



Operationalizing The Learn - Unlearn - Relearn Cycle in Reflective Writing Through Dediarying

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Abstract : This paper introduces Dediarying, a new psychological-literary construct coined in 2025 to describe a form of reflective writing structured around the Learn–Unlearn–Relearn (LUR) cycle. Unlike conventional diary keeping, which records events, or expressive writing, which emphasizes disclosure, Dediarying specifically targets the completion of unresolved cognitive and emotional loops. It integrates insights from expressive writing research, narrative therapy, cognitive-behavioral models, depth psychology, and Indian philosophical traditions. The framework is situated within neuropsychological theory, particularly memory reconsolidation processes and the interplay between prefrontal, amygdala, and hippocampal systems. Simultaneously, it resonates with cultural perspectives on memory and relearning found in Vedic and yogic literature. By bridging psychological science and cultural philosophy, Dediarying is proposed as both a methodological innovation and a potential lexicographic contribution, with implications for long-term global mental health research.

Index Terms - Dediarying, Learn–Unlearn–Relearn, reflective writing, narrative closure, memory reconsolidation, psychological innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the oldest tools of human reflection and transformation. From personal diaries and literary journals to structured forms like cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) logs, reflective writing has consistently been used to articulate, release, and reconstruct human thought. However, despite its widespread use, writing-based methods often leave unresolved loops: forgotten tasks, unfinished narratives, and emotional residues that continue to occupy cognitive and affective bandwidth.

Dediarying—a term coined by the author in 2025—emerged as a response to this limitation. It represents a process distinct from traditional diary writing. While a diary records, Dediarying releases. It operationalizes the **Learn – Unlearn - Relearn (LUR) cycle** in reflective writing, enabling closure of unfinished cognitive and emotional processes.

The conceptualization of Dediarying, as with several breakthroughs in science and psychology, was first intuited in a dream by the author, later articulated into a framework with both neurobiological plausibility and cultural-philosophical depth. This paper introduces Dediarying as a scientifically testable, culturally grounded method positioned to extend the field of psychology and mental health.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Expressive Writing

Research pioneered by Pennebaker (1997) established expressive writing as a therapeutic intervention. Participants writing about traumatic or emotional experiences showed reductions in stress, improved immune functioning, and greater coherence in life narratives. However, expressive writing often emphasizes disclosure rather than closure. It can bring awareness but does not always resolve lingering unfinished tasks.

2.2 Narrative Therapy

Narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) highlights rewriting personal stories to externalize problems. It restores agency but is primarily story-based, less structured for task completion or closure of cognitive loops.

2.3 CBT Journaling

Cognitive-behavioral journaling (Beck, 1976) uses structured thought records to challenge distortions. While highly effective for restructuring, it is task-focused and cognitive, often overlooking emotional residues of incomplete tasks.

2.4. Depth Psychology

Carl Jung emphasized *shadow integration*, symbolic language, and individuation (Jung, 1959). Writing was seen as a pathway to self-discovery but not formalized as a closure methodology.

2.5. Vedic and Cultural Roots

Indian philosophical traditions emphasize cyclical processes of learning, forgetting, and rediscovery, which parallel the LUR cycle underlying Dediarying. The concept of *smṛti* (memory) in classical texts highlights the enduring influence of past impressions on present cognition, while practices of *svādhya* (self-reflection or self-study) emphasize disciplined introspection through written or oral engagement with one's experiences and texts. Similarly, the Upanishadic method of *neti-neti* ("not this, not that") exemplifies unlearning—systematically dismantling limiting identifications in order to arrive at higher understanding. The Chandogya Upanishad describes transformation through realization of deeper truths, a process that can be read as an ancient articulation of relearning. Collectively, these traditions frame memory and reflection not as static records but as dynamic processes of revision and renewal—an orientation that resonates with the aims of Dediarying.

2.6. Gap Identified: No existing writing-based method explicitly integrates LUR, neurobiological reconsolidation, and closure as the primary aim.

III. THE L-U-R FRAMEWORK

Defining Dediarying:

Dediarying is the structured practice of reflective writing that actively engages the Learn–Unlearn–Relearn cycle to close unfinished cognitive and emotional tasks.

- **Learn:** Capturing and clarifying experiences, memories, and tasks.
- **Unlearn:** Releasing maladaptive beliefs, outdated narratives, or emotional residues.
- **Relearn:** Reconstructing meaning, building updated narratives, and integrating closure.

