



## The Aesthetic Self - Therapy in The Select Novels of Doris Lessing

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### ABSTRACT

*The desideratum of this study is to evaluate the effect of ethnicity, social deprivation, and gender on perceived. Being a Free Women is "the disease of women in our time" especially for those who attempt to live the kind of life women never lived before. But this is inseparable from the universal theme of the individual's isolation; in a world that supplies no dependable values. The relationship of Elia and Paul at the centre of „The Yellow Note Book“ is tinged with women's magazine fantasy. Like many people she is scared of being alone in what she feels and fears emotion in a hostile world, but as an artist, driven to experience as many different things as possible, she has to face the question of responsibility. The Note Books punctuate instalments of a conventional novel entitled „Free Women“, in which Anna herself a character, using experience in the Note Books selectively. If literature is analysed after the events and the Note Books are read first and then the novel, we could see how Anna, the unblocked writer of the „Free Women“ is using her fragmented experience recorded in the Note Books compelling it into a positive whole with a control. The African material of the Black Note Book describes some of her most deeply felt experience which soon disappears. At the centre of „Free Women“ is Richard Tommy and Marion Triangle and Anna appears excessively detached.*

**KEYWORDS :** Demure, Winsome, appealing, elegant, resplendent, poised, self-assured, self-effacing, unpretentious.

### Overture

The Golden Note Book equally rolls back the frontiers of modern silence, but it does so in the name of an aesthetic of self – therapy as if for Anna to explore and write about her problems were sufficient and even tantamount to resolving them. Anna's sense that she has made progress in her self- exploration receives no independent confirmation. The depth and complexity of Anna's experience are most strongly evoked in many passages, especially in African Mashopi episodes. Mrs. Lessing's protagonist artist is not a remote character but one who has an uncommon responsiveness to common experience and Mrs. Lessing records it with utmost fidelity. Feminist in English speaking countries immediately adopted novel as a spearhead for the movement. Lessing herself refuses to take sides in the war between the sexes.

### Boulder pushers and the failures

Anna has been blocked as a writer because excessive self- concern has distorted her vision. Parallel with this theme is her struggle toward a fulfilled love to achieve which she must recognize as in the artistic sphere, that she cannot force patterns of happiness on simple life. In *The Yellow Note Book*, the strong Ella writes of a man and woman who at the end crack up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits yet winning a new kind of strength. The stormy relationship between Anna and Saul is an evidence of the phase of disorientation and alienation in which we live. It explores in-depth the dilemma of the „Free Women“. „Anna fears spreading her feelings of discontent and futility and so unable to write in the beginning but by the end she has learnt to live through her divided selves, „naming“ the horrors. Anna's predicament is not different from her society, but a reflection of its ideals and failures, the frustration and sterility of „living“ without a central philosophy, but forced like Martha to accept the fading of the Marxist dream; she seeks a new centre. In „The Golden Note Book; the discontinuity reflects ,not only the novelists“ view point, but lack of unity in Anna's life and life she sees it. By means of the note books Annan divided herself into four to avoid facing up to the chaos; in one, *The Blue Note Book* she tries to be honest and this especially is in the end superseded by the Golden; all of her in one book.

### Portrayal of Nostalgia

The Mashopi Hotel sequences set in war time in Zambesia is an almost Chekovian view of the decadence which ironically finds its fullest expression in the small group of youthful communists to which the narrator herself belongs. At the end of her first Mashopi sequence, Anna writes in her „Note Book“ that is „full of nostalgia“. (*Doris Lessing „The Golden Note Book“*) The sequence portrays political and moral futility of a group of revolutionaries who stick together out of mere comradeship, though they have largely lost faith in what they

are doing. Her nostalgia is justifiable because, waiting for the end of the war, they have no choice but to postpone the attempt to face up their inner misgivings for all the privileges they enjoy in Zambesia. Their life is like that of the „inhabitants“ of a very luxurious prison camp, Lessing's masterful evocation of the interactions of this ill-assorted group of people show Anna in London striving to build her own identity.

We would sense her indifferent roles as a disillusioned communist, a fashionable author. A psychoanalytic patient, a welfare worker and an unusual lover and mistress. The whole of „The Golden Note Book“ might be seen as exploration of decadent consciousness and the fragmented life of a thwarted heroine unable to discover any integral meaning to her existence. Anna experiments with her life with a purpose. She sardonically remarks to her American lover Saul Green, *“You say, and I am what I am because the United States is such and such politically, I am the position of women in our time. (ibid, 566).* Anna's experience of jointly going mad with Saul is represented as something, which will change her life. It is a terrifying experience, a crack in the personality like a crack in a dam and through which the future might prove in a different shape. In her cocoon of madness Anna the political idealist and welfare worker, is forced to acknowledge the destructiveness and egotism within her own personality. The dreams that Anna notes down for her psychoanalyst or the Note Books themselves project the theme of “The Golden Note Book”

### Social Disillusionment

The Nineteenth Century novelists, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot consciously set out to expose silent and unspoken feelings and the secret agonies of the heart to the public view. *They did so within the context of a fully – structured vision of life. Elaine Showalter, „A Literature of their Own British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing“, 97.* It's undiminished popularity and increasingly political cause on the whole front. The Note Books are a chronicle of Anna's biography from 1950 – 57. With lengthy flash backs describing her experience in World War II in Africa. She says “We should all go to bed, shut up about sexual liberation and go on with the important matters“. (*Interview with Lessing by Jonah Raskin, “A Small Personal Voice“, 71*)

### The Role of Sexuality

Lessing's emphasis on the role of sexuality in Anna's reflections reinforces feminism. Anna and Molly are a completely new type of women. „Free Women“ see the traditional sex roles as a victory in the sexual revolution. Molly's self- respect suffers from the fact that she has not taken shelter in marriage. Despite her determined sexual experimentation's in casual sex, it is evident that Anna's real desire is identical to Marion's. She wants to be loved in a conventional relationship

and fears she never will be. Anna's love with Saul Green, who is a writer in self- exile from McCarthy's America, is only to see her own fragmented personality reflected in him. He is a multiple schizophrenic who unpredictably assumes and sheds half a dozen personalities. Like Martha Quest, Anna diagnoses her own self – tendencies and experiences "split" in her. She takes on personalities of various people whom she has known while Saul assumes the form of her compulsion to see the world orderly and progressive. Her eyes are opened to the dark secret of our time.

### **Peroration**

Doris Lessing's works have always provoked vehement reactions; she has been scorned as a communist and as a traitor to communism; labelled as a radical, a feminist and a liberal. Her will and determination to write is to make powerful onslaught on the existing imbalance in social structure. Most of her works are traditional in style and theme.

### **References:**

1. **Lessing, Doris. The Golden Note Book.** London: Michael Joseph, 1962.
2. **Elaine Showalter, 'A Literature of their Own British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing', 97)**
3. **Stubbs, Patricia. Women and Fiction Feminism and the Novel.** Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1979) (**ibid, 566**)