

# Gender, Class, and Political Power in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*: A Feminist Reading of the Post-Colonial Landscape in Chile

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## Abstract

In *The House of the Spirits*, Isabel Allende explores the intersection of gender, class, and political power through the lives of the Trueba family, with a focus on the experiences of the female characters. This paper examines how women in the novel engage with political movements, challenge dictatorial oppression, and navigate patriarchal structures. Central to this exploration are Clara, Blanca, and Alba, whose individual journeys highlight the complexities of female agency in times of political and social unrest. Through their activism, spiritual resistance, and personal struggles, these women subvert traditional gender roles and demonstrate how women carve out spaces for resistance within male-dominated spheres. The feminist critique within Allende's work exposes the limitations imposed on women's agency in revolutionary movements, while also showcasing their significant contributions to the fight for social justice and gender equality. This analysis reflects the broader feminist discourse on the intersectionality of gender, class, and political struggle in the context of Latin American history.

**Keywords:** Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*, feminism, female agency, political revolution

## 1. Introduction

In Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, the historical and political backdrop of 20th-century Chile plays a pivotal role in shaping the social dynamics and individual experiences within the novel. Chile's turbulent history, particularly during the latter half of the century, is a central theme in Allende's work, providing context for the personal and political struggles of her characters. The period of dictatorship, which culminated in the military coup of 1973, is particularly significant, as it represents the moment of rupture between the idealistic hopes of post-colonial independence and the grim realities of political oppression and inequality. Chile's class divisions are starkly delineated in the narrative, with the aristocracy, epitomized by characters like Esteban Trueba, representing a deeply entrenched social order based on economic privilege and patriarchal authority.

The novel spans several decades, offering a lens through which readers can understand the evolution of social and political structures in Chile, including the tension between traditional elite classes and the rising leftist movements that eventually sought to challenge the dictatorial regime. The class system in Chile is not merely a backdrop, but rather an active force that shapes the experiences of the characters, particularly the women. Women, both from privileged families like Rosa and Clara and from working-class backgrounds like Pancha, find themselves navigating a society that is deeply divided by class but also profoundly gendered. While the elite women may have the appearance of wealth and privilege, their roles are restricted by patriarchal expectations, as their worth is often measured by their ability to fulfill traditional roles within the family, rather than by their personal aspirations or capabilities.

At the same time, women of the working class face an even more pronounced social marginalization and are

often relegated to subservient positions within the household and broader society. These power structures are reflective of broader post-colonial realities that continue to affect many countries in Latin America. Despite the political changes over the decades, Chile's historical trajectory of inequality—particularly in terms of class and gender—remains embedded in the social fabric, presenting a paradox of progress amidst repression.

In *The House of the Spirits*, Allende uses the Trueba family to illustrate how post-colonial power structures are not merely remnants of the past but are still deeply intertwined with the political and economic systems of the present. Through the character of Esteban Trueba, a wealthy landowner who embodies the authoritarian ideals of the elite class, the novel critiques the patriarchal, hierarchical nature of Chilean society. Trueba's control over his family, and particularly his domination over Clara, his wife, and Alba, his granddaughter, symbolizes the persistent power dynamics that women are subjected to in both the family and the wider socio-political world.

The role of women in these systems is central to understanding the way gender intersects with class to create layers of oppression and disempowerment. Even in the revolutionary moments depicted in the novel, women are often sidelined, their voices marginalized, and their contributions erased or undervalued. Allende uses this dynamic to comment on how Chile's historical and social stratifications serve as a persistent force, shaping the destinies of women and their attempts at resisting oppression.

## **2. The Intersection of Gender and Class in the Narratives of Female Characters**

The intersection of gender and class is a central theme that profoundly shapes the lives of the female characters. Allende intricately weaves these two forces together to explore the ways in which women experience the world, both personally and politically, through a lens of societal expectations and social structures. The experiences of Clara, Rosa, and Alba serve as poignant reflections of how class privilege and gender inequality intersect and either limit or empower them in their struggles for personal autonomy and political agency.

