

Madness And Schizophrenia As Means Of Spiritual Healing In Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook

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Abstract:

This paper underlines the portrayal of madness and schizophrenia as means of spiritual healing in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. Insights for this analysis have been drawn from R. D. Laing. Freudian approach to schizophrenia and madness is psychological whereas Laing's understanding of it is existential. Anna Wulf, the protagonist in the novel goes through madness and schizophrenia and ultimately discovers wholeness.

Keywords: Wholeness, madness, schizophrenia, spirituality, existentialism, psychoanalysis.

Introduction

Anna Wulf, the protagonist in *The Golden Notebook* (1962) goes through an experience which is somewhat similar as that of Martha in the *Children of Violence* novels. In her Preface to *The Golden Notebook* Lessing states that "the theme of 'breakdown... when people 'crack up'—[...] is a way of self-healing, of the inner self's dismissing false dichotomies and divisions" (viii). This statement underlines the importance of breakdown and of schizophrenia to the vision of breakthrough in this novel.

It is important to note here that Freudian approach to schizophrenia and madness is psychological whereas Laing's understanding of it is existential. Freud explains schizophrenia as a taxonomy in which the patient "regresses" to a state of "primary narcissism in which the distinction between between the id, the ego and the superego disappears." (Malcom FF363) R. D. Laing had quite a new and radical approach to this phenomenon. In his book *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1960), he analysed the state of psychosis, particularly schizophrenia, from an ontological perspective. His understanding and allegiance to the phenomenological and existential tradition of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty account to a large

extent for his understanding and interpretation of schizophrenia. According to Laing the psychotic breakdown is not a sign of some genetic, biological abnormality and neurological disorder, but an existential crisis. This he understood as a natural reaction to a persecutory and inescapable and social order. He, as a result, no longer sees schizophrenia and madness as pathological phenomena. It was for him an existential state which is the result of an ontological insecurity. He observes:

I have given a glimpse of a revolution that is going on in relation to sanity and madness, both inside and outside psychiatry. Modern psychiatry came into being when the demonological point of view gave way 300 years ago to a clinical viewpoint. The clinical point of view is now giving way before another point of view that is both existential and social. The shift, I believe, is of no less radical significance. (288)

Laing was among the very first psychiatrists who stressed the need for a phenomenological interpretation of madness and schizophrenia,

whose signs were to be understood in terms of an indefensible existential experience of an inescapable social reality. His position is that when an individual's existence is forced to split into fragments, he/she experiences a kind of defense mechanism- a schizoid world where symbolic relations are weakened and the real emerges as if peeled off from his/her self. "Psychosis" from Laing's perspective is thus viewed as the natural outcome of an inconsistency between the self and others. Viewed in this light a schizophrenic person suffers from a strange duality between his "desire to reveal himself ([herself]) and his/[her] desire to conceal himself/[herself]." (DS 38) When the schizophrenic person claims the "truth" of his "existential position He/she is not accepted by the society and has to pay the price of "being mad." (290)

Anna Wulf goes through this existential schizophrenic experience in the novel. She is an intellectually and sexually free woman novelist. She has been a communist activist. She is also a divorcée, a single mother. Lessing in the novel depicts her undergoing a schizophrenic breakdown, which results in a paralysis of her will and a subsequent writing block. Anna has spent her youth in central Africa. Now she has moved to London in 1956 after her divorce with her husband Max Wulf. She shares a flat with her friend Molly and gets involved in activities of the Communist Party in England. In England she faces an atmosphere of violence, terror and fragmentation characteristic of the postwar period.

Anna's artistic and psychological breakdown, like that of Martha, is an outcome of several different factors which include her disillusionment with her political ideals as a communist, failure of her love affair with her lover Michael and her sado-masochistic relationship with an American Writer, Saul Green. Among other things her sado-masochistic relationship with Saul Green is the main factor which causes her breakdown.

