



JACLR

*Journal of Artistic
Creation & Literary
Research*

JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access Graduate Student Journal of the Universidad Complutense Madrid that publishes interdisciplinary research on literary studies, critical theory, applied linguistics and semiotics, and educational issues. The journal also publishes original contributions in artistic creation in order to promote these works.

Volume 7 Issue 2 (December 2019) Article 3

María Sánchez Salguero

*"The treatment of fragmentation in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*"*

Recommended Citation

Sánchez Salguero, María. "The treatment of fragmentation in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*" *JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research* 7.2.3 (2019): 27-41
<<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>>
©Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Abstract: This paper is a critical analysis of the treatment of the issue of fragmentation in the novel *The Golden Notebook* written by Doris Lessing and first published in 1962. The aim of this essay is to analyze the topics of social fragmentation and fragmentation of the self and analyze how they are related to each other. The methodology that has been used for this essay is a critical analysis of the topic of fragmentation in the novel. For that purpose, different academic articles and books specialized in the topic, the novel and/or the authoress have been read.

Keywords: Fragmentation, breakdown, self-fragmentation, compartmentalization, twentieth century

María Sánchez Salguero

The treatment of fragmentation in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*

0. Introduction

'The point is, that as far as I can see, everything's cracking up.' (Lessing 25) *The Golden Notebook*, written by Doris Lessing and first published in 1962, is a novel largely impregnated with this feeling of decadence and breaking down. Divided in different points of time, the novel focuses on the disintegration of political and social groups as well as on the lack of faith of the society provoked for the amount of violence and destruction lived during World War II, as well as for the fear that governed people during the nuclear age. Furthermore, Colonialism and Communism are key pillars in order to understand the

fragmentation represented in the novel, which is reflected in British society as well as in the main character, Anna Wulf.

Fragmentation is the central topic of the novel, it is always related with other topics and important historic events and settings, as the life in the British Colony of Rhodesia during the 40s, shortly before the Second World War, the emotional crisis of men and women after the war and during the nuclear age, and the loss of faith in the Communist Movement in Britain during the 1950s. In an individual way, fragmentation is reflected in the inner self of Anna Wulf, who compartmentalizes herself into different selves precisely in order to endure her inner contradictions. (Pickering 94) What is more, the novel itself is structured in a fragmented way, divided in four different notebooks written by Anna Wulf; the Black Notebook, the Red Notebook, the Yellow Notebook and the Blue Notebook. Each of them represents a part of her life. Beside the notebooks, the structure of *The Golden Notebook* includes 'Free Women', which is a conventional novel that Anna Wulf is writing, which is also a reflection of her life. Additionally, the fragmentation in the structure of the novel is not just related with the fragmentation of Anna's selves into different notebooks, but also with "the variety of narrative forms-diary, letter, book review, parody, short story, film script, headline, news item, synopsis" (Pickering 92) The fact that the novel does not follow a unique narrative form, but many different ones, results in the sensation that there are different voices, when actually there is just one voice, Anna's. Therefore, this narrative structure of multiple forms is a connection with the central theme: fragmentation.

The aim of this essay is to analyze and compare how the topic of fragmentation is represented in both society and the character of Anna Wulf, and how they are related to each other. Therefore, this essay will be divided into three parts.

In the first place, the beginning of the essay will be focused on social fragmentation, which is divided at the same time in different periods of time: on the one hand, the period just before the Second World War in the British Colony of Rhodesia, how a group of young communists are losing their ideals as the war is coming and as they realize that colonialism is difficult to eradicate; and on the other hand, the collapse of the British Communist Party during the 1950s. As stated by Pons, after the "denunciation of Stalin's crimes in the famous 'secret report' at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in February 1956" (210), one of the consequences was a "crisis of trust amongst communists around the world on a much more serious scale than had ever occurred in the past" (210). Pons also claims that "many communists experienced 1956 as an *annus terribilis*, although more in Europe than elsewhere" (210). Lessing represents this fragmentation of the Party throughout the experiences of Anna in it, the loss of faith of the members and of Anna herself in the Communist Party, as the following extract shows: "People are reeling off from the C. P. in dozens, brokenhearted. The irony is that they are broken-hearted and cynical to the degree that they were loyal and innocent before. People like myself who had few illusions (...) remain calm and ready to start again, accepting the fact that the British C. P. will probably slowly degenerate into a tiny little sect" (Lessing 235). Although she mentions the idea of a new start, she points out her view that the actual Communist Party has disappointed her as well as other members, causing them pain. The cynicism that she mentions is caused by this

disappointment and the loss of faith in a Party that "will degenerate into a tiny little sect" (Lessing 235), as Anna says.

