. *The House of the Spirits* is a novel in its own class, the work of a true writer, a good and beautiful book to be devoured in one mouthful.

Despite all her works, this research gives emphasis on her best novel *The House of the Spirits* in which I found radical feminism. By scrutinizing the text, this study gets various problems of the female, that's why it takes the point of female issues for research. Many writers give their review on this novel. Robert M. Adams and his "The Story Isn't over," in *New York Review of Books* write "Mixed review of the novel that praises Allende's use of magical elements and mood of reconciliation. The critic does fault the author for failing to take proper advantage of her eccentric but "entertaining" female characters" (32).

His criticism makes it clear that the novel is about the use of female characters. Here women characters are taken as the matter of entertainment for male. The women in Tre Marias are abused by Steban Trueba for his sexual satisfaction. Alba grand daughter of Steban Trueba has been the matter of entertainment for Steban Garcia, an illegal son of Steban Trueba. In the context, Claudia Marie Kovach examines, "The ways in which Allende propagates a 'prophetic vision of female integrity and justice' in *The House of the Spirits*, focusing on the role of memories in the book and Allede's narrative strategies" (74).

Kovach highlighted the female issue in Allede's *The House of the Spirits*. He tries to show a kind of justice that is inherent in Allede's novel. Nivea, the mother of Clara who demands "women to have equal rights with men, to be allowed to vote and attend the university, and for all children, even bastards, to be granted the full of protection of the law"(28). Allende's other characters like Pancha Garcia, Alba and Clara are demanding for justice. Literary critic Gail Tayko affirms this assessment in his discussion if women in *The House of the Spirits*: He discusses "how *The House of the Spirits* could be utilized in the classroom, concluding that the work interweaves sexual, political and economic oppression"(19-20).

Tayko explores the ideas of Allende and tries to mention the problems that are in society regarding socio-political and sexual oppression. For example, the women in Tres Marias have been exploited in every sector. They are oppressed sexually, politically and economically. Like Pancha Garcia who is very poor and she also has been the victim of physical and mental exploitation. Esteban Trueba rapes her but she can not do anything against his monstrous behavior.

The women named Pancha Garcia who has been exploited sexually and she doesn't get justice. Another female character Alba has been the victim of political conspiracy and the victim of revenge. She is also tortured both physically and mentally. In the same way Trauba's family is economically very poor, Esteban Trueba's mother due to the lack of money faces death and his sister also remains unmarried. So, there are many problems especially women are facing which are clearly mentioned in this novel. Moreover, Ruth Y. Jenkins states, "The connections between the supernatural and female voice in Allende's *The House of the Spirits* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Women Warrior*, stating that "both authors narrate and preserve authentic female experience"(19).

Jenkins also finds a kind of female experience in Isabel Allede's *The House of the Spirits*. In this novel there is the connection of supernatural events and the female voice regarding the female experience. Female characters in the novel present the different kind of attitude and the expecting the proper life style in order to exist in the society. There are some female characters that belong to this category. For example, a major character named Clara after her death her spirit visits to the Alba to encourage her to live and not to be coward. Moreover, the experience of female regarding their struggle in hardships as in *The Women Warrior* give way to the victimized women.

Some other female characters like Nivea and Ferula also have the experience of struggle during their adult life.

Allede's this novel inspiration of her family matter gets several comment either good or bad but as whole this text raising the main problem of the society is regarded respectfully and got world wide popularity.

The fiction is about socio-political situation and male domination in relation to the Latin American society. It also discusses the themes appertaining to the western, particularly Latin American novel writing; a discussion that also presents the female endurance and their hope for liberation in *The House of the Spirits*

The centre of the focus is to encompass all the issues that matter to female endurance and their hope for freedom. The analysis necessarily has to overlook other themes and aspects of the novel like role of cultural tradition, poverty, society, and politics and so on, though they might appear if they are deemed to be related to the major thesis of the paper.

Since time immemorial, women always have been subjugated to harsh domination of male. Let it be mother, or wife or daughter in all forms, she has been ruled by the males. This subjugation is not only in east or west, but in all parts of the world. While there are tales of females being the rulers and mightier than men, such narratives are limited to myths with no specified versions to prove them. This, however, does not mean that the women have not raised their voice against male domination.

Details concerning women's subjection by men go far back to the ancient myths and scripture. Jewish myth says that Lilith, who was Adam's first wife considered herself equal to him. Unlike Eve, she was created from the dust, just as Adam was created. Adam demanded Lilith's submission but she rejected such proposal and

claimed that she is equal to him. When Adam repeatedly insisted her submission, she rudely disrespected him and flew to the lap of nature, to the edge of Red sea just as some female characters in *The House of the Spirits* like Clara leaves Esteban Trueba for his rude behavior and also his sister curses him and leaves the home. Some other women also raise the voice against the so called male domination. Unlike in Allende's novel, however, God threatened Lilith to come back, or to lose a hundred of her demon children daily to death. The presumptuous Lilith preferred punishment to patriarchal submission. For this crime of disobeying the authority, she was excluded from the human community, and was condemned to the excessively painful punishment to kill her own children

This story is stark example of the male domination; as the God, too is male and created by men. However, the daring defying of Lilith shows that women were not just submissive, but powerful enough to revolt against the domineering male authority, even in the ancient period.