Anna Wulf, the protagonist, describes the kind of novel she wishes to write as "a book powered with an intellectual or moral passion strong enough to create order, to create a new way of looking at life. The Golden Notebook may represent Doris Lessing's attempt to write such a novel. For the original edition of The Golden Notebook, Lessing made the following statement :

Since I hold that criticism of literature is a criticism and judgment of life, this book would say what I wanted to say about life...

Thinking about these two books, I understood suddenly they were not two books but one; they were fusing together in my mind. I understood that the shape of this book should be enclosed and claustrophobic--so narcissistic that the subject matter should break through the form.

This novel, then, is an attempt to break a form; to break certain forms of consciousness and go beyond them. (234)

Clearly, in The Golden Notebook, Lessing seems concerned with bringing about changes of consciousness, changes in our way of feeling our own existence and our relation to the human society; her vision of life would, in Ana's words, put "an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all live". Lessing seems here, as in her other novels, to be presenting the theme of wholeness. One aspect of this theme that Lessing emphasizes in this novel relates to our achieving a totality of being which compels us to think in ways which deny the sharp boundaries between male-female, kind-cruel, good-bad, adult child, love-hate. Fundamentally, she summons us to revise our ordinary way of conceiving experience, a way which calls for the false separation of these

entities. Primarily then, what Lessing seems to present in this novel is a vision of wholeness which entails our perceiving simultaneously the opposites, the dichotomies, the polarities, and the contradictions which our experience presents to us as truths. The value of such perception could result in our accepting ourselves--in the words of Abraham Maslow--as persons who can perceive themselves simultaneously as good and bad, selfish and unselfish, male and female. In essence, Lessing suggests that by expanding our vision and by accepting a form of thought that acknowledges the existence of nonexclusive categories, we then may be able to experience a unity of being, resulting in our enjoying a richer and more rewarding life.

Perhaps a vivid illumination of this aspect of the wholeness concept shines forth in Lessing's portrayal of the novel's main character, Anna Wulf, for Lessing seems to launch Anna on a personal quest for wholeness and for a more meaningful, satisfying existence. Anna, a novelist, at the novel's beginning is afflicted by a feeling of psychic disunity that is evidenced in her attempt to divide and to categorize her experiences into four separate notebooks. Possibly her problem could be better described in the words of R. D. Laing who writes: "Some persons do not seem to have a sense of that basic unity which can abide through the most intense conflicts with oneself, but seem rather to have come to experience themselves as split..." (DS 165) Lessing's description of Anna's psychic rebirth resonates with insights from R. D. Laing. According to Roberta Rubenstein: "One of Laing's central hypotheses is that the psychotic breakdown manifested in acute schizophrenia is a natural process of mind-healing, which, if allowed to run its full course will be therapeutic rather than destructive." (Rubenstein 179)

Indeed, Anna's problem seems to be reflected also through her inability to write a second novel after the publication of her successful first one, *Frontiers of War*. Her writer's block

seems to lead her in undertaking a rigorous self-examination in her effort to acquire self-knowledge and to reconcile the division within herself. Clearly, one answer to her problem lies in her coming to terms with the question of opposites, contradictions, dichotomies. For early in *The Golden Notebook*, Anna indicates in the initial "Free Women" section that she has begun to seek a new attitude beyond "Men. Women, Bound, Free, God, Bad, yes, No, Capitalism, Socialism, Sex, Love" (356). Thus, Anna's problem calls to mind a statement made by Lessing herself in "The Small Personal Voice" where she writes: "If there is one thing which distinguishes our literature, it is a confusion of standards and the uncertainty of values. Continuing, Lessing notes :

It would be hard, now, for a writer to use the Balzacian phrases like 'sublime virtue' or 'monster of wickedness' without self-consciousness. Words, it seems, can no longer be used simply and naturally. All the great words like love, hate; life, death; loyalty,, treachery; contain their opposite meaning and half a dozen shades of dubious implication...It is hard to make moral judgements, to use words like good and bad. (SMV 86)

This statement could very well describe Anna's problem in *The Golden Notebook* both as a writer and as a human being. For in order for Anna to gain or to regain self unity, she must acquire an attitude that would transcend the principle of the antagonism of opposites, an attitude that would permit her to write about and to experience life more genuinely and realistically. Of course, Lessing traces Anna's introspective efforts to resolve her problem through self discovery in the various notebooks, especially the black, red, and blue notebooks that comprise a major portion of the novel.

