

Feminist Crisis Narrative in The Golden Notebook

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Abstract: *The Golden Notebook* is Nobel Prize winner Doris Lessing's most famous work. Interspersed with five notebooks, the author depicts the entire world of the mid-twentieth century in this story, which is considered "the pinnacle of twentieth-century examination of gender relations. By describing the personal life and pursuits of its heroine, Anna, *The Golden Notebook* pictures the reality of the world and the fragmented mental state of people in the 1950s. This paper explores the feminist crisis described in this book. It analyzes Anna's struggle for liberation and identity in a patriarchal society, and explores the fragmented narrative, web-like narrative structure, and multiple narrative perspectives employed in the novel to represent Anna's feminist struggle. By analyzing these narrative elements, this paper aims to illuminate how these techniques contribute to the portrayal of Anna's feminist crisis and provide a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of her experience.

Keywords: *The Golden Notebook*, Doris Lessing, Feminist Crisis, Crisis Narratives

1. Introduction

1.1. The Golden Notebook

The story takes place mainly in London in the late 1950s. The novel consists of a "Free Women" story and five notebooks. Collapse is the central theme of *The Golden Notebook*, which is expressed through the novel's unconventional structure. Each notebook is a part of the protagonist's life. The story "Free Women" is relatively complete and coherent, but it is cut into five parts in four notebooks: Black, Red, Yellow, and Blue. The Black Notebook is about Anna Woolf as a writer; the Red Notebook focuses on politics; the Yellow Notebook is a love story based on Anna's own experiences; and the Blue Notebook is a diary reflecting mainly her spiritual life. The final, The Golden Notebook, is a sublimation of the whole, symbolizing her return to a more complete state of spirituality.

The understanding of the work has gone through a gradual process from one-sided to diversified. The current research results mainly focus on the dimensions of feminism, especially on the exploration of the plight of women [1]-[4] and the possibility of women's development [5]-[6]. It is also noteworthy that some researchers may analyze feminism from a unique perspective like androgynism [7], which is very instructive. Besides, the exploration of the author's feminist critique is also an important part of this field [8]-[10]. Meanwhile, the analysis of the novel's narrative techniques [11]-[13] and its political content [14]-[16] has also been very impressive.

The feminist crisis depicted in *The Golden Notebook* exposes the complexities and challenges faced by women striving for liberation and identity in a male-dominated world. This paper aims to

analyze the various dimensions of this crisis by examining Anna Wulf's personal life, social relations, and political involvement. By delving into these aspects, this study aims to shed light on the nuanced portrayal of the feminist crisis in the novel.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Since the 18th century, the medical discourse of “crisis” has gradually become an everyday discourse, and the crisis caused by Covid-19 has made this issue a global and individual concern. Most crises originate from sudden changes in the “normal” order of events. They can be triggered by natural disasters or man-made factors such as war, political or economic events, and ideological movements. It may involve a wide range of spheres of existence or be a significant problem for an individual. At the same time, some crises are potential and thus “ongoing”.

Crises have been around since the beginning of time, and so have the reflections on them. Crises force people to face them and require them to make decisions to improve the “abnormal” situation. The crisis is objective on the one hand, and a constructive aspect on the other: its constructive orientation allows its abnormal situation to enter the discourse and become the focus of public attention. Crisis studies, in turn, need to reflect based on these two facets. Fiction-based literature constructs a unique way of observing and narrating the crisis and generates a reflection on the crisis discourse, offering another possibility to face and solve the crisis.

In crisis narratives, the central focus is on the protagonist's crisis experience and how it affects their identity, relationships, and worldview. These narratives aim to describe the emotional, psychological, and sometimes physical struggles the protagonist faces. They often explore universal themes such as loss, trauma, identity, and resilience, giving the reader or viewer a glimpse into the human condition and how individuals navigate adversity. Besides, crisis narratives aim to provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of the human experience, offering insight into the challenges and the potential for growth and transformation in the face of crisis. These narratives can inspire reflection and introspection.

