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**Scriptotherapy and the Working Through Traumatic Experiences
in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements for the
Degree of Master in English Literature and Civilization.

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Declaration of Authenticity

The work reported in this dissertation was carried out by us under the supervision of Ms BENTAHER Soumia Department of English Faculty **Letters and languages** at Amar Telidji University Laghouat, Algeria.

We hereby declare that the title of the dissertation (**Scriptotherapy and the Working Through Traumatic Experiences in Doris Lessing's Novel The Golden Notebook(1962)**) and the contents of this dissertation are the product of our own research and no part has been copied from any published source (except the references, standard mathematical or genetic models/equations/formulas protocols etc.). we further declare that this work has not been submitted for award of any other degree/diploma. The University may take action if the information provided is found inaccurate at any stage.

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Dedication 1

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Mrs. Oum Elkheir Taibi and Mr Babaghayou sadek who gave me love and support and helped me defeat all the challenges faced and made it possible for me to reach the goals I aspired for. They taught me how to value education and to be always a source of inspiration for others.

I also dedicate my work to my two best friends Rougab wafa and Akli Silya for being a source of support, encouragement, and for their wonderful presence in times of joy and despair, providing me with love, understanding and believing in my academic capacities when I stopped believing in myself. Special thanks goes to my dear brothers Babaghayou Mahmoud and Mohamed Amine and my dear sisters Siham, Hasna, and Imane who gave me a lot of support in times when I needed help.

I would like to thank Mouna Maicha for helping me and being there in this journey. To all my friends “the angels” who shared words of advice and support, thank you for your encouragement, your friendship makes my life a wonderful experience.

Dedication 2

This dissertation is dedicated to my father's soul, Boulerbah Bendjedia , may the Almighty bless his pure soul and grant him the highest paradise.

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Abstract

The current dissertation offers a new critical reading of Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* that takes up themes of trauma and healing as quintessential tropes to understand her approach to and representation of female traumatic experiences. The research also aims at demonstrating how Lessing's novel can be read as a narrative of healing or scriptotherapy. Moreover, this dissertation seeks to highlight the significance and symbolism of the central female character, Anna Wulf, in rendering its creator's vision about a traumatized subject which uses scriptotherapy as a means to work through a traumatic experience. Through her fiction, we assume that Lessing demonstrates the transformative power of trauma narratives and their capacity to turn unspeakable stories about women's suffering into narratives of testimony that are infused by the power of healing. Then healing narratives, according to Lessing, constitute an adequate tool for the representation, transmission, and healing of female traumas. So, in her feminist approach to trauma, Doris Lessing attempts to invest in therapeutic and healing discourses that identify her female character's story as a form of scriptotherapy.

Keywords: Trauma, Healing, Scriptotherapy, *The Golden Notebook*.

Table of Contents

Declaration of Authenticity	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgments	IV
Abstract	V
Table of Contents	VI
General Introduction	01
Chapter One: Understanding Contemporary Trauma Fiction	
Introduction.....	02
I.1. Trauma Studies.....	08
I.1.1. Trauma Theory.....	10
I.2. Trauma Fiction.....	12
I.2.1. Description of a Traumatized Subject in Fiction.....	14
I.2.2. Responses of a Traumatized Subject to Trauma Experience.....	17
I.2.3. Literary Techniques in Trauma Fiction.....	18
I.2.4. Depiction of Traumatized Subjects in Fiction.....	18
I.3. Trauma Narratives.....	19
I.3.1. Trauma Narratives in Literature.....	20
I.3.2. Literary Techniques in Trauma Narrative.....	20
Conclusion.....	22
Chapter Two: Narratives of Healing in Contemporary Women’s Fiction	
Introduction	24
II.1. Narratives of Healing.....	25
II.1.1. Narratives of Healing in Trauma Fiction.....	26

II.1.2 Narratives of Healing in Women' Fiction.....	28
II.2. Scriptotherapy.....	30
II.2.1. Characteristics of Healing Stories (Narratives of Healing).....	31
II.2.2. Key Techniques oh Healing Narratives.....	32
II.2.3. Impact of Healing Narratives.....	34
II.2.3.a. Connectedness.....	34
II.2.3.b. Understanding of Recovery.....	35
II.2.3.c. Reduction in Stigma.....	35
II.2.3.d. Validation of Personal Experience.....	35
II.2.3.e. Emotional and Behavioral Responses.....	35
II.3. Stages of Recovery.....	35
II.3.a. Establishing Safety.....	35
II.3.b. Reconstructing of Trauma Story.....	36
II.3.c. Restoring the Connection between Survivors and their Community	36
II.4. Demonstrations from Contemporary women's Fiction.....	37
II.4.a. Vandals by Alice Munroe.....	37
II.4.b. Still Alice by Lisa Genova.....	38
Conclusion.....	39

Chapter Three: Healing as a Major Theme in *The Golden Notebook*

Introduction.....	42
III.1. The Novel as Trauma Fiction.....	42
III.1.2 About the Novel <i>The Golden Notebook</i>	43
III.1.3. Anna as a Traumatized Subject.....	45
III.2. Anna and the Act of Working through a Traumatic Experience.....	46

III.3. Reading the Notebook as a Paradoxical Emblem of Trauma Narratives and Narratives of Healing.....	48
III.4. Reading Scriptotherapy in <i>The Golden Notebook</i>	50
Conclusion.....	54
General Conclusion.....	56
Works Cited	60
Appendices.....	65
- Appendix 1.....	66
- Appendix 2.....	67
Résumé.....	68

General Introduction

General Introduction

Trauma fiction has recently emerged as a response to a contemporary interest in trauma studies. The rise of this field has provided literature with new ways of conceptualizing trauma. Authors of trauma fiction have become more aware of the fact that narrative in its different manifestations has become a privileged space for the representation of private and collective traumas in our contemporary age.

Trauma studies have become significant in understanding the literary rendering of human suffering as for trauma has become a major theme and an important topic in writing about traumatic human experiences, especially after the horrors of both world wars. Psyches of people have been damaged and fragmented due to this horror. Subsequently, trauma studies deeply deal with the psyche of the subject, in which it explores the mental conditions which the subject had experienced. It also investigates what kind of trauma the subject has gone through and endured, in addition to their reactions and responses when getting traumatized, and whether this trauma can be literarily represented.

Therefore, contemporary literary concern with trauma and literary representation reflects the emergence of a new literary discourse that takes up themes like trauma, fragmentation, shattered psyches, fragmented identities, traumatic memories and healing as reflecting a prevalent occupation among writers of trauma fiction. The latter depends in its definition on the ways in which trauma is conceptualized, addressed and reflected in contemporary fiction for trauma, as a concept, escapes understanding and resists representation. As a literary theme, trauma can be also regarded as representing a key paradigm to approach contemporary experience in literature; an experience that exceeds the human ability to express it. Therefore, trauma narratives work from the premise that narrative and storytelling help fictional characters exteriorize and transform traumatic events into a

coherent story. This act of storytelling is, ergo, considered as a main step towards a verbalization and communication of the experience of suffering.

In this regard, and since most scholars have argued that contemporary literature has shown a great concern with the potential of trauma narratives to disclose different experiences of human suffering, women writers have been of no less contribution in the promotion of such kind of narrative. Since trauma narratives represent a fecund medium to bear witness to and speak out silenced accounts of marginalized social groups, women writers conceive of trauma fiction as an ideal vehicle to express their feminist approach to trauma that entails a thematic merging of trauma with healing.

It is, however, said that behind every great man there is a woman, but one may ask what might be behind a great woman. The answer would certainly be her history, or better expressed as ‘Herstory’¹, which is composed of good and hard times. Throughout history, it is admitted that women were subordinated by men, and were always classified as secondary in constructing societies. However, this has become no longer the case during the contemporary era and particularly as represented in contemporary literature. Women; after getting involved through literature; could have a voice through their writings. Their written productions have served to reflect their lives and what they encounter as female individuals. They could transmit their messages and show the world what women are and how they live. Moreover, this attempt is strengthened thanks to literary concepts and theories such feminism and trauma. The latter has strongly contributed in shedding more light on women’s psyches, and has given a deep look into their souls.

In this vein, trauma fiction by women writers demonstrates stories that centre on female characters which are aesthetically shaped to voice their traumatic versions of life.

¹ It is a way of writing history from a feminist point of view

Their fiction demonstrates the transformative power of trauma narratives and their capacity to turn unspeakable stories about women's suffering into narratives of testimony infused by the power of healing. Then healing narratives constitute an adequate tool for the representation, transmission, and healing of female traumas. In their feminist approach to trauma, a wide range of trauma fiction by women writers have invested in therapeutic and healing discourses that identify their female characters' stories as a form of scriptotherapy². The latter can be simply defined as the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experiences, and indeed it is the case with most female characters. It is the act of writing out and writing through that enables them to liberate the pain they feel inside. Doris Lessing's female protagonist Anna Wulf stands definitely as a perfect example of a female character that succeeds in overcoming her traumatic experience by the creative and strategic act of writing through it.

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962) has been credited as one of the most influential trauma fiction that effectively tackles a woman's approach to the themes of trauma and healing as depicted through her central female character, Anna Wulf. The analysis of Lessing's novel has been the focus of a number of research papers discussing the novel through the lens of different critical views. Nick Bentley's "Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*: An Experiment in Critical Fiction" (2009), reflects a prevailing critical reading of the novel as realist fiction that engages in a critical and philosophical investigation into the nature of the relationship between literature and politics. However, Hajer Elarem's 2015 "A Quest for Selfhood: Deconstructing and Reconstructing Female Identity in Doris Lessing's Early Fiction", analyzes Lessing's oeuvre by approaching her fiction as an attempt to understand her female protagonists' quest for selfhood and self-knowledge. Another work that deals with female subjectivity is Alice Rachel Ridout's 1997 "The Good Parodist:

² Therapeutic writing (the use of writing through as a way of healing)

Beyond Images of Escape in the Fiction of Doris Lessing” which demonstrates Lessing’s use of parody that provides her with a useful strategy for negotiating female subjectivity. A different analysis is provided by Shenli Song in her 2010 work entitled “*Alienation and Isolation: Problems of the Modern Society in Doris Lessing’s The Golden Notebook.*” In this research, Song discusses female issues through themes of alienation and isolation. However, it is the work of Samia Kaci, “Female Identity Crisis in Doris Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook*” (2015), which seems to associate Lessing’s book with the issue of identity crisis.