In Latin American countries males are taken as superior, they are centre and everything is mobilized by the male and female are subjugated. So, this fiction also shows the male and female relation. But my research finds that the women in Latin America are always been the victim of male's cruel behavior. Like, Pancha Garcia, who has been exploited sexually and mentally by Steban Trueba.

In the eastern culture, female is placed (at least, that what we read) at a high status. Hindu philosophy regards her as the symbol of power and the source of creation. According to a popular story in *Durga Sapta Puran*, a sacred book of the Hindus, when all the male gods and the mankind. Since, the day of her assassination of Mehasasur, the demon, Hindus celebrate Dashain, one of the great festivals of Hindus, to mark the victory of the goddess (Bhagwati) over the bad (demons).



However, these acts by Bhagwati in the east and or that of Lilith in the west are limited to mere myths, and in reality, all these acts serve no other functions than that of providing pure entertainment. Even to this day, no culture and society has given a respectable social space for females. Despite this, however, every culture and society has similar historical and mythical incidents where women have protested and bestowed their power to save the humanity. However, all these acts of endurance have been limited to myths or tales, but in practice females always have been subjugated to harsh discrimination and injustice.

Moreover, in the male dominated society, when female try to rose, they are termed 'witches' or 'mad women.' They often have been undervalued in comparison to men. It becomes clear if we examine some of the outstanding literary characters. Lady Macbeth, and Ophelia's madness is considered pathetic while Oedipus is heroic figure, and King Lear's madness is gloriously universal. In Nepalese history, too, the role of Queen mother Rajyalaxmi has been reduced to mere a puppet, despite her decisive role in safeguarding the nation's interest from the foreigner invasion. In the Western culture, the Gorgons, Medusa, Scylla, and Circe- (the mother of death and goddess of night) are few female characters who had tried to define them by dauntlessly confronting the power of authority. From the female perspective, the monster woman is simply a woman who seeks the power of self articulation. But from the male point of view, all these mythical figures are the terrible objects in that they reject the submissive silences of domesticity.

If the females are ready to endorse the reality of domesticity they are considered normal but those who reject the male imposed authority of domesticity are simply considered outcasts. This assumption of women's inferiority goes far back to Aristotle, who viewed that the females were female by virtue of certain lack of

qualities. We can observe a continuity of this in Freud's assumption that female sexuality is shaped by "penis envy".

In this regard, we can see that from the ancient time to the twentieth century, women have been dominated in different forms by the man made ideology and culture; an ideology that makes them culturally enduring characters who are suppose to suppressing their protest against the patriarchal dominancy.

Feminists are united by the idea that women's position in society is unequal to that of men, and that structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social, and economic detriment of women. However, feminists have used different theories to explain these inequalities and have advocated different ways of readdressing inequalities, due to this, there are marked geographic and historical variations in the nature of feminism.

To erase the traditional stereotypes concerning women and to achieve recognition in literature, women had to labor very hard. The nineteenth century and the twentieth century women had to face great difficulty in establishing themselves as the writers in society. Thus campaign of writing to establish them in the society was earlier, initiated formally through writing at the second half of the eighteenth century, especially through the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, who spoke for the political and social rights of women in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1793). Although many critics attempted to intervene in the field of feminist writing, Wollstonecraft is generally considered to be the first formal example of feminist writing.

Before this, the seventeenth and eighteenth century and even some of the nineteenth century women writers were afraid of writing for the fear that they might be considered crazy women for their audacity. But with the passage of time, when the

women grew more conscious of their rights, they bravely attempted the pen and proved themselves equally powerful as male writers. Though written by a man J. S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) is regarded to be milestone in the development of feminism.

Facing different cross currents like the Suffrage Movements, Civil Rights Movements and Liberation Movements of 1960s of twentieth century; feminism took shape as an organized movement only after 1960s. It was launched as one of the effective literary movements after this. This ferment of the 1960s provided feminism with its ideological core, vitality and impetus. The early feminists during the first half of the twentieth century were ultimately successful in gaining the suffrage in 1919 and were instrumental in the enactment of protective legislation for women workers in the 1920s. These women, who were concerned with reforms to improve the status of women within the separate sphere, have been termed social feminists. At the same time, they were challenged by a group of more outspoken feminists who rejected protective legislative as inherently discriminatory and worked for equal rights legislation. These are often described, as the radical feminists. They questioned patriarchal authority in such a radical manner that the social feminists accused them of being anti-family (Source: *Students' Microsoft Encarta 2008*).

During the 1960s and 70s, new wave feminism came with an attempt to break down the barriers between the male and female spheres. In a social context, where patriarchy disseminated the idea that to be women in this society is to be "feminine" and to be a feminist is to be "neurotic," this movement of feminism flourished much with the writings of twentieth-century feminist theories with their world famous works *A Room of One's Own* and *The Second Sex* respectively.

Woolf in her *A Room of One's Own* (1929) wrote, for example, about how women are imprisoned within the domestic premises and are prevented from realizing their productive, creative possibilities. The social and economic obstacles extended before them always obstructed women's creativity. She believed that these obstacles often stood as hurdles before their literary ambitions. In her essay "Professions for Women," Woolf discussed the disabling nineteenth century ideology of womanhood. She also claims that the literary genres were made by men for their own use. Only the novel gives women a workable space, but still their forms has to be reworded for its new purpose expressing the female body.