The Golden Notebook by Doris Lessing portrays the feminist crisis of its heroine, Anna, through unique narrative techniques such as fragmented narrative, web-like narrative structure, and multiple narrative perspectives.

1.2.1. Fragmented Narrative

Fragmented narratives are stories that jumble up the sequencing of a story, challenging the reader to piece together the different components of the story to make sense of it. They can start in the middle of the action and often hop back and forth through the timeline of events [17].

The fragmented narrative in the novel reflects the disjointed nature of Anna's feminist crisis, which mirrors Anna's fragmented state of mind and emotions as she struggles with her feminist crisis. The story is divided into notebooks, each representing a different aspect of Anna's life. The fragmented narrative depicts the disarray and internal conflicts she faces as she fights with societal expectations, gender roles, and her own identity as a woman in a patriarchal society.

1.2.2. Web-like Narrative Structure

The web-like narrative structure weaves together different storylines, notebooks, and perspectives, creating a complex network of interconnections. The book's structure is like a web, seemingly chaotic, yet tightly connected. This structure signifies the interrelatedness of Anna's feminist crisis with various aspects of her life. It underscores the idea that her feminist crisis cannot be understood in isolation but rather as a pervasive force that shapes her entire existence.

1.2.3. Multiple Narrative Perspectives

A multiple narrative describes a type of story that follows several protagonists rather than focusing on one main character. In some cases, writers choose this structure to show the individual perspectives of characters in a larger “macro story” and how they relate to each other. In other stories, the purpose is to use the multiple characters’ perspectives to establish a larger theme [18].

The novel incorporates multiple narrative perspectives, allowing for a multifaceted exploration of Anna’s feminist crisis. Each character represents a distinct idea, providing unique thoughts into Anna’s experiences and struggles. Through these multiple perspectives, the author introduces a broader understanding of the complexities and contradictions within Anna’s feminist crisis and highlights the diversity of feminist perspectives and experiences.

Through the three tactics, *The Golden Notebook* effectively represents Anna’s feminist crisis. These narrative techniques show the fragmented state of her mind, the complex but related feminist crisis, and the diversity of feminist opinions. By employing these unique narratives, the novel offers a nuanced portrayal of Anna’s feminist crisis inviting readers to reflect on their own understandings of gender, identity, and societal expectations.

2. Personal Crisis and Self-Identity

In *The Golden Notebook*, Doris Lessing explores the themes of personal crises on self-identity through the experiences of the protagonist, Anna Wulf. The novel delves into the intricacies of individual identity, the effects of societal expectations, and the pursuit of self-discovery and authenticity.

The depiction of Anna’s personal crisis is one of the novel’s most important elements. As a writer, mother, lover, and political activist, she struggles with dissatisfaction and disillusionment. This personal crisis is exacerbated by her fragmented emotions, strained relationships, and the turbulent political situation of the time. Anna’s personal crisis is the catalyst for self-discovery and redefinition. Throughout the novel, Anna undergoes a profound process of self-identity formation. She questions societal norms and expectations, challenging traditional gender roles and the constraints placed on women. Anna’s search for self-identity is intertwined with her exploration of her writing and creative expression. The novel presents her writing as a means of self-discovery and a way to reclaim her voice and agency. Anna’s personal crisis also leads her to examine the different facets of her identity. The colored notebooks she uses to compartmentalize her life represent the fragmented aspects of her identity. Through these notebooks, she attempts to integrate the diverse aspects of herself, including her personal desires, political convictions, and emotional experiences. The fragmented narrative structure mirrors the disintegrated nature of her self-identity and highlights her struggle to reconcile the various parts of herself.