In second place, the next part of the essay will be focused on the fragmentation of the self of the main character, Anna Wulf. This part will be divided in two parts: on one side Anna's compartmentalization into notebooks, which will be focused on how fragmentation is represented by the division of her life, feelings and thoughts in different notebooks. On the other side, the following part will concentrate in the projection of Anna on the fictional character of Ella, and how fragmentation and breakdown are represented in Ella's thoughts.

Social fragmentation and fragmentation of the self are related since Anna Wulf lives in first person each period. The experiences of the colony of Rhodesia are her own experiences, as well as she is a member of the Communist Party when it begins to collapse. Thus, eventually the third part of the essay will focus on how the representations of both social and inner fragmentation are related in the novel.

1. Social fragmentation

The image of a fragmented world is very present in Modernist and Postmodernist literature. Firstly, the Great War and then the Second World War and their consequences left a sense of emptiness and incoherence, which was represented in literature by different writers. For instance, on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Moody claims that "the poem treats myth, history, art and religion as subject to the same fragmentation, appropriation, and degradation as modern life" (Moody 123). Eliot's poem, first published in 1922 after the First World War, deals with a world that is destroyed and fragmented after the destruction of that war. Eliot's work represents an example of the connection of the issue of fragmentation with war and destruction in Modernist and Postmodernist literature. Bîrsanu explains that "When describing fragmentation as a postmodern principle, he resorts to Eliot's *The Waste Land* in order to exemplify the diversity and complexity of the modern world and the inevitable impossibility of presenting an unitary vision" (Bîrsanu, 40). The modern world, the twentieth century, is marked by a great amount of social and political changes and, more especially, the World Wars. All that destruction and death was reflected in literature; as Eliot and other modernist writers, Doris Lessing shows in her novel the relation between the fragmentation of the world, the social fragmentation, and historical events of the twentieth century.

The historical context of *The Golden Notebook* holds a wide range of social changes such as the end of Imperialism, the Cold War and the resulting fear of a nuclear war, or the response of the world when Stalin's purges were revealed (Maslen 19). Therefore, the theme of breakdown in *The Golden Notebook* is initially related to these social changes, social problems and global politics (Pickering 87): in the novel, "Soviet-inspired Communism, European colonialism and imperialism, British society, and national liberation struggles in the Third World are disintegrating, collapsing, crumbling, fragmenting under pressures both internal and external" (Yelin 87). The fragmentation of these social and politic aspects is mainly reflected in two different settings; on the one hand, the experiences of Anna Wulf with the Communist Party in England during the decade of 1950. On the other hand, the experiences of Anna in the British Colony of Rhodesia shortly before the war, which are narrated as memories by Anna in the Black Notebook.

1.1 Social fragmentation motivated by the loss of faith in the Communist Party in the 1950s

After Second World War, the feeling of breaking down was present both in social and political aspects of British society. The large amount of people that died in the war, the destruction that the world suffered as well as the bombing and the use of the atomic bombs made a strong impact among people. Although people took a stand against the war and its consequent crimes, the moral barrier that had been overcome was hard to restore (Glover 70)

The loss of morality and the loss of faith after Second World War motivate Anna to believe in something in order to survive. The search of faith was something common in western society after the war. As stated by Dunn: "The disorientation and sense of emptiness accompanying cultural turmoil give rise to a search for compensation and redemption through identifications with and membership in various groups and communities" (144). The fact that Anna joins the Communist Party is a response to the postwar atmosphere in Britain (Yelin 80). Anna herself explains it: "I came home thinking that somewhere at the back of my mind when I joined the Party was a need for wholeness, for an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all live" (Lessing 157).

The hope of a new and better world after all the destruction was a common denominator between the members of the British Communist Party during the 50s. They were unified by the need of creating something good after all the destruction, by the need of unification after the fragmentation, by the need of having hope and faith. Anna explains it to her therapist Mrs Marks: "It seems to me that ever since I can remember anything the real thing that has been happening in the world was death and destruction. It seems to me it is stronger than life." "Why are you a communist?" "At least they believe in something" (Lessing 216).

