A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FEMINIST GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY AND POETRY THERAPY AS AN ADJUNCTIVE TREATMENT TO INCREASE SELF-ACTUALIZATION ON THE PERSONAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1988

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To my mother, Wanette
Talbott-Green, my children,
Jonathan, Christopher, and Rachel,
my husband, Donald Chase Boyer,
who lovingly have supported me.

Cassandra: Appollo was the seer
who set me upon this work.

Chorus: Were you already ecstatic in the
skills of God?

Cassandra: Yes; even then I
read my city's destinies.

from Agamemnon by Aeschylus
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express the sincerest appreciation for the creative, enthusiastic response of those who aided me in the conceptualization and conclusion of this interdisciplinary study: Dr. Joseph Quaranta, my chairperson; Drs. Cliff Hallam, Frank Rodriguez, Phillip Marks, Julian Markels, Marlene Longenecker, Richard Kelsey, and James Wigtil. I am grateful for the many women, besides my mother and daughter, who have been models: Dr. Helen Swank, Laurel Richardson, Mary Margaret Fonow, Barbara Rigney, Barbara Wood, and Barbara Baisden. I wish also to think others who contributed: Drs. Gail Hackett, Walter Davis, Nicholas Mazza, Alice Smith, and especially, Sr. Arleen Hynes. Much appreciation goes to Dean Jean Dickershield and Pamela Hussen of the Graduate School for their generous administrative assistance.

I acknowledge with deep respect the debt I owe to Dr. Norman Holland for his initial encouragement to undertake this study and for his pioneering efforts to unite psychology and Literature at The Center for the Psychological Study of the Arts, SUNY-Buffalo. Further thanks to R. Tom Riggs, Executive Director of Mental Health
Services of Upper Pinellas County, and to the Adult Services Director, Rosemary Fleishman, whose personal and professional support for the research was invaluable.

Thanks also to Margaret Honton for her work of editing and publishing the volume of poems used in the research and for the inspiration of its splendid contributing poets. Lovingly, I thank my husband for his technical assistance in editing, correcting, proofreading, and facilitating the movement of this manuscript through its various vicissitudes, Allen Fuller for his last-minute editing, my children, and my daughter-in-law, Kitty, for their understanding, unflagging encouragement and active participation and suggestions for organization and revisions. Finally, I thank the research participants, those inspiring "poems in persons" upon whom this study is based, for their contributions; and Dr. Wendell A. Butcher, whose spirit moves over these pages as it moved over my life.

Footfalls echo in the memory...
from Burnt Norton by T.S. Eliot.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The field of psychotherapy includes a wide range of approaches and techniques applied to many groups of clients. In this study, feminist therapy and the use of poetry therapy as an adjunctive strategy to promote self-actualization in female clinical out-patient groups are examined. Feminist therapy has been developed over the past years. A number of studies demonstrate that feminist therapies are effective with a wide variety of specific groups including men and non-feminists (Johnson, 1976; Hare-Mustin, 1978; Hill, et. al., 1979; Marecek, et. al., 1979; Kravitz, 1980; Brodsky, et. al., 1980; Stock, et. al., 1982; Chambless and Wenk, 1982; Alyn and Becker, 1974; Usher, 1985; and Parlee, 1985).

Poetry therapy as an application of creative arts therapy has also been evolving as a distinct strategy to assist clients psychotherapeutically. Further poetry therapy has been conducted with persons experiencing a wide variety of disorders (Alexander and Buggie, 1967; Jones, 1969; Edgar, 1969; Heniger, 1972; Mazza, 1979, 1980; Mazza and Prescott, 1981; Hynes, 1972; Miller, 1982; Hallowell, 1983; Silverman, 1983; Goldstein, 1983; Koda, 1984; Angelotti,

Although poetry therapy has been practiced as long as other psychotherapies, poetry therapy is not a well-defined or researched technique (Lerner, 1976; Berry, 1978; Hynes, 1986). In this study, a population not often researched, women in clinical care, is being addressed. Two modes of therapy are being compared: feminist therapy alone and poetry therapy as an adjunct to feminist therapy.