In addition, the novel explores the tension between conforming to social expectations and maintaining personal autonomy. Anna struggles to adapt to the pressures of social norms, especially in relationships and motherhood. She grapples with the expectation that women are prioritized in their roles as wives and mothers, which conflicts with her desire for personal fulfillment and expression. This tension emphasizes the internal conflict that shapes Anna’s personal crisis and her quest for self-identity.

In the process of pursuing self-identity, Anna is also confronted with the limitations and contradictions of various ideologies and belief systems. She questions the validity of political activism, the constraints of traditional gender roles, and the shortcomings of romantic relationships. This critical scrutiny allows her to get rid of societal expectations and embark on a journey of self-discovery based on her own values and aspirations.

In conclusion, *The Golden Notebook* delves into the themes of personal crisis and self-identity through the experiences of Anna Wulf. The novel explores her dissatisfaction with societal roles, her fragmented self-identity, and her search for authenticity.

2.1. Personal Dissatisfaction and Alienation

In *The Golden Notebook*, Doris Lessing presents Anna Wulf as a character who grapples with personal dissatisfaction and alienation, resulting in a fragmented state of mind.

Anna's struggle with personal dissatisfaction and alienation is intertwined with her experience as a woman in a patriarchal society. She is dissatisfied with her roles and identities. The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by rigid gender roles and expectations for women. She feels constrained by societal expectations and struggles to reconcile her desires as a writer, mother, lover, and political activist. Anna challenges these traditional roles but faces resistance and backlash from society. She tries to figure out ways to rebalance the tension between her personal desires for fulfillment and societal expectations. This conflict leads to a sense of disillusionment and dissatisfaction, causing her self-identity to splinter into various fragments. She feels burdened by societal expectations and norms, particularly regarding gender roles and relationships. The limitations placed on her as a woman and the pressure to conform to societal norms create a dissonance between her authentic self and the person she presents to the world. This dissonance further contributes to her fragmented self, as she struggles to reconcile her true desires with societal demands.

The fragmented self in *The Golden Notebook* is also connected to Anna's struggle with mental health. She experiences repeated bouts of depression, anxiety, and emotional instability in the story. These mental health challenges further exacerbate her sense of alienation and disconnection from her authentic self. The portrayal of Anna's mental health issues adds more complexity to her fragmented self, highlighting the interplay between internal and external factors in shaping her identity.

Throughout the novel, Anna's journey toward self-integration is marked by moments of reflection, self-analysis, and attempts to bridge the gaps between her fragmented selves. Her use of colored notebooks to delineate her experiences is her attempt to make sense of the different aspects of her life and reconcile the conflicts within her, which also reveal the fragmented nature of her existence.

2.2. The Tension between Societal Expectations and Personal Desires

In *The Golden Notebook*, Doris Lessing skillfully depicts the tension between societal expectations and personal desires. This conflict resonates in the specific context of the post-World War II era and the changing social landscape of the 1950s and 1960s.

The aftermath of World War II had a profound impact on societal norms and expectations, leading to conflicting desires for the characters in the novel. The war disrupted traditional gender roles, as women took on new roles and responsibilities during the war. However, as the war ended, there was a strong social demand for women to return to their pre-war domestic roles. This background sets the stage for Anna Wulf's internal struggle between societal expectations and her personal desires for independence and self-expression.

The societal expectation that women prioritize their roles as wives and mothers clashes with Anna's desire for intellectual and personal fulfillment. As a writer, Anna seeks to pursue her craft and express herself freely. However, society places a greater emphasis on her role as a mother and expects her to prioritize domestic responsibilities over her personal ambitions.

Anna's relationship with her daughter Janet is a concrete backdrop to this conflict. Anna struggles to balance her desire to be a nurturing mother with her longing for personal autonomy. When Janet falls ill, Anna reflects on her conflicting desires, stating, "She's had what I never had: a good, loving mother. Except that I haven't been a good, loving mother. I've been writing books and plays."

