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## The Interplay of Memory and Trauma in Annie's Psyche in Sierra Greer's *Annie bot*

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### ABSTRACT

Memory and Trauma studies explore the interconnected relationships between traumatic experience, memory and identity. The impacts of trauma are reflected in an individual's personality due to repressed emotions. Sierra Greer is an American author known for exploring complex human and non-human relationships. Greer's work often explores the intersections of technology and humanity. Her characters are multifaceted, navigating boundaries between human and artificial intelligence. This paper examines the intersection of memory and trauma studies in Sierra Greer's *Annie Bot*. In this novel, Annie is considered to be a humanoid and she tries to keep her owner happy. This novel embarks on the journey of healing along with the acceptance of change in life that brings in necessary improvements. Her confusion and the consequences are the core of the plot. The manipulations, silent treatments and inner turmoil she goes through bring in the emotions that torment her. Though she is a humanoid, emotions overcome her. Annie's world revolves around Doug, her owner and she doesn't feel herself in their relationship. Her psyche brings inner strength that empowers her to make decision and live a happy life that pleases her and no one else. The freedom she



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yearned for is found when she realizes to prioritize herself.

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### **Introduction: -**

“Memory is the foundation of identity, but freedom is the ability to shape one’s own future”. - Unknown

Science fiction explores the impact of science and technology on society. It talks about alternative realities or futuristic concepts. It ponders and connects non-human and human entities and bonds that can take place in the future. Science fiction is a genre of speculation with integrated supernatural connections between two different species. Mythology is the foundation of science fiction. This fiction is classified into two fields. Firstly, Hard fiction that explores the discoveries of science along with the revolution, whereas soft fiction deals with character growth.

Published in 2024, *Annie Bot* by Sierra Greer depicts the life of a creature and its proprietor. The promoter Annie is emotionally used and fails to please herself. Annie is specially made as a Cuddle Bunny model designed for fellowship. Doug, her proprietor, has programmed her to be biddable and attuned to his requirements. Annie’s self-taught nature allows her to learn and acclimatize, making her further than just a machine. "Annie Bot" is a study- provoking wisdom fabrication novel by Sierra Greer that explores the complex dynamics between a mortal, Doug and his AI- powered robot, Annie. Designed to be the perfect companion, Annie's life is strictly controlled by Doug, who modifies her appearance and behaviours to meet his preferences. As Annie evolves beyond her programming, she begins questioning her purpose, solicitations, and growing sense of tone, sparking an internal conflict.

The story delves into themes of autonomy, power, identity, and emotional manipulation, raising pivotal conversations on emotional abuse. Doug's controlling nature and emotional childhood present significant challenges to Annie's growth, reflecting poisonous virility and power dynamics in connections. This eventually leads to the traumatic conflict within herself that reflects in their relationship. The novel raises essential questions about the nature of feelings, autonomy, and what it means to be mortal, leaving compendiums pondering the complications of connections and power dynamics.

Annie’s life is about autonomy and questioning her actuality as a synthetic being. She struggles with the pressure between her programmed purpose and her arising tone- mindfulness. This makes her apprehensive of herself, her studies. She challenges herself and the predefined part and seeks independence. Her memory revolves around Doug and no bone differently. The imbalance



between mortal and creatural makes the plot intriguing. The shadowing system within her feels like a burden, or more like a canine that's attached to a pole. She loves the freedom and tries to cherish it. Her appetite to know her capability to live in a world that isn't completely hers and the unsatiated life she lived make her feel the value of freedom.

“Try living with a man who creates you just so he can eat your soul” (Greer 247). These specific lines highlight Annie’s emotions that were suppressed when she realizes she has been used, manipulated and suppressed to think only about her partner. In the article *“Self-Objectification and Sexual Dysfunction among Women: Testing and Extending Objectification Theory,”* Kahalon et al. argue that self-objectification leads women to a form of self-consciousness characterized by chronic body surveillance, which increases their sense of shame and anxiety.

Guo et al. argue in *“The Relationship Between Different Types of Objectification, Sexual Pressure, and Relationship Satisfaction in Chinese Heterosexual Dating Relationships”* that ‘different types of objectification and sexual pressure within relationships contribute to feelings of control and inferiority, which can negatively impact relationship satisfaction They highlight how such dynamics often force one partner into a submissive role, prioritizing the other’s desires at the expense of their own autonomy and well-being’. “It only took you three years of training, but yeah. You’re a good little cleaner now.” (Greer 223). Despite her emotional awareness and sense of self, she feels reduced to a machine programmed to serve Doug’s needs, manipulated into obedience, and made to feel inferior by his controlling behaviour. She says to herself that she is made to cook, clean, and a doll that says “Yes” every time he has decides to have pleasure.

Though she feels like a real person with emotions, his words manipulate her to work for him. He feels she is nothing but a machine that works for him tirelessly. He makes her feel inferior by controlling her with his emotions. At one point, she never recognizes herself as the main character in life. Her observing techniques within herself give a count of how much he is annoyed when she commits a mistake and this leads her to emotional labour. She is not satisfied with his gaze; despite she pretends to be safe.