Similarly, Woolf in "Shakespeare's Sister" *A Room's of One's Own* beautifully depicts the pain of being a woman. She creates a character called Judith, sister of William Shakespeare, the greatest English dramatist. Judith too, was equally talented as Shakespeare in her childhood. However, unlike Shakespeare, she never was sent to the Grammar School. She, however, managed to study Latin, Ovid, and Horace, and the elements of grammar and logic. And just as Shakespeare had fled to London to accomplish his dream to work in theaters, Judith too, fled to London.

But on her arrival to London, she found that the women were not permitted or act in theatres, as at that time, the female role to, was performed by the males. And so, she stood outside the theatres caring the horses, while people tried to take undue advantage of her beauty and innocence. She then had only two opportunities, either to surrender to her rapists, or to follow a so-called gentleman, who had taken pity, on her to look after his children; who knows a wife of maid. Her brother, Shakespeare, by contrast had an opportunity to turn into small and part time actor in the theatres, and later had chance to flourish dramatist, Shakespeare the great.

The whole episode shows how the genius of women is often discarded because they are born up in a society that is male engineered and pioneered by males. Clara, Alba, Nivea, Ferula and Pancha Garcia are the women in distress, too are like Judith; they are struggling in an uncaring society, though they have many responsibility. They try erasing the limitation that is made for the women that is to get equal position in the society. Nivea gathers the women and they walk on the road to demand the law and justice.

When truth is created and articulated among the people under the system of power, the constructed truth gets materialized in the form of culture and through this culture those people internalize their own interiority; thus, supporting the system of authority of power. In this regard Italian communist thinker Antonio Gramsci talks about the hegemony and defines hegemony as, "A culture of endurance, the consent of the ruled to be ruled: ruled themselves agree to be ruled in hegemony" (32).

Simon Blackburn in *Dictionary of Philosophy* talks about the ideology which is connected with male and female relation. He says that the ideology as a, "Sets of ideas associated with distinctive political standpoints conservatism, environmentalism, feminism and socialism" (185). In this sense, ideology is a wide range of system of beliefs, ways of thought, and categories that provide the foundation of programmes of political and social action: an ideology may be thought of spectacles that distort and disguise the real status. As such, ideologies are not just a set of errors of reasoning but rather as a systematically distorting factor that causes the errors of problem in the thought of its victims. It can also make the real condition appear totally upside down and those who do not actually suffer from such distortions can only realize the distorting effects of ideology but those are effected from it are totally blinded.

Here ideology works as a weapon for the males to dominate the females and to perpetuate the same imposed thought upon them. The revisionist Marxist thinker Louis Althusser views:

Ideology manifests itself in different ways in the discourse of each of the semi-autonomous institutions of an era, including a literature, and also the ideology operated to form and position the users of language as the "subjects" in a discourse, in a way that in fact subjects them – that is, subordinates them to the interests of the ruling classes. (Abrams 183)

An ideology is the product of the position and interest of a particular class that is male in our society. In any historical era, the dominant ideology, embodies and serves to legitimize and continue the interest of the dominant social class that is female.

So, by the use of ideology, as a weapon, dominated class in the society, (i.e. female) is chopped according to the interest of the privilege class i.e. male into the pieces of cultural discourses, and those pieces of discourses become truth even for the females because they have been made so by the domination or powerful authority. Discourse is another factor which addresses the male and female situation in the society. According to Blackburn:

Discourse is a continuous stretch of language containing analysis of the social and linguistic description of norms governing such productions, and may include (in critical linguistics) focus upon the social activities; for instance, the hidden presuppositions that the persons addressed are of a certain class, race, or gender. (107)

It is a theory designed to establish the right moral and political principles, and these principles are emerged by means of certain process taking place under some conditions.

When the conditions are restrained by power, the process is communication regarding discourse. In the context M. H. Abrams narrates:

Michael Foucault's view that the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting pre-existing entities and orders, bring into being the concepts, oppositions, and hierarchies of which it speaks that these elements are both products and propagators of power or social forces, and that result, the particular discursive formations of an era determine what is at the time accounted knowledge and the truth as well as what is considered to be humanly normal as against what is considered to be criminal, or insane, or sexually deviant. (107)

By the means of power, discourse is created in any form, either in verbal as myths or in written texts, which may seem to present or reflect an eternal reality in fact consists of what are called representations that means, verbal formations which are the "ideological products" or "cultural constructs" or the historical of specific era. Such representations are conditioned to be true to those who are under the system of ruling power who has the privilege to create the discourse as truth.

From all these above conditions, we can witness that feminism came with political, cultural and social awareness but the male ideology and discourse is still there in the culture and society to distort feminism making the women culturally silent and enduring, thus making their thinking culturally erroneous.

The central thing is that our civilization is pervasively patriarchal i.e. it is male centered and controlled, and is organized and regulated in such a way as to

subordinate women to men in all political, economic, social, legal, and artistic. From ancient time to the present, the female tends to be defined by negative reference to the male as the human norm. Females are considered as other or a kind of non-man, by her lacks of the certain identifying male organ, of male power and of the male character traits that are presumed to have achieved the important privilege and the major works of civilization and culture. Women themselves are thought to internalize the ruling patriarchal ideology, i.e. the conscious and unconscious presupposition about male superiority. So, they are conditioned to hate their own sex and to cooperate in their own subordination.