This passage demonstrates Anna's internal conflict between her desire to be a loving mother on the one hand and her yearning for personal fulfillment through her writing on the other. The tension between societal expectations of motherhood and her own ambitions creates a profound sense of guilt and dissatisfaction within Anna.

Additionally, the characters in *The Golden Notebook* represent different societal expectations and the resulting conflicts. Molly, for example, embodies the societal expectation of the conventional wife and mother. She sacrifices her personal desires and ambitions to fulfill her role as a wife and mother, leading to a sense of unfulfilled potential and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, Marion, Anna's friend, rebels against societal expectations and chooses a path of unconventional relationships. Still, she's also struggling with her own conflicting desires and the consequences of her choices.

The novel highlights the internal struggle triggered by conflicting desires and the difficulty of reconciling personal desires with societal expectations. The characters in *The Golden Notebook* grapple with the fear of deviating from societal norms and the desire to live authentically and pursue their true passions. This tension often leads to a sense of dissatisfaction, frustration, and inner conflict.

2.3. Anna's Pursuit of Independence and Liberation

In *The Golden Notebook*, Anna Wulf's feminist crisis is intricately tied to her quest for independence and liberation. She desperately desires to break free from traditional gender roles and expectations. She rebels against the idea of being solely defined by her roles as a wife and mother and instead seeks to establish her own identity beyond these societal constructs. Anna refuses to be confined to these roles, and her pursuit of autonomy leads her to question and challenge the limited options available to women in the 1950s and 1960s. Anna seeks to establish herself as an independent woman, asserting her own agency and defining her identity on her own terms. Through her writing and intellectual pursuits, Anna aims to assert her individuality and carve out a space for herself in a world that often marginalizes women. Anna's feminist crisis is deeply rooted in her desire for intellectual and creative fulfillment. She recognizes that her passion for writing is integral to her sense of self, and she refuses to let her artistic ambitions be stifled by societal expectations. Anna's dedication to her art becomes a central aspect of her quest for independence as she strives to establish herself as a successful writer and thinker, regardless of the obstacles she encounters.

Throughout the novel, Anna Wulf's pursuit of autonomy and liberation is evident in her inner reflections and interactions with other characters. The following passage is an example of her quest for independence:

"I want to write truthfully about my life, and that means getting rid of the smooth romantic surfaces and getting down to the things inside which hurt. The only way I can do this is by cutting myself into two, one of me writing the novel, the other of me standing aside and thinking: 'That's not true' or 'That's true but I didn't realize it' or 'That's false, how could I think that?'" (The Golden Notebook, p. 202)

In this passage, Anna expresses her determination to write honestly and authentically about her experiences. She seeks to break down societal expectations of women's writing, which often involve conforming to certain prescribed narratives. By "cutting herself into two," she separates herself from societal constraints and critically examines her own thoughts and emotions. This act of self-reflection and analysis represents Anna's quest for independence in terms of reclaiming her voice and asserting her own narrative.

Overall, the book portrays Anna's feminist crisis as an ongoing quest for autonomy, independence, liberation, and self-discovery. Through her struggles and triumphs, Anna becomes a symbol of resilience and a catalyst for challenging societal norms, ultimately contributing to the larger feminist discourse.

3. Political Crisis and Ideologies

3.1. Cold War Context

The Cold War period, characterized by geopolitical tensions and ideological divisions between the United States and the Soviet Union, serves as a significant backdrop in the novel. The aftermath of World War II and the changing social environment of the 1950s and 1960s profoundly impact Anna's self-identity. The war has disrupted traditional social structures and shattered conventional beliefs, leaving Anna feeling disoriented and disconnected from the outside world. The societal norms and expectations that once provided her with a sense of stability and purpose have been called into question, which deprived her of a solid foundation for her identity. This political context plays a role in shaping Anna's worldview and contributes to her feminist crisis in several ways.

