

Mel Boland

# Displacement in Isabel Allende's Fiction, 1982–2000



PETER LANG

## 54

This book explores the concept of displacement in the fiction produced by the Chilean writer Isabel Allende between 1982 and 2000. Displacement, understood in the author's analysis to encompass social, geographical, linguistic and cultural phenomena, is argued to play a consistently central role in Allende's fictional output of this period. Close readings of Allende's texts illustrate the abiding importance of displacement and reconcile two apparently contradictory trends in her writing: as the settings of her fiction have become more international, questions of individual identity have gained in importance. This discussion employs displacement as a means of engaging with critical debates both on Allende's individual texts and on her status as an original writer. After examining in detail the seven works of fiction written by Allende during this period, the book concludes with reflections on the general trajectory of her work in this genre.

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1982–2000**

# Hispanic Studies: Culture and Ideas

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## Preface

Isabel Allende's work is suffused with experiences of, and references to, displacement, and her personal experiences of exile and migration have informed character development and the thematic content of her fiction. Allende's first foray into the world of fiction was the now globally and critically acclaimed *La casa de los espíritus* [*The House of the Spirits*] in 1982, a fictionalized panorama of twentieth-century Chilean society. *La casa de los espíritus* was written by Allende in self-imposed exile, and the reflections on and interrelations between personal, national and universal histories continue to inform her writing today.

This study examines the relevance of the concept of displacement to the seven works of fiction by Allende published between 1982 and 2000. This discussion comprises five chapters: in Chapter 1, displacement is introduced and traced through Allende's fiction in broad terms. In Chapter 2, the relevance of displacement to the development of the character of Esteban Trueba in *La casa de los espíritus* is explored through his relationship with inhabitants on his family's country estate, Las Tres Marías, and it is argued that Trueba's trajectory in the novel is underscored by a constant awareness of social and geographical displacement. In Chapter 3, appearance, disappearance and displacement are explored in Allende's second novel, *De amor y de sombra* [*Of Love and Shadows*], which was published in 1984. A carnivalesque reading of the text, informed by the work of Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, is used to suggest that this novel displays an underlying coherence, and highlights rampant subversive activity, a key element in Allende's fiction. In Chapter 4, oral language and silence are examined in *Eva Luna* [*Eva Luna*] (1987) and the short-story spin-off collection, *Cuentos de Eva Luna* [*The Stories of Eva Luna*] (1989), and it is argued that Allende reinstates the primacy of oral language through written language in *Eva Luna*, while she illustrates the power of silence and reticence in *Cuentos de Eva Luna*. In Chapter 5, the question of cultural

displacement is examined through an analysis of three novels, published following Allende's relocation to the United States: that is, *El plan infinito* [*The Infinite Plan*] (1991), *Hija de la fortuna* [*Daughter of Fortune*] (1999) and *Retrato en sepia* [*Portrait in Sepia*] (2000). In this chapter, relationships between the individual and the community, as well as the variety of reflections of inner and outer conflicts experienced by characters, are explored.

This study argues that the recurring motif of displacement in Allende's writings illustrates the writer's concerted, nuanced engagement with issues of identity and a search for belonging. Allende's fiction moves beyond the confines of Latin America into a more international setting, and reflects her own experiences of displacement. Her fiction explores cross-cultural concerns of key relevance to contemporary global society. Moves in Allende's fiction towards the treatment of global concerns are juxtaposed with the growing importance of the individual, as a sense of displacement becomes increasingly internalized and indeed embraced by characters in her work.

## CHAPTER I

# An Introduction to Displacement in Isabel Allende's Fiction

In spite of Allende's obvious talents, there is not a single ounce of originality in the 300 pages of [*Retrato en sepia*]; one may read on, enthralled, but one never gets lost in another world in the way one does with the best books.

— ILAN STAVANS<sup>1</sup>

I am an eternal foreigner; the daughter of diplomats, a refugee, an immigrant. I have started from scratch in a new place with a new language several times, so I am not attached to objects.

— ISABEL ALLENDE<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction: Unoriginal Sin?