It is widely accepted that when one's sex is determined by anatomy, the prevailing concepts of the qualities that are considered to construct what is masculine and what is feminine in identity and behavior are largely cultural constructs that were made by the pervasive patriarchal biases of our civilization. As, Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* puts it:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization a whole that produces this creature which is described feminine. A man would rather never set out to write a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: I am a woman: this truth must be based on all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. (17)

The term masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as in



indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.

In this way, humanity is male and man defines woman not is herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. As such, it is clear that in such pervasive cultural condition, women's lives are either misrepresented or not represented at all.

Few writers dared to challenge the existing trend of depicting male as superior to female. However, though less, there have been attempts by writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Beret Browning, Kate Chopin, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Sylvia Plath, Atwood Margaret, are some of the name popular in the trend of feminist writings.

Feminist thoughts and activities can be divided into two waves. The first wave, which began in about 1800s and lasted until the 1930s, was largely constructed with gaining equal right between women and men. The second wave, which began in the late 1960s, has continued to fight for equality but has also developed a range of theories and approaches that stress the difference between women and men and that draw attention to the specific needs of women.

Most of the writers belonging to this latter phase challenged the literary representation, where the female has been targeted as the "evil" factor behind any wrong happenings. They challenged the dominance of male characters through literary creations. However, their presentation of female character superior or equal to the male was not free from the dominant presence of a male who supervised the female character to oppose the existing social values and norms.

An example of female revolt can be seen in a Norwegian dramatist, Ibsen, especially in his play *A Doll's House* (1879). In the play, Nora the central character

dares to walk out of the male world, throwing a real challenge to the puritan males. The drama was criticized severally by the clergies and religious leaders, and the writer was asked to change the ending, especially the scene, where Nora leaves her husband and children with a determination not to return to the same structure of social dominance.

This drama had a huge impact on the writings of later writes. It specially invited scores of critics and scholars to track the never traded way. Following the performance of this drama, what is a proof concerning the impact of *A Doll's House* there was a drastic change in the feeling of women working in medical, education sector? They were lured to raise their voice in favor of their female counterparts, whose voice was never heard.

While in specific instances women's control or men's support for feminist values could make a difference, in society as a whole the process of structural differentiation is likely to continue unabated until it runs into structurally generated contradictions and effective political opposition; an opposition that might seize the opportunity provided by those contradictions. Marxism, on the other hand, giving its historical materialist premises, acknowledges the dialectical unity between agency and structure, subject and object; it believe that socio-historical agency has an objective social content, and structures are embodied in socio-historical agents.

To consider some of the different strategies for responses to female endurance, let's return to the schematic claims that women are oppressed and this oppression is wrong or unjust. Very broadly, then, one might characterize the goal of feminism to be ending the oppression of women. But if we also acknowledge that women are oppressed not just by sexism, but in many ways, like by class, homophobia, racism, and so on. Then it might seem that the goal of feminism is o end all oppression that

affects women. Everyone might not agree with such expansive definition of feminism. One might agree that feminists ought to work to end all forms of oppression - oppression is unjust and feminists, like everyone else, have a moral obligation to fight against injustice- without maintaining that it is the mission of feminism to end all oppression. One might even believe that in order to accomplish feminism's goals it is necessary to combat racism and economic exploitation, but also think that there is a narrower set of especially feminist objectives. In other words, opposing oppression in its many forms may be instrumental, even a necessary means to feminism, but not intrinsic to it. Some writer analyzed the male and female relation and realized the necessity of feminism which they considered the better way to study about the female problem. For example, bell hooks, a prominent critic argues:

Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation racism and other forms of group oppression, and that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact. This knowledge should consistently inform the direction of feminist theory and practice. (22)

The feminine uprising is also set up in such a way that it should take place in males mercy.

On hooks' account, the defining characteristic that distinguishes feminism from other liberation struggles is its concern with sexism. She further writes:

Unlike many feminist comrades, I believe women and men share a common understanding- a basic knowledge of what feminism is if it is ever to be a powerful mass- based political movement. I suggest that

defining feminism broadly as "a movement to end sexism and sexist oppression" would enable us to have a common political goal sharing a common goal does not imply that women and men will not have radically diverge perspective on how that goal might be reached. (23)

hooks approach depends on the claim that sexism is a particular form of oppression that can be distinguished from other forms. Racism and homophobia, even though, it is currently (and virtually always) interlocked with other forms of oppression are some of its examples. Feminism's objective is to end sexism, especially so because of its relation to other forms of oppression, this will require efforts to end other forms of oppression as well.

It follows that feminists who themselves remain racists will not be able to fully appreciate the broad impact of sexism on the lives of women of color. Furthermore, as sexist institutions are also, racist, classicist and homophobic, dismantling sexist institutions will require that we dismantle the other forms of domination intertwined with them. Following hooks' lead, we might characterize feminism schematically (allowing the schema to be filled in differently by different accounts) as the view that women are subject to sexist oppression and that this is wrong. This move shifts the burden of our inquiry from a characterization of what feminism is to a characterization of what sexism, or sexist oppression is.