Firstly, One aspect of the Cold War context that influences Anna's worldview is the prevailing dichotomous notions, such as capitalism versus communism and individualism versus collectivism. These binary frameworks inform Anna's understanding of gender roles and societal structures. For instance, she questions the traditional gender norms reinforced in capitalist societies in which women are often relegated to domestic roles and denied equal opportunities. Anna's feminist crisis is intensified by her self-awareness that the binary frameworks of the Cold War era perpetuate these oppressive gender dynamics.

Moreover, the Cold War era represents a time of heightened societal and political polarization. The political climate of the Cold War era heightens Anna's awareness of power imbalances and the need for resistance. The global power struggle between the superpowers parallels Anna's personal struggle against patriarchal oppression. The Cold War context highlights the pervasive influence of patriarchy and traditional gender roles. The political climate exacerbates the gender inequalities she experiences, highlighting the challenges she faces as a woman striving for independence and autonomy. Anna seeks to challenge the dominant narrative that marginalizes women and suppresses their voices. The Cold War context actually amplifies her quest for independence and liberation.

The Cold War's emphasis on conformity and the suppression of dissenting voices also resonates with Anna's feminist crisis. Anna's own journey of self-discovery and liberation was parallel to the broader cultural and political struggles of the time. The pressure to conform to societal expectations and the fear of reprisals for challenging the status quo mirror the silencing and marginalization of feminist voices during this period.

For example, "We were all helping to hold up this appalling structure, with our heads bloodied but unbowed." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 190) reflects Anna's recognition of the oppressive nature of the existing power structures. The reference to "this appalling structure" can be interpreted as the patriarchal system perpetuated by both capitalist and communist societies alike. The Cold War context intensifies her awareness of the need for resistance and change. "We women are locked up with the enemy. We don't have the guts to declare war. But we do have the power to undermine, sabotage, and strike back." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 444) suggests that Anna's awareness of women's confinement to oppressive structures resonates with the geopolitical context of the Cold War. The language of resistance and subversion indicates her growing awareness of the need to challenge the status quo and oppose gender inequality.

3.2. Communist Party Involvement

Throughout the novel, Anna's political engagement with the Communist Party plays a significant role in shaping her worldview and contributing to her feminist crisis. The failure of political movements and the compromises made in the pursuit of political goals contribute to her sense of personal

dissatisfaction and alienation. The incongruity between her political beliefs and the realities of the world around her further undermined her sense of self.

Initially, Anna sees the Communist Party as a vehicle for social progress and equality. She believes that by aligning herself with the Party, she can contribute to the advancement of women's rights and challenge the patriarchal structures of society. Her political engagement reflects her desire for collective action, and her hope for a better future.

However, as Anna delves deeper into her involvement with the Communist Party, she begins to witness its limitations and contradictions on gender issues. She was disappointed by the Party's inability to address women's oppression and the subjugation of their voices in the movement. This disillusionment contributes to her feminist crisis, as she struggles to realize that the Party she once believed in does not offer the solutions she seeks.

Anna's disillusionment is further exacerbated by the Party's suppression of dissent and its rigid adherence to ideological orthodoxy. She finds herself silenced and marginalized within the Party, as her feminist concerns are ignored or deemed subordinate to the larger revolutionary goals. This conflict between her feminist ideals and the Party's priorities deepens her crisis, as she questions the validity of her political engagement and collective action in addressing women's issues.

Moreover, Anna's political dealings with the Communist Party are intertwined with her personal life and relationships. Her commitment to the Party often conflicts with her personal desires and aspirations, especially in her relationships with men. The Party's emphasis on collective struggle and sacrifice conflicts with Anna's need for individual autonomy and fulfillment, adding more complexity to her feminist crisis.

We can clearly find her changes throughout the whole novel. At first, she holds the view that "The Party was full of young men... full of ideals, and passionate about them." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 118). This statement shows Anna's initial enthusiasm and attraction to the ideals of the Communist Party. She is drawn to the Party's promise of social change and the opposition to capitalist oppression. The desire for a more egalitarian society drives her political engagement at this time.

