

SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE IN ISABEL ALLENDE'S *OF LOVE AND SHADOWS*

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Abstract

Isabel Allende Llonca, a Chilean- American novelist writes magnanimously triggering her imagination to combine with real event. She enthralled the mind of the readers by her vivid sketches. Her works carry a strong notion on the indispensable role of novels in a society. Her novel *Of Love and Shadows* centres on the tumultuous relationship of magazine editor Irene Beltran and photographer Francisco Leal. They make an attempt to trace Evangelina Ranquileo, a strange girl near the village of Los Riscos who had suddenly disappeared. The two people were daring to challenge everything for the sake of truth and justice. While tracing Evangelina, the two people become overwhelmed in a vortex of terror and violence. They go to the mine informed by Pradelio and discover Evangelina's body. Francisco has his camera with him, and he takes photos of the scene. Later, he and Irene return to the mine and unearth more bodies buried there- all the people were tortured and killed by the Lieutenant Ramirez. In spite of his brutal activities, the General of the military grants him a pardon. Thus the novel highlights how the dictatorship disturbs the mental equilibrium of the people. The victims go to the extent of leaving their own country waiting for democracy to return to their own land. By focusing on these unjust treatments the author tries to change a generation's thinking.

Keywords: truth, justice, dictatorship, democracy, own land, change etc.

Search for Truth and Justice in Isabel Allende's *Of Love and Shadows*

The search for wisdom and integrity is an unfinished project in social history. Allende's *Of Love and Shadows* is created out of the belief that exposing the truth will eventually bring about justice. Her work deals with the political turmoil's of a nation and tells the story through the eyes of those whose voices have been ignored or silenced the women of the country. A theme of the novel is the contrast between the incorruptibility of love and the shadows of violence and viciousness. The novel explores the contrast between, on one hand, the gentleness and beauty of love and on the other, the darkness and cruelty of everyday reality.

The proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa have once again foregrounded the ordeal involved in reconstructing a past fraught with political and

personal violence and have, at the same time, also illustrated the therapeutic superiority of testimony. Literature has always played a vital role in the process of coming to terms with reality. As a woman within a postcolonial context, Isabel Allende bears witness to political domination and gender discrimination in her novels. They serve as examples of testimonial literature which focus on the dilemma of women as marginalized citizens and represent a collective scruples in testimony to the atrocities of the past. This is accomplished through the interface of her fictional characters with an identifiable historical context. In *Of Love and Shadows*, her female protagonist, Irene, asserts her individuality through writing/reporting which questions the soundness of the male-oriented and so-called “objective” historical reportage. By creating disparate and complementary perspectives which put emphasis on the female/personal as well as the male or public aspects of experience, Allende proposes recognition of the personal and the tangential in the documentation of historical events; she underlines the validity of the “other” side of familiarity and history.

Of Love and Shadows is a riveting tale of tragedy and delight, of bravery and give up, of family constancy and state betrayal a tale that is both profoundly moving and uplifting. As in *The House of the Spirits*, Isabel Allende once again exposes herself to be a spectacular storyteller, skilfully contrasting images of filled to capacity morgues and mass graves with the colourful landscape of South America and bringing to bold life characters that all but jump off the page: “Irene’s willfully ignorant, decadent mother; Francisco’s impulsive, foolhardy father; and Mario, a homosexual celebrity and fearless subversive”(43).

Set in a country of uninformed arrests, sudden disappearances and summary executions, Isabel Allende’s magical new novel tells of the zealous affair of two people prepared to risk everything for the sake of justice and truth. Irene Beltran, a reporter, comes from a wealthy background; Francisco Leal, a young photographer clandestinely engaged in undermining the military authoritarianism, is strongly attracted by her beauty. It does not matter that Irene’s fiancé is an army captain, “each time Francisco accompanies her on a magazine assignment, he falls more deeply in love with her” (65). When Irene and Francisco go to investigate the mysterious case of Evangelina Ranquileo, a girl suffering from spectacular fits which are rumoured to have astonishing powers, the arrival of soldiers adds a sinister aspect to the inscrutability. And then Evangelina disappears. In trying to mark out her and indict the Junta, Irene and Francisco becomes surround in a vortex of terror and violence.

Irene is the avant-garde daughter of a wealthy, bourgeois family. Her fiancé is Army Captain Gustavo Morante. Irene and Francisco first meet working together on a magazine article about Evangelina Ranquileo, a strange farm girl near the village of Los Riscos who seems to possess mystical powers. Every day at noon, she has convulsion that cause dancing among the silverware in the cubbyhole and the sound of hail upon the roof. The locals flock to Evangelina’s home in the hope that she can use her magic to work miracles to cure them of their ills.