Indeed, the black notebook presents an explicit illumination of Anna's attempt to come to grips with the problem of opposites. This notebook is a chronological, first person account of the genesis and fate of her first novel, *The Frontiers of War*. As revealed in this notebook Anna's writer's block revolves partially around her inability to accept the seemingly "evil" aspect of herself and of society out of which her first novel was born. The novel was "about" a "colour problem" in Africa during World War II. Anna reveals that she "suspects" the level in herself from which the novel was written because it was evoked by one of the "unhealthy" forces in society, that of war. Anna writes :

I know very well what level in myself that novel, *Frontiers of War*, came from. I knew when I wrote it. I hated it then and I hate it now... But the emotion it came out of was something frightening, the unhealthy, feverish, illicit excitement of wartime, a lying nostalgia, a longing for license, for freedom, for the jungle, for formlessness. It is so clear to me that I can't read that novel now without feeling ashamed, as if I were in a street naked (61).

Later, Anna recalls the moment she knew she could write the novel:

I remember very clearly the moment I knew I could write it. I was standing on the steps of the bedroom block of the Mashopi hotel with a cold hard glittering moonlight all around me.... I was filled with such a dangerous delicious intoxication that I could have walked straight off the step a into the air, climbing on the strength of my own

drunkenness into the stars. And the intoxication, as I knew even then, was the recklessness of infinite danger, the secret ugly frightening pulse of war itself...(67)

Anna appears to recognize that she had written *Frontiers of War* out of an exhilaration for war and this creates in her a feeling of sterility and artistic blockage because she disapproves of war. Yet Anna seems to realize that in order to write another novel, she must experience the same emotion that evoked the first one:

And I know that in order to write another, to write those fifty reports on society which I have the material to write, I would have to whip up in myself that same emotion. And it would be that emotion which would make those fifty books novels and not reportage. (61)

Because Anna seems to believe that she had committed a crime in writing *Frontiers of War* because it grew out of an emotion that she "hated" and that she seemingly preferred not accepting as a part of herself, even though at the same time she realized it was just such an emotion that made the novel "a novel", she shied away from writing another novel. Consequently, as long as Anna was unable to come to grips with the aspect of her nature out of which her first novel evolved, she remained locked in her writer's block. Hence, in *The Golden Notebook* Lessing shows how Anna finally comes not merely to recognize the existence of opposites, but also to accept the "evil" or negative side of the "opposites" as a part of herself and a major component of her own creativity.

In the initial black notebook, Anna writes about the shaping of her first novel, recalling experiences that she wrote about in the novel. She remembers a problem she had with

words when trying to describe Will Rodde. Anna realizes that if she describes Rodde realistically, she would have to use seemingly

opposing words in the description. Anna writes the following list :

Ruthless	Kind
Cold	Warm
Sentimental	Realistic.(67)

Anna reaches the conclusion that "in describing any personality all these words were meaningless." (67) Anna continues:

To describe a person one says : 'Will, sitting stiffly at the head of the table, allowed his round spectacles to glitter at the people watching him and said, formally, but with a gruff clumsy humour : Something like that but the point is, and it obsesses me (and how odd this obsession should be showing itself, so long ago, in helpless lists of opposing words not knowing what it would develop into), once I say words like good/bad, strong/weak, are irrelevant, I am accepting amorality, and I do accept it the moment I start to write 'a story', 'a novel' because I simply don't care. All I care about is that I should describe willi and Mary Rose so that a reader can feel their reality.(67)