Clara, the central female figure of the novel, embodies a unique intersection of class privilege and gendered oppression. As the daughter of a wealthy family, Clara enjoys the material benefits of her class but finds herself confined by the traditional roles imposed upon women in Chilean society. Her character challenges conventional gender norms through her spiritual gifts and her deep connection to the mystical world, which provides her with an avenue of power and independence that transcends her class position. However, Clara's role as a woman within the Trueba family reveals the tension between class-based privilege and gendered limitations. While she enjoys the luxury of being part of the elite, her position as a wife and mother is dictated by traditional patriarchal norms, and her intellectual and emotional needs are often subordinated to the desires of her husband, Esteban Trueba. Despite her powerful spiritual and intellectual presence, Clara's efforts to shape her own life are frequently undermined by the constraints of patriarchal dominance, both in her marriage and in broader society.

In contrast, Rosa, Clara's sister, represents a more tragic intersection of beauty and vulnerability within the context of class and gender. Born into the same privileged class, Rosa's beauty becomes both her asset and curse. Her physical appearance and her role as the idealized woman within a patriarchal society are central to her fate. Her tragic death symbolizes the destructive consequences of the class and gender systems that confine women's identities to their physical attributes and family roles. Rosa's life illustrates how the pressures of beauty standards and gender expectations can limit women's autonomy, even for those with significant material privilege. Her story highlights the fragility of women's power in a society where their value is often based on their ability to fulfill patriarchal ideals of feminine purity and submissiveness.

Alba, the granddaughter of Esteban Trueba, represents the newer generation's attempt to break free from the patriarchal and class-based systems that have shaped the lives of her ancestors. Alba's evolution from an innocent, sheltered child to a politically active feminist reflects the changing tides of social consciousness in Chile, particularly in the context of post-colonial struggles and revolutionary movements. As a young woman caught between the privilege of her family and the growing political unrest in Chile, Alba is uniquely positioned to challenge both the gender norms imposed on her as a woman and the class dynamics that have historically protected her. Her political awakening is emblematic of a broader generational shift in which women, particularly those of privileged backgrounds, begin to question their role in social change. However, despite her active resistance and involvement in revolutionary efforts, Alba's journey is not without the complications of gender and class. As a young woman in a revolutionary context, she faces constant obstacles in her struggle for agency, both within her family and within the political sphere.

The intersections of gender and class limit these women in different ways but also offer them unique opportunities for empowerment. Clara's spiritual and emotional independence, although stifled by patriarchal authority, represents a challenge to traditional gender roles. Rosa, despite her tragic fate, embodies the intense pressure exerted on women to conform to societal expectations, and her death highlights the devastating effects of these pressures. Alba, on the other hand, takes a more active role in political activism, using her position of privilege to confront the authoritarian regime and demand equality, while simultaneously grappling with the

constraints placed on women's participation in revolutionary movements.

The experiences of Clara, Rosa, and Alba demonstrate the complex ways in which gender and class intersect to shape the lives of women in *The House of the Spirits*. These intersections both empower and constrain them, offering different forms of resistance and agency while also highlighting the persistent inequalities embedded in post-colonial and patriarchal structures. Allende's portrayal of these women reveals that, while social class can provide some women with advantages, it does not insulate them from the gendered limitations imposed by a deeply patriarchal society. Through their stories, Allende illustrates the struggle for women to navigate and assert their agency within these intersecting systems of power, oppression, and resistance.

### **3. Clara's Role in Challenging Patriarchal Structures**

Clara, one of the central characters in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, plays a pivotal role in challenging patriarchal structures through her defiance of traditional gender roles. As a woman born into the Trueba family, Clara's position within the upper class provides her with certain privileges, but she is simultaneously subjected to the limitations imposed by patriarchy. Throughout the novel, Clara's character emerges as a force that defies these societal expectations, especially through her spirituality, magical realism, and her assertion of personal independence.

From a young age, Clara is portrayed as a woman with extraordinary abilities, possessing spiritual gifts and an intuitive understanding of the world around her. Unlike other women in her family, who are bound by traditional gender expectations, Clara uses her mystical powers to carve out a space for herself that is beyond the control of the men in her life. Her connection to spirituality is not only an expression of her individuality but also an act of resistance to the strict, patriarchal roles that seek to limit women's autonomy. Clara's spiritualism, manifested through telekinesis, premonitions, and her ability to communicate with spirits, allows her to navigate the world on her own terms, rejecting the traditional expectations of womanhood that focus on domesticity, passivity, and submission.