However, despite the attempts of the members of the British Communist Party of having faith, the novel reflects an increased disappointment with the Party on account of the news about the Stalinist's purges, which were denounced in the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU (Pons 210). At last, the disappointment leads to a moral collapse of the Party (Pickering 95). Consequently, Anna, as other members of the Party, loses her faith in it, which motivates the fragmentation of relationships between the members of the Party, as the followings extract of the novel shows:

Suddenly Jack says: 'Are you going to leave the Party, Ana?' I say: 'Yes.' Jack nods. It is a friendly unjudging nod. And very lonely. There is at once a gulf between us not of trust, because we trust each other, but of future experience. He will stay, because he has been in it so long, because it has been his life, because all his friends are in and will stay in. And soon, when we meet, we will be strangers (Lessing 314)

The social fragmentation suffered by Anna involves the isolation of herself regarding all her friends of the Party, not just Jack. Nevertheless, a year after leaving the party, Anna is tempted with the 'promise' of a new British Communist Party and she becomes enthusiastic

about this idea. The 1950s were a period in which the followers of the Communist Party found themselves in a cycle of excitement and hope followed by disappointment (Watkins 21). Indeed, short time later, Anna finds herself in this cycle of excitement and disappointment: "People are contemplating, apparently without misgivings, the existence of two rival C.P.'s. Yet it's obvious what would happen. The energies of both would be occupied by throwing insults at each other and denying each other's right to be communist at all. A recipe for farce" (Lessing 395). In spite of the promises, the members that joint again the Party find that the essence of the Party has not changed at all. They suffer a disappointment that is bigger than the first time they left the Party, because it means the complete loss of faith in a better world. "People are reeling off from the C.P. in dozens, brokenhearted. (...) Yet I was really inspired by a belief in the possibility of a new honest C.P. I really did believe it was possible" (Lessing 395). This complete loss of hope and faith in a better world built through socialism affects Anna in a deep way regarding her entire life (Pickering 95). The social fragmentation caused for it will affect other parts of her life, motivating likewise the fragmentation of her inner self.

Society during the 1950s and 1960s suffered this loss of faith and hope in account of political and social changes and historical events. In Dunn words, "postmodernity generates a sense of ephemerality and loss associated with cultural fragmentation" (144). *The Golden Notebook* focuses on this period of loss and fragmentation that governed the second part of the twentieth century on the beginning of the collapse of Soviet-inspired Communism. Lessing introduces colonialism through the memories of Anna about her life and experiences in the British colony of Rhodesia, in Africa, shortly before the Second World War. The experiences that are narrated by Anna focus on herself and her group of friends, formed by young women and men who are enthusiastic communists with great ideals about socialism.

1.2 Social fragmentation motivated by colonization

In the British colony of Rhodesia, which is currently Zimbabwe, the African citizens were excluded from civil liberties and freedoms (Raftopoulos & Mlambo 61) The idea that the colonizer were superior of the colonized was a common idea. Dalal, Farhad and Harvie Ferguson point out that "The colonial discourse is such that the definition of being human is made identical to the colonizer and his entire world system. The colonized, the Other, is something not human. Or if he is allowed to be human then it is only so far as being an 'early' human in the shape of a child or a primitive" (95). *The Golden Notebook* shows a minimal part of the consequences of this racial discrimination, focuses on Anna and her experiences.

In this context of the colony of Rhodesia in the late 1940s, Anna's group of friends dream about the possibility of a socialist revolution that releases Africans from the yoke of British colonialism. The atmosphere which pervades the group's meetings is mostly characterized by conversations about communism, socialism, and the ways in which a socialist revolution could be possible in the colony, as the following extract of the novel shows:

Then the argument about 'the line' began again-between Paul and Willi. (...) In a color-dominated society like this, it was clearly the duty of socialists to combat racialism. (...) So our picture of what ought to happen, must happen in fact, because it was a first principle that the proletariat was to lead the way to freedom, was not reflected anywhere in reality. Yet the first principle was too sacred to question. Black nationalism was, in our circles (and this was true of the South African communist party), a right-wing deviation, to be fought. The first principle, based as it was on the soundest humanist ideas, filled us full of the most satisfactory moral feelings (Lessing 98)

The members of the group, which is called the Mashopi group due to their constant meetings in the Mashopi Hotel, have strong ideals of a better society as well as a strong determination against racism. Following these ideals, Paul, a member of the group, starts a friendship with Jackson, an African man that works in the hotel. The friendship provokes the dismissal of Jackson by the owner of the hotel: Jackson is African, and Paul is English, they cannot be friends. This is the turning point of the fragmentation of the Mashopi group since what unified them was the ideological thought of a better world, that they could help to build this better world. As Anna says: "We were all curers of souls. Ted took to extremes an attitude we all had, that anyone in any sort of trouble was our responsibility" (Lessing 100). However, after the dismissal of Jackson, what they feel is that they have failed him and also themselves. They feel that they cannot combat racism.

According to Dalal, Farhad and Harvey Ferguson, the dangers of racialism is that: "these ideologies enter the minds of those who inhabit this social space to become part of their psyches and emotions" (193.) The colonizer establishes the image of superiority over the colonized based on race, making them feel inferior: "the we-images reside in the minds of the inhabitants and are a fundamental part of the structure of their psyches. This promotes fragmentation in the estate" (Dalal, Farhad and Harvey Ferguson 193). The fragmentation motivated by racism in *The Golden Notebook* is related to a group that is precisely part of the colonizer, but who want to change the situation. Nevertheless, the idealistic perspective of the group collapses, and consequently, the group itself suffers a fragmentation as well, in account of these images that colonialism and racism impose in a colonial society.

