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**SURREALISM IN THE WRITINGS OF ISABEL ALLENDE: A
DREAMLIKE JOURNEY INTO THE DEPTH OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

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Abstract:

Isabel Allende, the acclaimed Chilean novelist, has captivated readers worldwide with her unique literary style that seamlessly blends elements of magical realism, feminism, and political commentary leading to avail the experience of invisible dimensional world of inner experience by incorporating the Freudian technique of psychoanalysis to delve into. However, one aspect of her writing that often goes unexplored is her incorporation of surrealist elements, a technique that adds depth and complexity to her narratives. This research paper delves into the surrealist influences present in Allende's writing, examining how she employs surreal imagery, symbolism, and dreamlike sequences to create a rich tapestry of human experiences that transcends the boundaries of conventional reality.

Keywords: *Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Invisible World Beyond Veil, Dimensions, etc.*

Surrealism, a cultural movement that emerged in the early 20th century, aimed to revolutionize the way art and literature were perceived. Founded by André Breton, surrealism sought to liberate the human mind from the constraints of rationality and logic, embracing the subconscious and the world of dreams as a means of expressing truths that lie beyond the veil. (Breton,1924). Surrealist artists and writers used techniques such as automatic writing (*hypnotic writing/ hallucination by spirit*), juxtaposition of incongruous elements, and the exploration of the uncanny to challenge conventional perceptions of reality.

Isabel Allende's novels are rich with surrealist elements that add depth and complexity to her narratives. One of the most prominent surrealist techniques she employs is the use of dreamlike sequences and magical realism. In her acclaimed novel *The House of the Spirits*, Allende seamlessly interweaves magical elements with realistic events, creating a surreal tapestry of human experiences. For instance, when describing the character of Clara, Allende writes: "She spent hours watching the path of dust motes in the sunlight and could predict the weather by intuiting the airs that blew from far away, carrying the aroma of gardens and beaches, or the metallic bitterness of lightning storms" (Allende, 12).

As it proves Allende's ability to blur the line between reality and the surreal, imbuing her characters with seemingly supernatural abilities that defy the laws of physics. By doing so, she invites



readers to suspend their disbelief and embrace a world where the boundaries between the mundane and the extraordinary are blurred, echoing the surrealist tradition of challenging conventional perceptions of reality.

Another surrealist technique Allende employs is the juxtaposition of incongruous elements, a hallmark of surrealist art and literature. In her novel *Eva Luna*, Allende describes a character's dream in which mundane objects take on surreal qualities: "She dreamed of flying over the sea, trailing a long tail of bed sheets, and of walking through the desert carrying a golden fish bowl filled with water" (Allende, 89).

This juxtaposition of elements that would typically be incompatible, such as flying over the sea while trailing bed sheets or carrying a fish bowl through the desert, creates a sense of disorientation and challenges the reader's perception of reality. By presenting these surreal images without explanation or rationalization, Allende invites readers to embrace the irrational and the unexpected, echoing the surrealist ethos of embracing the subconscious and the world of dreams.

Use of Symbolism and Metaphor:

In addition to surreal imagery and dreamlike sequences, Allende also employs symbolism and metaphor in a manner reminiscent of surrealist poetry. In her novel *The Stories of Eva Luna*, Allende uses the image of a green-winged macaw as a metaphor for freedom and self-expression: "The green-winged macaw soared above the slums, its vibrant plumage a beacon of hope for those trapped in the squalor below" (Allende, 23).

By imbuing a simple bird with symbolic significance, Allende invites readers to explore deeper meanings and interpretations, a hallmark of surrealist literature. The juxtaposition of the vibrant macaw against the backdrop of the slums creates a striking contrast that challenges the reader's perception of reality and invites them to explore the symbolic significance of the image.

Allende's use of symbolism and metaphor extends beyond the natural world, as she also employs surreal imagery to explore complex themes and emotions. In her novel *Of Love and Shadows*, Allende uses the image of a butterfly to symbolize the fragility and transience of life: "The butterfly danced in the air, its delicate wings a blur of colour against the grey backdrop of the city. For a fleeting moment, it was a beacon of beauty and hope, but then it was gone, crushed beneath the heel of an indifferent passerby" (Allende, 137).

Through this poetic and surreal description, Allende invites readers to contemplate the fleeting nature of existence and the juxtaposition of beauty and cruelty that permeates the human experience. By employing surreal imagery and symbolism, she transcends the boundaries of literal representation and invites readers to engage with her work on a deeper, more symbolic level.

The Influence of Surrealist Painters:

While Allende's surrealist influences are primarily rooted in the literary tradition, bearing the imprint of surrealist painters such as Salvador Dalí and René Magritte. Like these artists, Allende employs dreamlike imagery and juxtapositions of incongruous elements to challenge the viewer's perception of reality. For instance, in her novel *The Japanese Lover*, Allende describes a dream sequence that evokes the surreal landscapes of Dalí: "She found herself in a desert, the sand dunes undulating like waves frozen in time. In the distance, she saw a clock melting, its hands drooping like wilted flowers" (Allende, 204).

This image, with its melting clock and surreal desert landscape, calls to mind Dalí's iconic painting *The Persistence of Memory*, a work that has become synonymous with her personal inner turmoil of frustration symbolizing the surrealist movement. By incorporating such surreal imagery into her writing, Allende follows the surrealist tradition adding depth and complexity to her narratives.



Surrealistic Socio-political realities:

While Allende's use of surrealist elements is often employed to explore the depths of the human experience, she also leverages these techniques to comment on political and social issues. In her novel *The House of the Spirits* Allende uses surreal imagery to depict the horrors of political oppression and torture: "The walls bled, and the blood ran in rivulets down the floor, pooling in the corners of the room. The victims' screams echoed like the cries of tortured souls in limbo" (Allende, 289).

By presenting the brutality of torture through a surreal lens, Allende amplifies the horror and dehumanization of such acts, inviting readers to confront the visceral reality of political oppression. The surreal imagery transcends literal representation and taps into the collective unconscious, evoking a primal sense of fear and revulsion.

To conclude, Isabel Allende's writing is a testament to the enduring influence of surrealism in contemporary literature, through her masterful narrative technique use of dreamlike sequences, juxtaposition of incongruous elements, and symbolic imagery, through which Allende created a literary world that challenges conventional perceptions of reality and invites readers to explore the depths of the human experience. Her incorporation of surrealist elements not only adds richness and complexity to her narratives but also serves as a footprint in the movement of the power of literature to transcend the boundaries of the mundane and delve into the realms of the subconscious, toward the multi-dimensional and the surreal world. Allende's work represents a continuation of the surrealist tradition, carrying forward the legacy of artists and writers who sought to liberate the human mind from the constraints of rationality and logic. By embracing the irrational, the dreamlike, and the symbolic, Allende invites her readers to embark on a journey that transcends the boundaries of conventional reality, allowing them to explore the invisible world beyond the veil of the human world in all its depthless, vastness at the galactic scope with full of complexity, beauty, and contradictions.

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