Clara's resistance to patriarchal structures is further underscored by her independence within the confines of her marriage to Esteban Trueba. While Esteban embodies the traditional role of the patriarchal figure, exerting control over his family, land and wealth, Clara consistently maintains a sense of autonomy. Though Esteban attempts to impose his authority over her, Clara refuses to conform to the subjugated role that is typically assigned to wives in a patriarchal marriage. Her refusal to bow to his tyranny and her decision to follow her own spiritual path challenge the traditional expectations placed upon women as obedient wives and mothers.

Clara's role as an independent woman in a male-dominated society also intersects with the novel's use of magical realism, a narrative technique that amplifies her resistance to societal norms. Magical realism, through its blending of the supernatural and the real, reflects Clara's empowered sense of identity, allowing her to exist outside the strict confines of reality that would otherwise limit her as a woman. The magical events she experiences are not just fantastical occurrences; they are expressions of her power, agency, and resistance against the patriarchal forces that attempt to confine her. Through her spiritual gifts and her active engagement with the supernatural, Clara resists the repressive social structures that seek to marginalize and silence women, making her a symbol of female empowerment in a world dominated by men.

In addition to her spiritual powers, Clara's independence is evident in her refusal to adhere to conventional gender roles even in the most domestic aspects of her life. She does not fit into the mold of the typical wife or mother in her society. For example, Clara's desire to have a relationship with her children on her own terms, rather than simply fulfilling the role of a submissive wife and mother, emphasizes her rejection of patriarchal expectations. Despite Esteban's authoritarian rule within the household, Clara becomes the emotional and spiritual center of the family, guiding her children, particularly Alba, in the ways of emotional intelligence and spiritual awareness.

Ultimately, Clara's character exemplifies a defiance of patriarchal norms, showcasing how a woman can resist traditional roles and assert her independence, even within the constraints of a rigid social structure. Her connection to spirituality, magical realism, and her role as an independent woman make her a powerful symbol of feminist resistance in a world that seeks to silence and subjugate women. In Clara, Allende creates a character who uses her otherworldly abilities and inner strength to carve out a space where she can exist on her own terms, free from the control of the male-dominated systems around her. Through Clara, Allende explores the possibilities of female empowerment, spiritual independence, and resistance in the face of societal oppression.

### **4. Rosa and the Symbolism of Female Suffering**

Rosa stands as a tragic figure whose life is imbued with deep symbolic meaning, particularly in terms of feminine vulnerability and the intersection of beauty and suffering within a patriarchal society. Rosa's character serves as a poignant representation of how women, especially those from privileged classes, are often trapped by the societal expectations placed upon them—expectations that reduce them to mere objects of beauty and

idealized femininity while simultaneously subjecting them to suffering.

Rosa is introduced as a beautiful and fragile young woman, often admired for her delicate features and enchanting appearance. Her beauty, however, becomes both her blessing and curse, as it symbolizes the expectations placed on women in a patriarchal society. In a world where women are valued primarily for their appearance, Rosa's allure creates a double-edged sword: it makes her an object of desire, but it also makes her vulnerable to the constraints of societal norms. Beauty in this context is not empowering but is tied to an inherent fragility, as it restricts her to a life in which her worth is linked to how she looks, rather than who she is or what she can achieve. Rosa's suffering, which culminates in her tragic fate, illustrates the perils women face when their identity is defined by external appearances rather than their internal strength or personal agency.

In patriarchal societies, beauty and suffering are often intricately connected for women, as their physical attractiveness is often seen as both a virtue and a vulnerability. Rosa's character highlights this intersection. She is raised in a privileged family, where her beauty is meant to be an asset—perhaps even a tool to secure a good marriage or to uphold the family's social standing. However, Rosa's beauty also becomes a trap, as it is the focal point of the family's identity and the symbol of her value within the social hierarchy. When she is ultimately poisoned and dies prematurely, her tragic fate becomes emblematic of the destructive impact of a system that reduces women to their physical attributes while denying them agency or a meaningful role in shaping their own futures.

Rosa's tragic death is not simply the result of an individual act of violence but rather a symbolic representation of how women in upper-class families are constricted by their roles. Although she is from a wealthy background, her family's expectations limit her opportunities to exercise personal autonomy. Rosa's story illustrates how, in patriarchal society, even women of privilege are often relegated to passive roles—expected to remain beautiful, docile, and obedient, rather than to cultivate their own desires, ambitions, or independent identities.