Regarding the day after Jackson was dismissed, Anna says that: "We decided to leave the hotel that afternoon, and we never went back. A few days later Paul was killed, and Jimmy went off to fly his bombers over Germany. (...) And that was the end of it all" (Lessing 149). Anna relates the fragmentation of the Mashopi group to the disappointment that was provoked by Jackson's situation and to the direct consequences of the war for the group's member: the death of Paul and Jimmy going to the war. As stated by Yelin, "The group is dissolved, however, not by divisions within or between its members, but by the explosive denouement of the Mashopi episode ("colonialism") and by Paul's death ("mortality"): " (79) There is a rupture regarding these particular events, a rupture of the idealistic world that they think they could build, but eventually this world is fractured owing to injustice and destruction.

As in her experiences with the Communist Party in the 1950s as in her experiences with colonialism in Rhodesia, the social fragmentation suffered by Anna in both situations is caused by external factors, social factors that are not on her nor other members. Both experiences are characterized by a loss of hope and breakdown. According to Yelin, "The representation of Anna's life in the Communist Party exemplifies rupture, division, and doubleness. (...) The internal disintegration of the (Mashopi) group members and the external pressures that fracture the group prefigure the psychic breakdowns of particular Communists and the fragmentation of the Communist Left in London in the 1950s" (79).

The social fragmentation that is narrated by Anna is not just suffered by her, but by people who also had hope and faith. Anna connects her experiences in Rhodesia with her experiences with the Communist Party in the 1950s by comparing two characters; each of them belongs to a different period. Maryrose was her friend in the colony, a member of the Mashopi Group; meanwhile Molly is her friend and companion in London during the postwar years. Both characters suffer from the disappointment and the breakdown of their ideals:

Molly began crying this evening, quite out of the blue-she was sitting on my bed, chatting about her day, then she began crying. In a still, helpless way. It reminded me of something, could not think of what, but of course it was Maryrose, suddenly letting the tears slide down her face sitting in the big room at Mashopi, saying: 'We believed everything was going to be beautiful and now we know it won't.' Molly cried like that. Newspapers all over my floor, about the Rosenbergs, about the things in Eastern Europe (Lessing 155)

Colonization and Communism play a key role in *The Golden Notebook*, as advocates of the breaking down and fragmentation of its characters. According to Yelin, "In the first two-thirds of *The Golden Notebook*, the theme of the crack-up or breakdown is elaborated in the novel's representation of the national and global politics" as "Soviet-inspired Communism, European colonialism and imperialism" (87). Lessing constructs a story putting these important periods of history all around the topic of fragmentation. By doing this, Lessing is showing the effects that those periods and events had on people. Throughout *The Golden Notebook*, history events and people's feelings are mixed, bridged by fragmentation. Soviet-inspired Communism as well as colonialism and imperialism were collapsing during the twentieth century, conversely people who suffered the injustices and disappointment provoked by them were collapsing too, fragmenting themselves as individuals as well as a society.

2. Fragmentation of the self

Lessing reflects the fragmentation of the self in the structure that *The Golden Notebook* has. Pickering argues that "the dialogue between disintegration and unity that constitutes the subject of the novel also determines its structure" (92). Throughout the division of the narrative into different parts, the feeling of fragmentation becomes stronger. Furthermore, this fragmented structure shows the different stages that Anna follows toward her final breakdown. The fragmentation of Anna is represented in two aspects; on the one hand, the

compartmentalization of herself into notebooks. As stated by Pickering, "Disintegration-the threat of breakdown into chaos-is recorded directly in numerous instances throughout the notebooks, but the separation into notebooks itself symbolize compartmentalization, the loss of unity" (92). On the other hand, the projection of Anna in a fictional character, Ella. In the Yellow Notebook Anna writes 'The Shadow of the Third', a novel in which the protagonist is Ella, a projection of Anna. Throughout Ella Anna expresses her inner thoughts, separating them from herself.

2.1 Anna's compartmentalization through the notebooks

The four notebooks were identical, about eighteen inches square, with shiny covers, like the texture of a cheap watered silk. But the colors distinguished them - black, red, yellow and blue. When the covers were laid back, exposing the four first pages, it seemed that order had not immediately imposed itself. In each, the first page or two showed broken scriblings and half-sentences. Then a title appeared, as if Anna had, almost automatically, divided herself into four, and then, from the nature of what she had written, named these divisions. And this is what had happened (Lessing 71)

In this way Lessing introduces the notebooks in the novel, as a division of Anna herself. When Anna is asked why she does not have just one notebook, she says: "perhaps because it would be such a scramble. Such a mess" (Lessing 240). Therefore, the reason because Anna divided her life and herself into four parts is that to feel safe from her own contradictions (Pickering 94).