Then the idea changes, "But the Party... didn't understand women. The left-wing is still living in the nineteenth century as far as women are concerned." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 191). Anna's disillusionment with the Communist Party stems from its failure to address gender inequality. She realizes that despite its revolutionary and appealing rhetoric, the Party still adheres to traditional gender roles and rules, relegating women to secondary positions in the movement. This realization deepens her feminist crisis and highlights the limitations of the Party in achieving true gender liberation.

It gets worse after that, we can see that "It is ironic that the Party... should turn out to be the last bastion of male chauvinism." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 425). These words further underscore Anna's disillusionment with the Communist Party. The irony lies in the fact that a movement ostensibly dedicated to equality and social justice perpetuates patriarchal structures and reinforces male dominance. This awareness strengthens Anna's sense of feminism and pushes her forward to the quest for autonomy outside the confines of the Party.

Pathetically, she becomes afraid of the Party in the end. "I find I am frightened of the Party: the dogmatism, the rhetoric, the fanaticism." (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 451). As Anna becomes increasingly disillusioned with the Party, she also becomes concerned about its dogmatic and rigid nature. She recognizes the dangers of blind adherence to ideology and begins to doubt the efficacy of the Party's approach to achieving authentic change. This realization contributes to her ultimate disillusionment and intensifies her feminist crisis.

3.3. Feminism and Political Activism

In the novel, feminism and political activism are closely intertwined, as Anna is trying to achieve her own feminist consciousness within the broader context of the prevailing political ideologies of the time.

Throughout the novel, Anna's feminist crisis emerges as a response to the patriarchal structures and gender inequality that exist in society, which limits women's independence and competence and suppresses their voices and discourse. She experiences the burden of societal expectations, the objectification of women, and the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. Her awareness of the need to challenge and dismantle these oppressive systems led her to embrace feminist ideology and become an advocate for women's rights. She wanted to confront the limitations imposed on women by societal expectations, gender roles, and so on. *The Golden Notebook* delves into power imbalances between men and women in personal relationships, the workplace, and even society at large. Anna's experiences, along with those of other female characters, highlight the disparities and injustices rooted in gender inequality. This exploration prompts Anna to doubt the status quo and seek liberation from these power imbalances. Doris Lessing criticizes the dominance of men in all spheres of life, including politics, literature, and relationships. Through Anna's experiences, the novel exposes the ways in which men exercise power and control over women, often leading to the detriment of women's autonomy and rights.

The author uses Anna's story to highlight the intersectionality of feminism and politics. Lessing explores the complexities of how gender inequality intersects with other forms of oppression, such as class warfare and racial discrimination. For example, the character Ella, an African-American woman, expresses the necessity for feminism that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by women of color. Ella states, "I want a special white women's racism" (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 315), revealing the particular oppression towards women of color and their miserable feelings and indicating the importance of recognizing and addressing intersecting dimensions of power and oppression.

Criticism of political movements is also an important part of the novel, including those aligned with feminist goals. Anna's disillusionment with the Communist Party reflects a broader skepticism toward political ideologies that claim to fight for equality but fail to adequately address the complexities of gender oppression. Anna reflects on her disillusionment, stating, "The Party never understood what the women were talking about. They didn't want a women's movement" (p. 341). This critique highlights the need for feminism to go beyond political ideologies and address the specific concerns of women.

4. Feminist Crisis Narrative

4.1. Fragmented Narrative

The fragmented narrative style plays a significant role in representing Anna's feminist crisis. The fragmented narrative reflects Anna's fragmented state of mind and emotions as she struggles to cope with the challenges and contradictions of her feminist beliefs and aspirations. This narrative technique effectively conveys the disarray and chaos within Anna's internal world, capturing the complexity of her struggle for women's rights.