When Irene and Francisco get there at Evangelina's home, they find the army has arrived, too. Evangelina's brother Pradelio, who is in the army, has told Lieutenant Juan de Dios Ramirez about his sister's abilities. Thinking she is phony, Lieutenant Ramirez tries to scare her out of her state. When he approaches her, Evangelina enters a spasm and attacks him, dragging him out of the house. Later, Lieutenant Ramirez returns; in vengeance for the humiliation he feels he suffered at her hands, he holds the family at gunpoint and arrests her. Evangelina is never heard from again.

Irene and Francisco try to help Evangelina's mother, Digna, find her daughter. They go to the morgue to come across for her body, but it isn't there. What they do find, however, opens Irene's eyes to a authenticity she has never before faced: the rough treatment of the regime under which she and her fellow countrymen live. Until now, her privilege and wilful blindness have kept her from acknowledging the hostility and oppression of life in her country. When she notices the propagation of dead bodies at the morgue people who had all been tortured to death by the organization she sees for the first time. Irene's conscience stimulates.

The occurrence of the military junta takes on a Kafkaesque quality as the young lovers become more and more involved in uncovering the secrets of the death squads. Isabel Allende has sketched a vivid description of what it means to be caught up in a world beyond one's own control. As in *The House of the spirits* she divulges an awesome power of storytelling. *Of Love and Shadows* unfolds an entrancing tale of tragedy and anticipation, of bravery and sacrifice, of family trustworthiness and state betrayal that is both tremendously moving and inspiring. From the very first sentence, Allende brings readers to a Latin American country in the grip of a military dictatorship.

Considerately spoken is lust and love through the dissimilar characters in the novel, thereby giving anticipated in all readers to become skilled at from. Through this novel, the reader can not only discover a special and hidden aspect of themselves and their lives, but also discover a buried truth that most often can never be discovered in other attempts. Through relating with the characters, discoveries are made of our own merits and missions that we infrequently investigate. Not only are the characters imperative, but also the experiences and 'fairytale' in which they hold dear to their hearts. Every character adds to the experiences of joys and sorrowfulness in a country where anything can come about.

Set in an atmosphere of oversupply uncertainty and fear, in a country of accidental arrests, sudden disappearances and summary implementation, Isabel Allende's second novel tells of the passionate affair of two people prepared to risk everything for the sake of justice and truth and their fight for their love in the middle of Pinochet's government, and what they do to survive.

The forbidding reality of overcrowded morgues and crowded momentous is differed with the colourful landscape of South America.

Allende saw its argument as something that spoke to her, rather than an idea that she had to seek out. She read about the victims at Lonquén when the news was on the rampage to the world by the Catholic Church in Chile. In the same manner that was done in the novel, the church set their plan in motion before the Chilean authorities had a chance to hush them. On November 30, 1978, the remains of fifteen bodies were discovered in what had formerly been furnace in the countryside outside of Santiago in the village of Lonquén. When Allende read the news, she was living in Venezuela, where she had relocated due to the average temperature of terror that had developed in Chile. Like Irene Beltran, Allende had been a journalist in Chile and was well approachable of the human rights abuses that were occurring in her homeland. As a result, the young writer's exciting and physical health suffered as she was living and breathing fear. *Of Love and Shadows* gives timelessness to these events, so that these voices uncovered in the excavate have not been silenced.

Isabel Allende's commitment to writing fiction has placed her as one of the world's most read novelist of all times. She has broadened the road for female writers in general. Her make-believe love stories which normally combine with actual historical events contain a formula the public be pleased about.

For Allende, writing becomes a means of meet head-on and exposing official silence by keeping the collective memory alive. Coddou absolutely admits this dimension in literature when he refers to it as this other form of scruples that is literature. The idea of survival features strongly in Allende's works, especially women as survivors and Gordon observes that *De amor y de sombra* instead seems to be saying that love can continue to exist even in the shadow of Big Brother steadily watching, can survive physical suffering and the threat of death and perhaps also that love needs the shadow to become most fully love.

In her novels, she attempts to renovate the lives of the "other(s)" whose experiences have been absent from recorded history or official credentials; she creates different versions of history which subvert the official one and attain a testimonial quality accentuate the interrelationship between public and political experience. By constructing a dialogue between male and female as well as dialectic between personal and official, historical and fictional, she can signify both sides of the "story".

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