At first glance, critic Ilan Stavans's scathing description of Chilean author Isabel Allende's sixth novel, *Retrato en sepia* [*Portrait in Sepia*],<sup>3</sup> published in 2000, may appear to be a strange point of departure for an examination of Allende's fiction, but his comment is apposite for a number of reasons:

- 1 Ilan Stavans, 'Do you remember?', *The Times*, 5 October 2001, <<http://www.timeonline.co.uk/tol/incomingFeeds/article766336.ece>> [accessed 18 June 2012].
- 2 Isabel Allende, *The Guardian*, 14 April 2008, Section G2, p. 14, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2008/apr/14/features.g2>> [accessed 23 July 2012].
- 3 Isabel Allende, *Retrato en sepia* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2000). Further references will appear parenthetically in the text.

first, Stavans is one of many critics who consider Allende's works a qualified success; while he acknowledges positive features such as her ability to tell stories, he nevertheless cites a lack of originality as one of the key failings of this novel. In Stavans's eyes, the novel is engaging, but lacks an original, compelling or radically different perspective on the quest by the protagonist, Aurora del Valle, to decipher the meaning of the nightmares from her childhood and to forge a place for herself in Chilean society. Other commentators have also made reference to the relative degree of originality in *Retrato en sepia* as well as in other, if not all, works of fiction by Allende. Some argue that the recognizable features of her fiction are in fact quite positive: for example, in her review of the novel, Helen Falconer describes *Retrato en sepia* as 'trademark Allende', which she understands to be 'a family saga crowded with brilliant personalities, outlined then coloured in with such artistic care that we can't help but imagine them as drawn from life'.<sup>4</sup> However, many other critics follow the line of argument propounded by Stavans and view this novel as merely further evidence that Allende's writing is formulaic and wholly predictable in terms of plot and character development: for example, María de la Cinta Ramblado-Minero states that 'the trajectory of Aurora [in *Retrato en sepia*] is a repetition of the experience of previous characters, from the original ones in *La casa de los espíritus* [*The House of the Spirits*], to Aurora's own maternal grandmother, Eliza, in *Hija de la fortuna* [*Daughter of Fortune*].'<sup>5</sup> She coins the term 'Allendian' (p. 177) to describe what she identifies as recurring features throughout Allende's work. In an overview of critical approaches to Allende's work published up to 2002, Beth Jorgenson also cites repetition as a feature of her fiction; she states that 'the potential for

4 Helen Falconer, 'Colouring the Family Album', *The Guardian*, 17 November 2001 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2001/nov/17/fiction.isabelallende>> [accessed 15 June 2012].

5 María de la Cinta Ramblado-Minero, *Isabel Allende's Writing of the Self: Trespassing the Boundaries of Fiction and Autobiography* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2003), p. 177. See also Claire Lindsay's discussion of critical views on Allende in her *Locating Latin American Women Writers: Cristina Peri Rossi, Rosario Ferré, Albalucía Angel, and Isabel Allende* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 113–20.

pleasure [in Allende's work] is limited to the real but easy pleasure of the familiar, and has not to date provided the more challenging reward of an encounter with the new and the unexpected.<sup>6</sup> However, it is perhaps in Harold Bloom's introduction to a collection of essays on Allende where some of the most pointed criticism of the similarities to be found between her works can be discerned: Bloom summarily dismisses her work, and argues that 'rereading her is simply not possible'.<sup>7</sup> While he does acknowledge her 'humane political and social stances' (p. 2), he shares Ramblado-Minero's concerns regarding characterization when he explains how he struggles to differentiate between characters such as Nívea, Clara, Blanca and Alba in *La casa de los espíritus*. Bloom's uncertainty on the status of Allende's fiction leads him to wonder whether her novels are 'permanent works of literary art' or rather 'popular romances for our age of Ideology and Information' (p. 2). Bloom's introduction is a damning precursor to a work which endeavours to illustrate the depth and underlying complexity to be found in Allende's writing and highlights the critical polarity that surrounds Allende and her work.