According to the works mentioned earlier, it seems like little research has been undertaken to study Lessing’s novel as a trauma fiction that depicts a creative endeavour which merges tropes of trauma and healing. Therefore, the significance of our dissertation lies in providing a new critical reading of Doris Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* that takes up themes of trauma and healing as quintessential tropes to understand her approach to and representation of traumatic experiences.

Hence, the current dissertation aims at demonstrating how Lessing’s novel can be read as a narrative of healing or scriptotherapy. Moreover, this dissertation seeks to highlight the significance of the central female character, Anna Wulf, in rendering its creator’s vision about a traumatized subject which uses scriptotherapy as a means to work through a traumatic experience. For the purposes at hand, a number of research questions are to be set forward as an attempt to reflect on our dissertation’s main concern:

- a) To what extent can Doris Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* be read as a narrative of healing?
- b) What does characterize trauma fiction and women’s trauma fiction in particular? And what is the significance of trauma narratives and narratives of healing in defining these fictions?

- c) How is a traumatized subject expected to work through a traumatic experience?
- d) What is the symbolic role of Anna Wulf, the female protagonist, and the notebook in representing Lessing's approach to healing a traumatic experience?

In order to provide answers to the research questions, we see it necessary to undertake a theoretically-based approach that draws upon a range of theoretical insights aimed at tackling concepts like, trauma studies, trauma theory, trauma fiction, healing narratives and scriptotherapy. In addition, the dissertation is constructed upon three chapters and each chapter addresses a research question. The first chapter, then, focuses mainly on trauma fiction. However, the second chapter aims as at distinguishing the significance of healing narratives whereas the third chapter offers an analysis of Doris Lessing's novel, *The Golden Notebook*.

Chapter One

Understanding Contemporary Trauma

Fiction

Introduction

Over the past two decades, trauma studies have expanded into a great interdisciplinary research area. The latter examines the effects of trauma in literature and society by its psychological and cultural significance. Trauma studies further address the impact of trauma theory on the ways in which trauma is conceptualized and understood and this has in turn been reflected in contemporary trauma fiction.

This chapter is concerned mainly with introducing the genre of trauma fiction and it will be divided into three main parts. The first part will attempt to define how trauma and fiction constitute a new paradigm in the literary field. The current chapter aims also at highlighting the relationship between both concepts in how trauma studies start to be part of literature, mainly fiction; and how trauma is represented through stories that contain memories of pain and suffering which can make an original and unique piece of literature. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to discussing trauma narratives, and how a traumatized subject can narrate his story in order to reach a stage where he will be able to narrate his trauma. The third part will be concerned with the depiction of traumatized subjects in trauma fiction.

I.1. Trauma Studies:

The central elements that help define the field of trauma studies are psychological trauma and its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping subjects in terms of individual and cultural aspects. Psychoanalytic theories on trauma form the basis of criticism that explains the representations of an extreme experience and its effects on the subject and the memory. However, trauma studies explore the impact of trauma on literature and society by analysing its psychological and cultural significance. (Mambrol)

Trauma studies emerged in the 1990's depending on Freud's theory to develop a sample of trauma that imagines experiences that challenge the limits of language representation and meaning. This challenge of language, fragmentation of psyche, and dismantling of meaning altogether establishes the primary criterion for trauma studies and it impacts the critical discourses that were ignored by other approaches. (Mambrol). Originally, a trauma studies, as a field, derive from the domain of medicine and then psychology. Trauma studies have become relevant in literary and cultural studies for trauma has become a major theme and an important topos³ in writing about traumatic human experiences, especially after the horrors of both world wars. (Schönfelder 28)

Accordingly, trauma studies have emerged as a new area of study within the humanities and social sciences that concerns itself with looking into how humans, or rather subjects, respond to particular painful experiences and how these subjects are anticipated to overcome and work through these experiences. According to Freud traumatic experiences are repeated relatively, fragment the psyche, and effect memory in different ways compared to other experiences, which are the most important points of trauma studies that address the theory of trauma and the way that trauma has relation with memory and identity. However, a different area of investigation related to trauma studies which are trauma criticism. The latter follows and employs psychoanalytic theories for analysing emotional suffering as represented and contained in literary texts as well as the language of loss and disruption that appears in a form of fragmented thoughts and texts. Therefore, trauma theories represent an effective vehicle for studying the psyche of the individual especially when dealing with traumatic experiences.

³ According to Google topos means a traditional theme or formula in literature.

I.1.1. Trauma Theory

[T]he subject of trauma attracts passionate advocacy and passionate skepticism in a quite disproportionate measure.” (Brewin 27)

“Trauma has become a paradigm because it has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life. (Lakhurst 80)

The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained more attention in 1996, with the publication of Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* which takes the interpretation of Freud’s trauma theories as its main theoretical foundation. As a theoretical discipline, trauma studies were introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic post-structural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. The evolution of trauma theory in literary criticism might best be understood in terms of the changing psychological definitions of trauma, and social concerns that are part of the study of trauma in literature and society. (Balaev 1)

As Anne whitehead in her 2004 book, *Trauma Fiction*, states that the study of trauma appeared as a prominent publication which was rapidly followed by a number of trauma studies in fiction, non-fiction, film, and culture. Caruth gathered essays and interviews by literary theorists, film-makers, sociologists and psychiatrists in order to reinforce the trans-disciplinary nature of trauma theory. By introducing the volume, Caruth summarised the definition of trauma which has emerged out of the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)⁴:

⁴ Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSR) Van der Kolk and van der Hart defined PTSD as follows: “a delayed feedback into repeated hallucinations, nightmares, flashbacks, somatic reactions, demeanors deriving from the event and general numbing” (van der Kolk and van der Hart 173)

The pathology consists [. . .] solely in the structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. (4-5)

Whitehead added that Caruth's formulation of trauma profoundly questions the relation between experience and event. Trauma holds the power of a literality which makes it possible to written forms and direct temporalities. Insufficiently, taking benefits of its appearance, trauma does not depend on the possession of the individual to be retold when needed, however; it acts as a haunting or possessive impact which not only insistently and intrusively returns but is, moreover, experienced for the first time only in its belated repetition. Unsettling temporal structures and disturbing relations between the individual and the world, trauma represents for Caruth a deep crisis of history:

If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess. (5)

Moreover, Whitehead inserts that Caruth's articulation of a crisis of historical experience looks powerfully with the ruptured narratives and annoying lives which have arisen out of the destruction of latest traumatic events and experiences. Focusing on the structure of trauma, Caruth knowingly risks the claim of losing the details of an event in generalisable situations, but away from seeking to reduce or minimize hardship, her work

introduces an essential attempt to think through the gaps and disturbances which certainly inhabit trauma (Whitehead 5).

I.2.Trauma Fiction

The term 'trauma fiction' has several definitions. Anne whitehead in her book, *Trauma Fiction*, defines it as: "the recent journey of the concept of, trauma from medical and scientific discourse to the field of literary studies" (12). This type of fiction is also perceived as representing "a paradox or contradiction" (11). In other words, the terms trauma and fiction are completely contradicting in the way that trauma has relation with psychology and a hurting experience that may effect on the individual's emotions, sanity and life, while fiction refers to any literary narrative. Many novelists connected between these two terms in which they created a new concept and a new way of writing in narrating and telling people's experiences about trauma in a form of fiction. Then, how can a traumatic experience be narrated in a form of fiction? And how can these two terms be related to each other?

Trauma fiction is a genre that appeared in the 1980s. According to Roger Luckhurst, this interesting genre of fiction has come into existence with Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, in 1987 (87). Many writers stated that there were other novels written earlier that were seen as trauma fiction however it was until the late 1980s with the emergence of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)⁵ that this genre started to gain prominence and interest in the literary field. The reading public eventually began to show a great interest in trauma literature for the latter provides them with a new medium of representation that tackles deeply the hardships human nature encounters. In this vein, Lamia Lahrach stated in her article *Leila Aboulela's Minaret as a Trauma Fiction: Literary Tools and Representation* that:

⁵Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSR) Van der Kolk and van der Hart defined PTSD as follows: "a delayed feedback into repeated hallucinations, nightmares, flashbacks, somatic reactions, demeanors deriving from the event and general numbing" (van der Kolk and van der Hart 173)

These works share a certain trauma aesthetic and formal radicalism that tackle some contradiction, according to which traumatic experiences resist language or representation. This contradiction causes the rejection of the linear representation of traumatic events in trauma fiction and the use of unsettling temporal structures and different modes of reference, figuration and indirection. (493)

Moreover, Anne Whitehead has aptly explained the aesthetic techniques and way of writing which typically distinguish trauma fiction as she has laid out the backgrounds and contexts from which this genre takes shape. "Trauma fiction arises out of and is inextricable from three interrelated backgrounds or contexts: post-modernism, post-colonialism and a post-war legacy or consciousness" (81). Still, human experiences, emotions and conditions can be expressed through literature. Therefore, trauma as a literary trope can be represented in literature due to such writing of people's narratives and memories. Hence, narrative in fiction will be regarded as the best discourse to capture and represent trauma:

Novels represent this disruption between the self and others by carefully describing the place of trauma because the physical environment offers the opportunity to examine both the personal and cultural histories imbedded in landscapes that define the character's identity and the meaning of the traumatic experience. The term "trauma novel" refers to a work of fiction that conveys profound loss or intense fear on individual or collective levels. (Balaev)

According to Laurie Vickroy, writing literature or narratives can be a good attempt for traumatized subjects to work their traumas; through the act of writing they can figure out the

origin of the trauma and in this case it can help them to heal their traumatic wounds. In this sense, fictional narratives that help readers and characters alike access a traumatic memory,

have taken an important place among diverse artistic, scholarly, and testimonial representations in illuminating aspects of trauma and in elucidating our relationship to memory and forgetting within the complex interweaving of social and psychological relationships. (Vickroy 1)

I.2.1. Description of a Traumatized Subject in Fiction:

Each person reacts to an experience accordingly, the same thing for traumatic events. Not everyone who encounters a shock is considered as a traumatized person. However; people's reaction differs from person to another depending on their character. A traumatic experience can be simply defined as the shock that causes physical and psychological harm, or emotional. People experiencing the trauma are known as 'the traumatized subjects'.