Anna's problem as presented in the first black notebook is to deal with the innocence through which she created the novel. However as Anna looks back over her experiences in retrospect, she realizes that the experiences as she recorded them were not as "positive" as they seemed. Maryrose's seeming innocence was in effect tainted by an incestuous love affair with her brother. Anna's one "desperately and wildly and painfully happy" venture with Paul hurts willi. Then in the third black notebook

Anna contrasts the beauty of the veld as manifested in the white butterflies with the millions of ugly grasshoppers. Here Anna writes of the presence of opposite forces in nature. Yet not until "The Golden Notebook" does Anna come to see that the beauty and the ugliness were present in all of her accounts. As the "film Sequence" of her Mashopi experiences pass before her mind, Anna seems to realize that in "ordering" the experience in the black notebook as well as the others, Anna had placed emphasis on the aspects of her experiences that were important to herself, experiences that the kind of education she received permitted her to write : "I suffer torments of dissatisfaction and incompleteness because of my inability to enter those areas of life my way of living, education, sex, politics, class bar me from". Anna seemingly has come to this realization when she writes in "The Golden Notebook" section :

I also knew what I was going to be told. Knowing was an 'illumination'. During the last weeks of craziness and timelessness I've had these moments of 'knowing' one after the other, yet there is no way of putting this sort of knowledge into words. Yet these moments have been so powerful, like the rapid illuminations of a dream that remain with one waking, that what I learned will be part of how I experience life until I die... The fact is the real experience can't be described. (541-42)

Later in the same notebook Anna writes:

...Still asleep, I read words off a page I had written: That was about courage, but not the sort of courage I have ever understood. It's a small painful sort of courage which is at the root of every life, because injustice and cruelty is at the root of life. And the reason why I have only given my attention to the heroid or the beautiful or the intelligent is because I won't accept that injustice and cruelty, and so won't accept the small endurance that is bigger than anything.(543-44)

What Anna seems to come to understand is that both positive and negative or good and evil forces are equally present in the world but if the forces are balanced and considered openly, then a more healthy state of existence would be possible not only for herself but for everyone. Indeed, the culminating sense at the conclusion of "The Golden Notebook" section is the complexity of the core of human nature. Anna seems to view the world as a place in which good and evil are so complicatingly blended that it is often impossible to say where good ends and evil begins. As it is with Anna, so it is with society.

Anna's experiences in the Communist Party which she records in the red notebook also help her in achieving a more meaningful existence. In the red notebook, Anna struggles to maintain the open minded attitude of her original communist vision in the face of both the McCarthy purge and Prague executions in the 1950's; thus, in the red notebook Anna traces the decline of her enchantment with the communist Party. Having joined the Party because she felt that it could put "an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all live," Anna discovers that the Party did not hold an answer for her.

After Anna joins the Party, she recalls a statement by Mary Rose from the black notebook that they "believed everything would be beautiful" where she worked earlier with a socialist group in Africa, but once in the Party, she discovered that it was not. In fact, she finds that the Party intensifies the split within herself. For in the Party Anna suffers from a feeling of dryness, and she feels that her creative emotion is being cancelled since she is unable to exercise control over her actions. In the Party anna's creativeness and individually are threatened, and, thus, she rebels against the annihilation of her inner self. Hence, Anna fails to find wholeness in the Party through external experiences, and thus she resorts to the inner self.

Anna's problem, her writing block, leads her to a psycho analyst whom Anna and Molly call mother sugar. The session with her permit Anna to "grasp", as Irving Howe has noted the connection between her own "neuroses and the public disorders of the day." Anna begins her psychotherapy in 1950 and ends it in 1954. In her sessions with Mrs. Marks, Anna experiences certain moments when she glimpses the unity of the human experience which is the goal of the quest, but she is not ready to accept it. At one point during the sessions, Anna declares that she is "living the kind of life women never lived before", and Mother Sugar responds:

'Never?' she said, and behind her voice I could hear the sounds she always evoked at such moments -- seas lapping, beaches, voices of people centuries dead. She had the capacity to evoke a feeling of vast areas of time by a smile or a tone of voice that could delight me, rest me, fill me with joy --- but I didn't want it just then. (245)

It was the memory of Anna's sessions with Mother Sugar that helped to sustain Anna

during the time of crises when Anna nearly experiences a nervous breakdown. In "The Golden Notebook" section Anna dreams that she writes down some words and carries them to mother sugar:

...I looked at these words which I had written, and of which I felt critical; and then I took them to Mother Sugar. I said to her: We're back at the blade of grass again, that will press through the bits of rusted steel a thousand years after the bombs have exploded and the world's crust has melted. Because the force of will in the blades of grass is the same as the small painful endurance. It that it? And so?