Despite the body of critical work adopting a sceptical view of the nature and content of Allende's fiction, it is nevertheless undeniable that her works have had a significant and enduring impact on the Latin American, and indeed global, literary scene. Furthermore this impact has been, and continues to be, the subject of much criticism and commentary in studies on contemporary Latin American literature: Efraín Kristal, for example, suggests that Allende has made a crucial, central contribution when he explains that '[a]fter the initial "Boom," a second wave of worldwide interest in the Latin American novel was generated, almost single-handedly at first, by Isabel Allende, whose critical and commercial success opened the way

6 Beth Jorgenson, "Un puñado de críticos": Navigating the Critical Readings of Isabel Allende's Work', in *Isabel Allende Today*, ed. by Rosemary G. Feal and Yvette E. Miller (Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review, 2002), pp. 128–46 (p. 142).

7 Harold Bloom, 'Introduction', in *Isabel Allende*, ed. by Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House, 2003), pp. 1–3 (p. 2).

for the recognition of women writers.<sup>8</sup> Attempts to categorize Allende's work within Latin American literary movements have also been frequent, with many critics identifying her work as belonging to the Post-Boom wave of writing: for example, Raymond Leslie Williams argues that Allende's 'fast-moving plots and accessible works make her the post-Boom writer par excellence',<sup>9</sup> while Donald L. Shaw devotes an entire chapter to Allende's work in *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction*.<sup>10</sup> The continuing critical indecision surrounding Allende's place in the literary scene is a useful point of departure for the present study, which addresses primarily the concerns raised by critics such as Bloom, Stavans and Ramblado-Minero about issues of repetition and originality in Allende's fiction. It is argued here that it is only through careful reading – and rereading – of her work that subtle differences in her approaches to issues can be discerned. The present discussion focuses on seven works of fiction published by Allende between 1982 and 2000, and the recurring motif of displacement is employed as a way of examining her approach to characters and themes. Admittedly, these seven texts represent only a selection of Allende's ever-expanding body of work, but within this time period, which begins with the publication of *La casa de los espíritus* in 1982 and concludes with the release in 2000 of *Retrato en sepia*, it is argued that a clear evolution can be traced in Allende's approach to plot and character.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, *Retrato en sepia* in a sense functions as an intertextual bridge between her 1999 novel *Hija de la fortuna* and *La casa de los espíritus*, and thus its arrival in

8 Efraín Kristal, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*, ed. by Efraín Kristal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1–22 (p. 9).

9 Raymond Leslie Williams, *The Columbia Guide to the Latin American Novel Since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 62.

10 Donald L. Shaw, *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

11 Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus*, 12th edn (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2004). Further references will appear parenthetically in the text.



2000 closes a narrative circle in Allende's writing, and invites a review of her fiction produced to that point.<sup>12</sup>

The focus on displacement in this study is proposed for the following reasons: first, we argue that an analysis of displacement in Allende's fiction highlights the author's concerted exploration of the relationship between individuals and communities in her work. This approach is used as a means of revisiting and reappraising both characters and themes in texts which have already garnered significant critical attention, such as Esteban Trueba's relationship with the inhabitants of his family's country estate in *La casa de los espíritus*, to be broached in Chapter 2, and issues relating to communication and communities in both *Eva Luna* [*Eva Luna*] and in her short-story collection *Cuentos de Eva Luna* [*The Stories of Eva Luna*], examined in Chapter 4.<sup>13</sup> It will be argued that it is through the foregrounding of experiences of displacement that the uniqueness in Allende's writing is to be found; while it would be futile to contend that similarities between characters' trajectories in these texts are not readily apparent, as suggested earlier by Ramblado-Minero, this analysis instead highlights the subtle differences between characters as a way of arguing that Allende's fiction is multi-layered and indeed remains a relatively untapped corpus of work in critical terms.