Being traumatized is not easy, whether in a story, novel or even in reality. Every character needs to be brought to life, be fundamental, and the most important of all, realistic. The world is not perfect, and bad things happen especially to good people, that is why traumatized protagonists are known in fiction; meaning that they can perform in romance, in science-fiction, in dramas and mystery novels. Characters that have suffered trauma, and have psychological consequences and PTSD are difficult to be rendered in a work of literature. There is also the pressure from the fact that trauma is a sensitive and critical subject that needs to be dealt with by respect and compassion. (Roy)

Traumatized subjects go through many difficult situations. They act a role that must be performed in a way that makes the reader or the spectator believe and live with the events of the story. Trauma subjects show reactions that represent their traumatic shock. *Anil's Ghost* is a novel written by Michael Ondaatje in 2000, where he shows the different reactions

of trauma subjects, who witnessed mainly the same trauma experience; war and how each of the subjects manage with their situation.

The thesis *Representation of Trauma in Anil's Ghost* written by Anthea Aragôn Malo shows the main character Anil, despite the difficulties she suffers because of the government and officials who are against her and the horrible conditions of work, she tries to find the truth about her country and tries to forget about her trauma. An important fact about Anil is that she suffers nightmares. Her traumatic events are revived in the form of flashbacks and nightmares. There is an episode in the novel where Anil falls ill and while she is sleeping she experiences a nightmare.

They taped down sheets from the Sunday Observer so the pages covered the floor. You have the felt pen? Yes. She began removing her clothes, her back to him, then lay down next to the skeleton of Sailor. She was wearing just her red knickers, silk ones she usually put on with irony. She hadn't imagined them for public consumption. She looked up at the ceiling, her hands on her breasts. Her body felt good against the hard floor, the coolness of the polished concrete through the newspaper, the same firmness she had felt as a child sleeping on mats. He was using the felt marker to trace her shape. You will have to put your arms down for a moment. She could feel the pen move around her hands and alongside her waist, then down her legs, both sides, so he blinked the blue lines at the base of her heels. (Ondaatje 61-62)

There are elements on which we can see that Anil appears to be dead, she lays on the floor and put her body as if it was a dead body. She appears to feel good in this situation. "She rose out of the outline, turned back and saw he had drawn outlines of the four skeletons as well" (Ondaatje 61-62). Anil's character shows ways of acting that can be a traumatic

event. She tried to hide her trauma with her curiosity, obsession of searching the truth. Anil is a traumatized subject that pretends to act as a normal person despite her inner war. (Malo 14)

Another traumatized subject in the novel is Sarath, who deals with his trauma in a different way. He tries to focus on his work so that he escapes from his personal problems. As well as he uses alcohol as a solution from forgetting his trauma experiences as mentioned in the novel: “he drank as he works” (Ondaatje 57). In addition to that, A very important fact in Sarath’s trauma experience is that “Sarath’s wife killed herself two years ago” (Ondaatje 46). This can be another reason behind his trauma. (Malo 15)

There is a passage where he lies to the front desk man in the hotel about the death of his wife. While he admits her death to Anil he denies it to other people. Denial is a frequent reaction in traumatized people. (Malo 16)

“Did Mr. Sarath ever come here with his wife?”

“Yes, madame.” “What was she like?”

“She’s very nice, madame.”

A nod proof, then a slight tilt of his head, a J stroke, to suggest possible hesitation in his own judgement. “

Is?” “Yes, Madame?”

“Even though she is dead.”

“No, madame. I asked Mr. Sarath this afternoon and he said she is well. Not dead. He said to give me her wishes”. (Ondaatje 57)

Traumatized subjects differ as their reactions differ from person to another. There are who hide their trauma by avoiding, forgetting and denying the fact that they are traumatized,

and there are who use alcohol as a solution for escaping the truth or making themselves busy so that they won't remember their trauma experience.

I.2.2. Responses of Traumatized Subjects to Trauma Experience

As trauma experiences differ from an incident to another, traumatized subjects also react and respond differently to the experience. These are some reactions on traumatic events:

- Remembering the traumatic events: traumatized subjects sometimes react to the trauma experience as remembering and reliving the trauma repeatedly and suffer from nightmares and flashbacks. Such cases are found generally in war, death, rape, and abuse traumas.
- Fear, anxiety and anger: these reactions are the most common to trauma. Anyone experiences trauma will definitely feel fearful, anxious, afraid and angry as they are normal reactions to any kind of trauma.
- Sadness and guilt: all trauma subjects are expected to feel guilty and sad of the events they witnessed, and cry after the traumatic event as a normal react.
- Avoid thinking about the experience: sometimes traumatized subjects make themselves busy with something in order to forget and not remember the traumatic event.
- Pretending as nothing happened: one of the most irritating things that the traumatized subjects hate is to talk about what happened or to talk about the experience. They feel more comfortable with pretending as if nothing happened.
- The denial: generally the traumatized subjects do not believe that they are traumatized; don't believe that they are trauma subjects.
- Seeing danger everywhere: the traumatized subjects do not trust anyone and see as if everything might cause them another shocking experience.

I.2.3. Literary Techniques in Trauma Fiction

There are many literary techniques that are represented in trauma fiction narratives such as repetition, intertextuality and fragmentation which are represented by “the rhythms, processes and uncertainties of traumatic experience within their underlying sensibilities and structures” (Vickroy 4). Shifting in perspective and memory, timeless plot, repetition, flashbacks, and visual images are among other techniques used by trauma fiction authors in order to take the reader through the confusing state of character within the narrative. Moreover, the use of fragmentation technique that shows that the story is interrupted through the use of several literary techniques, fragmentation is something that has been identified as one of the tools used by contemporary writers and fictional trauma writers to create a sense of the chaos, the indefinable disorderliness of the state of dramatization, particularly, as Laurie Vickroy states, in relation to the function of ‘remembering:

Writers have created a number of narrative strategies to represent a conflicted or incomplete relation to memory, including textual gaps...repetition, breaks in linear time, shifting viewpoints, and a focus on visual images and affective states. (29)

I.2.4. Depiction of Traumatized Subjects in Fiction

Some authors wanted to clarify some historical examples of trauma which led to different works of contemporary fiction. There are many novels that have been written in a form of trauma fiction in order to show the suffering and the misery of traumatized subjects, who witnessed illness, wars, slavery, and/or the destruction of their homelands. Taking the example of Toni Morrison who tried to gain political recognition for the suffering of African Americans during and after slavery in novels such as *Beloved* (1987) which revolves around the Literary Trauma Theory. *Beloved* is one of the key works of trauma fiction as well as

Jazz (1992) which is a continuation to *Beloved* in recalling a traumatized past. Morrison has presented in front of public a painful past, history of dispossession and loss not in the manner of a chronicle historian but as a therapeutic historian/sociologist and this is known by trauma narratives.

I.3.Trauma Narratives:

In the last two decades, a variety of fictional works on traumatic experiences and its representation have manifested. The narrative approaches are informed by theorizing and testimony of the Holocaust, Vietnam, and Incest as well as postcolonial analyses of the psychic costs of colonization and racism. Contemporary writers in this mode Toni Morrison, Marguerite Duras, Larry Heinemann, Jamaica Kincaid, Pat Barker, Dorothy Allison. (Insanity and trauma in contemporary fiction)

The exposure technique which is known by trauma narrative or narrative of pain, in other words through storytelling in which the traumatized people are expected to confront and face their fear and talk about it, in order to overcome their painful and hurting memories.

Narrative is the action of telling a story in different forms whether in a form of speech, poetry, prose, song, theater, or dance which describes an event. However, trauma narrative is a technique used by psychologists in order to help the traumatized people overcome the shocking experience as an exposure to the painful memories left from the experience. Storytelling used as a mean to help the traumatized subjects express their thoughts and memories the way they find it suitable and comfortable for them. Without treatment of the psychotherapy, the traumatized people face many difficulties in socializing and talking with new people. Even with the therapist, the traumatized subject finds it very hard to talk about their painful experiences and memories that caused their wounds. However, when the traumatized person starts to write, it is remarkable by therapists that,

students make fewer mechanical mistakes when writing about trauma than they do when writing about ordinary topics (perhaps because they are more engaged with the topic) and typically produce writing samples marked by their "quality, organization, and depth" (Pennebaker 161) and the quality of the writing will suffer when students write about upsetting events seems unfounded. (Tyler 3)

I.3.1. Trauma Narratives in Literature:

Trauma narratives help the reader to understand and see what a trauma is through the subjects who have witnessed suffering event and how they react to it. This kind of trauma fiction presents certain characteristics. "Individuals" actions under extreme oppression, whether in a domestic or war situation cannot be understood by applying normalized values or moral systems" (Vickroy 2). This is the reason why writers use specific narrative tools such as the ones explained in order to show the reader how traumatized subjects express their traumas.