Rosa's fate also reflects the societal obsession with purity, especially for women of the aristocracy. In many ways, her death can be seen as a perverse consequence of her immaculate beauty, as she becomes a symbol of the ideal woman who is too precious to live beyond her cultural and familial function. Her purity is tied to her role as an object of desire rather than an active participant in society or her own life. The tragedy of Rosa lies not only in her untimely death but in how her suffering becomes a reflection of the narrow and damaging roles that are imposed upon women by the structures of power and patriarchy.

Rosa's tragic fate is an exploration of how women are victimized by societal norms and class structures, even when they come from privileged backgrounds. Despite her wealth, Rosa has little agency within her family and society, and her beauty, which should have been a source of empowerment, becomes her undoing. Her death serves as a warning about the inherent dangers of reducing women to physical objects in a society that views them through the lens of beauty, purity, and passivity.

In conclusion, Rosa's character in *The House of the Spirits* represents a tragic collision of feminine beauty and suffering, offering a profound commentary on the limitations imposed on women, particularly those of the privileged class. Her suffering, both symbolic and literal, highlights the social and political constraints placed on women in a patriarchal society that values them for their appearance rather than their agency. Through Rosa's tragedy, Allende critiques the harmful effects of a system that ties women's worth to their physicality, reminding readers of the importance of seeing women not just as objects of beauty, but as full, autonomous individuals with the right to self-determination and agency.

##### **5. Alba's Political Awakening and Feminist Identity**

Alba's journey in *The House of the Spirits* begins in a privileged, sheltered environment, but as she matures, she becomes deeply aware of the political turmoil surrounding her. Growing up under the protection of her family, particularly her grandmother Clara, Alba is initially removed from the socio-political struggles that define Chile's trajectory. However, the oppressive realities of the military dictatorship and the subsequent repression of dissent force her to confront the oppressive systems around her. Alba's development from innocence to activism is driven by a growing understanding of the injustices faced by the marginalized and the brutality of the regime. Her exposure to revolutionary ideas and resistance movements shifts her worldview, pushing her from a passive observer into an active participant in the political struggle.

Through Alba's character, Allende explores the intersection of gender, class, and political oppression, emphasizing how these forces shape her identity and actions. As Alba becomes increasingly politically aware, she begins to recognize the gendered nature of oppression. Her growing involvement in the resistance movement reflects her rejection of the patriarchal constraints placed upon her, both within her family and in society. In this way, Alba's personal awakening parallels the feminist movements in Chile, particularly during the post-coup years. Her transformation into an active feminist and revolutionary symbol reflects the new generation of women who, having witnessed the injustices around them, began to claim agency and voice their opposition to the

regime.

Alba's political awakening is not just a response to the dictatorship but also to the patriarchy within her own family. Her grandfather, Esteban Trueba, embodies the old patriarchal order, and his power over the family is representative of the larger social hierarchy in Chile. In rejecting his authority, Alba challenges not only political repression but also the deeply ingrained gender roles that limit women's autonomy. Throughout the novel, Alba's evolving relationship with Esteban demonstrates how political and gendered power structures are intertwined. As she grows more politically engaged, Alba's feminist identity and her resistance to her grandfather's control become central to her character's development.

Alba's feminist consciousness is shaped by her personal experiences of suffering. The violence inflicted upon her family and her own torture during her captivity crystallize her understanding of the oppressive forces at play in both political and personal realms. This transformation is representative of the larger shift in feminist movements across Latin America, where women began to reclaim their power and fight for gender equality amidst political turmoil. Alba's path is one of empowerment, as she evolves from a passive observer into a politically active woman who is willing to fight not only for her own rights but for the rights of the oppressed.

Her involvement in the revolutionary cause represents the active role women played in social movements, where their contributions were often sidelined or ignored. Alba, however, refuses to accept a secondary position and insists on making her voice heard. Her story mirrors the feminist movements in Chile during the dictatorship, where women were integral to the struggle for democracy, yet often marginalized in historical accounts. Alba's determination to reclaim her narrative and to fight for justice makes her a figure of resilience, not only against political oppression but also against gendered oppression.

Alba's development as a politically engaged woman is a reflection of the new generation's desire for equality. Through her, Allende portrays a new feminist identity that rejects the traditional roles assigned to women and embraces active participation in the public and political spheres. Alba becomes a symbol of hope for a society that, despite its oppressive past, has the potential to change. Her personal growth is thus intertwined with Chile's political transformation, as she becomes not only a revolutionary but also a symbol of the fight for gender equality, political freedom, and social justice.

