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## Quest For Self Identity: Psychoanalytic Theory and Writing Technique in Isabel Allende's Maya's Notebook

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**Abstract:** *This paper deals with the psychoanalytic feminism as in Isabel Allende's Maya's Notebook, as it involves the life and mind of women. And one can see that the whole novel is all about Maya a 19-year-old girl and her sufferings because she has to cope with desolation and loss at a very young age. Another woman who gets the focus of the author is Maya's grandmother. The most important issue that Allende brings out is the way women are abused for criminal activities and for money –making. The lyrical prose used to describe the delight of sea-life is yet another aspect of the novel. Exile in this kind of a landscape is more a search for inner peace, to escape alienation, death, and grief. Life in Chile is portrayed as a union of raw nature unlike the mechanical life of California. Maya's Notebook is very much rooted in the contemporary global culture. Maya Vidal regains her identity after getting shattered into pieces by the circumstances. Her exile and diary get her closer to herself and rescues her getting disintegrated.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Psychoanalytic Theory, Imagination, Self-realization through Exile, Changeover.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The present work on Isabel Allende attempts an analysis of the use of psychology in *Maya's Notebook*. One could apparently see the views of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan totally applicable to what happens in the novel. *Maya's Notebook* by Isabel Allende is a bruising, cinematically vivid new novel. It's an exercise in gritty realism rather than the fanciful folkloricism that Allende has been known for, since her fictional debut, *The House of the Spirits* thirty years ago. With *Maya's Notebook*, Allende succeeds in shedding all such limiting labels. Written in the smart, engaging and blunt first person voice of its teenage heroine, *Maya's Notebook* purports to be the diary-like account of a young Chilean American's picaresque quest for love and moral enlightenment as she roams from Berkeley to Las Vegas to the Chiloe Archipelago off Chile's southern coast.

Maya's life is a chaotic account of running for her life. She is fleeing from, an assortment of drug-dealers, junkies, petty dealers and rapists, whose brutal, dark humorous personality and exploits are rendered in harrowingly persuasive detail. This novel is about parents, communities, and gangs. Maya's voice over touches the credibility of Allende's clunky invocation of contemporary pop culture. More significantly in the course of its nearly 400 pages *Maya's Notebook* never establishes a solid and illuminating connection between the viciously lurid odyssey that Maya undergoes and the discoveries that she makes about her South American family's own past ordeals. Most readers will easily guess the hidden tie between Nini and Maya that is revealed at the end of the novel.

*Maya's Notebook* exerts the raw and genuine power. Although Allende has set her previous novels in Chile, *Maya's Notebook* offers her the most visceral and urgent reckoning with the country that the expatriate author left behind decades ago. Isabel Allende has explored the ways in which people survive and even thrive over the trauma. Into the dark corners of history and the human psyche she boldly goes, shining like a strong light in the darkness, that is her focus. This document is a template. An electronic copy can be downloaded from the Journal website. For questions on paper guidelines, please contact the journal publications committee as indicated on the journal website. Information about final paper submission is available from the conference website.

### SCHIZOPHRENIA – CHALLENGING MENTAL ILLNESS

Schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder which affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. Someone with schizophrenia may have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is imaginary. It may lead to an unresponsive act and become an introvert. It may have difficulty expressing normal emotions in social situations. Schizophrenia is not a split personality or multi personality. The majority of people with schizophrenia are not violent and do not cause danger to others. Schizophrenia is not caused by any childhood experiences, poor parenting or lack of willpower but the symptoms are not identical it differs from one person to another.

Scientists recognize that the disorder tends to run in families and a person inherits to develop the disease. Schizophrenia can be triggered by environmental events, such as viral infections or in the highly stressful situation. Similar to some other genetically related illnesses, schizophrenia appears when the body undergoes hormonal and physical changes. People with schizophrenia will have a chemical imbalance of brain chemicals which are neurotransmitters. This imbalance of these chemicals affects the way of a person's brain and leads to hallucination or delusions. In *Maya's Notebook*, the central character Maya Inherits this disease and tries to escape from it through exile.

*Maya's Notebook* by Isabel Allende is a story describes the life of a nineteen-year-old young woman and her sufferings. The novel has autobiographical elements which have caused the critics to assume that she is fictionalizing her life experience. The whole story revolves around Maya's dismal past and the uncertain present which finds her in hiding on an isolated Island off Chiloe's coast where her grandmother Nidia had taken her. On the Island, she is totally disconnected from technology and ensconced in a magical world of nature myth and spirits.

Maya's diary relates a journey of her life destruction that begins after her beloved grandfather Popo's death. Maya's promising path as a good student and athlete is traumatically disrupted by the death of her grandfather and her grandmother's subsequent depression. Maya gets addicted to the usage of drugs, delinquency, and crime that leads her to a school for trouble teens in Oregon and ultimately to streets of Las Vegas where she ends up homeless, addicted and fighting for her life.

Allende's trademark for Chiloe is as strong as her clever writing which lends buoyancy to narrative style. A later question from the readers referred to these dreams and prophetic vision with reference to Allende's writing and creative process. Allende related that she works, she is quite, silent and alone for a long period of time like a monk and that in this context she hears in the voice of characters.