Second, an examination of Allende's fiction within this period through the prism of displacement aims to reconcile two apparently contradictory trends which have emerged in her writing: on the one hand, the settings of her fiction have moved beyond the recognizably national confines of

12 Isabel Allende, *Hija de la fortuna*, 3rd edn (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1999). Further references will appear parenthetically in the text. Much of the global success of this novel may in fact be attributed to the selection of its English-language translation, *Daughter of Fortune*, in February 2000 as part of US chat show host Oprah Winfrey's hugely successful book club (Oprah's Book Club). For further information, see Ana Patricia Rodríguez's article "'Did Isabel Allende Write This Book for Me?': Oprah's Book Club Reads *Daughter of Fortune*' in *The Oprah Affect*, ed. by Cecilia Konchar Farr and Jaime Harker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), pp. 189–210.

13 Isabel Allende, *Eva Luna*, 5th edn (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1993). All subsequent references will be to this edition.

Chile in *La casa de los espíritus* and *De amor y de sombra* [*Of Love and Shadows*] into a more international setting from the publication of *Eva Luna* onwards; on the other hand, questions of inner conflict and identity appear to have gained in importance, with characters especially in her later fiction questioning both their respective individuality and their affiliations to various communities with whom they come into contact, including communities in exile.<sup>14</sup> This study looks at how, beyond the more international landscapes of Allende's fiction written since her move to the United States in 1988, it is the relationship with self and indeed the *embracing* of a sense of displacement that form part of the originality to be found in later works such as *Retrato en sepia*.

Third, in considering this fiction, this analysis aims to illustrate the relevance and importance of three works of fiction by Allende which have received relatively scant critical attention, that is, *De amor y de sombra* (1984), *Cuentos de Eva Luna* (1989) and *El plan infinito* [*The Infinite Plan*] (1991).<sup>15</sup> These texts are examined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively in order to gauge their place and importance in Allende's literary output. For a variety of reasons, these texts have often been neglected by critics: for example, the relative merits of *De amor y de sombra* as an independent text are often ignored in favour of a comparative analysis between this text and *La casa de los espíritus*; *Cuentos de Eva Luna* is often discounted by virtue of being a short-story collection and *El plan infinito* is often criticized for being overly ambitious in attempting to chart the dramatic changes in the United States of the mid- to late twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> This analysis seeks to locate each text within Allende's *oeuvre* and, in particular, to highlight the significance of *Cuentos de Eva Luna* in relation to her exploration of the relationship between self and community.

14 Isabel Allende, *De amor y de sombra*, 8th edn (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1995). All subsequent references will be to this edition.

15 Isabel Allende, *El plan infinito* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1991). Subsequent references will appear parenthetically in the text.

16 To cite just one example, Karen Castellucci Cox's *Isabel Allende: A Critical Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003) completely ignores *Cuentos de Eva Luna*. Further critical discussion of these texts may be found in their respective chapters.

Fourth, Allende's position in the context of contemporary Latin American studies will be considered towards the conclusion of this discussion, and it will be shown how an analysis of the thematic content of her later fiction, with its increasing focus on negotiating cultural difference, raises various issues about the feasibility of continuing to describe her fiction within strictly Latin American parameters. First, however, it is important to establish the scope of displacement for the purposes of this analysis.

## Displacement: A Point of Departure

The selection of the polysemous term *displacement* as a common thread here necessarily requires some justification: first, the basic sense which provides a springboard for the present discussion may be found in a definition offered by Angelika Bammer, who, in an introduction to a critical collection on the topic, describes displacement as 'the separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture'.<sup>17</sup> Both parts of this definition highlight the important interplay between culture and displacement: on the one hand, there is a very visible and physical form of dislocation through the movement of people from their homeland to another place, while on the other, the sense of displacement is less apparent, but equally influential, through enforced political changes which may have significant social and psychological repercussions, despite the lack of any obvious geographical relocation of people. This basic dichotomy of visible and invisible displacement offered above by Bammer, moreover, can be broken down further: political upheaval in a country may lead to the enforced movement or migration of people from

17 Angelika Bammer, 'Introduction,' in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. by Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. xi–xx (p. xi).