Meta-analysis of comparative therapy outcomes suggests that diverse therapies are effective in the majority of comparisons (Sloane, et. al., 1975; Smith and Glass, 1980; Shapiro and Shapiro, 1982). However, the majority of the studies analyzed rarely included dynamic, humanistic or creative arts therapies. Even more rarely were clinically diagnosed women represented in comparisons of therapy outcome studies. Clinical journals have called for an expanded model of research that includes more field studies and clinical populations (Howard, 1984; Polkinghorne, 1984; Ford, 1984; Scherman and Doan, 1985; Gelso, 1985; Forsythe and Strong, 1986). Theorists in the psychology of sex and gender also have called for research designs and models that bring a broader feminist theory and an inter-disciplinary perspective to psychological research (Sherif, 1979; Wilston, 1981; Unger, 1983; Williams, 1983; Henley, 1985).
The literature indicates that client and therapist values have greater importance than other variables to determine outcome (Hjelle and Butterfield, 1974; Klein, 1976; Garfield, 1978; Bergin and Lambert, 1978; Parloff, et. al., 1978; Orlinsky and Howard, 1980; Dworkin, 1984). Insofar as research into therapy is concerned, the apparent allegiance of the researcher has been found to be a good predictor of the outcome obtained for a given treatment (Smith, et. al., 1980; Shapiro, 1982). Therefore the values of the therapist as well as the participants in research are of major interest. Feminist therapists believe all therapy goals are value laden; therefore, they state their goals _a priori_ their research and practice. Most feminists do not take an essentialist view of women's nature, but believe that women create their own existential being through self-actualizing values which may be actualized in behavior. Changes in value orientations are believed to occur as a result of therapy toward a more self-actualizing orientation.

The variables of interest in this study are those pertaining to the psychology of women and the potential for creative arts therapy to enhance self-actualization. Socialization into gender tends to work against self-actualization, especially as it is reflected in autonomy, inner-directedness, self-esteem, and other actualizing measures examined as a part of this study.
Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to examine the effects of feminist and poetry therapies on post-outcome measures of self-actualization of a group of clinically diagnosed clients in group therapy in an out-patient setting. The independent variable was the structured implementation of poetry as an adjunct to feminist therapy. The dependent variables were the post-test outcome variables of self-actualization as measured by the Time Competence and Inner-Directedness scales of Personal Orientation Inventory.

The general intent of this study, then, was to consider the interdisciplinary application of psychology and literature to psychotherapeutic problems of women in an out-patient clinical setting. The specific goal was to investigate the potential of feminist therapy and poetry therapy to increase self-actualization in women. Socialization into gender tends to work against self-actualization, especially as it is reflected in autonomy, inner-directedness, self-esteem, and other self-actualizing measures on the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), the instrumentation used for this research study.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:
1. To what extent does the addition of poetry therapy to feminist therapy influence the time-competency dimension of self-actualization of clients as measured by the POI?
2. To what extent does the addition of poetry therapy to feminist therapy influence the inner-directedness of clients as measured by the POI?
3. Does feminist therapy influence self-actualization in participants?

**Significance of the Study**

Despite the fact that women constitute a large majority of persons seen in adult out-patient therapy, women are in the minority represented in theory, research, and practice (APA Task Force on Sex Bias and Sex-Role Stereotyping, 1975; McKenna and Kessler, 1977; Brodsky and Hare-Mustin, 1980; Richardson and Taylor, 1983; Hyde, 1975). The review of literature indicates that research is needed to conceptualize a framework for both poetry therapy and the differential psychology of women and to develop measures for evaluating outcome criteria that reflect the current knowledge of the psychology of women (Hare-Mustin and Brodsky, 1980; Hyde, 1985; Parlee, 1985). A feminist perspective offers such a framework, and one is presented in this study.