Fragmented narratives present disconnected thoughts, memories, and experiences in a non-linear manner. As Anna moves between different ideologies, expectations, and social norms, this fragmentation mirrors the fragmented nature of her feminist beliefs. The story unfolds through a series of interconnected notebooks, each representing different aspects of Anna's life. The narrative jumps back and forth in time, with episodes from the past interwoven with events from the present. This non-linear structure breaks with the traditional chronological order and reflects the fragmented nature

of Anna's memories and experiences. It emphasizes how her feminist crisis is not confined to a single moment but is deeply rooted in her past, present, and anticipated future. The narrative captures moments of confusion, frustration, and disillusionment, as well as moments of clarity and empowerment. The fragmented structure allows the reader to witness Anna's inner struggles and the evolution of her feminist consciousness.

The fragmented narrative can be seen in the way Anna's thoughts and emotions are presented. The text often switches abruptly between different streams of consciousness, capturing the disjointed nature of Anna's thoughts. For instance, in one moment she may be reflecting on her political activism and feminist ideals, and in the next, her thoughts may shift to personal relationships or societal expectations. This fragmented presentation reflects her fractured state of mind as she tries to make sense of her feminist beliefs in the face of social pressures and personal challenges. Or we can also see that Anna's inner monologue jumps from her musings on writing to her frustration with gender roles: "Sometimes I think I am writing a kind of hideous *Three Musketeers*... Then I feel as if I'm just a little girl playing at being a writer... But on the other hand, I am an adult woman. I am a political animal. I am a writer." (*The Golden Notebook*, page. 72). This fragmentary style captures Anna's internal conflict, where her identities as a writer, a woman, and a political activist clash, leaving her feeling disoriented and fragmented.

Through the fragmented narrative, *The Golden Notebook* captures the fragmented state of Anna's feminist crisis. The fragmented style reflects Anna's inner turmoil, her inner conflicting voices, and her struggle to find a unified sense of self and purpose.

4.2. Web-like Narrative Structure

The web-like narrative structure is a distinctive feature that enhances the portrayal of Anna's feminist crisis. The web-like structure creates a complex network of interconnections that reflect the intricate and interconnected nature of Anna's experiences, relationships, and feminist struggles.

One aspect of the web-like narrative structure is the use of multiple notebooks, each representing a different aspect of Anna's life. These notebooks function as distinct threads within the narrative, each offering a unique perspective on Anna's feminist crisis.

As the narrative shifts between these notebooks, the web-like structure becomes apparent, interconnecting the different aspects of Anna's life. For instance, her personal experiences influence her political beliefs, which in turn shape her writing. The interweaving of these narratives forms a complex web of connections that illustrate the interplay between Anna's personal experiences and the broader feminist movement.

Moreover, the web-like narrative structure is enhanced and strengthened through the use of intertextuality and self-reflexivity. The novel contains excerpts from Anna's own writings, such as her diary entries, fragments of her novel, and political manifestos. These texts interact with each other, creating a web of references and connections. These intertextual elements underscore the complexities of Anna's feminist crisis and offer insights into her evolving thoughts and ideas.

Additionally, the web-like narrative structure can also explore the relationships and connections between the characters. The novel incorporates dialogues, conversations, and letters exchanged between Anna and other characters. These multiple narrative perspectives provide diverse feminist viewpoints and contribute to a nuanced exploration of Anna's feminist crisis. The inclusion of different voices reflects the multiplicity and diversity of feminist ideologies and experiences. Anna's interactions with her friends, lovers, and fellow activists compound the complexity of her feminist crisis. The narrative ties these relationships together, highlighting how they shape Anna's understanding of herself, her feminism, and her position in the world. The web-like narrative structure also demonstrates the interconnectedness of Anna's personal struggles with a larger social and political context. The novel examines the influence of the Cold War, the rise of communism, and the

women's liberation movement on Anna's feminist consciousness. The interconnectedness of these elements is portrayed through the web-like structure, illustrating how Anna's personal experiences are intertwined with broader societal forces. Through the interconnected narratives, the novel explores how these external forces shape Anna's understanding of herself as a woman and as a feminist.