As mentioned above, there are a variety of interpretations- feminist and otherwise of what exactly oppression consists in, but the leading idea is that oppression consists in an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people. Not just any enclosing structure is oppressive, however, for plausible any process of socialization will create a structure that both limits and enables all individuals who live within it. In the case of

oppression, however, the enclosing structures in questions are part of a broader system that systematically and unjustly disadvantage one group and benefits another. So, although sexism restricts the opportunities available to- and so unquestionably harms- both men and women in terms of its overall effect, women as a group unjustly and obviously suffer the greater harm.

It is a crucial feature of contemporary theory, however, that one assumes that members of the privileged group have intentionally designed or maintained the system for their benefit. The oppressive structure may be the rustle of an historical process whose originators are long gone, or it may be unintended result of complex cooperative strategies gone wrong.

First, we need to explicate further what it means to be oppressed because you are a woman. Regarding this matter, Hazard Adams comments, "Woolf held for the radical changes that would or should occur as women's freedom and their suppressed values began to effect conceptions of power, family, and social, in the past shaped by men" (817).

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* established the principle of modern feminism. In this work, she uses existentialist terms for the culture's definition between masculinity and femininity. 'He' is subject or 'self'; 'she' is object or 'not self' that means she is otherness. This otherness of women has the effect of equating masculinity with humanity, and so our language condition enables use to speak of mankind instead of humankind, and to use the masculine pronoun 'he' generally to represent both men and women. So, according to Beauvoir, for feminists to break this patriarchal power, it is necessary to challenge men at the level of theory, but without entering the theoretical domain on men's terms.

Contemporary feminist criticism derived its original impetus from the Women Liberation Movement of the 1960s. In this regard, Mary Ellman's *Thinking about Women* (1968) and Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970) are the pioneering books. Between these two texts Millet's work is highly valued as a book to herald the beginning of feminist criticism. It is mainly about the unequal relation of domination and subordination. This state in society, as Millet calls is sexual politics. Elaine Showalter calls it the first major book of feminist criticism.

Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) is another great contributory theoretical work of feminism. In this book she presents two different models of approaching the text, thus rejecting the male model of approaching the text which had been thoroughly used hitherto even by women. In this sense, feminist approach to interpret the male oriented text by women. Showalter's next model, Gynocriticism takes its departure from the assumption by saying that women are different in terms of nature, race, culture and notion; therefore, they cannot be universally studied. In it, woman studies the text produced by women from woman's perspective. The woman reader identifies the career of women writer. It studies the problem of female language and creativity. Gynocritics develop new models based on the study of female experiences, which is related to feminist research in history anthropology, psychology and sociology. In this sense, gynocritics construct a female framework for the analyses of women's literature kicking out the models of male.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is an investigation of typical motives and patterns among the nineteenth century women writers. One of their central arguments in this book is that nineteenth century women writes chose to express their resistance through in a series of duplicitous textual strategies whereby both the angel and the monsters, the sweet heroine and the raging

madwoman, are aspects of the authors self image or self construct, as well elements of her treacherous anti-patriarchal strategies. According to them, patriarchal aesthetics always want a girl to be inanimate objects of art. They suggest the female artists first to struggle "against the effects of a socialization which makes conflict with the will of her male precursors seem inexpressively absurd, futile or even as in the case of the Queen in *Little Snow White's* self annihilating" (49). They further argue that the woman can begin such a struggle by actively seeking a female precursor who proved by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible.

The anthropologist explanations about both the subversive feminine symbols like witches, evil eye, menstrual pollution, castrating mothers and feminine symbols of transcendence like mother goddess's merciful dispensers of salvation and female symbols of justice are also tools to suppress females. In this case, Gilbert and Gubar explicitly point out that women can appear from certain point of view to stand both *under and over*, but really a simply outside of, the sphere of culture's hegemony.

These ideas of subversive and protective mentality are the seminal outbursts in the women's selfhood movement, liberating out from the entanglement of male ascribed angelic mire of submission. The male hegemony created by discourse of power makes the women accept the truth as prescribed by the sexist male.

Feminist criticism comes in many forms and feminist critics have a variety of goals. Some have been interested in rediscovering the works of women writer overlooked by a masculine- dominated culture. Others have revisited books of male authors and reviewed them from the woman's point of view to understand how they both reflect and shape the attitude that have held women back. A number of contemporary feminists have turned to other topics such as women in postcolonial societies, women's autobiographical writings, experiences of lesbians the theme of

womanliness as a masquerade, and the role of film and other popular media in the construction of the feminine gender.

Until a few years ago, however, feminist thought tended to be classified not according to topic but, rather according to country of origin. This practice reflected the fact that, during the 1970s and early 1980s, French, American, and British feminists wrote from somewhat different perspectives. This is somewhat similar to what has been happening in Nepal.



## **II. Female Endurance and hope for Liberation in *The House of the Spirit***

Allende is popularly known as a prominent novelist of Chile America. Unlike many American writers, she has presented enduring and protective female characters capable of challenging the existing male hierarchy. *The House of the Spirits* is a striking literary masterpiece that reflects subversive and outgoing female voice, at the same time.

To Allende every mundane charm is related to the illusions, and only the reality is through for which lies her pursuit of truth, and no wealth and power can stop her mission. In this novel everything is stated about the earlier and later part of Steban Trueba's life. Hence, the narrative starts from the beginning part of the story. The narrative includes the catalogue of chief characters and their prime qualities. The chief characters are presented here Esteban Trueba, Nivea, Clara, Blanca, Alba, Ferula, and Pedro Tercero Garcia and etc.