The four notebooks are complemented with a novel written by Anna, 'Free Women'. On the one hand, Free Women has Anna Wulf herself as the main character (Ridout & Watkins 47). She presents Anna Wulf as if she was not herself, but a third person. "Anna wore neat, delicate clothes, which tended to be either prim, or perhaps a little odd; and relied upon her delicate white hands, and her small, pointed white face to make an impression" (Lessing 30). The story follows a linear order. On the other hand, the four notebooks are written in first person, and they do not follow a proper order. The Notebooks begin with this entry written by Anna: "Every time I sit down to write, and let my mind go easy, the words, it is so dark, or something to do with darkness" (Lessing 71).

The notebooks and 'Free Women' are alternated in the novel. The notebooks interrupt the linear order of 'Free women', and they are formed by different styles that reflects the division of her life and her feelings (Ridout & Watkins 47). There is a multiplicity of voices that are alternated between the notebooks: Anna writing in first person about her life and omniscient narrators that tell the stories of Ella in "The Shadow of the Third", in the Yellow Notebook, and of Anna in "Free Women". In the words of Ridout and Watkins, "The Golden Notebook is particularly complex in terms of the identification of authorship and the complicated layering of narrative levels. Anna Wulf is ostensibly a character in the frame novel 'Free Women', but she is also the narrator of the four notebook sections. She is then both a product and producer of fiction, as well as a critical reader of her own and other

people's work" (52). This duplicity of Anna is part of the structure of fragmentation that characterized the novel.

Initially, each notebook is focused on one specific aspect of the life of Anna. The Black Notebook is used regarding her life as a writer; the Red Notebook focus on her political life and experiences, the Yellow Notebook centers on her emotional life and eventually the Blue Notebook concentrates in her daily life, it is a diary. However, as the novel progresses, the limits between the notebooks become weaker and the themes that are reserved for each notebook are mixed (Maslen 21).

The linear progression of *Free Women* also reveals a development of Anna herself, which eventually ends in her breakdown. The entries of the notebooks, which are written between the sequences of *Free Women*, are also part of this development: in *Free Woman 2*, Anna tries to escape from the anguish that she feels produced by death and destruction in her life (Pickering 106). There is a moment in which Tommy, Molly's son, reads an extract of one of the diaries in which Anna narrates the thoughts that she has had that particular day.

I stood looking down out of the window. The street seemed miles down. Suddenly I felt as if I'd flung myself out of the window. I could see myself lying on the pavement. Then I seemed to be standing by the body on the pavement. I was two people. Blood and brains were scattered everywhere. I knelt down and began licking up the blood and the brains.' (...) When you had written that, you put heavy brackets around it. And then you wrote: 'I went to the shop and bought a pound and a half of tomatoes, half a pound of cheese, a pot of cherry jam, and a quarter of tea. Then I made a tomato salad and took Janet to the park for a walk (Lessing 246)

This extract of the novel shows the attempt of Anna to separate herself of her thoughts about destruction and death. The notebook is the tool for that purpose. She relieves there her thoughts, then she crosses them out and eventually she writes something that is totally normal and quotidian. In that way, Anna is trying to replace those kinds of thoughts for everyday unimportant actions.

As the novel advances, the boundaries that separate the notebooks are erasing; the compartmentalization is becoming harder for Anna (Pickering 109). The different themes, which are carefully separated, begin to "merge and overlap". (Pickering 109) Anna herself is aware of it, for instance she writes after one of her entries "This sort of comment belongs to the blue notebook, I must keep them separate" (Lessing 471).

Anna's breakdown is also becoming evident as the content of the notebooks begins to change. At some point, Anna begins to fill the notebook with newspapers clippings, provoking the collapse of the notebooks themselves (Pickering 105). These clippings are full of headlines of wars, death and destruction. For instance, "Dec. 17th, 1952. 11 COMMUNIST LEADERS HANGED IN PRAGUE" (Lessing 226) or "30th March 1954. 2nd H-BOMB EXPLODED" (Lessing 227).