*Maya's notebook* narrates the life of Maya in a psychoanalytical fashion, which also implies that it has a healing effect on the protagonist's psyche. Maya's Notebook, Maya is seriously suffering from a psychic disorder which worsens her situation into addiction to drugs and alcohol and leads her to join a serious criminal gang. All these things happened because of Maya's imbalance and mental stability which leads to all serious problems in her life. 'This caused me quite few problems with the psychologists in Oregon, who tried to force me to revolve my grief or some similar trite platitude' (MN 68).

Freud's psychoanalysis is made use of in this novel. His theory is mainly based on psychoanalytic as a therapy. Psychoanalysis defined as a method of investigating mind and especially the unconscious mind. A therapy of neurosis inspired from the method. An investigation method and clinical experience that uses the knowledge of unconscious.

While the main plot revolves around Maya and her mental depression, it also shows some implications of feminist psychoanalytic criticism. Mostly the feminist psychoanalytic theory focuses on the women who belong to a minority and the women who are sexually abused. In either case, it leads to mental depression. Maya is a victim of abuse. She is under the care of her grandmother Nini who gives Maya all the love and care. Though she has a good home, care, love, and affection, she feels the lack of her parents in her life.

My Nini's stoic philosophy is more suitable: "since we're going to suffer, let's clench our teeth" she said. Pain is like that, the pain of the soul does not go away with remedies, therapy, or vacation; you simply endure it deep down, fully, as you should. I would have done well to follow my Nini's example, instead of denying that I was suffering and stifling the howl that was stuck in my chest. Later, in Oregon, they prescribed antidepressants, which I didn't take, because they made me stupid. They watched me, but I was able to trick them by hiding chewing gum in my mouth, where I struck the pill with my tongue and minutes later spit it out intact. (MN 68)

The protagonist Maya in spite of growing up with love and affection is devastated by the sudden death of her grandfather Popo. This makes her feel completely lonely. Her husband's death is a greater shock for Nini, Maya's grandmother has an impact on Nini's affection for Maya. Maya starts feeling lonely and her loneliness has made her fall for all addiction. In order to get rid of loneliness Maya gets addicted to drugs, falls into a bad company and moves with criminals, thus Maya begins to spoil her life this becomes a major psychological defect in her.

This chapter mainly deals with schizophrenia which is a major mental illness. Maya is seen as a schizophrenia girl who is mentally affected by the bitter experiences that had happened to her. It is surrounding that had changed Maya as a mentally affected girl but the root cause for all the problems is that she had a lack of care and affection. As a remedy to her depression, Nini sends Maya to Chiloe Island where Maya relives her past by writing a diary documenting all that she went through. Her writing brings a realization upon herself and her past.

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder often characterized by abnormal social behavior and failure to recognize what is real. Common symptoms include false beliefs, unclear or confused thinking, auditory hallucinations, reduced social engagement and emotional expression, and inactivity. Diagnosis is based on observed behavior and the person's reported experience. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the psychiatrist Kurt Schneider listed the forms of psychotic symptoms that he thought distinguished schizophrenia from other psychotic disorders. There is a tentative evidence for the effectiveness of early interventions to prevent schizophrenia.

A recent study of the ancient Greek and Roman literature showed that although the general population probably had an awareness of psychotic disorders, there was no condition that would meet the modern diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia in these societies.

I had withdrawn inside a hard shell and wouldn't let anyone get close to me. I turn myself into a defiant and a sulky stranger who didn't answer when spoken to, burst into the place like a whirlwind, didn't lift a finger to help around the house, and

slammed doors at the slightest annoyance, the psychiatrist explained to my Nini that I was suffering from a combination of adolescence and depression and recommended that she sign me up for youth bereavement groups, but I wouldn't hear of it in the darkest night when I was more desperate, I sensed my Popo's presence. My sadness summoned him. (MN 72)

Today Freud's method is the most accomplished psychotherapy used in psychiatry. Many objections have been raised against traditional psychoanalysis, both for its methodological rigidity and for its lack of theoretical rigour. In order to get relief from the problems as well as from the FBI Nini sends Maya to Chiloe Island where Maya gets slowly rescued. The present rescues her from the past and she begins to write her diary both about her present and past. She finds a way to reconcile herself from the past and finds hope for future.

As a therapy psychoanalysis is based on the concept that individuals are unaware of the many factors that cause their behavior and emotion. These unconscious factors have the potential to produce unhappiness, which in turn is expressed through a source of distinguishable symptoms, including disturbing personality traits like difficulty in relating with others, or disturbance in self – esteem or general disposition. In *Maya's Notebook*, Maya gets affected psychologically after the death of her grandfather and that leads her life to disaster.

Maya finds her practice of writing to be having a healing effect; which is very much Freudian as Freud used the memories of the past to diagnose the root cause of mental illness of his patients Allende has implemented in her novel *Maya's Notebook* through her protagonist Maya.

### LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF ISABEL ALLENDE

Words are the powerful things. They can be used to construct or destruct. As a writer, it is important not only to think about what you say but also how to say it. To communicate effectively it's not enough to have well organized ideas expressed in complete and coherent sentences and paragraphs. One must also think about the style, tone, and clarity of his/her writing and adapt these elements to the reading audience. In order to choose the most effective language, the writer considers the object of the document the context in which it is being written and who will be reading it.

The choice of conceptual writing style molds the overall writing style and over all character of the work. As the title suggests the whole novel is from the perspective of Maya Vidal a 19-year-old girl, the protagonist of the novel. The novel is a manifestation of Maya's diary in which she writes her full life story including her childhood but mainly focusing on the four years from her grandfather's death. Thus the novel is told in the first person. Though she recounts the story of her grandparents the lines in the novel are often repeated. And it has become a personal fairy tale.

She occasionally guesses at the inner thoughts of her grandparents the only since the whole novel is an autobiography and can be seen as subjective. It's all about Maya who talks about her and her life experience in the entire novel. From the beginning to the end the novel it is full of first person narrative and the author has given a vivid picture through her style of writing.

Maya is the light of narrative guises wise beyond her 19 years but convincingly coltish, she gives us an outsider's observations and has a chirpy, wry sense of humor when she falls in love, she writes her adoration and despair with hyperbole, exclamation marks, and teenage whole heartedness. The sections describing her past are dominated by the energetic narrative impetus and lose track of any feelings of abandonment, terror and hurt at the story's center.

*Maya's Notebook* moves in the first person narrative aspect. Maya tells her own story and her intimate relationship with her grandfather Popo. Maya used to read the dictionary with her beloved grandfather. Little of that coded language find its way into the book, even during intense scenarios with her best friends and sometime boyfriend, a helpless fellow in low-slung baggy jeans.

The prioritizing of story over voice suggests that it's not the aim of *Maya's Notebook* to plunge the reader into the grim existence of a real-life Maya; this is a tale of revelations and resolutions, Despite the observations about the number of young people lost street violence, crime, and slavery, or because of them, the driving force of this novel is ultimately resilience.

In the worldview, the wise perspective of the narrative voice can elide with the young narrator: "I'm not going to be weighed down till the day I die", (MN 126) Maya insists. Her argument is compelling. She hits some nasty snags on the way to her rock bottom but emerges with her joy in life intact, able to heal others.

Isabel Allende's novel *Maya's Notebook* feels like a break from the past, a deliberate distancing from the deep historical context and magical realism that has marked her work and charmed her readers across generations and national borders. In her narrative techniques, Maya's notebook is a gritty, violent, cautionary tale set firmly in the present in its tone.

The use of Spanish words in this novel is a disadvantage to the reader. But Allende as a writer has her own reasons to use them. The tone of the novel is autobiographical and Allende has used a language that is appropriate to the first person narration and the confessional tone of the narrator.

One can see that *Maya's Notebook* is full of words and linguistic habits of the teenagers. Another notable feature of the novel is that it is a translated work and the content of the language are carried over to the second platform. Spanish is called as a romance language that originated in a Castile region of Spain. Madrid in terms of its number of native speakers in the world wide. Spanish is the group of Ibero - romance group of languages. Which evolved from several languages. It was first documented in central northern Iberia after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Spanish vocabulary was influenced by Basque.

Spanish is the national language of 19 countries in the American totaling at least 418 million native speakers in the hemisphere. In the European Union, Spanish is the mother tongue of eight percent of the population percent speaking it as a second language learned in the United States. Usually, Spanish is written in Latin script.

Allende strives to illustrate the post-colonial social and political upheavals of the modern period in Chile. Her works as a represent the artful integration of her personal history of her homeland. Her characters are intimately real and their lives accented by magic. In one of her articles, she says that it's very hard to define her style of writing first of all because writing is a natural process. And it has to come spontaneously from the heart. She will never think about what to write and that is why she says that she doesn't have to talk about her writings.

Actually, Allende is not a professional writer. She is a journalist. And during her work, she saw a beautiful painting and that makes her create stories. Then she started to write children stories. According to Allende life, the world is something mysterious and we have to take each and everything that we see and cross read it. Isabel Allende is famous for her style and her writings have originality and clarity. Though there is some excessive use of Spanish words, the language is simple and outstanding.

### CONCLUSION

Every mental problem of the humans has a come due to the surrounding. Isabel Allende's novel usually deals with something which is always realistic. But *Maya's Notebook* blends psychology with realism. This project is discussed about the evolution of Maya's mind from an agitated teenager to composed adult. The whole novel indicates Mays the sufferings. The solution that Maya finds on exile as a permanent solution to her problems. She is sent to a new place in order to get out of the problems.

*Maya's Notebook* narrates a wayward American teenager regains her health and soul on a remote Chilean island. In all of her work, Isabel Allende has explored the ways in which the people survive, even thrive, after trauma. And yet, it is not darkness that is her focus, but rather the things that dim and disperses it – kindness, forgiveness, and empathy. Allende is a disciple of love. In her world, love wears down dictators, heals the sick, surprises the hopeless and renders life magical.

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