She said.

But the point is, I don't think I'm prepared to give all that much reverence to that dammed blade of grass, even now. At which she smiled, sitting in her chair four-square and upright, rather bad tempered because of my slowness because I missed the point. (544)

As a result of the sessions with Mrs. Marks, Anna learns to take note of her dreams. In this regard, Doris Lessing seems to suggest that dreams, too, are a part of life, and if a person is to be considered from the whole perspective then dreams become significant. As Mona Knapp notes "The dream, scrutinized by scientists in various experiments, have been found to be an absolute necessity to man. It keeps our psychic life alive, in its own proper climate. It sustains a life not corruptible and not susceptible to the pressures of society. When we cease to believe in this spiritual underground, to nourish ourselves on feeling, our lives become empty shells, automatic,

mechanical continuing, she notes : "We are beginning to see the influence of dreams upon reality and reality on dreams. In The Golden Notebook, Lessing depicts Anna as becoming aware of the importance of dreams in her quest for wholeness. In one of the sessions with Mrs. Marks, Anna reveals the following dream which Anna calls her "joy in spite" dream

The first time I dreamed it, the principle, or figure, took form in a certain vase I had then, a peasant wooden vase from Russia, that someone has brought back... this vase... had a personality and the personality was a nightmare, for it represented something anarchistic and uncontrollable, something destructive. The figure, or object, for it was not human, more like a species of elf or pixie, danced, and jumped with a jerky cocky liveliness and it menaced not only me, but everything that was alive, but impersonally, and without reason. This was when I 'named the dream as about destruction. The next time I dreamed, months later, but instantly recognized it as the same dream, the principle or element took shape in an old man, almost dwarflike, infinitely more terrifying than the vase object, because he was part human. This old man smiled and giggled and sniggered, was ugly, vital and powerful, and again, what he represented was pure spite, malice, joy in malice, joy in a destructive impulse. This was when I 'named' the dream as about joy in spite. And I dreamed the dream again, always when particularly tired,

or under stress, or in conflict, when I could feel that the walls of myself were thin or in danger. The element took a variety of shapes, usually that of a very old man or woman (yet there was a suggestion of double sex, or even sexlessness) and the figure was always very lively, in spite of having a wooden leg, or a crutch, or a hump, or being deformed in some way, and the creature was always powerful, with an inner vitality which I knew was caused by a purposeless, undirected, causeless spite. It mocked and jibbed and hurt, wished murder, wished death. And yet it was always vibrant with joy. Telling Mother Suger of this dream, recreated for perhaps the sixth or seventh time, she asked as usual: 'And how do you name it?' and I replied as usual with the words spite, malice, pleasure in hurt; and she enquired: 'only negative qualities, nothing good about it?' 'Nothing', I said, surprised. 'And there is nothing at all there?' 'Not for me.' (523)

She then smiled in a way I knew meant that I should think more about it, and I asked: 'if this figure is an elemental and creative force, for good as well as for evil, then why should I fear it so terribly?' 'Perhaps as you dream deeper you'll feel the vitality as good as well as bad...'

And I thought as I often did, that she was having it both ways: for if this figure, or elements, was so familiar to her in the dreams or fantasies

of her patients that she 'instantly recognized it,' then why was it my responsibility that the thing was totally evil? Only the word evil is too human a word for a principle to be, in spite of what part-human shapes it chose to assume, as essentially inhuman.