Although Anna tries to maintain the compartmentalization in the notebook as in her life, as the novel keeps advancing, she finally collapses and breaks down:

I stood by the window, looking out, trying to calm myself by thinking of Janet. But she seemed remote from me. The sunlight-it was pale winter sun, was remote. What went on in the street was remote from me, the people passing were not people, they were marionettes. I felt a change inside me, a sliding lurch away from myself, and I knew this change to be another step down into chaos (Lessing 516)

Anna accepts her breakdown (Pickering 114), she is aware of the path that she has been following. She is no longer able to maintain the fragmentation of her life neither her inner self. Therefore, she decides to end the fragmentation and start another notebook that unifies all the aspects of her life: "I'll pack away the four notebooks. I'll start a new notebook, all of myself in one book" (Lessing 528).

The new notebook is named 'The Golden Notebook', and collects a kind of summary of "Anna's life-her past, her ideals, her dreams, her disintegration into madness, her reintegration into a new self, her hope for the future, the dissolution of her writer's block: it "button(s) up" (535) her commitment to communism and her romantic love with Michael and Saul" (Pickering 120).

With the golden notebook the breakdown of Anna is healed, and the fragmentation does not exist anymore. The new notebook offers Anna the opportunity to leave behind the chaos of compartmentalizing her life, her feelings, her thoughts. Lightfoot explains that "her use of the Golden Notebook represents Anna's abandonment of the fragmentation of the four notebooks as she integrates and records the whole of her awareness in this beautiful new notebook" (280). As it has been seen, Anna's fragmentation has different stages throughout the novel, represented by the notebooks, and eventually ending in unification of herself, represented by the Golden Notebook.

3.2 Anna's projection on Ella

In the Yellow Notebook, Anna writes her novel "The Shadow of the Third", in which the protagonist is Ella, who is a projection of Anna herself. Through this novel, Anna tries to put together her different selves before an imaginary setting. (Pickering 95) In Pickering words, "this novel reflects Ella's self-destructive tendencies" (95). Although Anna is aware that Ella is a projection of herself, she tries to separate Ella from her; to make Ella a different person out of Anna's control:

I see Ella, walking slowly about a big empty room, thinking, waiting. I, Anna, see Ella. Who is of course, Anna. But that is the point, for she is not. The moment I, Anna, write: Ella rings up Julia to announce, etc., then Ella floats away from me and becomes someone else. I don't understand what happens at the moment Ella separates herself from me and becomes Ella. No one does. It's enough to call her Ella, instead of Anna (Lessing 404)

The projection of Anna on Ella may be seen as a separation of herself from her desires or her deepest inner thoughts. For instance, Ella's thoughts about suicide could be an indirect

consequence of Anna's fragmentation. These kinds of thoughts begin in an innocent way, as the following extracted of the novel shows:

A few minutes later she was concentrating on her novel, which was half-finished. The theme of this book was a suicide. (...) The moment of death would also be the moment when the real continuity of his life would be understood—a continuity not of order, discipline, practicality, commonsense, but of unreality. It would be understood at the moment of death that the link between the dark need for death, and death, itself, had been the wild, crazy fantasies of a beautiful life; and that the commonsense and the order had been (not as it had seemed earlier in the story) symptoms of sanity, but intimations of madness (Lessing 166)

This extract can be seen not as a simple idea for a novel, but actual thoughts about suicide that Anna has but she is afraid to reveal. Consequently, she uses Ella as a kind of shield from which Anna can say whatever she wants, owing to the words are from Ella, not from herself. Shortly after that, Ella has to fly in an airplane from Paris to London, and the airplane has had some mechanical issues before the flight. Ella finds herself with the following thoughts:

As the airplane began to vibrate, she thought: I'm going to die, very likely, and I'm pleased. This discovery was not, after the first moment, a shock. She had known it all the time: I'm so enormously exhausted, so utterly, basically tired, and in every fibre of myself, that to know I haven't got to go through with living is like a reprieve. (...) Ella shut her eyes. She thought: I'm quite convinced we shall crash. (...) It's all over. I feel as if I had been born with a weight of fatigue on me, and I've carrying it all my life. (...) It will fly into pieces in the air, she thought, and I will go spinning off down like a leaf into the dark, into the sea, I'll go spinning weightlessly down into the black cold obliterating sea. (Lessing 285)

The breakdown suffered by Anna is reflected on Ella. The extract shows Anna's desire of escape from all the complications that has in her life. She is tired of the contradictions, the fragmentation. Therefore, she would like to have the possibility to escape without having the responsibility of the choice.

Anna's projection of herself on Ella could be seen as a disengagement of parts of herself that she does not dare to show. In essence, is a fragmentation of her inner self into two persons: herself, Anna, and a different self, Ella. By writing her feelings, Anna may heal herself and decrease the fragmentation of herself. However, what she has written, as her notebooks and her novel 'Free Woman', "cannot be healed" (Yelin 87).