Therapeutic and research outcome variables traditionally have been defined in terms of adjustment to social roles and
the elimination of pathology; however, the detrimental effect of traditional outcome criteria on women in therapy has been reported (Klein, 1976; Gilbert, 1980; Hunter and Kelso, 1985). Research literature in both feminist and poetry therapy indicates that outcome criteria reflect the researchers' values of greater self-actualization and growth of human potential rather than adaptation and adjustment. Feminist therapy goals are directed toward greater autonomy and inner-directedness (Steinman and Fox, 1974; Brodsky and Hare-Mustin, 1980; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1983; Wine, 1985; Alyn, and Becker, 1984; Hunter and Kelso, 1985, for example).

Likewise, poetry therapy goals are to promote self-actualizing changes in attitudes and values such as autonomy and inner-directedness and to bring about a creative problem-solving environment conducive to a rapid resolution of existential problems (Silvermn, 1977; Brand, 1979; and Hynes, 1986). It was logical assumption that a combination of feminist and poetry therapy would lead to higher levels of self-actualization.

Research by literary critics who studied readers' responses did not differentiate between male and female readers until other subjectivist critics, such as feminists, began to demonstrate that women authors and women's experience were rarely emphasized in literature. They found few self-actualizing images of women with whom healthy women
could identify presented in the traditional literature of prose or poetry. On the contrary, the images of women most commonly found were pathological and based on stereotypes formed by cultural and social conditioning: passivity, hysteria, materiality, irrationality, compliancy, and incorrigibility (Ellman, 1978). These are characteristics similar to the images of women that have been presented by psychotherapists (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel, 1970; Broverman, et. al, 1972; The American Psychological Association, 1976; Tanny and Birk, 1975; Delk and Ryan, 1977).

Showalter (1978) documented similar findings of literary and psychological double standards, and contended that readers respond to these images and internalize them as role models which then become normative. One problem for poetry therapy is that traditional literature has provided few self-actualizing models of personal identity as creative, adventurous, curious, brave, autonomous, perservering, and heroic. Few believe that these traits are normal for women (Holly, 1975). Even though there are prescriptions for women's behavior, thoughts, and feelings in literature and psychology, research itself has contributed little to the knowledge of how women view themselves or how they may respond to literature written for or about them.
Literary criticism provided no single analytical or empirical method to study reader's response to poetry. It did, however, supply some theoretical and methodological assumptions to facilitate women's perceptual responses, integrate thoughts and feelings, and help them become more self-defining and whole.

While there is some research of an empirical nature in the journals of psychology on the brief treatment of psychological and somatic dysfunction, it involved didactic, not imaginative, literature such as poetry. Psychological journals reflecting the use of literature on outcome in psychotherapy were specific to behavioral treatment (Brownell and Heckerman, 1978; Glasgow and Rosen, 1978; Miller, 1980; Dodge, Glasgow and O'Neill, 1982). None of these represented feminist therapy. Only one representative study of therapy in feminist psychotherapy, Alyn and Becker (1984), reported the use of poetry as part of a multi-modal feminist approach to therapy, but no investigation of the specific outcome of this modality was made.

Studies of poetry therapy specifically were described as imprecise, ill-defined, and irrelevant to outcome goals (Sclabassi, 1973; Lerner, 1978; Shrank and Engles, 1981; Hynes, 1986). Hynes, and also Stainbrook (1978) found these studies unconcerned with the interrelationship process of the poem, the participants, and the therapist and, moreover, unrelated to the essential cognitive functions which
maintain and modify behavior in the poetry therapy process. No studies of poetry therapy were related to gender variables. No recommendations were made in the research of poetry therapy that it constitute research designs to include gender-fair research methods, measurements, and poetry selection. It was one problem of this study to demonstrate why these factors should be emphasized if research is to be relevant to the outcome goals of therapy with women.