one part of a country to another, yet this group of people may end up being prevented from crossing the border into another country, owing perhaps to problems with documentation or to an unwillingness on the part of the prospective host country to grant them entry. This situation, which has been reported with increasing frequency in the media in the twenty-first century, is known as *internal displacement*, and those who find themselves in a type of limbo, within their own national borders, but unable to escape, have been referred to as *internally displaced persons* (IDPs).<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it is not merely changes in political regime that may effect a form of enforced movement within the borders of a country: policy changes instituted by a government may also trigger movement, which is known as *development-induced displacement*.<sup>19</sup> Another frequent cause of internal displacement is environmental change, with natural disasters often causing sudden mass movements of people.<sup>20</sup> Of course, political and environmental factors are

- 18 The concept of internal displacement is of growing relevance in global affairs, and concerted efforts have been made to identify, name and highlight not only the problem of internal displacement, but also those who suffer from being trapped within their own national borders. For a rigorous introduction to the concept, as well as a fascinating snapshot of how lobbying proceeds in a supranational organization such as the United Nations, see Thomas G. Weiss and David A. Korn's *Internal Displacement: Conceptualization and its Consequences* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006).
- 19 In the run-up to the Beijing Summer Olympics in 2008, there was much controversy surrounding the enforced relocation of citizens from lands which were to be redeveloped for the hosting of the games. An official document relating to the relocation process, which seeks to explain the Chinese Government's views, 'Briefing on the relocation project for Olympic venues', can be found at <<http://en.beijing2008.cn/news/official/preparation/n214253222.shtml>> [accessed 4 July 2012]. The Geneva-based Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), on the other hand, presents a much grimmer picture of the relocation process in the report 'One World, Whose Dream? Housing Rights Violations and the Beijing Olympic Games'. The full report is available to be read online at the following URL: <[http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/One\\_World\\_Whose\\_Dream\\_July08.pdf](http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/One_World_Whose_Dream_July08.pdf)> [accessed 9 July 2012].
- 20 Examples of climate-induced displacement are plentiful, but the Hurricane Katrina situation of August 2005 in New Orleans, Louisiana, is a key example of displacement

equally relevant to situations of exile, or *external displacement*, which is the term used in contradistinction to situations of internal displacement mentioned above. A cursory glance at coverage of contemporary global affairs suffices to show the range of conflicts throughout the world that have forced people to move away from their homes and relocate in order to escape a dangerous or threatening situation and to search for asylum in neighbouring countries, from the significant waves of migration throughout the twentieth century through to ongoing conflicts this century in Sudan and Israel, to cite but two examples.<sup>21</sup> In addition, contemporary debates on globalization examine the impact of the practices of multinational companies on economies and communities worldwide.<sup>22</sup>

Situations of internal and external displacement have been commonplace in Latin America, especially since colonial times. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century alone, there has been widespread reporting on the internally displaced people (IDPs) of Colombia, owing to the continuing civil war there:<sup>23</sup> in a report which looks at public policy on forced

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affecting a developed country. The US government's slow response to the plight of many of their own citizens created a media furore. For further discussion, see *Natural Disaster Analysis After Hurricane Katrina: Risk Assessment, Economic Impacts and Social Implications*, ed. by Harry W. Richardson, Peter Gordon and James E. Moore (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009).

- 21 For a recent discussion of the problems of internal displacement in Sudan, see Munzoul Assal's 'Rights and Decisions to Return: Internally Displaced Persons in Post-war Sudan' in *Forced Displacements: Whose Needs are Right?*, ed. by Katarzyna Grabska and Lyla Mehta (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 139–58. In relation to Israel, Kim Chernin's *Everywhere a Guest, Nowhere at Home: A New Vision of Israel and Palestine* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2009) provides a very personal perspective on the impact of the creation of the Israeli state in 1948 and subsequent conflicts.
- 22 The organization *Human Rights Watch* provides a comprehensive and regularly updated website at <[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)>, with further information regarding displacement and migration.
- 23 An important UN Refugee Agency report on the plight of internally displaced people in Colombia, entitled *Colombia. Internal Displacement – Policies and Problems*, is available online at <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/44bf463a4.html>> [accessed 7 January 2009].