First of all, these works are a result of political ideologies, poverty, war, etc. They are witnesses of trauma and how important it is in social terms. Second, trauma narratives examine "our ability to deal with loss and fragmentation in our lives" (Vickroy 3). Third, people confirm the problems witnessed by trauma subjects of these kinds of writings and subjects help to face them. Finally, trauma writers show the problem of the traumatized subjects' disrupted relationships, the difficulty of interacting with others when someone has a trauma. (Aragon)

I.3.2. Literary Techniques in Trauma Narrative

Trauma narratives are created in a way writers use special narrative elements which help readers to empathize with the traumatized character. One of them is the combination of testimonial elements, like emotions in order to create "a dialogical conception of the

witnessing” (Vickroy 27). Writers use multiple storytellers as a technique which makes the reader live with the character’s events and trauma. In addition to the use of flashbacks as a literary technique, which shows how the character sees flashback of the traumatic event. The reason behind this technique is that to make the reader be similarly confused as the character is. (Aragon 10)

Textual gaps and repetitions are another kind of narrative tools usually used in trauma narratives. They “break in the linear time, shifting viewpoints and a focus on visual images and affective states” (Vickroy 30). The repetition of sentences and structures re-formulate the ideas of the traumatized subject. (Aragon 10)

Symbolization is also used as a narrative tool created through metaphors. “Sigmund Freud noted that symbolization brings at least the illusion of control and mastery” (Vickroy 30). Through symbolization the writer dominates his narratives. Metaphors have the capacity of representing the relations between the person and his limits as well as representing how this relation can be broken as a consequence of a traumatic event. (Aragon 10)

Victims become obsessed with any associations that can be linked to the trauma, even if they exist within different contexts. This recalls the omnipotent thinking common to early stages of life, where self and object are still so inseparable that particular elements (words, images) become over determined, as in dreams where one element can be traced to multiple psychic causes. (Vickroy 31-32)

Writers do their best to show trauma in their works through different narrative techniques. These narrative techniques can be seen in many literary works such as *Anil’s ghost* by Michael Ondaatje, *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova, and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. Characters of such books show different trauma responses to trauma which make

the readers understand and share their feelings with the traumatized characters and this is because of the mastery of literary narrative tools used by the authors. (Aragon 11)

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the backbone of this research, which will pave the way for the next chapter. The first chapter introduced the development of trauma studies and trauma theory to trauma fiction and how trauma and fiction are represented in novels and stories. how can traumatized subjects narrate their stories in a form of trauma narratives. The stories and the experiences shared by traumatized people are known by trauma narratives in which the traumatized subjects are to tell their experiences about the events that were behind their trauma. And how using their narratives in a form of fiction.

Chapter Two

Narratives of Healing in Contemporary

Women's Fiction

Introduction

“The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma”

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*

Being a traumatized person is no longer a rare or unusual condition since its various representations and reflections of trauma in contemporary literature are heavily discussed by different writers as an attempt to work through certain traumatic experiences. Contemporary writers tend to contribute to literature by resorting to an interdisciplinary approach to their texts, in which they include psychology as they write stories about characters who endure and suffer from different traumas. They also encourage traumatized subjects to write about their traumas and externalize them in order to get recovered by themselves. Surviving and getting recovered for those contemporary writers, however, is self-writing, self-expressing, and verbalization of traumatic events. These writings come under the umbrella of narratives of healing. When the traumatized subjects write about their traumas, they guide themselves towards their healing. This act of self-writing for the sake of trauma healing is defined as scriptotherapy.

This chapter is, then, an attempt to introduce narratives of healing in contemporary women's literature. Divided into two main parts, the first one provides an overview of narratives of healing. Subsequently, this part narrows down into trauma fiction, in which it deals with healing of narratives as a way of healing trauma, and how the concept of trauma is the main concern of healing narratives. Furthermore, the present part discusses healing narratives used by female authors. It presents these narratives in women's fiction. It also justifies why such narratives are frequently used by females more than male writers by presenting traumatic female cases that used the healing narratives to overcome trauma. All

the mentioned above is an introduction to the second part of this chapter, which is the main concern of this thesis. It demonstrates the concept of scriptotherapy, in which this concept is going to be well defined and explained according to scholars. This demonstration aims at

II.1. Narratives of Healing

The last decades of the 20th century witnessed an increase in life narrating, covering autosomatography “writing about one’s own body, a genre potentially including not just illness memoirs but also those about disability” and autopathography “which implies the condition is a pathos, the ancient Greek word often translated as “disease”. (Helen King)

Not only great artists have been inspired by illnesses, but also ordinary people. In recent decades, writing about illnesses, hard moments and traumas has resulted in hundreds of autobiographical novels of subjects’ experiences. In the book *Reconstructing Illness: Studies in Pathography*, Anne Hunsaker Hawkins offers taxonomy of such works, classifying them according to the prevailing myths, that authors use to confront or accept their illnesses. Unsurprisingly, she finds that most people choose the archetypal myths of battle, journey, and death and rebirth in writing their pathographies. In narrative reconstructions of their illnesses, these subjects seek to answer the questions of why they became ill, what their illnesses mean in the context of their lives, and how they can reshape their lives to accommodate the significant changes that illness brings. From her reading of hundreds of pathographies, Hawkins believes that writing their illness stories is the last stage of healing for many of the authors. Writing about physical, psychological disease or psychic trauma offers a powerful means of healing. It may seem self-evident not only to people who regularly read pathographies but also to those who use writing as a therapeutic intervention with subjects and trauma victims. (Jones)

Healing stories are part of narrative literature in psychology. They are stories narrated by people who overcame illness or trauma, these kinds of stories are called healing narratives. Healing from trauma or any kind of illness needs a process to be followed in order to reach the wellness state. Narratives are experiences and stories that subjects share. In other words, narratives of healing are the stories told about people's experiences of healing, especially healing from trauma.

II.1.1. Narratives of Healing in Trauma Fiction

“If he wrote it he could get rid of it. He had gotten rid of many things by writing them.” (Ernest Hemingway).

There are unforgettable moments and events that last in people's memories for the rest of their lives. Many traumatized subjects do their best in order to forget about the moments that caused them trauma. However, the attempt to forget and not to remember makes trauma harder, and strengthens its effects on their psyches. Therapists believe that in order to forget and overcome a hurting trauma experience, the best way to do is to talk it out and externalize it through exposure treatments. The subject will find it difficult at the beginning of the process, yet getting used to it, the hurting trauma memories start to vanish gradually until trauma memories lose their emotional power. Herman states that, “Creating a narrative out of the traumatic event takes “fragmented components of frozen imagery and sensation” reassembling them into “an organized, detailed, verbal account, oriented in time and historical content (Herman 177).” (McQuail 7-8). According to Herman, narratives of healing from trauma are a sort of fragmentation of thoughts and ideas. The traumatized subject writes about their traumatic experience in a randomized flow of thoughts that later on are to be changed into ordered, well explained account within historical framework. (8).

Moreover, Henke studies the notable functionality of the procedure of narrating in recovering trauma; the matter of expression hypothetically re-established an understanding of division to the, until now, fragmented self, now reshape as the main character in his or her life drama. Through the imaginative transcription of a consecutive subject-position, the life-writing project produces a recovery writing that returns the fragmented self to a qualified situation of psychological agency.(8).

In her 2008 article, “The Healing Power of Narratives and Social Support”, [Anna McFarlane](#) states:

Narratives are different from stories, in that they enable individuals to elucidate the order and importance of events, so that insights into the mind-set and thought process may occur. Therapies such as Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) rely on the repeated recounting of an individual’s narratives to deal with trauma. It is thought that this repetition exposes people to trauma cues within the narrative, thereby enclosing the experience as an autobiography and allowing the trauma to be processed. In a similar fashion, illness narratives are important for the process of healing and coping with a diagnosis. Besides being helpful for the individual, sharing narratives can create change in the community by creating empathy and reducing stigma.

Anna insists that it is important to differentiate between narratives and stories in the sense that narratives help in having deep impact by externalizing what have happened for many years ago.

Some therapies suggest that writing the trauma narrative repeatedly has better results as it turns it into a biography which helps more in healing the subject. As Lily Heehs states in her thesis, “Literature, Trauma and Recovery in the Czech Republic and Beyond”:

During my study abroad with Naropa in the spring of 2006 I underwent what I can now see was a very traumatic experience. The issues that arose between myself and other students on the program, between myself and a culture that I had no reference point for, which offered no notable connections to my catalogue of past—became a perplexing cycle of disembodiment and disorientation. As a result of this, I had no idea what the cure for.

She also insists on the repetition of telling trauma. For effective results, it is better to tell and re-tell the trauma event times and times. This act reinforces the diminishing of trauma effects on the memory, which eventually results in facilitating the achievement of a recovery state. Narratives of healing are significant in trauma fiction, as they are with more significance in women's fiction.

II.1.2. Narratives of Healing in Women's Fiction

Art is another source of healing that may relieve the subject. Creative expression allows women to take painful experience and reconstitute those events into visual and performing arts. When an audience participates in this event, it bears witness to a survivor's transformation. Whether alone or in a group, with an audience or without, the power of creativity defies the destructive force of trauma. Creative projects can also bring women together to re-interpret their abuse experiences through art. For others, creative self-expression such as writing or journaling provides personal time and space to reflect on their experience. No matter what form it takes, art is a way to make a world that the artist controls entirely, a world infused with the meaning she gives to it. Involving traditional healers and cultural modes of expression such as drumming or traditional dance can also be a way for a woman to reclaim cultural experiences that she may have lost or never had the chance to experience. (TRAUMA-INFORMED STORYTELLING 75)

Through history, it was noticeable that women had no chance to express themselves through literature. Unlike men, the lack of knowledge by women disabled them to write or contribute to literature. This means that women have had to fight for a long time to overcome their voicelessness. This resulted in the suppression of traumatising experience. Females' writings about trauma have been done creatively to be accepted as a literary work. Trauma literature and trauma for women have the same tension, which is the simultaneous struggle to accept the given ideology and to protest against it. This is also the struggle between disclosing the sources of trauma.

Through the instrument of literature, females and their body have been traditionally ignored, and it is the contemporary women's fiction that challenges this degraded ideology. Women are underestimated by Modern socio-political, and it is the scripting of females, by females, that has rehabilitated the function of 'the weaker sex' in the literary domain (Rebecca). Rebecca adds:

It was Virginia Woolf (1929) who stated that a woman must have 'a room of her own if she is to write fiction'. If 'writing fiction' is to be interpreted as a women's ability to be productive/functional within her own space that is outside of or separate from patriarchal discourse.

Women have resorted to trauma narratives to create this particular room in order to express themselves. As Woolf stated, writing by females needs enough space to be scripted, which allows females to write freely without any limits.

In sense of feminist approach, the probability for disarrangement of patriarchal social criterion through narrating about trauma is massive. As a performance of opposition, imaginative scripting can authorise ignored voices to take part of discourse, or as Bell Hooks argues in regards to the Other and creative expression: "Story-telling becomes a process of

historicization. It does not remove women from history but enables us to see ourselves as part of history.” (Tanya Lee Alport)

II.2.Scriptotherapy

Healing narratives constitute an adequate tool for the representation of healing of female traumas. In their feminist approach to trauma, a wide range of trauma fiction by women writers have invested in therapeutic and healing discourses that identify their female characters’ stories as a form of scriptotherapy. The latter can be simply defined as the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experiences, and indeed it is the case with most female characters.