The American Psychological Association in 1976 reported that the failure to consider the differential psychology of women in psychotherapy was a factor causing emotional distress, absence of meaning, loss of values, and dehumanization in women (Rawlings and Cartering, 1977; Nickerson, 1979; Albee, 1981). Feminist psychologists maintain that traditional beliefs about gender roles have biased the theory, research and practice of psychotherapy and fostered a double standard of mental health, one for healthy adults and males, and another for females, based on gender expectations for socially desirable behaviors (Maracek, Kravitz and Fina, 1980; Cox, 1981, Israel, 1984). Research has demonstrated that psychotherapists give differential diagnosis and treatment based on factors of sex and gender (Chesler, 1972; Broverman, et al., 1977; Brodsky and Hare-Mustin, 1980; Albee, 1981), and that outcome is largely
determined by the subjective and objective value orientations of the researchers (Rosnon, 1981; Howard, 1984; Ford, 1984). It is a value of feminist therapists that outcome should be based on the psychology of healthy adults, such as self-actualizing persons, and not on a double standard of the traditional medical model. It is a feminist belief that emphasis on the differential psychology of women corrects the existing bias in theory, research, and practice.

From a feminist perspective, traditional therapies were designed to move participants toward a standard based on certain "normal" cultural values and prescriptions not representative of a healthy outcome for women; for example, the assumption that women be submissive, dependent, passive, illogical, non-competitive, overly emotional, non-adventurous, non-ambitious, unable to lead (Broverman, et al, 1975; Kaplan, 1982). Women were also often labeled psychiatrically when they refused to conform to cultural expectations; for example, when they were substance abusing or aggressive, or when they over-conformed to cultural stereotypes and were viewed as "histrionics," "anorectics" or "agoraphobics" (Chambless and Goldstein, 1980).

Feminist therapists did not find it therapeutic to focus on personal pathology as a cause of maladjustment, but hypothesized that even normal women's low self-esteem or psychological dysfunctions were more often the result of a disintegrated sense of cultural values, lower social status,
lack of economic power, and other aspects of a subordinate position in society. Therefore, feminist therapists were more concerned with a woman's optimal, not "normal," functioning. That is, they were concerned with the personal integration of self-actualizing values as outcome variables in therapy because these represented a single standard of mental health for males and females: greater inner-directedness, here-and-now functioning, flexibility of choice and behavior, greater freedom in decision-making and acceptance of responsibility. Most see traditional therapies as less effective for these outcomes (Franks and Burtels, 1974; Mander and Rush, 1977; Wyckoff, 1977; Brodsky and Hare-Mustin, 1980; Kirk, 1983).

Feminist and creative arts therapists generally have focused on positive aspects of psychological functioning such as creativity, personal growth, self-esteem, self-actualization, and personality integration. These aspects related directly to the creative processes of poetry as represented by psychologists, poets, and literary critics. In fact, psychologists and poetry therapists have viewed mental health and creativity as concomitant outcomes of successful therapy. Through processes of creativity, creative arts therapies may modify old ways of thinking and feeling and improve functioning (Robbins and Silbey, 1976).

According to poetry therapist Hynes (1986), creativity itself improves morale and dispels neurosis, liberates
persons from conditioned responses, and is congruent with inventive problem-solving, divergent thinking, flexibility, and spontaneity—all of which represent self-actualizing values and are congruent with the group process goals proposed in this research.

If the processes of poetry are to work, then the catalysts (the poems) must be considered in terms of their potential effect on response (Jaskowski, 1983; Rice, 1984). Contemporary studies in literature and psychology indicate that women read, write, and respond to literature differently than men do, that there is a double standard among literary critics which relegates women's poetry and prose to sub-category status in the accepted literary canon, and that this factor must be of theoretical and practical interest to both literary critics and psychologists. Traditional literature, as well as psychology, has often been centered on male experience; therefore, an emphasis on the differential psychology of women and women's literature provides a more open perspective about a group often overlooked in the research, theory, and practice of both disciplines.