Example: A student recalling an incomplete project writes about the lingering guilt (Learn), reframes the meaning of its incompletion (Unlearn), and redefines success by committing to a new trajectory (Relearn).

Unlike diary writing (recording) or expressive writing (disclosing), Dediarying emphasizes **closure as the endpoint** of reflective writing.

IV. NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL PLAUSIBILITY

For research purposes, an operational definition may be framed as follows:

"Dediarying is a structured process of revisiting previously written diary entries to extract adaptive insights (Learn), identify and dismantle maladaptive narratives (Unlearn), and construct integrated, future-oriented narratives (Relearn), thereby achieving closure and enhancing narrative coherence."

4.1. Reconsolidation as the Core Mechanism

Memory reconsolidation research (Nader & Hardt, 2009) shows that once reactivated, memories enter a labile state in which they can be updated. Writing triggers reactivation of autobiographical memory traces, allowing emotional associations to be modified.

4.2. Neural Circuits

- **Amygdala:** Emotional salience, especially fear and guilt.
- **Hippocampus:** Episodic retrieval and contextual updating.
- **Prefrontal Cortex:** Cognitive reframing and inhibition.
- **Language Areas (Broca/Wernicke):** Encoding experiences into words solidifies reframed meaning.

4.3. The Dediarying Pathway: A Neurocognitive Model

The proposed neurocognitive model for the therapeutic process of *"dediarying"* is visually represented in **Figure 1**. This framework outlines the sequential flow of information through key brain regions, from the initial memory recall to the final cognitive reframing. Thus, Dediarying may represent a neurobiologically testable closure mechanism.

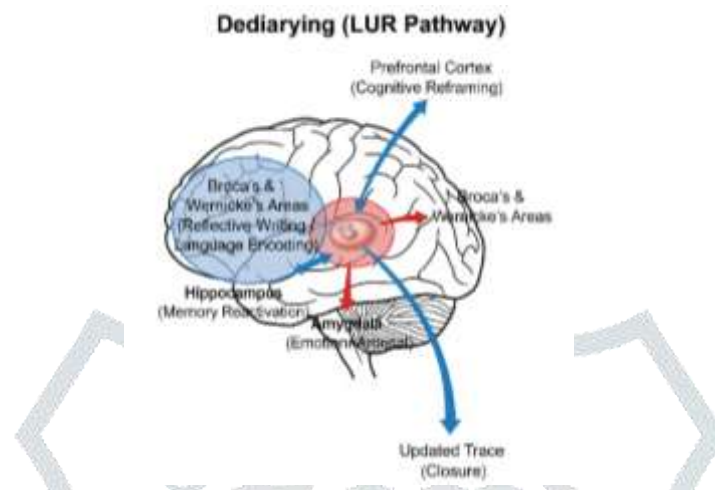


Figure 1. Conceptual Flow of the Dediarying (LUR) Pathway. The diagram illustrates the neural and cognitive sequence involved in updating autobiographical memory. The process begins with **Memory Reactivation** in the **Hippocampus**, which triggers **Emotional Arousal** in the **Amygdala**. This emotional experience is then processed and re-encoded into a structured narrative through **Reflective Writing** in the **Broca's and Wernicke's Areas**. The executive functions of the **Prefrontal Cortex** engage in **Cognitive Reframing**, which ultimately leads to an **Updated Trace (Closure)** where the memory is reconsolidated with new meaning and reduced emotional intensity.

V. POSITION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Dediarying is best understood in contrast to existing reflective and therapeutic writing frameworks, which each emphasize different endpoints. While these methods have advanced the field considerably, none directly operationalize closure as their central mechanism.

5.1. Cognitive–Behavioral Journaling (CBT)

CBT thought records (Beck, 1976) provide structured tools for identifying and challenging maladaptive cognitions. They are powerful for reframing distorted thinking but are fundamentally task-focused and cognitive in orientation. The emotional residues of unfinished experiences or forgotten tasks are not their primary concern. By contrast, Dediarying integrates both cognitive and emotional processing, directing the individual not only to restructure but also to close the loop of unresolved tasks.

5.2. Expressive Writing (Pennebaker)

Pennebaker's expressive writing paradigm (1997) emphasizes disclosure: writing about emotional upheavals to gain health benefits. This approach improves self-awareness and coherence but can leave individuals **stuck in repetitive retelling** without closure. *Dediarying* builds upon this by moving beyond disclosure toward **completion**, ensuring that writing culminates in release rather than rumination.