displacement in Colombia, Marta Inés Villa states that '[e]n la actualidad hay más de tres millones de desplazados internos en Colombia y cerca de 300.000 colombianos han buscado refugio en países vecinos, como Ecuador, Venezuela y Panamá, y en países más distantes, como Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, Canadá y Costa Rica' [*there are currently more than 3 million internally displaced people in Colombia and around 300,000 Colombians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, such as Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama, and in more distant countries, such as the United States, Canada and Costa Rica*].<sup>24</sup> In Bolivia, the fractured nature of society and uneven distribution of wealth and resources have become more pronounced through recent political wrangling over the acceptance of the new constitution, approved in January 2009 by the government of Evo Morales. Regional calls for autonomy and challenges to attempts to reform the linguistic, social and economic situation of the country are played out in a territory whose inhabitants are constantly on the alert, given the ever-present threat of natural disasters, as witnessed already on numerous occasions this century. Displacement may also be usefully examined diachronically in this context, through the various waves of colonization and migration in Latin America, and the concomitant reconfigurations of the sociopolitical landscape.<sup>25</sup> In relation to the history of Chile, Allende makes reference to several significant examples in her 2003 memoir, *Mi país inventado* [*My Invented Country*]; she discusses the plight of indigenous populations there over the last two centuries, and in particular the displacement of the indigenous Mapuche tribe. In addition, she describes the arrival of the British in the

24 Marta Inés Villa, 'Políticas públicas sobre el desplazamiento forzado en Colombia: Una lectura desde las representaciones sociales', in *Las migraciones en América Latina: políticas, culturas y estrategias*, ed. by Susana Novick (Buenos Aires: Catálogos, 2008), pp. 229–48 (p. 230). All translations into English are by me.

25 For a comprehensive overview of Latin American history since colonial times, see Marshall C. Eakin, *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Mario Sznajder and Luis Roniger offer a more specific examination of Latin American history in relation to exile in *The Politics of Exile in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): the section 'Spanish America: Practices of Expulsion' (pp. 41–5) includes extensive reference to displacement or 'destierro'.

nineteenth century, the impact of neo-colonialism and the controversial measures introduced through government policies which sought to encourage immigration from Europe throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Allende strongly believes that Chile's 'política de inmigración ha sido abiertamente racista' [*immigration policy has been openly racist*].<sup>26</sup> In relation to British expatriates resident in Chile, she notes how their descendants, despite never having set foot in Britain, continued to live in a form of splendid isolation: 'tenían a mucha honra hablar castellano con acento y enterarse de las noticias por periódicos atrasados que venían de allá' (p. 60) [*they took great pride in speaking accented Spanish and learning about the news from old newspapers which came from Britain*].<sup>27</sup>

Changes throughout the Chilean political landscape of the twentieth century, particularly since the 1973 political coup in which General Augusto Pinochet played a crucial role, often led to situations of self-imposed exile for figures who subsequently went on to achieve global acclaim as writers; apart from Allende herself, many other prominent Chilean writers, including Ariel Dorfman, Antonio Skármeta and José Donoso, have considered questions of displacement at various stages in their writing, with their literature often providing a space in which estrangement and isolation during and after experiences of totalitarian regimes are explored.<sup>28</sup>

26 Isabel Allende, *Mi país inventado* (Barcelona: Areté, 2003), p. 58.

27 Allende examines in great detail the tensions and dynamics in the relationship between British expatriate siblings Jeremy and Rose Sommers, who have moved to Valparaíso, Chile, in *Hija de la fortuna*; see Chapter 5 for further discussion of this.

28 A 2007 documentary film, *A Promise to the Dead: The Exile Journey of Ariel Dorfman*, directed by Peter Raymont, charts Dorfman's experiences of the coup and his return to Chile following the death of Pinochet. In many ways, key issues addressed in this documentary, such as memory and exile, are equally pertinent to investigating Allende's work. Skármeta's *El baile de la victoria* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2003) sketches a love story in post-Pinochet Chile, where the spectre of the dictatorship still haunts the lives of the protagonists. Donoso's *La desesperanza* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1986) is set in the midst of the Pinochet regime and uses the death of celebrated poet Pablo Neruda's wife, Matilde Urrutia, as a springboard for the examination of protagonist Mañungo Vera's efforts to resettle in Chile following an extensive period living in Paris.