The act of writing, by female or male writers, for the sake of self-healing is defined as scriptotherapy. The term scriptotherapy is taken from the Latin root “scriptum” which means “thing written”, and “therapia” , “to nurse or to cure” (Riordan 264). Yet, for better understanding of this term, it is preferable to check its definition that is given by the first one who used it Suzette A Henke. In her book *Shattered Subjects*, Suzette states: “Scriptotherapy is a discursive space within which all the psychological wounds one suffer from are re-enacted with the purpose of making them heal” (2). As she is the first who used the term, Suzette gave a clear definition by which she meant that the pain felt by the patient can be re-lived logically by writing and expressing thus pain. This act results at healing and recovery . She also defines scriptotherapy as: ‘the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic reenactment” (Silvia 102).

As for the website “Lawshemy”; Word Nerd, the term is defined as: ‘Therapeutic writing; the use of writing as a form of therapy’. This definition leads to the contribution of scriptotherapy to psychology. Since it is therapeutic then it can be used by psychologists in their clinics to help their patients express themselves and verbalize their pain. Word Nerd

adds: 'Scriptotherapy is a very powerful, yet readily accessible tool and one that can add only good to life by practicing'. The purpose of scriptotherapy can be seen through its effects on the psyche and life of the traumatized person.

II.2.1.Characteristics of healing stories (narratives of healing):

It is important to be aware of what characterizes such kind of writings. In his article 'Diving In The Moon: Honoring Story, Facilitating Healing', Steve Banhegyi suggests the following characteristics:

- **Healing Stories are Patient centered:** Recovery narratives are all about the patient and what they encounter, feel, and live.
- **Healing Stories provide an ending to a Dilemma Tale:** By telling their own stories, patients make a termination to them by getting an answer to what will encounter them.
- **Healing Stories Provide Meaning and Reason:** Such narratives provide the patient with the reasons why they are encountering these events.
- **Healing stories provide a label:** The application of a label to the illness paves the way towards recovery by answering the question of what the patient is having.
- **Healing Stories provide context and a hopeful future:** This part increases patient's expectations of what will be next, and they can predict when they will get recovered by approaching their stories to these narratives of healing.
- **Healing Stories engage the patient in ritual performance:** Rituals help thhe patient to feel the responsibility towards healing by reminding them of what to do in particular periods of time. Whenever the ritual is done, the patient is reminded to do the same.

- **Healing Stories are told in a ritual space:** These stories are told in a space that is intended for ritual. The patient is taken from away daily life and prepared to receive a new story to control the future.
- **Healing Stories inspire a sense of confidence and hope:** A new hope of life is given birth within the patient, and they will be able to challenge their illness with confidence.
- **Healing Stories are supported with media and memory devices:** Remembering the healing journey helps the patient to get recovered. Memory plays an important role in the healing process with all its devices.

II.2.2.Key Techniques of Healing Narratives:

Narrative therapy employs a number of key techniques to drive the process of change and meaning making. These techniques include: the collaborative position taken by therapists; meaning-making, externalisation of problems, discovering unique outcomes, thickening new plots, linking preferred stories to the past and future, the use of outsider witnesses, remembering, and documentation. (Robert 99). These techniques are to help the subject to move smoothly through the process of healing. Narratives of healing utilize these techniques to make it easier for the patient to follow the different steps of the process.

The collaborative position taken by therapists creates a comfortable atmosphere within the psyche of the patient. If the therapist is collaborative, the subject would be so too, as they can communicate easily and exchange the information needed to fulfil the therapy which obviously leads to better results. Moreover, meaning-making in such narratives is to give the subject clear and full explanations about all what concerns the events they encounter towards their recovery. In such narratives, problems are externalised and shared with the outside environment. This step creates opportunities to find solutions for each problem, as it

gives a relief to the subject that such cases face problems and these problems are to be solved. Subjects consequently understand that the problems they face need to be verbalised and told to others either the psychoanalyst, family members, or any trustworthy person.

The next technique should be expected by the psychoanalyst and the subject, which is unique outcome. Externalisation of problems leads to the discovery of new results which helps the subject to be ready to explore while moving through the healing process.

Another technique used in healing narratives is thickening new plots. When the subject is presented to different versions of stories having similar series of events to theirs and extract what to do and what to avoid, also they will be updated to new healing procedures which facilitate their recovery. Healing narratives link preferred stories to the past and the future. This technique fills the gap found within the subjects' life.

Linking stories to the past remind the traumatized subjects of what they were and how they lived, and help them to remember what and how they became traumatized. When the subjects read or write about their past, it would be easier for them to keep that image of how was their life before getting traumatized and reinforce their attempt to at least go back to that mode of life. However, linking their stories to the future pushes them to be more hopeful and to believe that trauma can be healed. The previous techniques can be correctly fulfilled in the presence of outsider witnesses. When using outsider witnesses the subject can make sure of the reliability of their story-telling. These witnesses reinforce the healing narratives and make it more reliable. The technique of remembering encourages traumatized subject; either as readers or writers of healing narratives; to refresh their memories and bring back what have passed during or before trauma occurred in their life. This process helps them to know exactly what caused trauma for them, which consequently facilitates the categorisation of the

trauma they suffer from. This becomes easier even for the psychoanalysts to determine and specify the case their traumatized subject suffers from.

In addition to the techniques mentioned above, documentation is employed in healing narratives as well. To document an event is to save it from forgetfulness, and what is needed for traumatised subjects is not to forget any piece of information that can help them during their recovery process. To remember everything wouldn't be easy for the traumatized, that is why it is recommended to fully document all events and details related to traumatic experiences.

This documentation is better accompanied with time and place of the event. These techniques used in narratives of healing, aim at the same objective of the narratives themselves which is leading the traumatised people towards their recovery.

II.2.3. Impacts of healing narratives:

Narratives of healing directly influence the psyche of the traumatized. The next lines present a set of impacts of the healing narratives the traumatized witness: A recent systematic review has produced a conceptual framework of the impacts of recovery narratives on recipients, identifying five types of impact: connectedness; understanding of recovery; reduction in stigma; validation of personal experience; and emotional and behavioural responses. (Beardsley 16) These impacts explained are explained as follows:

II.2.3.a. Connectedness:

After reading or writing about recovery, trauma narratives feel as if they were born again, and they get connected into life again. Sharing their experiences make them part of the society and involve them within it. Externalising their stories make their voices heard and

even create new opportunities of friendship and socialisation for them. Telling their stories enable them to give meaning to their lives, and feel heard by others.

II.2.3.b. Understanding of Recovery:

Narratives of healing provide clear explanations of how the recovery process is done, and it also provides the different symptoms of traumatised subjects as well as trauma-healed people.

II.2.3.c. Reduction in Stigma:

Healing narrative reduces the impact of trauma on the traumatized. It minimizes the volume of negative feelings they have due to their illness, and it weakens their pain. This is simply thanks to the techniques employed by these narratives.

II.2.3.d Validation of Personal Experience:

After getting presented to these narratives, trauma subject realise the existence of their own stories and the importance of the fact they are living in. The effectiveness of their stories can be reached by the patient in gratitude to scriptotherapy.

II.2.3.e. Emotional and Behavioural responses:

Trauma firstly affects the mental side of the traumatized people, which obviously makes a clear change in their emotions. They become sensitive and even aggressive towards each others. Yet, these feelings are to vanish slowly thanks to scriptotherapy. As a result, a huge change in the subjects' behaviour would occur and many attitudes would change as well.

II.3. Recovery through Scriptotherapeutic Stages

The traumatized subject goes through certain stages in order to reach the recovery state. These stages are identified by Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery*, in which she states: “The fundamental stages of recovery are establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community” (Herman 02).

II.3.a. Establishing Safety:

First of all, the traumatized subject needs to feel safe. This is his main concern to feel safe, as this is the hardest phase to achieve. Establishing safety has to be on both sides, the self and the society. The traumatized first loses the inner peace and safety, which requires them to establish this safety first to move on through their recovery process. In *Recovery from Psychological Trauma*, Judith Herman states: “Establishing safety begins by focusing on control of the body and gradually moves outward toward control of the environment” (113). The society does not remain the same for the traumatized person since the traumatic event might be caused by the society or any person. It is necessary for the traumatized to achieve the social safety in order to be able to externalise and share their trauma with strangers either from the society or their families. This phase takes a long period of time as long as it depends on the depth of the trauma and the reason of it as well.

II.3.b. Reconstruction of Trauma Story

The second phase is the reconstruction of trauma story. After achieving safety on both sides (personal and social) the way to the second step is already paved. The traumatized subjects, in this phase, are able to externalise their traumatic experience with outsiders. This step allows them to get involved into life again. A therapist can contribute in the process of telling the story. The presence of a psychoanalyst helps the survivor to tell the untold,

remember the forgotten, and “speak the unspeakable.” (Herman 125). Herman states: “The narrative includes not only the event itself but also the survivor’s emotional response to it and the responses of the important people in her life.” (125) Narrating the traumatic events includes all what the survivor encounters during and after the traumatic event physically and emotionally. It also includes the reactions of the close people to the survivor and how they enacted when the trauma occurred.

II.3.c. Restoring the Connection between survivors and their Community

When reaching this stage, the survivor is able to build confidence with people. They can create new friends, and even have a partner. This can develop into deep relationships. At this point, the survivor can show gratitude towards people who helped them during the recovery process. Social relationships will be better and stronger as long as the female survivors are able to trust people and share life with them. They become more powerful and sociable. Sense of connection will be created within the personality of the survivor. Herman describes the survivor: “who undertakes public action also needs to come to terms with the fact that not every battle will be won.”(152) Herman adds: “Her recovery is not based on the illusion that evil has been overcome, but rather on the knowledge that it has not prevailed, and on the hope that restorative love may still be found in the world.” (152)

II.4. Demonstrations from Contemporary Women’s Fiction:

Many female writers have significant works that represent trauma fiction, and traumatized females. These narratives contribute in emphasising women’s versions of trauma. Munroe’s *Vandals* and Genova’s *Still Alice* are two significant works that reflect and represent narratives of healing written by female authors with female protagonists.