Female characters in the novel are presented very beautifully, like Clara is a charming as well as audacious. Alba and Blanca are also very beautiful and these beautiful women make perfect pair with their husband and lover in their earlier life. Like in most of her novel, Allende treats her female characters in this text as ideal beings, thereby enforcing the social, political and patriarchal values of the Latin America (West). Allende describes Clara as a clairvoyant and telekinetic who is rarely attentive to domestic tasks, but she holds her family together with her love for them and her uncanny predictions. Blanca who enjoys in love making in her earlier life and Alba also do the same. Clara happens to marry with Steban Trueba about which she already had known because of her predicting power. Clara fits the scriptural definition of resistance.

Similarly when she becomes a housewife, she tries to manage her family

perfectly along with Steban Trueba. Allende has created Clara who is very sweet, a thrilling and an audacious character. Steban Trueba loves her and finds beautiful as Rosa, Clara's dead sister to whom Steban had loved blindly. Despite all these Allende has presented binary between female characters as brave, experienced and heroic manner, which qualities make this novel as a romantic novel.

The traditional, cultural, social and political issues relate to women as represented in the novel inform how Allende views them. Allende, who is an adherent follower of humanism, respected her female characters with respect and dignity. She has presented her female characters, not only as ideal beings that help to resist the adverse situation. When the Rosa, Clara's sister dies there comes a very sad situation and "it was the custom of then for women and children not to attend funerals, which were considered a male province, but at the last minute Clara managed to slip into the cortege to accompany her sister Rosa,"(48-49).

Allende in these lines addresses the Clara's audacity and her attempts to break the traditional and male made rule. Such type of elements that make the novel more beautiful and attractive. Allende through this character tries to maintain social hierarchy. She also shows a way to the female to get equal opportunity in every aspects of life. The following lines give clear view of male and their behavior considering superior to other in this novel as Steban Trueba shows:

He finished picking the whitish fish from the tangles of bones and laid his knife and fork across his plate. He set as stiffly as he walked straight as a pole, his head thrown slightly back and to one side, with a sidelong glance that held a mixture of pride, distrust, and myopia. His gesture would have been unpleasant if his eyes had not been so astonishingly sweet

and bright. His tense posture would have suited a short stubby man who wanted to appear taller, but he himself was almost six feet tall and slender. His most silent trait was his moodiness and a tendency to grow violent and lose his head. (55-56)

The description of Esteban Trueba a major male character in the novel and his manner that he shows. Definitely he is hard working young man but his ways of working are not appreciable. He thinks himself superior to others. This type of activities invites the disorder for female characters. This is one of the most interesting events described in the novel. Esteban Trueba who commits many crimes regarding the female issues, as he rapes many girls in Tres Maries, one of them is Pancha Garcia. The following lines describe his crime committed in Tres Maries:

Esteban bent down and removed Pancha Garcia's burden, held it in the air for a moment, and then hurled it violently to the side of the path. He threw his arm around her waist, swept her up with an animal-like grunt, and placed her before him in the saddle. The girl did not resist. He kicked his heels in the stirrups and they took off at a gallop in the direction of the river. They dismounted without speaking and looked each other over. Esteban unfastened his broad leather belt and she stepped back, but he grabbed her with a single stroke of his hand. They fell arm in arm among the eucalyptus leaves. Esteban did not remove his clothes. He attacked her savagely, thrusting himself into her without preamble, with unnecessary brutality. He realized too late, from the blood spattered on her dress that the young girl was a virgin, but neither Pancha's humble origin nor the pressing demands of his

desire allowed him to reconsider. Pancha Garcia made no attempt to defend herself. She did not complain, nor did she shut her eyes. She lay on her back, staring at the sky with terror, until she felt the man drop to the ground beside her with a moan. (74-75)

Above mentioned lines not show the Steban Trueba's cruel behavior over the Pancha Garcia rather a kind of tradition or culture that women should endure. Like, here Pancha doesn't react against the Estaben's bad behavior. It also reveals the male domination. That's why she only bears his torture. He rapes her brutally even until bleeding. In such a way he does with other girls too. So he creates a kind of anarchy in the society. He rules their and takes himself as an agent of colonialism.

But the following lines give the clear idea of socio- political structure and a female character that goes against such kind of inequality regarding the female rights.

Nivea, Rosa's mother, who, after her husband had retired from politics, terrified by the poisoned brandy, had begun her own political campaign. She would chain herself with other ladies to the gates of Congress and the Supreme Court, setting of a ridiculous. He knew that Nivea went out at night to hang suffragette posters on walls across the city and that she was capable of walking through the heart of the city in the plain light of day with a broom in her hand a three-cornered hat on her head, calling for women to have equal rights with men, to be allowed to vote and attend the university, and for all children, even bastards, to be granted the full protection of the law. (85)

The present researcher has come to a conclusion that *The House of the Spirits* is a gem in English (American) literature that has revolutionized female characters, Allende These are the main clue to the novel that how the powerful makes a plea for the help

of ideal being when she is in trouble. Allende, hints the readers of hidden inner power to struggle against the harsh reaches of the society including politics. Here the traditional concept about the female has been distorted by Nivea. Nivea laid her power to resist and protest against the traditional concept of sexist male.