Eventually, Anna stops writing 'The Shadow of the Third' without giving it an end. In Pickering words, she is "disturbed by what it reveals about her own tendencies toward self-destructions" (96). Therefore, she is aware of her fragmentation into other self, which is Ella, as well as of her breakdown that is reflected in the suicide thoughts.

3. Connection between social fragmentation and fragmentation of the self

Doris Lessing narrates in *The Golden Notebook* a story that is impregnated with the history of the twentieth century. As stated by Lightfoot, the novel shows how the political and social changes lived in the period in which the novel is set affects its characters, primarily its protagonist, Anna Wulf. By doing this, Lessing has been able to show the effects that wars, death and destruction have on people (Lightfoot 277).

The fragmentation of the self is related with the social fragmentation in different parts. The connection between both is mainly represented by the newspapers clippings that Anna collects. As stated in the section three of this essay, the breakdown of Anna becomes evident as the notebooks begin to collapse, firstly in newspapers clippings. At some point of the novel, Anna says to her therapist that she is stuck in cuttings from newspapers, so her therapist asks her what kind of cuttings, and Anna explains: "Just things that struck me—events that seemed important' (...) I glanced over them the other day: what I've got is a record of war, murder, chaos, misery.' (...) 'It's just a matter of luck that I haven't been tortured, murdered, starved to death or died in a prison'" (Lessing 228). Anna's feeling about the postwar years is that death and cruelty are the main pillars of the world and the relationships between people (Maslen 22). These thoughts and feelings provoke Anna's loss of hope, which leads to her necessity to divide herself.

The newspaper clippings are at first separated in each notebook and its theme. The Black Notebook, which concerns the life of Anna as a writer, collects the memories of Anna about her life in the colony, since these memories were the material that she used in order to write her best seller 'The Frontiers of War'. After remembering all these experiences and analyzing them, Anna feels that the novel was "powered by a nostalgia for death and destruction" (Pickering 94). Anna wonders herself "Nostalgia for what? I don't know, because I'd rather die than have to live through any of that again. And the 'Anna' of that time is like an enemy, or like an old friend one has known too well and doesn't want to see" (Lessing 150). The newspapers clippings of the Black Notebook are about death and violence in Africa. (Pickering 116) The fears and the lack of hope of Anna come in a first place from the period of her life in which she lived in the colony of Rhodesia. The fact that the newspapers clippings of the Black Notebook are about death and violence in Africa indicates a connection between what she lived in that period of her life and the breakdown that she is suffering in the present.

Consequently, the injustices that she witnessed in the colony, in addition to the death of Paul when he was training to Second World War, affects her in that strong way that she cannot be optimistic looking at the world, because of all the destruction and deaths that she has lived. In Lightfoot words, "In the Golden Notebook Doris Lessing shows the effect on individuals of the chaotic experience of twentieth-century political and social upheaval" (277) and more specifically, the effect on Anna.

In the Red Notebook, which narrates the political life of Anna, the fragmentation is produced by Anna's disappointment about the Communist Party (Pickering 142). "It seems to me that ever since I can remember anything the real thing that has been happening in the world was death and destruction" (Lessing 216). This extract of the novel is related to Anna's thought about her reason for joining the Communist Party, which was the need to believe in

a better world through socialism. The newspapers clipping of this notebook are related to violence in The Soviet Union, Europe, China (Pickering 116). The disillusionment for the Party and for socialism not just provokes the social fragmentation among its members, but it goes beyond and affects Anna in every single way. All violence related with socialism has led her to the loss of the faith that she had in the world, in the peace. As stated by Watkins, "The sense that the tone has changed marks Anna's loss of a meaningful engagement with politics; the grief occasioned by this loss is frequently described in terms of fragmentation and breaking" (60). She wants not to feel anymore. "People know they are in a society dead or dying. They are refusing emotion because at the end of every emotion are property, money, power" (Lessing 478).

The different experiences that Anna has lived throughout her life are the main reasons of the fragmentation that she imposes herself in order to overcome these memories:

I opened the box and forced them to look. But instead of a beautiful thing, which I thought would be there, there was a mass of fragments, and pieces. Not a whole thing, broken into fragments, but bits and pieces from everywhere, all over the world-I recognized a lump of red earth that I knew came from Africa, and then a bit of metal that came off a gun from Indo-China, and then everything was horrible, bits of flesh from people killed in the Korean War and a communist party badge off someone who died in a Soviet prison (Lessing 230)

Due to her experiences of war and destruction, Anna is forced to compartmentalize her life and her memories. She aims to put order in her life, the order that she thinks the world does not have anymore. At the end, the collapses of her compartmentalization gives likewise order to her, because she is not longer trying to control herself (Pickering 116).