II.4.a. *Vandals* by Alice Munroe:

“In “*Vandals*”, Munroe explores the silencing force of trauma and unhealed wounds in order to call on her readers to break the compact of silence” (Silvia 113).

Munroe is known of her writings of paradox and ambiguity. Her characters are created with feelings of ambivalence as they are in an in-betweenness of what to do and what not to do, to remember or to forget, to tell their stories or not. ‘*Vandals*’, the last story in the collection of *Open Secrets*, explores the violation and rape of a child and how she got traumatized. The novel also investigates the horror of the sexual abuse and the violation of the victim as well as her brother who witnessed her violation. Munroe’s smooth method of story-telling facilitates the transmission of the pain and the horror felt by the traumatized character. The abused child kept silent after getting traumatized, also she never told anyone about what happened to her. Yet, she continued in a normal relationship with her abuser; neighbour; with deep fear inside her. This feeling as “Herman describes in depth in her chapter on child abuse as: victims often develop attachments to their abuser, which they will strive to maintain, while attempting to preserve faith to their parents (98-107).” (Silvia 117) The traumatized subject in ‘*Vandals*’ did the same as Herman describes, as she was living next to her abuser. In addition, the character is in an inner conflict of emotions.

This novel encourages readers to externalize their traumas and not to keep silent when facing any kind of shocking event. ‘*Vandals*’ as a healing story, attempts to involve its receivers with individualized scientifically directed instrument to emphasize the harmful contradiction of traumatic memory (118). Consequently, this attempt motivates traumatized readers to externalise, tell, and share their stories with outsiders, as it also highlights the negative effects that come as a result of keeping silent and not sharing these traumatic events.

II.4.b. *Still Alice* by Genova Lisa:

This novel was written in 2009, it is about a 50-year-old lady who could achieve a lot in her life. She had a successful professional career as a university teacher of Linguistics holding a PHD in neuroscience from Harvard University. During a lecture she had with her students, she forgot a simple word to utter the thing that was strange for a Linguistic's teacher. By time, this accident occurred many times which pushed her to visit a doctor to discover that she is having Alzheimer's disease. Eventually this caused her a traumatic reaction, consequently she couldn't believe that and refused this fact. At first she kept that for herself, later on she told her family about her disease starting with her husband then her daughters who got traumatized as well of what happened to her mother.

Eventually, this traumatic event causes negative effects on Alice's professional and personal life. At the beginning Alice refused to admit that she has Alzheimer disease, she was also deeply shocked. By time, she had to admit that and share this fact with her family. Through the events of this novel, the reader can have a close look at traumatized lives and how they face this disease. It also highlights the process of recovery done by the character. First, Alice had to accept the fact that she has Alzheimer disease , then she started to help herself to recover psychologically. From a literary perspective, the novel can be considered as a trauma narrative and a scriptotherapy as long as the Alice is telling her story and externalising her trauma. Genova's novel encourages all patients to be aware of what they are having in order to know what suits their cases. Though Alice did not fully reach the healing state, but rather psychologically has healed. The message behind this novel is to show how her female fought against her illness and her trauma. The main objective of such narratives is to lead readers towards recovery in a smooth and easy way. (Genova) These narratives are constructed by contemporary female writers who tend to help female subjects to recover through writing.

Conclusion

Narratives of healing are used as a sort of recovery from trauma. These narratives help the traumatized subjects to externalize their traumatic experiences and share them. Contemporary writers, particularly women, tend to represent the unspeakable and untold through their narratives. Female writers are more likely to use such narratives in order to give more significance to females in the society and show that they suffer as well, yet their sufferance is not reflected through literature. With scriptotherapy their trauma became more reflected and represented in which female traumatic experiences became common in contemporary literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Healing as a Major Theme in *The Golden Notebook*

Introduction

This final chapter will attempt to read Doris Lessing's novel *The Golden Notebook* as trauma fiction and as a narrative of healing. This reading allows us to understand how Lessing employs trauma narratives and the healing stages in which the main character Anna went through. This will be resulted by a combination of psychoanalytical application of trauma theory as well as scriptotherapy. In addition, we will look for the significance of scriptotherapy throughout this application. This chapter aims at demonstrating how Lessing's novel can be read as a narrative of healing or scriptotherapy. Moreover, this dissertation seeks to highlight the significance of the central female character, Anna Wulf, in rendering its creator's vision about a traumatized subject which uses scriptotherapy as a means to work through a traumatic experience.

III.1. The Novel as Trauma fiction

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* has been credited as the earliest and most influential work of fiction to analyze the construction of femininity in the second half of the twentieth century. (Pellicer-Ortín, Andermaher 49) Writing about people's experiences is considered as fiction. Thus, writing about people's trauma experiences is considered as trauma fiction. The way Lessing's story is written into words in which she tells the traumatic events and the experiences of her main character and how she shows the sufferances and difficulties the main character went through, is a trauma fiction. This attractive way of transmitting trauma makes Lessing's novel influential.

Laurie Vickroy says about trauma fiction that is trauma fiction narratives have many literary techniques such as intersexuality and fragmentation (Vikroy). These literary techniques are found in *The Golden Notebook* . First of all, fragmentation is demonstrated through the separation and fragmented ideas and thoughts in the novel. The main character

writes about her life experience in four separated notebooks, in which each one represents a certain aspect from her life. This fragmentation is a reflection of her fragmented mind and psyche to the point that she selected to reflect her story in four different colored notebooks.

Paulina Kamińska says that:

The fragmentation of Doris Lessing's novel is complex. Most basically, it is composed of four notebooks, which are enclosed by five chapters of *Free Women*, the novel written by the fictional writer Anna Wulf, and finally superseded by the eponymous golden notebook. Anna sets out to write the four notebooks, more out of compulsion than a well thought-out plan, aiming to reorganize and put in order the various aspects of her life. In each of the notebooks, a theme emerges from "broken scribblings and half-sentences," establishing one of the artificial divisions of Anna's life (Lessing 71)". (qtd. In. Kamińska)

Anna Wulf writes her story of her life in a form of fiction, presented as free women. Divided into parts where she records each theme alone. Her goal is to combine all the notebooks together, which represent a complete image of her whole life, including all her good and bad memories, her shock, her disappointment, her experiences and emotions.

III.1.2. About the Novel *The Golden Notebook*

From the beginning of *The Golden Notebook*, when the protagonist Anna Wulf says: "everything's cracking up," (Lessing 4) the fragmentation of both world and mind appear as driving forces in the novel. Its plot revolves around Anna's own gradual mental breakdown. Throughout the novel, she writes endlessly about her deep fear of insanity in four different notebooks in different colors that cover and represent four different aspects of her life: past, politics, fiction, and present. However, she realizes that none of them captures the real "truth"

of her identity and experience. When she gives up on the four books and begins writing everything in the single golden notebook as an emblem of scriptotherapy, Anna achieves a sense of unity and purpose by confronting the chaos within herself and refusing to divide her mind into different books. Anna finally refuses to divide herself and finds sanity by accepting the contradictions in her identity. (Jennings, 2018)

At the beginning of the novel, Anna's identity is completely fragmented as she cannot combine her four separate notebooks into a single story. The novel itself is fragmented, and the reader must constantly switch between Anna's four notebooks and disjointed thoughts within each of them. She feels that she has become multiple people and, at times, struggles to remain herself, like when she repeats, "Anna, Anna, I am Anna" (284) on the train ride home. Similarly, during her relationship with the exiled American screenwriter Saul Green, Anna finds herself unable to predict which version of her fragmented self needs to show. (Jennings, 2018)

Anna seeks to recognize herself in her writings and decisions, to banish her contradictory beliefs and deeply fears the mental breakdown. She sees two paths from her initial fragmentation towards her goal of wholeness and non-fragmentation. The first is to deny and repress her contradictions (like her simultaneous resentment toward marriage and desire to marry, her belief in communist theory and her disdain for the Communist Party, or her nostalgia for her time in Africa but disgust at the novel she wrote about it). Her second alternative is paradoxical: she can dissolve her fragments, embracing chaos, contradiction, and heterogeneity. She has kept herself apart to hold herself together, compartmentalized her contradictory thoughts to avoid ever reading them in the same place. However, when the notebooks begin bleeding into one another (like when Anna realizes her reflections in the yellow notebook should actually belong in the blue notebook), she understands that she must stop dividing up her chaos and keeping it to herself; confronting it by writing all her thoughts

together, in one place, and revealing them to the world. Lessing shows that everyone is multiple and chaotic from the start, suggesting that breakdown is not the opposite of wholeness, but rather a means leading to it. When Anna lets her fragments dissolve into a unified self, she finally “cracks up” (4) she gives up her four notebooks and writes everything in the single golden notebook, which symbolizes the unification of her identity. (Jennings, 2018)

III.1.3. Anna as a Traumatized Subject

The golden notebook is a novel that focuses on breakdown, fragmentation, and confusion. These situations are presented through the central character Anna where trauma appears, more specifically; when the main character Anna struggles to attune her own life and is not able to make sense of the chaos and the confusion she feels all around her. She is in a paradox of ideologies, and an inner conflict took place within her. Anna becomes in an in-betweenness due to her multiple fragmented ideas and reflections.