5.3. Narrative Therapy

Narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) highlights re-authoring personal stories and externalizing problems. While empowering, it is **story-centered** rather than task- or closure-oriented. *Dediarying* converges with narrative therapy in reconstructing meaning but diverges by insisting on the **Learn–Unlearn–Relearn cycle** as the guiding structure, providing both narrative coherence and task resolution.

5.4. Depth Psychology and Jungian Approaches

Jungian methods value shadow integration, symbolism, and archetypal meaning (Jung, 1959). These traditions validate the unconscious role of writing and dreamwork but often remain **symbolic and less testable**. *Dediarying* is complementary: it acknowledges archetypal and cultural influences while grounding itself in **neurobiological plausibility** (reconsolidation, memory updating) and linguistic measurability (narrative coherence).

Mindfulness-Based Writing

Mindfulness and contemplative traditions in psychology encourage non-judgmental awareness of experience. When adapted into writing practices, they cultivate presence and acceptance but may lack an explicit mechanism for **reconstruction and closure**. *Dediarying* bridges awareness and closure, combining reflection with active transformation.

5.5. Paradigm Distinction

Taken together, existing schools of writing and therapeutic intervention address important aspects of the reflective process—awareness, restructuring, expression, narrative re-authoring—but stop short of explicitly systematizing closure.

Dediarying is distinct in its insistence that closure is not incidental but central.

It is the first framework to **operationalize the Learn–Unlearn–Relearn cycle in reflective writing**, making it simultaneously lexicographic, psychological, and neurobiological. This positions Dediarying as not merely an extension of prior models but as a **lingo-psychological method** in its own right, with the potential to evolve into a paradigm comparable to CBT, DBT, or mindfulness once validated through empirical studies.

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH

While *Dediarying* is at present introduced as a conceptual framework, its implications extend to multiple domains of psychology, neurobiology, and cultural studies. Future research may focus on:

- **Empirical validation:** comparative studies with expressive writing, CBT journaling, and narrative therapy.
- **Neurobiological correlates:** imaging and cognitive neuroscience methods to examine memory reconsolidation, language processing, and closure mechanisms.
- **Clinical applications:** trauma recovery, unfinished-task syndromes, anxiety, and mood disorders.
- **Transcultural psychology:** adaptation across languages and cultural traditions, with particular attention to Vedic and Upanishadic parallels.
- **Lexicographic recognition:** the entry of *Dediarying* into literary and clinical vocabularies.

VII. CONCLUSION

The present paper introduces *Dediarying* as a novel lingo-psychological method that unites narrative psychology, neurobiological plausibility, and Vedic cultural insights into a coherent framework of closure. Unlike existing models—such as expressive writing, CBT journaling, narrative therapy, or Jungian approaches—*Dediarying* uniquely operationalizes the Learn–Unlearn–Relearn cycle, foregrounding closure as the critical endpoint of reflective writing.

By positioning itself at the intersection of cultural psychology, neuropsychology, and theoretical discourse, *Dediarying* carries implications beyond immediate clinical practice: it is a candidate for lexicographic recognition, a transdisciplinary tool for trauma processing, and a future paradigm in reflective methodologies. While the current paper restricts itself to conceptual framing, future work may extend into empirical testing, cross-cultural applications, and eventual clinical protocols.

In sum, *Dediarying* represents both a neologism and a methodological innovation. It offers psychology a tool that is simultaneously *scientific and culturally rooted, operational and visionary*, with the potential to impact narrative therapy, trauma recovery, and the very vocabulary of psychological practice in decades to come.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, V. V. N. Vamsy Krishna Damiseti, hereby declare that this manuscript represents my original scholarly work. The concept of “Dediarying” and the Learn–Unlearn–Relearn (LUR) framework are my independent intellectual contributions, developed through my interdisciplinary research in psychology, cognitive science, and cultural studies.

All sources of literature, theories, and data referenced in this paper have been duly acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic integrity and UGC norms. The manuscript is free from plagiarism, duplication, or unauthorized use of intellectual material.

I further affirm that AI-based tools have been employed solely for language refinement and formatting assistance; the conceptualization, theoretical development, interpretations, and conclusions presented are entirely my own.

This work has not been submitted elsewhere for publication and remains under my sole authorship and responsibility.