In other words, it was upto me to force thing to be good as well as bad? That was what she was saying? (408-409)

In this passage the crux of Anna's problem in her quest for wholeness seems to be revealed : her inability to accept the negative aspects of her personality. In naming her dream the principle of joy in spite, Anna seems to acknowledge the connection between the two opposites but she is yet unable to accept fully the "negativeness" as a part of her own nature. Anna dreams again:

I slept and I dreamed the dream. This time there was no disguise anywhere. I was the malicious male-female dwarf figure, the principle of joy in destruction; and Saul was my counterpart, male-female, my brother and my sister, and we were dancing in some open place, under enormous white buildings, which were filled with hideous, menacing, black machinery which held destruction. But in the dream, he and I, or she and I, were friendly, we were not hostile, we were together in spiteful malice. There was a terrible yearning nostalgia in the dream, the longing for death. We came together and kissed, in love. It was terrible even in the dream and I knew it. Because I recognized in the

dream, those other dreams we all have, when the essence of love, of tenderness, is concentrated into a kiss or a caress, but now it was the caress of two half-human creatures celebrating destruction.

There was terrible joy in the dream. When I woke up the room was dark, the glow of the fire very red, the great white ceiling filled with resentful shadow, and I was filled with joy and peace. I wondered how such a terrible dream could leave me rested, and then I remembered Mother Suger, and thought that perhaps for the first time I had dreamed and dream 'positively'—though what that means I don't know. (508)

In this dream Anna appears to come face to face with the realization that 'negativeness' is a part of her nature. Hence, she confronts in herself the ultimate horror, the negative force that she wishes to deny as a part of herself. In addition, she seems to realize the 'interrelationship' between herself and Saul, herself and man. For she seems finally aware of the inter connection between herself and others. In her dream, she sees a likeness between herself and Saul who, like Anna, is tormented by a divided personality. Shortly after she dreams this dream, Anna responds to Saul's question of "why do you have four notebooks? by saying obviously, because it's been necessary to split myself up, but from now on I shall be using one only." Further, Anna has another dream which she calls an ordinary dreams although she feels that she had been delivered from disintegration because she could dream it:

...the dream faded in a lying pain of nostalgia. I said to

myself in my sleep, hold myself together, you can do it if you get the blue notebook and write. I felt the inertia of my hand, which was cold and unable to reach out for pen. But instead of a pen I held a gun in my hand. And I was not Anna but a soldier... somewhere before me was the enemy. But I didn't know who the enemy was, what my cause was. I saw my skin was dark... I understood I was on a hill-side in Algeria, I was an Algerian soldier and I was fighting the French. Yet Anna's brain was working in this man's head, and she was thinking Yes I shall kill, I shall even torture because I have to, but without belief. Because it is no longer possible to organize and to fight and kill without knowing that new tyranny arises from it. Yet one has to organize. Then Anna's brain went out like a candle flame. I was the Algerian, believing, full of the courage of belief. Terror came into the dream because Anna was threatened with total disintegration. Terror brought me out of the dream and I was no longer the sentry, standing guard in the moonlight with the group of comrades moving quietly behind him over the fires of the evening meal. I bounded off the dry-sun-smelling soil of Algeria and I was in the air. This was the flying dream, and it was a long time since I had dreamed it, and I was almost crying with joy because I was flying again. The essence of the flying dream is joy, joy in light free

movement. I was in the air above the Mediterranean, and I knew I could go anywhere. I willed to go East. I wanted to go to Asia, I wanted to visit the peasant. I was flying immensely high, with the mountains and seas beneath me, treading the air down easily with my feet... (513-514)

Through this dream Anna seems to come face to face with the truth about herself and her relationship to the cosmos. For during this dream she finally is able to achieve the freedom she desires. Shortly after this dream Anna buys the golden notebook that she later gives to Saul. Anna's decision to give Saul the notebook which she wanted dearly to keep for herself attests to her denial of the 'I' and of the egocentricity of her nature. At the end of the final blue notebook Anna writes : "I'll pack away the four notebooks with the others. I'll pack away the four notebook. I'll start a new notebook, all of myself in one book --" (423)