Similarly, Ferula and Clara in *Tres Marias* try to help the women and encourage them to resist against the male domination. The following lines present the Ferula and Clara's action and the condition of the women in *Tres Marias*:

Ferula gathered all the peasant women and children to say the rosary. They came more out of kindness than faith giving the aging spinster a chance to recall her good old days in the tenements. Clara waited for her sister-in-law to finish the mystical litanies of Our Fathers and Hail Marys, and then used the meetings to repeat the slogans she had heard the mother shout when she chained herself to the gates of Congress. The women listened with embarrassed smiles, for the same reason they prayed with Ferula: so as not to displace the patron's wife. But those inflammatory cries only made them laugh. 'Since when has a man not beaten his wife? If he doesn't beat her, it's either because he doesn't love her or because he isn't a real man? Besides, she was born with a wound between her legs and without balls, right, senora Clara? They would say Clara was beside herself. The women nudged each other in the ribs and smiled shyly with their toothless mouths and their wrinkled eyes, their skin toughened by the sun and their unhealthy lives, knowing full well that if they took it into their heads to put Clara's ideas into practice, their husband would beat them. (328)

Ferula, the sister of Esteban Trueba and Clara, wife of Esteban Trueba both go against the man made rules and regulation. They want to break such type of boundary. That's why in *Tres Marias* they try to enlighten the women of peasant family. There is a scenario of rusticity and the condition of people. Male are taken superior and women as things to play or use. So women's condition has been described in above lines. The women are left to live in hostile world. But some women defy the hostility and lead their life, amidst fear of losing their husband's help. This type of concept is found in Latin American society.

Moreover, a female is supposed to be a slave of her husband. Allende some how protests social norms and values. She makes Ferula and Clara very powerful characters that can roam the world to secure their rightful place. The conduct of these female characters is enduring and challenging. They not only defy malevolent intention of Esteban Trueba, but also safeguard themselves from the evil things of the society.

Alba, another very important female character in the novel. She is the granddaughter of Esteban Trueba and Clara. Clara always served her and encouraged to live daring life. But after the death of her grandmother she remains helpless. She leaves all the works to do as her grandmother used to do. Alba begins to suffer nightmares from which she awakes screaming and feverish. She dreams that that everybody in the family is dying and that she is left to wander in big house alone, with no other company than the faint threadbare ghosts that wander up and down the corridors. Not only this, she has been the victim of political conspiracy and revenge. Esteban Garcia, an illegal son of Esteban Trueba, wants to know where the lover of Alba is and at the same time he wants to revenge of his mother because Alba's grandfather had raped his mother in *Tres Marias*. Police arrest the Alba under the

commandment of Esteban Garcia and she faces both physical and mental tortures. The following lines show her condition in jail:

A brutal slap knocked her to the floor. Violent hands lifted her to her feet. Ferocious fingers fastened themselves to her breasts, crushing her nipples. She was completely overcome by fear. Strange voices pressed in on her. She heard Miguel's name but did not know what they were asking her, manhandled her, pulled off her blouse, and she could no longer think, could only say no, no and no and calculate how much longer she could resist before her strength gave out, not knowing this was only the beginning. Until she felt herself begin to faint and the men left her alone, lying on the floor for what seemed to her a very short time. (462)

The given lines reveal the Alba's situation in the jail. She has been treated very cruelly there. But she endures and hopes for liberation. There is the issue of politics as well as revenge. She is raped by many people there in jail according to the wish of Esteban Garcia. He is willing to know where the Miguel is. The Miguel is the lover of Alba and a guerrilla. Alba is also taken as a whore of guerrilla. But she is not revealing truth that where the Miguel is. Despite this there is the issue of revenge that is already mentioned above. The pain is given to her is unbearable. Here another woman named Ana Diaz who is also imprisoned and tortured as Alba but she is not feeling quite unpleasant as Alba.

Ana is a bold character and even after painful torture she is hoping for a good day. The following lines show her resistance and hope for liberation.

Ana Diaz helped Alba to resist while they were together. She was an indomitable woman. She had withstood every form of cruelty. They had

raped her in the presence of her lover and tortured them together, but she had not lost capacity to smile or her hope. She did not give in even when they transformed her to a secret clinic of the political police because one of the beatings had caused her to lose the child she was carrying and she had begun hemorrhage. It doesn't matter', she told Alba when she returned to the cell. Someday I'll have another one. (467-68)

The woman Ana Diaz is so courageous. She is encouraging Alba to face difficulty and helping her expressing her own experience. That's why the woman even after being cruelly exploited dares to live and hoping to make good future life.

Another voice of female can be heard by the spirit of Clara, grandmother of Alba. She knowing the intention of Alba not to live encourages to struggle with life and hope for good future. There are some lines that are expressed by the spirit of Clara to the Alba in which she is advising her:

When she had nearly achieved her goal, her Granddaughter Clara, whom she had invoked so many times to help her die, appeared with the novel idea that the point was not to die, since death come anything, but to survive, which would be a miracle. With her white linen dress, her winter gloves, her sweet toothless smile, and the mischievous gleam in her hazel eyes, she looked exactly as she had when Alba was a child. Clara also brought the saving idea of writing in her mind, without paper or pencil, to keep her thoughts occupied and to escape from the doghouse and live. (469-70)

Here Clara is representing a female voice and is resisting the male domination. The slave mentality of male and tortures given to female should be tackled by revolution



rather than to wish for death. Clara is showing her strength and boldness in her life span and after her death. She is rejecting the bad phenomena which are created by male.