## **6. The Family as a Microcosm of Political Power**

The Trueba family functions as a microcosm of Chilean society, where the dynamics of political power and social hierarchy are deeply embedded. At the heart of this family is Esteban Trueba, a patriarch whose character embodies the upper class and political elite of Chile. His wealth, control over land, and authoritarian rule within his household mirror the class-based power structures that dominated the country during the 20th century. Esteban's life, shaped by his rise from humble origins to a position of power, is symbolic of the traditional patriarchal order in which men hold power not only in the family but also over the country's political and economic systems. Through Esteban's character, the narrative critiques the authoritarian structures that protect the privileged classes while subjugating the poor and the marginalized.

Esteban's authority is not limited to his wealth but extends to his control over the Trueba family and the workers on his estate, reinforcing a hierarchical social order. The dynamics within the family echo the larger societal structures, where the patriarchal figure governs both the private sphere of the family and the broader societal roles of class and gender. Esteban's power is absolute, dictating the lives of his wife, Clara, and his daughter-in-law, Blanca, with little regard for their autonomy. His domination is symbolic of the conservative elite's control over both the political and social systems of Chile. Despite being in a position of power, his relationships with women reflect the patriarchal oppression that defines his worldview, where women are largely expected to fulfill traditional roles as wives and mothers.

The women in the Trueba family, however, resist or navigate these patriarchal structures in complex ways. Clara, as Esteban's wife, is a figure who pushes back against his dominance through her spiritual practices and mystical powers. Although she lives within the confines of the Trueba estate, Clara uses her spirituality to assert an autonomy that Esteban cannot fully control. Her resistance to his patriarchal authority is not through direct confrontation but through the power of her spiritual and emotional independence. Clara's ability to transcend Esteban's control symbolizes a form of resistance that is not openly political but deeply subversive, challenging the traditional roles women are expected to occupy in a patriarchal society.

On the other hand, Rosa, who occupies a similar social position as Clara, embodies a more passive form of resistance. As the beautiful and idealized daughter of a wealthy family, Rosa's life is confined by the expectations of her gender and her beauty. Her tragic death becomes symbolic of the destructive consequences of women being reduced to their physical appearance and the social roles assigned to them by patriarchal norms. Rosa's fate highlights the vulnerability of women who are revered for their beauty but have little room to define themselves outside of these superficial values. Her suffering and death reflect the tragic impact of patriarchal

control over women's autonomy and well-being.

Finally, Alba, Esteban's granddaughter, represents the culmination of the feminist awakening that is central to the novel. Unlike her predecessors, Alba becomes politically active in the context of the Chilean revolution, where she challenges not only dictatorial oppression but also the patriarchal structures within her family. As a young woman, Alba grows up during a time of political turmoil and is exposed to the ideals of resistance and social justice. Her feminist identity takes root as she begins to recognize the intersection of gender and class in shaping the lives of those around her, including her own. Alba's role in the revolutionary movement symbolizes a break from the traditional, passive roles that women in her family and society have been expected to play. She embodies the emergence of a new generation of women who seek equality in both the public and private spheres, rejecting the dominance of patriarchal figures like her grandfather.

The family power dynamics in the Trueba family reflect the larger social structures that define Chilean society. Esteban's absolute authority represents the elite male dominance that controls both the family and society, while the women's ability to navigate and subvert these structures highlights the potential for resistance and change. Through the experiences of Clara, Rosa, and Alba, Allende demonstrates how women, even within patriarchal systems, find ways to assert their agency—whether through subtle spiritual resistance, tragic conformity, or active political engagement. The Trueba family, as a microcosm of Chilean society, shows how gender, power, and class intersect to shape the lives of its members, particularly women, and how these structures are both reinforced and challenged in complex ways. The women's navigation of this system represents a broader critique of the social order and a vision for the potential transformation of gender and political power in Chile.

