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Humanities-½
14 Oct. 2013

Esperanza's Journey

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Esperanza definitely does this quote justice. Esperanza is the main character in the book, *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros. Esperanza has insecurities and tries to escape Mango Street. Despite her obsession with escaping Mango Street, Marin, Sally, and Alicia are three young women she meets while living there who have shaped her to become who she is by the end of the novella.

Marin influences Esperanza throughout the book. For example, " Marin. Dancing by herself under a street light somewhere. I know. Is waiting for a car to stop, a star to fall, someone to change her life forever"(Cisneros 27). This quote shows that Marin wants a man to rescue her from Mango Street. Through watching Marin wait for her "Knight and shining armor", Esperanza realizes that she does not want to rely on a man, she wants to escape Mango Street on her own. Although there are another example of Marin inspiring Esperanza. For instance, " She is the one who told us how Davey the baby's sister got pregnant and what cream is best for taking off moustache hair and if you count the white flecks on your fingernails you can know how many boys are thinking of you and lots of other things I can't remember now" (Cisneros 27). This quote definitely shows how Marin influences Esperanza. Marin tells her information that Esperanza did not need at her age. Yet when Marin tells Esperanza this, Esperanza decides she is not going to be self-conscious of her looks or spend her time focusing on irrelevant information that could distract her in her process of escaping Mango Street. Overall Marin takes part in inspiring Esperanza by showing her, how her way of escaping Mango Street, is not the best way to leave.

Sally has a huge impact on Esperanza's life. For example, "Sally, you lied. It wasn't what you said at all. Where he touched me. I didn't want it Sally" (Cisneros 99). In this passage Sally leaves Esperanza alone with a group of strange men. As a result of Sally's negligence Esperanza is raped. This incident teaches Esperanza never to rely on non-trustworthy people and not to stay alone with men she doesn't know well. She also learns from the experience how some men are in the real world. Nevertheless this is not the only way Sally guides Esperanza. For instance, "She says she is in love, but I think she did it to escape" (Cisneros 101). Since Sally gets married, Esperanza learns that she doesn't need a man to escape. Sally's husband is abusive, and Sally falls into the same pattern of control and abuse that she experienced with her father. Esperanza doesn't want to get married and be controlled. Therefore, Esperanza is influenced by Sally.

Alicia has a positive influence on Esperanza. For example, "Alicia, who inherited her mama's rolling pin and sleepiness, is young and smart and studies for the first time at the university. Two trains and a bus, because she does not want to spend her whole life in a factory or behind a rolling pin" (Cisneros 31). In this quote Alicia goes to school because she does not want to work in a factory her whole life. She does not want to follow in the footsteps of her mother. This is a positive influence on Esperanza because, Esperanza learns that she should put education first and not follow in others footsteps. Although this is not the only piece of evidence where Alicia influences Esperanza. For instance, "No, Alicia says. Like it or not you are Mango Street, and one day you'll come back too" (Cisneros 107). In this passage Alicia tells Esperanza to one day come back to Mango Street for the others, and to stop trying to forget Mango Street. Esperanza learns that everyone cannot escape Mango Street as easy as she can, and to come back to help them. Esperanza is guided by Alicia in a good and affective way.

Without Marin, Sally, and Alicia, Esperanza wouldn't be who she is today. Overall Esperanza learns how to rely on herself. Marin, Sally and Alicia teach Esperanza not to depend on a man, but instead, to put education first and to rely on herself to escape Mango Street. These three women guide Esperanza to be self-sufficient in the world. All young women can benefit from reading about Esperanza's journey to becoming a young women. Her journey will help others learn from her mistakes and live a life full of success and independence.

Work Cited

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, 1984.