Later, with the stabilizing force in her life, her daughter, away in school, Anna retires from the human world into the security of her room. Anna has indicated earlier that the room is the only place in which she feels safe. However, her room is no longer a place of security, for it has been invaded by aspects of the outside world through the newspaper clippings which Anna pins to her wall. Seemingly, Anna has become completely overwhelmed by the events reported in the clippings. She moves from one clipping to another in an attempt to find some unifying factor that would assist her in unifying the fragments in her life. Then, she has a vision:

That evening sitting on the floor, playing jazz, desperate because of her inability to 'make sense' out of bits of

print, she felt a new sensation, like a hallucination, a new and hitherto not understood picture of the world. This understanding was altogether terrible; a reality different from anything she had known before as reality, and it came from a country of feeling she had never visited. It came not being 'depressed'; or being 'unhappy'; or feeling 'discouraged'; the essence of the experience was that such words, like joy or happiness was meaningless. Coming around from this illumination—which was timeless; so that Anna did not know how long it had lasted, she knew that she had had an experience for which there were no words—it was beyond the region where words could be made to have sense. (557)

Anna is able to hang on to this vision and to achieve wholeness. The unity or wholeness which she achieves seems to come from an inner organic growth in that it is not imposed from the outside. Rather it results from Anna's quest for self- knowledge through self-discovery.

Quite possibly, the key to the structure of *The Golden Notebook* is presented near the end of "The Golden Notebook" section in the novel. At this point in the narrative movement, Anna Wulf has almost overcome her writer's block and is considering writing a new novel. At the close of an experience Ana has with Saul Green, Saul gives Anna the initial sentence to her new novel : "I'm going to given you the first sentence then. There are the two women you are, Anna. Write down : The two women were alone in the London flat". (534) This sentence turns out to be the initial sentence in *The Golden Notebook*, and its appearance there

suggests that *The Golden Notebook*, represents the novel Ana is finally able to write. And, the narrative content of the "Free Women" section in *The Golden Notebook* seems to represent a fictionalized account of Anna's life based on and growing out of the "real" situations that Anna writes about in her notebooks. That Anna seems finally able to write her novel even though Anna says she will not write anymore point to her discovery or understanding of the interrelatedness of the separate aspects of her life and alludes to her achievement of a more satisfying existence.

Finally, the fact that Anna eventually puts aside her note books and writes solely in one book and that she writes her new novel symbolizes the end of compartmentalization and fragmentation. All aspects of her 'self', all that she experiences, all of life itself form wholes. Indeed, Lessing's vision of wholeness that she projects through her protagonist Anna Wulf as well as through the structure of the novel, is a significant aspect of *The Golden Notebook*. Anna is finally able to achieve a breakthrough when she experiences the blurring of the boundaries of her individual and social self in the moment she encounters her lover Saul Green. Jean Pickering analyses this "sense of 'ego-loss'" by referring to R. D. Laing that Anna goes through an "inner voyage [which] is not what we need to be cured of, but... is in itself a natural way of healing our appalling state of alienation called normality." (Pickering 96). . In the Preface Lessing explains:

...things have come together; the divisions have broken down—the triumph of the second theme, which is that of unity, Anna and Saul Green, the American, 'break down'. They are crazy, lunatic, mad—what you will. They break down into each other, into other people, break through the

patterns and formulas they have made to shore up themselves and each other, dissolve. They hear each other's thoughts, recognize each other in themselves. Saul Green, the man who has been envious and destructive of Anna, now supports her, advises her, gives her the theme for her next book, *Free Women*. (GN 8)

Lessing uses this interpretation of schizophrenia as "an intensification of the divisions within the normal self" (247) in depicting the schizophrenic experience of Martha Quest and Anna Wulf. This idea is useful in understanding their divided selves or "false-self-systems." Lessing sees schizophrenia as a creative force capable of healing the individual crushed by the false demands of the society.

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