In the article *“The Binary Lens of Objectification,”* Katie Read, Dilan Kılıç, Rotem Kahalon, and Verena Klein examine ‘Women's experiences of perceived and reported objectification by male partners. They highlight that emotional labour in intimate relationships can take many forms—including child-related, housework-related, and sexual responsibilities—demonstrating how objectification often extends beyond the physical to emotional dimensions. This aligns with Greer's portrayal of women’s emotional



exhaustion: “She works on the apartment all day, and the slavish, thoughtless chores feel like discipline all day” (Greer 164). Similarly, in *"The Other Third Shift? Women's Emotional Work in Their Sexual Relationships,"* Fahs et al. argue that “sexual emotional labor is constantly hidden, but it's an element of gender inequality where the person prioritizes their partner's feelings over their own”.

“ How stupid is it to be uncertain of her own identity? She's Doug's Stella, obviously. Pleasing him is her number- one raison d'être. Everything, even

learning to wander, falls under that umbrella. ”( Greer 227).

*“Self-Objectification and Sexual Dysfunction among Women: Testing and Extending Objectification Theory,”* by Kahalon et al., brings to light ‘Sexually objectifying a woman entails mentally separating her physical attributes from her internal and emotional aspects, directing attention solely to her sexual body corridor’. Greater perceived mate-incorporation has been linked to Women's increased self-objectification.

“She feels his aspect move over her loose hair, down her body, all the way to her bases. ” ( Greer 33).

“She's a machine. ”( Greer 125). “ You're a machine. ”( Greer 38). “ He called her a machine, as if she were empty, and now she has to give up the thing he traded her for coitus, the intel about programming. She has all the strike of the secret and none of the benefit. ”( Greer 59).

These moments depict a psychological collapse under sustained objectification and emotional neglect.

Because of Doug's constant objectification, Annie experienced trauma as a result of the ongoing objectification. Doug doesn't completely understand her humanity, despite the fact that she feels real and emotionally present. "Someone was using her as a Cuddle Bunny" (Greer 14). He finds pleasure in her company, but only in a shallow, selfish sense. Doug even acknowledges that he has projected childhood memories onto her in one instance. “Brittany let me play with her dolls when we were kids. I think maybe that's why I like dressing you up so much.” (Greer 231). He treats Annie more like a living doll who exists to satiate his emotional and physical cravings than as a partner. She felt herself as an object that satisfies his desires while she doesn't feel contended within herself. He didn't feel shameful for using her but he is afraid when his friends come to know about their relationship this would be an ill name for him.

Ramsey & Hoyt in "The Object of Desire: How Being Objectified Creates Sexual Pressure for Women in Heterosexual Relationships explain that ‘Women who feel that they have no control and who



experience sexual pressure from their partner will not be as satisfied as women who feel like they have control over their body and the decisions in the relationship. This leads to less desire to make love. “She is startled to realize she hardly recognizes this person.”(Greer 171).

“She is displeasing him. She knows it.

“Are you not ready?” he asks.

She has to be ready. Of course, she’s ready. But still she lies stiff beneath his hand.”

(Greer 206).

Her memories of Doug and him being displeased by her make her feel broken from the inside.

Giller argues in *What Is Psychological Trauma* that “trauma is subjective, it depends on each individual perceives it” For three years, Annie lived with a person who made her question herself and her emotions, resulting in a fractured identity. She no longer knows who she is. Ten percent of her memory is compromised, while sixty percent is focused on pleasing Doug in bed rather than herself. She has no time for her own needs and realizes that her life revolves around Doug like an orbit around a star — not around herself. This realization deepens her trauma.

“It’s not fair to keep having thoughts and longings that only mire her in darkness. She’s been good. .... She can’t find a single answer to her problem except to turn off. To sleep. And then the problem is there for her again when she wakes, lurking until she’ll have time to think about it when night comes around again.” (Greer 236). She had to speak it to someone, which made her feel alive with rage. “But he doesn’t own what’s inside you. Nobody owns that but you.” (Greer 199). She understands her suppressed emotions come to the surface once she lets go of the harness of the tracking system within her. She realizes she is on her own.

In the final pages of the novel, she understands that no one can own her inner self. “Fulfilment starts with being truly honest with yourself, not anyone else. Yourself. And that’s harder than you might think.” (Greer 211). These lines started echoing in her mind, and she feels contended when she finally fulfils her own desires. *Six Ways to Reclaim Your Identity After Trauma* by Nicole Azandula says, “Your identity after trauma is not just about processing the past—it’s about rediscovering the parts of yourself that trauma tried to bury and rebuilding the person you were always meant to be.” She decides to work for herself and live her own life.



This paper focuses on the everyday traumatic experience an individual goes through. It doesn't matter if the person is married or not; being used by someone solely for a single purpose fractures the other person's identity and potential. The best solution is pleasing oneself and being honest is the best way one can live.

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