Anna is classified as a traumatized subject due to her inability of collecting her notebooks and arrange them all together in one book. Although her possession of writing talent, yet; she was not able to write or script about her own life. She could not narrate her experiences, which resulted at her ending up with writing shattered and fragmented narratives. Furthermore, any traumatized subject is not expected to easily accept and believe the fact that he or she is under trauma shock. Anna appears in the novel in which she denies the fact that she is not able to write or narrate about herself, and refuses the fact that she is traumatized, this appears when she said to her psychoanalyst Mrs. Marks in one of their sessions: "Why can't you understand that," I said, really wanting to make her understand, “that I can't pick up a newspaper without what's in it seeming so overwhelmingly terrible that nothing I could write would seem to have any point at all?”(Lessing 251). Anna didn't

believe that she is experiencing a writer's block, but she denies. The denial is one of the first aspects the traumatized may do in order to escape the truth as well as their trauma. (Jennings, 2018)

The purpose behind the fragmented narratives is to embed the reader in the traumatized subject's experiences and to find meaning behind this fragmentation. Her trauma was represented through her narratives in the way her writings can't be communicated and understood, in the way that everything is divided and fragmented. She couldn't understand her position in which she was feeling as if "everything's cracking up". (Lessing 15)

III.2. Anna and the Act of Working through a Traumatic Experience

Throughout the novel the main character Anna appears as a traumatic subject in which she witnessed a series of traumatic events that left her under a serious shock. Her trauma appears when Anna was feeling that "everything's cracking up" (Lessing 15). Her alienation from the Communist party, in which she used to be a very important and an active member, was the main reason behind her receiving a huge number of other traumatic experiences, in addition to her social life that was shattered because of the emotional betrayal and divorce by her husband, Michael. When she tried to preserve her sanity, she started writing her story in which she records her life during the year 1950-57; however, trauma appears while she was writing. She could not make her narratives in one single book. She found herself dividing her life experience into fragmented and non-chronological narratives. Anna separates her narratives into four fragmented incompatible notebooks. The division of her writing into several sections, which are further fragmented into entries from black, red, yellow and blue notebooks, replicates the protagonist's experience of split psyche and fragmented life. (Andermaher and ortin 50) In which we find that the writer used fragmentation to an extent to show the roughness of breakdowns of the main character.

Separation of the sections of her writings and her fragmented narratives is a sign of the inner pain she holds, is a sign of her shock in which she couldn't write one well-structured and well-organized novel which is shown in the story; story within a story within a story. She felt herself lost, as she states: "it seems to me that my mind is a mass of totally contradictory attitudes about everything". (Lessing 262) Lessing commented on the complex fragmentation of the novel in 1988 Interview in the Paris Review, she said:

This novel, then, is an attempt to break a form; to break certain forms of consciousness and go beyond them. While writing it, I found I did not believe some of the things I thought I believed: or rather, that I hold in my mind at the same time beliefs and ideas that are apparently contradictory. Why not? We are, after all, living in the middle of a whirlwind. (Lessing)

Even the writer herself didn't believe how she came up with such fragmented and contradictory ideas. This unbalance is represented through the main character Anna who experienced a serious of events which was the cause of her shock that scattered her mind and her whole life. In addition to that, at that time the social and ideological transformation and the change that happened in the 1950's in which everything is reshaped, new generation, new way of thinking, wars, even their traditions shifted. Moreover, this change shaped the new woman where she calls herself "a free woman"; (Lessing. 26) she leads an unconventional life, "the kind of life women never lived before". (415) She says that "there are whole areas of me made by the kind of experience women haven't had before". (415) Yet she suffers from a painful sense of 'splitting' which is caused by the struggle among opposing elements within her personality: between the Old and New Woman, between the new morality that started to challenge received perceptions of gender, marriage, and the lingering traditional views of romantic and love, family and friendship. (Andermaher and ortin 50)

In addition to that Paulina Kamińska mentioned in the article “The Golden Notebook as Trauma Narrative” that the novel involves the readers in the protagonist’s raw experience and her inability to write her story to reach the real experience that has been given a lot of attention in the field of trauma studies. Studied under the umbrella of trauma theory, Anna Wulf’s experience, which breaks through the shape of *The Golden Notebook*, is traumatic in the way in which it cannot be directly communicated, escaping both chronology and immediate understanding. Moreover, the protagonist became helpless against reality that she saw that is full of violence, which makes the novel an important witness of the history of the twentieth-century. (Kamińska 2)

III.3. Reading the Notebooks as Paradoxical Emblem of Trauma Narratives and Narratives of Healing

As Laurie Vickroy states that trauma narratives “internalise the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of traumatic experience within their underlying sensibilities and structures” (3), while Geoffrey Hartman argues that it is precisely through the fragmentation of the narrative, and its time breaching quality that they reveal their “traumatic core” (548). *The Golden Notebook* can be seen as a trauma narrative as it shows such characteristic features both in its language and form. (Kamińsk 216) Also it can be seen as narratives of healing.

Moreover the fact that Anna visited a therapist and tells him about her trauma experiences and her fear is considered as trauma narratives. This was the beginning of Anna’s healing process, as she paid sessions to Mrs. Marks to narrate about her most disturbing factors. Mrs. Marks as an expert psychoanalyst soon understands that the trouble goes beyond art’s faith. Among the most attracting features in this notebook is that Anna tries to clarify her dreams, what do they mean, “I tell Mrs. Marks this dream, and she asks: ‘What is it

about?" I reply: "About lack of feeling." And she gives her small wise smile which conducts our sessions like a conductor's baton. Dream: Wartime in Central Africa" (Lessing 172)

In fact, talking released her internal misery. Talking or narrating brings comfort to any traumatized person. The same for Anna in which she feels more comfortable with the therapist with whom she starts to become closer and she considers him as her best friend. Effectively, to understand Anna's breakdown and fragmentation needs to be with someone who knows the situation of the traumatized people and knows how to deal with her and with whom Anna feels at ease. (Kaci 79)

The healing narrative and trauma narrative comes from an idea that Louise DeSalvo outlines in *Writing as a Way of Healing*:

We are the accumulation of the stories we tell ourselves about who we are. . . .
Through writing, we revisit our past and review and revise it. What we thought happened, what we believed happened to us, shifts and changes as we discover deeper and more complex truths. It isn't that we use our writing to deny what we've experienced. Rather, we use it to shift our perspective. (11)

Though healing narrative and trauma narrative do not have the same meaning, however they bring out a result that helps the traumatized overcome his trauma, a result of 'healing.'

Therefore, the aims of the healing narrative differ from those of the trauma narrative is that they are not concerned with uncovering the repressed or unifying the unconscious with the conscious. The aim of the healing narrative is to create a story that represents the truth for its subject, regardless of the "truth" that others hope to project upon the subject. (Jennings, 2018)

Narrating about fears and breakdowns, writing and rewriting, taking people's opinions, and accepting their critic and talking out about fears is one of the most successful processes of trauma narrative and narrative of healing that Anna went through in order to overcome her shock. From the inability of narrative to convey her experience When she combined all her fragments and recognized that she can write from her fragments other stories and novels, is the process of her healing. When Anna lets her fragments dissolve into a unified self, she gives up her four notebooks and writes everything in the single golden notebook, which symbolizes the unification of her identity. Her insistence on embracing contradiction and combining her fragments is actually a way of healing. The chaos she finally experiences is precisely what forces her to reconcile the contradictory and separate dimensions of herself into a unified and healthy whole that is, nevertheless, not simply one thing. The very existence of *Free Women*, Anna's second novel, is proof that she has healed. (Kaci)

III.4. Reading Scriptotherapy in *The Golden Notebook*

Writing is considered as a tool in the process of healing, which is known by scriptotherapy, it is when the traumatized subject uses writing as a way of the therapeutic purposes. In Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* where the author shows the importance of writing towards healing and as a healing power for the main character's wounds.

The main character Anna Wulf tries to heal herself from her writer-block after witnessing a series of events that were the reason behind her trauma. From the very beginning of the novel, trauma symptoms appeared with her, when she said "everything's cracking up" (Lessing 4), she suffers from mental breakdowns, fear and chaos which led to her fragmented world and fragmented mind. Throughout the novel she writes about her deep fear four colored notebooks that cover four different aspects of her life. As Anca Georgescu states,

“the division of the notebooks has limited her development as an artist, and the breakdown she suffers from, the novel is one of boundaries which bound her”. (718).

Despite Anna’s writer’s block, however; she didn’t give up on writing. She tried to record anything that comes in her mind instead of staying arms folded. The fact that she knows her situation and her problem is one of the first steps towards healing. Unconsciously she was healing herself through writing. As well as admitting and talking about her problems is a major key towards healing,

Paul asks: Instead of making a record of my sins in your diary, why don't you write another novel?

I said: I could give you a dozen reasons why not, I could speak on the subject for several hours, but the real reason is that I have a writer's block. That's all. And it's the first time I've admitted it! (Lessing 437)

When she realizes that none of the notebooks reflects the real truth of her identity and experience she begins writing one single golden notebook by tying all her notebooks together where she tries to achieve a sense of unity by facing the chaos and refusing to divide and separate her life into different fragmented books. She looks for a book where Anna is herself by which she seeks wholeness, freedom and identity instead of being splitted into pieces. The unified notebook is the result of Anna’s healing process, as mentioned in the novel: “The golden notebook acts as a symbol of Anna's psychic integration, just as the previous four notebooks symbolized her feelings of disunity.”(74)

Lessing shows in *The Golden Notebook* the importance of writing as a healing power for the character’s wounds. Anna used writing as a way of healing in one of her notebooks; the yellow notebook titled ‘The Shadow of the Third’ where Lessing writes about Ella, the ego of Anna. The yellow notebook holds a very submissive writings about a woman falling in

love and surprisingly overwhelmed with emotions. Although Anna is the kind of people who witnessed betrayal and faced a lot of breakdowns in terms of her emotional life; psychic trauma folded her and led her into a depression, consequently she became stone hearted woman and didn't care about love and emotions. The yellow notebook was the starting point when the change towards healing occurs in the character Anna in other words the new Anna, the new identity Ella in need of passion, care and protection. Smartly choosing, Ella chose her doctor the psychoanalyst as a companion in her journey to continue her quest to reunite her different selves, and to be cured by Paul Tanner the 'witch doctor' from coldness, depression and trauma. The reason behind being with him and choosing him as a partner because of his wide knowledge about women, Anna finds inside him the attended man replacing the father, friend and lover. Obviously, Ella expresses direct passion towards her new lover through writing. (Kaci) as she says:

But after she had been with Paul Tanner for only a short time, she would say, with the utmost simplicity: 'Of course, I never loved George.' As if there were nothing more to be said about it. And as far as she was concerned, there was nothing more to be said. Nor did it worry her at all that all the complicated psychological attitudes were hardly on the same level as: 'Of course I never loved him,' with its corollary that: 'I love Paul. (134)

Furthermore, not only writing is considered as a way of healing in the scriptotherapeutic stages however, even confession is also used in the novel as a way of healing in the blue notebook where Anna narrates about her daily life which was a collection of psychoanalysis where Anna's remembrance submerged and had an emotional impact on her writings. This notebook turned to be a confession on the shoulders of Mr. Marks (psychoanalyst). She firstly, goes to solve a problem of block writing. Surprisingly, it appears

that block writing is more than being an important trouble, though this block comes from other difficult situations. (Kaci) as she writes in the beginning of the blue notebook:

I came upstairs from the scene between Tommy and Molly and instantly began to turn it into short story. It struck me that my doing this—turning everything into fiction—must be an evasion. Why not write down, simply, what happened between Molly and her son today? Why do I never write down, simply, what happens? Why don't I keep a diary? Obviously, my changing everything into fiction is simply a means of concealing something from myself. Today it was so clear: sitting listening to Molly and Tommy at war, very disturbed by it; then coming straight upstairs and beginning to write a story without even planning to do it. I shall keep a diary. (168)

Writing serves as a way towards heal, the use of scriptotherapy and writing towards healing helps her to get out the traumatic problems she had. When the main character witnessed a lot of problems she kept on trying and writing about the things that caused her writing block until she gathers her divided fragmented records into one united golden notebook which reflects the reconciliation of her “self”.