4.3. Multiple Narrative Perspectives

Through the fusion of multiple narrative perspectives, the novel depicts a range of voices and experiences associated with feminism. Each character represents a unique point of view, offering distinct insights into Anna's experiences and struggles. Each character has a different understanding and experience of the feminist crisis based on their background, beliefs, and personal experiences. Through conversations and interactions between characters, different opinions and perspectives on feminism are explored, sometimes leading to disagreements and ideological clashes. These debates serve to illustrate the diverse range of feminist theories and methods. It shows not only the contradictions and conflicts within feminism itself but also the internal struggles faced by individual feminists as well. Each character embodies their own set of beliefs, experiences, and limitations, which highlights the complexity and relativity of feminist experiences and perspectives.

Anna's narrative perspective demonstrates her struggles with societal expectations, relationships, and personal identity feminist crisis through her inner thoughts and reflections. For example, in one passage, Anna reflects on her role as a mother and writer, saying, "What am I doing as a mother? Running around shouting? Or just not there?... I am almost invisible until I get in the way. I am a dishrag" (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 92). This passage points out Anna's inherent conflict between fulfilling societal expectations as a mother and pursuing her own ambitions as a writer.

Molly's narrative perspective provides a completely contrasting viewpoint on feminism. As a free-spirited and unconventional character, Molly challenges traditional gender roles and explores different forms of relationships and sexuality. In a conversation with Anna, Molly expresses her dissatisfaction with traditional relationships, "It's absurd. This idea that there's only one person for you, and that if you don't find them, you're incomplete" (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 123). Molly's views challenge Anna's comparatively more conventional understanding of feminism, pushing her to doubt social norms and explore different possibilities for personal fulfillment.

Marion is a different figure on the contrary. Marion's narrative perspective represents a more traditional view of femininity and relationships. Through her interactions with Anna, Marion reveals her desire for marriage and conventional family life. In one conversation, Marion talks about her yearning for stability, "I want someone to depend on, I want a husband, I want children" (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 165). Marion's beliefs show the conflicts and tensions that arise when societal expectations clash with feminist ideals, adding complexity to the feminist crisis depicted in the novel.

Janet, Anna's daughter, represents the younger generation's view of feminism. Her narrative reflects the changing attitudes and challenges faced by young women. For example, she discusses her exploration of her own identity and sexuality, saying, "I'm trying to discover who I am, separate from what society wants me to be" (*The Golden Notebook*, p. 212). Janet's perspective adds a generational dimension to the feminist crisis, highlighting the ongoing struggles and progress young women are making in their quest for autonomy and self-discovery.

These multiple narrative perspectives enrich the exploration of the feminist crisis in *The Golden Notebook*. They offer diverse viewpoints that allow readers to see feminism from different angles and understand the complexities and contradictions within the movement. By presenting these contrasting perspectives, the novel emphasizes the diversity of feminist experiences and ideologies, highlighting that feminism is not a single entity but rather a multifaceted and evolving discourse.

5. Conclusion

The Golden Notebook is a complex and nuanced portrait of the feminist crisis. Anna Wulf's personal and political struggles highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. Meanwhile, through her quest for liberation, identity, and personal fulfillment, the novel reveals the tensions, disillusionment, and resilience inherent in the feminist struggle.

At the same time, the unique narrative techniques, including the fragmented narrative, web-like narrative structure, and multiple narrative perspectives in *The Golden Notebook*, serve as powerful tools for representing Anna's feminist crisis. The fragmented narrative reflects her internal disarray, while the web-like narrative structure emphasizes the interconnectedness of her crisis with various aspects of her life. The multiple narrative perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of her experiences and highlight the subjective nature of truth. By employing these unique narrative techniques, Doris Lessing creates a rich and nuanced portrayal of Anna's feminist struggle.

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