### **7. Feminist Critique of Political Revolution and Female Agency**

In *The House of the Spirits*, the political revolution and female agency are intricately connected, as female characters actively participate in the resistance movements against the oppressive government. Allende presents a multifaceted view of women's roles in revolution, showcasing their courage, sacrifice, and contribution to the broader struggle for social justice. However, the novel also highlights the limitations placed on female agency within these movements, demonstrating how the structures of patriarchy and political oppression restrict women's full participation and recognition, even as they play vital roles in resistance. The feminist critique in the narrative reveals how women, despite facing systemic inequalities, carve out their own spaces for resistance and empowerment, often in ways that are overlooked or underestimated by the male-dominated political world.

Clara, the novel's spiritual and mystical center, serves as one of the most powerful symbols of female resistance within the context of the political unrest that surrounds her. While Clara's political engagement is not as direct or obvious as some of the other female characters, her role in the family and her spiritual influence serve as a form of quiet resistance to both the patriarchy of her family and the oppressive forces in society. Clara's resistance to her husband Esteban Trueba's authoritarianism and the broader social norms around her exemplifies how women can wield power in subtle, non-confrontational ways. Her spirituality becomes a tool for independence, allowing her to challenge the patriarchal authority that seeks to confine her. Although Clara does not directly participate in revolutionary politics, her life embodies a form of resistance that is often overlooked in traditional political narratives, where women's power is typically understood only in terms of physical activism. This underscores a feminist critique of how the non-visible forms of female power—whether through spirituality, emotional intelligence, or caregiving—are undervalued in both patriarchal structures and political movements.

In contrast, Blanca and Alba, Clara's daughter and granddaughter, are more directly involved in the political movements that shape the novel's historical context. Blanca, who becomes romantically involved with Pedro Tercero, a revolutionary, is deeply immersed in the political realities of Chile's social and economic inequality. Blanca's engagement with the revolutionary struggle is not only a personal choice but also an expression of feminist resistance to the patriarchal systems in both her family and society. Blanca's activism underscores the tension between personal relationships and political ideals, particularly as she navigates her love for Pedro Tercero and her growing commitment to resisting the government. Her character embodies the challenges faced by women who are caught between the private realm of the family, with its own patriarchal constraints, and the broader public sphere of political resistance, where they are often relegated to secondary roles or dismissed altogether.

Alba, the novel's ultimate symbol of resistance, is perhaps the most politically active female character. Her political awakening comes through the pain and violence she experiences, as she is directly subjected to torture and imprisonment by the regime. Alba's journey reflects the emergence of a new generation of women who are willing to challenge both the political regime and the patriarchal norms that have shaped their lives. Her involvement in the revolutionary movements marks her as a figure who actively participates in the fight for justice, and her feminist identity becomes intertwined with her political activism. Alba's ability to resist the violence and oppression imposed on her, despite the personal cost, makes her a potent symbol of female agency in the face of dictatorship and gender inequality. Yet, her involvement in the revolution also highlights the

limitations women face within these movements. Despite their significant contributions, women like Alba are often relegated to supportive roles or subjected to violence that men are not, illustrating the gendered nature of political struggle.

The feminist critique within Allende's portrayal of the revolution is rooted in the recognition that female agency is often constrained by both patriarchy and political structures. Women in the novel, though crucial to the revolutionary efforts, find themselves marginalized within male-dominated political movements. The novel emphasizes that, even though women are integral to the fight against oppression, their voices and actions are frequently overlooked or undermined. Alba's character, for instance, represents a feminist challenge to the invisibility of women in political discourse, as she actively resists not only the regime but also the gendered expectations that limit women's roles in the public sphere. Her development as a feminist revolutionary underscores the dual struggles women face: the political oppression of the state and the gender oppression within their own families and societies.

However, the novel also shows how women carve out their own spaces for resistance, often in ways that are less visible but equally powerful. For Clara, Blanca, and Alba, resistance is not always about direct confrontation or rebellion in the streets but about asserting their autonomy, refusing to comply with patriarchal roles, and challenging the systems of power that seek to control them. Allende, through these characters, presents a nuanced view of feminism, where women's resistance comes in many forms—whether through spirituality, revolutionary action, or personal defiance—each contributing to the larger fight for freedom and equality.

Ultimately, the feminist critique in *The House of the Spirits* highlights the complex dynamics of female agency within political revolutions, illustrating both the empowerment and marginalization of women in the face of dictatorial oppression and patriarchy. Through the experiences of Clara, Blanca, and Alba, Allende offers a reflection on the challenges women face in claiming their political power, while also acknowledging the vital contributions they make in the struggle for social justice and gender equality.

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