*The House of the Spirits*, a novel in which the qualities mentioned above are in favor of female endurance and hope for liberation. Alba, Pancha Garcia, Ferula are left to survive in hostile world. They defy the hostility and lead their life. This concept of female resistance is western (Latin American) where female have to bear pain of male domination, if they raise the voice, it should be safeguard their male counterpart and find solace with in the periphery.

Isabel Allende shows that a female is supposed to be a kind of doll or slave of her husband or male. Presenting the character of Clara and her mother, Allende somehow protests social norms and values regarding female issues. She makes Clara, a strong and bold character who gives voice on behalf of female and in the same way her mother also goes against male domination and demands the rights for women. Clara abandons her husband to secure her rightful place. There are some limitation of domestic responsibilities for female, but some women don't follow them because they thin there should be limitation not only for female, so they try to break such type of limitation. In *Tres Marias* women are treated as animal and women are also expecting tortures from their husband or male. This has been the culture of *Tres Marias*. As Pancha Garcia is raped by Estaben Trueba but she doesn't react against his bad attempt to exploit her. Because of his this crime he has been responsible foe Alba's heart rendering situation.

Allende gets quite fascinating experiences with the Latin American socio-political, post colonial and cultural heritage and Latin American expressions. The story first of all narrated by Esteban Trueba later on by the Clara. The story tends to

show the Latin American women and their endurance and hope for liberation. Which provides a fertile soil for a number of literary works and the present work is one of them in the series.

The novelist Allende, being a westerner, obviously presents the novel writing tradition prevalent in the west. She makes ingenious use of the post-colonial phenomena, tradition and culture of Latin America in *The House of the Spirits* by focusing on female endurance. But it can not be ignored that with in the concept of endurance, too, she makes her female characters bold and brave. They are not only aware to their surroundings but also can change them, when necessary. This evokes some important critical issues like representation, history, culture and so on in Allende's writings. As she is also aware of the Latin American tradition and culture, she goes for further idealizing her female characters and the situations, which calls serious attentions of the critics and readers.

Sacrifice and devotion of Alba and Ferula and struggle of Clara and Nivea are some exemplary female characters in Latin American literature. Less writers of Latin American Diaspora have dared to tread this path, where their female characters are revolutionary and at the same time have the essence of endurance, thought to be a necessary trait of Latin American woman. Allende through the characters presented alone revolutionize the way of presenting female characters in Latin American as well as in whole western literature.

### III. Female Voice and Struggle for Existence

After a detailed analysis and research on Allende's one most discussed creation, that not only challenges the time honored practice of viewing female as domesticated creatures, but also has set up a trend of depicting women as powerful and independent beings in Latin American literature.

Alba, Clara, Ferula and Pancha Garcia are amongst the most analyzed characters in this novel. Alba, a major female character in *The House of the Spirits*. Alba sacrifices her youthful days and remains faithful to her lover, even when the entire society is trying to pollute her, mentally and physically she is more like a true philosopher, who challenges the lust of life and emphasize on family pleasure. She is like a true philosopher, who knows that life is for not only the sake for own benefit but for others' too.

However, Esteba Trueba a male protagonist in *The House of the Spirits* does not understand the feeling of women and goes to fulfill the social expectations within the framework of patriarchy. He doesn't take his responsibility seriously towards his family that why his mother dies and his sister hats him. Because his carelessness both female characters face the tragedy. Clara, the wife of Estaben Trueba challenges the social rules and regulations by crossing the four walls of her home in search of freedom. In doing so, she fulfills the honor of female. Besides, claiming her place in home freely she is also trying to provide justice to Pancha Garcia and trying to help Ferula, Estaben's sister.

Though *The House of the Spirits* is a tragedy, it breaks away the barriers of social epochs of their times defying voice of protest with in the frame work of male patriarchy. Allende, Through Clara, Alba, Ferula and Nivea makes these characters daring and capable enough to resist the anti-social elements. Besides, it sets up a trend

in against the tradition of depiction women figures as meek and weak creatures, which largely depended on the blessings of their male counterparts.

Scrutinizing the text, Allende seems as if she is a Marxist feminist. The elements such as social hierarchy, poverty, dominating forces, male and female relationship and so on are the matters which raise the class struggle. The primary goal of this research as already mentioned above is to focus on female issue and the problem that is between male and female. Many female characters in the novel have been the victim of socio-political situation of the Latin American society. Despite all these this research finds in the text that the women seem quite revolutionary and hoping for liberation. Indirectly they are disobeying the male domination and revolting against their male counterpart. So that this study tries to fulfill the aspirations of female by analyzing their problem in the male domination society.

Allende is profoundly revolutionary in the sense that she guides in shaping up the role of female endurance as a weapon against the tradition of presenting them as submissive and tolerant beings. Allende's female characters within the framework of the patriarchy are able to revolt against the male domination and, thus changed the way of presenting and viewing Latin American women, in days come, thanks to Allende.

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