

“A House of My Own” (p. 108)

Based on this vignette, make some inferences about the author, Sandra Cisneros. Explain your inferences.

“A House of My Own” in *The House on Mango Street* is about Esperanza’s house after she leaves Mango Street, the house of her dreams. It shows the pride and satisfactions she gets from having a nice house— a house that shows that she is not just a poor Hispanic girl in a bad neighborhood and house, but a “normal” American with a “normal” house. In essence, it shows how happy she is to be an free, *ordinary* citizen, not below the standard of the norm like she used to be. She wants to fit into society like everyone else, not being held back by poverty or race. Through Esperanza, I can infer that Sandra Cisneros, having wrote this book with Esperanza being the character that represented herself, must have felt the same way when she got her own house; so when I am describing Esperanza, I am making inferences about Cisneros also.

To Esperanza, her new house is “A house all *my* own. With *my* porch and *my* pillow, *my* pretty purple petunias.” It seems that she is very glad to be able to say that she actually owns property for herself, and does not have to depend on others. There is nobody else to depend on, “Nobody to shake a stick at. Nobody’s garbage to pick up after.” She feels independent and excited because like most Americans who can grow up and have their own house, she can too. She was completely happy to leave her old house (while many people would feel sadness doing so) and have her own house, showing that she is a person who enjoys freedom and control over her own life. With this new house comes freedom from family, freedom from being under a landlord (had she bought an apartment instead), freedom from prejudice and freedom from shame of living in such a poor, brick house such as the one on Mango Street— she welcomes all these new liberties into her life.

In addition, the house is “real.” Overall, she is extremely satisfied with her new residence, being what she wants her house to be. It’s the opposite of her house on Mango Street, the one that she was ashamed at. When moving into the house on Mango Street, she thought, “I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. One that I could point to. But this isn’t it” (5). She was extremely unhappy about her house, because it was not the movie-star houses she saw on TV that everybody adored and looked up to. Instead, she was like a rat in a sewer, full of shame and an undesirable place to call home, hated by and stomped on by all the humans. Now, when she had a house, one that she *could* call home and mention to others, she doesn’t complain. The fact that owning her own house means so much to Esperanza means that she didn’t fit in before (which was a major theme throughout the book), and that she strived to belong. Now, when she belongs, she is confident, unashamed, and even boasts about her house, without worrying about living in the ghetto on Mango Street.