



Literary Responses:

The House of the Spirits

Part I: Answer all of the literary responses in Part I in your composition notebook.

1. Design the cover/title page and on the reverse side of the page. Create a family tree (or two) on the opposite page so you can keep the characters straight.
2. Contrast the two major settings in the novel.
3. Define magical realism and cite 10 specific examples from the novel that illustrate magical realism. Include quote and the page number. This can/should be an annotated list.
4. Select three minor characters from the work and explain their purpose/function. This can be a list, but you should provide at least two significant quotes and a sentence or two of explanation for each of the three minor characters.
5. There is a quartet of women who constitute the center of this novel. Identify these women, how they are united and how they are unique from one another.
6. “Despite the fact that Esteban Trueba rapes, pillages, wounds, and conspires, he never entirely loses the reader’s sympathy. It is a remarkable achievement to make the old monster loveable to a reader.” Comment on this vantage point.
7. Isabel Allende once told an interviewer, “When I write, two obsessions appear constantly in my lines: love and violence. Two antagonist forces, light and darkness, good and evil, always are present in my stories and in my life.” How is this evidenced in *The House of the Spirits*?
8. Allende’s use of time and repetition- discuss.
9. Re-read the epilogue of the novel. Copy the passage starting with “It would be very different for me...” and ending with “...but above all, my own daughter.” Color mark the passage and explain what the narrator expresses here and its larger significance to the meaning of the novel.

Part II: For this section, select THREE topics. These should be developed essays with textual support.

10. Barrabas...significance? There has got to be something here!
11. Allende includes the following quote by Pablo Neruda as the epigraph to the novel: "How much does a man live, after all? / Does he live a thousand days, or one only? / For a week, or for several centuries? / How long does a man spend dying? / What does it mean to say "for ever?" Using specific evidence, explain how the epigraph relates to the novel's greater message.
12. Find instances of dismemberment in the novel. What does the act of dismemberment represent beyond its physical consequences?
13. What message does Allende send about the power of writing and the imagination? What is the value of writing or other expressions of imagination for the characters?
14. Explore the role of silence in the novel.
15. Make a case for whether maternity or paternity is more important in the novel.