At last, writing and rewriting and the attempt of tying everything together in one golden notebook is the sign of Anna's cure in which she puts an end to her trauma through scriptotherapy and putting all her thoughts and all her ‘self’ in one united book which shows the final phase of Anna's mental breakdown, Where she overcomes fragmentation and madness through the process of writing. As Sonya Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín states in their book *Trauma Narratives and Herstory*: “the novel is a fictional enactment of the process of ‘scriptotherapy’, which shows how the reconstruction of a woman's psychic crisis by writing down her story assists her to rebuild her sense of identity.” (50)

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the application of trauma theory on the novel *The Golden Notebook*, how the main character was subjected and the way she reacted on working through her traumatic experience and the paradoxical emblem of trauma narratives and narratives of healing that were the reason behind of Anna's cure and healing state from trauma. The latter appeared in a form of fragmentation because the mental and psychological breakdowns. Her healing was through the process of writing of scriptotherapy. As a result she combined her fragments and united her divided notebooks that show the actual state of her healing. At the end of the novel we can see that Anna has healed thanks to the concept of scriptotherapy of writing through healing, and she reconciles the contradictory and separation of herself into a unified and healthy whole that is, nevertheless, not simply one thing. Anna's second novel is proof that she has healed. (Jennings 2018)

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Writing serves as a means of externalizing ideas and sharing knowledge. Yet, it also serves as a healing instrument. That is to say that writing is not only for the sake of expression but it has therapeutic effects. These effects, particularly in this study, concern the trauma subjects. Those subjects suffer from a shock that creates a gap within their lives and prevent them from being themselves, as it affects their psyches and the way they live. The inner peace and safety of such cases is not easy to be reached when trauma occurs in their lives. Moreover, this is the concern of scriptotherapy that seeks to help traumatized subjects to overcome their trauma. This study is concerned with these two concepts; trauma and scriptotherapy. It represents all their aspects, and it elucidates the relationship between the two notions by providing an application of each one on the novel *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing. This application focused on the main character Anna who witnessed a series of shocking events that left her traumatized.

This research aimed at showing how the concept of scriptotherapy was employed as a healing power from traumatic experiences and events. The scriptotherapeutic stages were discussed in this thesis and applied on the main character of the novel. In addition to other notions related to the concept of scriptotherapy. In general, scriptotherapy was studied through the novel of *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing. The protagonist witnessed events that led her to fall traumatic. Eventually, this caused her mental and psychological breakdowns which appeared in a form of fragmented narratives and division of books that record and memorize the events she encountered during her life. The main concern of this research was shedding light on the narratives of the character through which trauma occurred. It also aimed at applying the healing stages of scriptotherapy on this character and showed how she struggled in order to overcome the traumatic shock she had.

This research was based on a theoretically based approach, that draws upon a range of theoretical insights aimed at tackling concepts like trauma studies, trauma theory, trauma fiction, healing narratives and scriptotherapy. which enabled us to analyze the psychological aspects of the novel and the main character. The main character's psyche was analyzed depending on theories that were provided in the two first chapters, to be applied on Anna in the third chapter.

The first chapter depends on a psychoanalytical study. It introduced an overall understanding of contemporary trauma fiction. The theory of trauma has been explained, as it was fundamental to comprehend all trauma studies, concepts, characteristics and types. This had to be discussed from both realistic and fictional perspective. The key elements of trauma were represented and introduced in this chapter in order to enable reading and analyzing the main character of *The Golden Notebook*. This chapter paved the way to the analysis of the traumatic events that took place in the novel of Lessing. The descriptive and theoretical study of trauma is tackled and presented in order to move to trauma narratives of the character.

The second chapter tackled healing narratives in contemporary trauma fiction, dealing also with narratives of healing in women's fiction. This chapter provided clear explanations of this term, and guides the reader to distinguish such narratives from other genres of writings. It also demonstrated some narratives of trauma and healing process. This is to introduce the concept scriptotherapy, which enables us to distinguish Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* as scriptotherapy or not. Examples from contemporary literature were included in sake of making connection between this concept and its application by contemporary female authors. This chapter also dealt with healing narratives used by females. That is to emphasize on the importance of these narratives in women's contemporary fiction.

As a result, the third chapter was a study of Doris Lessing's novel. It resulted in defining and confirming the state of the main character Anna by applying what was discussed in the two previous chapters. Through the events of the story, Anna witnessed accumulation of shocking experiences that caused her trauma. This character consequently suffered from events and conditions that lead her to be considered as a traumatized subject. Yet, this study focused on the act of working through traumatic experience. Furthermore, a paradoxical emblem of trauma narratives and narratives of healing, and how they are used interchangeably. Moreover, the application of the concept scriptotherapy and the act of working through the process of healing that were demonstrated in the second chapter. This application concerned the protagonist and the way she overcame her trauma, which then resulted in confirming the healing state of the protagonist, who could recover following the stages of healing through scriptotherapy.

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Appendices

Appendix: Doris Lessing (1919 / 2013)

She was born to British parents in [Iran](#), where she lived until 1925, and then she moved to Southern Rhodesia until moving to London, England in 1949. (Wikipedia)

At the age of 15, Lessing began to sell her stories to magazines. Her first novel, [The Grass Is Singing](#), was published in 1950. The work that gained her international attention, [The Golden Notebook](#), is one of the most complex and the most widely read of her novels published in 1962. By the time of her death, she had issued more than 50 novels.

(Wikipedia)

Lessing's fiction is deeply autobiographical Drawing upon her childhood memories and her serious engagement with politics and social concerns, Lessing has written about the clash of cultures, the gross injustices of racial inequality, and the struggle among opposing elements within an individual's own personality. (<http://www.dorislessing.org/biography.html>)

She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007. She died on 17 November 2013, aged 94, in London.

Appendix: Suzette A. Henke

suzette A. Henke jointed the university of Louisville as Thurston B. Morton Senior Professor of Literary studies in 1991.

Although she initiall set out to investigate the intriguing interface between autobiography and fiction of self-writing in context of gender and genre in early 80's, Suzette interest shifted unexpectedly once she witnessed the pattern of repressed trauma in large number of the 20th century. She is amous of her book *Shattered SubjectsI*, she wrote it about real traumatic experiences of women and how each of them managed to overcome her trauma chock. She used the term 'Scriptotherapy' for the first time .

Résumé

La thèse suivante présente une lecture critique contemporaine du Livre d'or de Doris Lessing qui aborde les thèmes du traumatisme et de la guérison en tant que tropes pour comprendre son approche et sa représentation des expériences traumatiques féminines .la recherche vise également à démontrer comment le roman de Lessing peut être lu comme une narration de guérison ou comme une scriptothérapie . en outre , cette thèse cherche à mettre en évidence la signification et le symbolisme du personnage féminin central ,Anna Wulf , en rendant la vision de ses créateurs sur un sujet traumatisé qui utilise la scriptothérapie comme moyen de travailler à travers des expériences traumatiques , À travers sa fiction, nous supposons que Lessing démontre le pouvoir de transformation des récits de traumatismes et leur capacité à transformer des histoires indicible sur la souffrance des femmes en récits de témoignages imprégnés du pouvoir de la guérison. Les récits de guérison, selon Lessing, constituent donc un outil suffisant pour la représentation, la transmission et la guérison des traumatismes féminins. Ainsi, dans son approche féministe du traumatisme, Doris Lessing tente d'investir dans des discours thérapeutiques et de guérison qui identifient l'histoire de son personnage féminin comme une forme de scriptothérapie.

المخلص

تقدم الاطروحة التالية قراءة نقدية معاصرة لرواية دوريس ليسينج الدفتر الذهبي التي تتناول مواضيع الصدمة و الشفاء كعبارة مجازية لفهم نهجها و لتمثيل الصدمات المؤلمة للمرأة. يهدف هذا البحث امكانية قراءة و تناول كتاب ليسينج كرواية لشفاء او النص العلاجي، علاوة على هذا تسعى هذه الاطروحة على تسليط الضوء على اهمية و رمزية الشخصية الرئيسية كامرأة أنا وولف، في تقديم رؤية المُنتج حول الخاضع للصدمة التي تعتمد على النص العلاجي كوسيلة للعمل من خلال تجربة مؤلمة من خلال خيالها نعتبر ان ليسينج تثبت القدرة التحويلية لروايات الصدمة و قدرتها على تحويل القصص التي لا توصف حول معانات المرأة الى روايات الشهادة التي تتخللها قوة الشفاء السرد العلاجي وفقاً لما قالته ليسينج هوة أدوات مناسبة لتمثيل صدمات المرأة. و نقلها و الشفاء منها لذلك تحاول دوريس ليسينج في المساهمة في المحدثات العلاجية و الشفائية التي تعطي هوية للشخصية الرئيسية الانثوية لقصتها كشكل من اشكال العلاج النصي.