

Narrative Point of View: Esperanza's Immaturity

Consider the opening first-person narration of Esperanza Cordero in Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*. How reliable is Esperanza's perspective in describing the house that she and her family have moved into on Mango Street? Carefully read the excerpts below and then analyze how Cisneros uses the narration to reveal the areas that Esperanza needs to grow and develop in order to be a mature person by the novel's end.

Concrete Detail
The house on Mango Street is ours, and we don't have to pay rent to anybody, or share the yard with the people downstairs, or be careful not to make too much noise, and there isn't a landlord banging on the ceiling with a broom. But even so, it's not the house we thought we'd get. (3)
Commentary

Concrete Detail
They always told us that one day we would move into a house, a real house that would be ours for always so we wouldn't have to move each year. And our house would have running water and pipes that worked. And inside it would have real stairs, not hallway stairs, but stairs inside like the houses on T.V. (4)
Commentary

Concrete Detail
<i>There.</i> I had to look to where she pointed—the third floor, the paint peeling, wooden bars Papa had nailed on the windows so we wouldn't fall out. <i>You live there?</i> The way she said it made me feel like nothing. [. . .] I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. One I could point to. But this isn't it. The house on Mango Street isn't it. (5)
Commentary