4. Conclusion

Doris Lessing deals in *The Golden Notebook* with the issue of fragmentation of society during the twentieth century on account of the injustices of colonialism and racialism during the 1940s as well as of the collapse of communism during the 1950s. The connection that Lessing makes between these historical events and the loss of hope it is an important issue due to the fact that she is showing the effects that they had on people: fragmentation for the pain that injustices provoke, fragmentation produced by the feeling of defeat. Lessing shows the effects of the loss of faith on society and therefore how it is fragmented.

Throughout Anna's memories of the period in which she lived in the colony of Rhodesia Lessing shows us two aspects related to colonialism and racism; the ideals and the injustices. The ideals of the Mashopi group were to eradicate racism and help African citizens in their way to freedom. The injustices that governed that society are that African people were treated as inferiors regarding English people. The ideals of the group are gradually collapsing with the injustices, and eventually the fragmentation is inevitable, because the injustices of colonialism are stronger and especially more real than the ideals of a group of young friends. The treatment of fragmentation related to colonialism in *The Golden Notebook* puts the focus on racism and the effect on it in society. The loss of faith on a better society

through socialism and the historic and political events that promoted it is also an important topic due to the fact that, as the novel shows, the period after the Second World War was a period in which hope and faith were needed. The problems that Communism had during the 1950s are represented in the novel as one of the main topics since as Stalin's crimes were revealed, people like Anna thought that all the things that the world and men could offer were just destruction. The fragmentation is derived from a sense of loss. Furthermore, the collapse of the Communist Party reflects in the novel the social fragmentation between its members, the incapacity of stay together in account of the disillusionment and mistrust.

The inner fragmentation of Anna into different notebooks reflects likewise the effects of these events during the twentieth century had on people. Anna's inner fragmentation begins represented by the collapse of the notebooks into newspapers clippings, in which Anna makes reference on one side to Africa and colonialism and on the other side to Communism and Soviet Union. Anna's need of compartmentalize her life is a response of the lack of order in the world that she feels. The projection of Anna on Ella shows the breakdown that Anna is suffering throughout Ella's thoughts of suicide. Both aspects of the fragmentation of the self in the novel represent the pain and anguish that people felt in account of the chaotic world of the 1950s.

Doris Lessing deals with history in an intimate way. Throughout Anna's experiences, feelings and thoughts we can learn about the effects of a fragmented society, a fragmented world, on individuals. The treatment of the issue of fragmentation in *The Golden Notebook* reaches a variety of historical events and personal fears and feelings (Anna's) which may represent people during those periods, but in all of them the focus is on the disappointment, the loss of faith and the despair provoked by social injustices and political mistrust.

Works Cited

- Bîrsanu, Roxana S. *T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land as a Place of Intercultural Exchanges: A Translation Perspective*. Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2014
- Dalal, Farhad, and Harvie Ferguson. *Race, Colour and the Processes of Racialization: New Perspectives from Group Analysis, Psychoanalysis and Sociology*. Routledge, 2002. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. June 2019.
- Dunn, Robert G. *Identity Crises: A Social Critique of Postmodernity*. University of Minnesota Press, 1998. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. June 2019.
- Glover, Jonathan. *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*. Yale University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. May 2019
- Lessing, Doris. *The Golden Notebook*. Fourth Estate, 2014
- Lightfoot, Marjorie J. "Breakthrough in 'the Golden Notebook.'" *Studies in the Novel* 7.2 (1975) pp. 277-284.
- Maslen, Elizabeth. *Doris Lessing*. Northcote House, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. April 2019.
- Davidson, Harriet. "Reading The Waste Land." *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, edited by Anthony D. Moody, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Pickering, Jean. *Understanding Doris Lessing*. University of South Carolina Press, 1990

- Pons, Silvio. *Global Revolution: A History of International Communism 1917-1991*. Oxford University Press, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. June 2019.
- Ridout, Alice, and Susan Watkins. *Doris Lessing: Border Crossings*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2011. ProQuest Ebook Central, Web. April 2019.
- Raftopoulos, Brian & Mlambo, Alois. *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*. Weaver Press, 2008. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. June 2019.
- Watkins, Susan. *Doris Lessing: Doris Lessing*. Manchester University Press, 2010. ProQuest Ebook Central. Web. April 2019.
- Yelin, Louise. *From the Margins of the Empire: Christina Stead, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer*. Cornwell University Press, 1998.

Bioprofile of the authoress

María Sánchez Salguero holds a degree in English Studies from the Complutense University of Madrid. Concerning her academic research, her main areas of interest are Modernist and Postmodernist Literature. Currently, she is attending a Master of Advanced Studies in Humanities, specialized in Hispanic Studies, in the University of La Rioja.

Contact: < mariasanchezs@outlook.es >