One significance of this study is its implication for economy and effectiveness in the and treatment of emotional, psychological, and behavioral problems of female clients in psychotherapy. Treatment has to be done within the circumscribed demands of time, space, staff, funding, and
ethics, and in the most efficient, cost-effective manner.

Women who seek treatment also have limited time and money. Studies consistently show that more women than men are patients in psychotherapy (Radloff, 1975; Weisman and Klerman, 1977; Rothblum, 1982), and that diagnoses such as depression and anxiety are made more frequently for women than for men. Research has accumulated which indicates that such symptoms are often associated with adult women's conflicts over culturally prescribed gender-role requirements (Seligman, 1975; Radloff, 1980; Horowitz, 1982). On the other hand problems traditionally considered "masculine" such as alcohol, drug addiction, and violence are increasing in women and have gone virtually unattended by funding sources.

Moreover, theory, research, and practice have not emphasized the psychological crises peculiar to women's somatic experience: anorexia, bulimia, and obesity (Levonkron, 1982; Beach and Martin, 1985; Brown, 1985), or the psychosocial, psychosomatic aspects of menses (Paige, 1971; Burdeff, 1981; Parlee, 1983), or hysterectomy and menopause (Bart, 1971; Notman and Nadelson, 1980; Usher, 1985). Little is written on pregnancy and childbirth (Sherman, 1971; Liefer, 1980), contraception and abortion (Luker, 1975; Hyde, 1979; Gilligan, 1981), mastectomy (Ervin, 1973; Jamison, Wellisch, and Pasnau, 1978) pain (Lack, 1983), or "empty nest syndrome" (Oliver, 1983; Junge
and Maya, 1985).

The above works do not appear in mainstream psychological journals. Although sexual dysfunction and reproductive crises in women have been noted at least since the Kinsey report in 1953 and lately by Radloff (1983) and Wine (1985), women's particular somatic problems have rarely been of interest to psychological researchers.

In addition, problems arising out of lesbianism and bisexuality (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1976; Peplan, 1982), battering (Roy, 1977; Walker, 1980; Talbott-Green, 1980), sexual harrassment (Offir, 1982; Bernard and Schlaffer, 1983), and incest (Meiselmann, 1978; Herman, 1981; Brinkman, 1983), cause women great psychological and emotional turmoil, but are categories not represented in The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Manual (DSMII), and so are not treated as being of high priority or "at risk" status. Victims of these gender-specific crises usually have not been designated as priority populations by funding sources in community mental health centers. Their possible relationship to gender-role learning and issues of power and dominance in the culture have been overlooked by most researchers and practitioners, in spite of their serious consequence for women's mental health and psychological development.

Black and Hispanic women or other minorities are not proportionately represented in the literature of psychology
and poetry therapy even though stereotypical psycho-social parallels between minority groups and women have been pointed out: emotionality, deferential manner, assumed inferior intelligence and creativity, limitation on educations and jobs, conflicting or undefined roles, and low self-esteem which result in impaired psychological functioning. (Hacker, 1951; Goldberg, 1968; Lopey, 1977; William and Moreland, 1979; Albee, 1981).

Feminist therapists, as others, are faced with the additional impetus to be more effective under the circumstances in a brief period of time. In addition, the holistic or wellness movement has increased the need to provide creative ways of educating and supporting the population through swiftly moving life-stage developmental changes such as those facing contemporary women.

The main significance of this study to research is that it addresses some of the problems described in the research both of the psychology of women and poetry therapy. It focuses on what some researchers have called women's need for and greater use of psychotherapy. (Cove, 1980; Hare-Mustin, Weismann and Klerman 1979). It contributes a conceptual framework not yet available for feminist poetry therapy. It results in a method of evaluating a process and outcome of poetry therapy. It reflects the current knowledge of the psychology of women and feminist, subjective, transactive or reader-response literary criticism
helpful in the selection and application of poetry therapy.

The study defines healthy functioning for women and uses a measure for assessing healthy functioning before and after psychotherapeutic intervention. It helps standardize diagnostic criteria, clinical assessment and operational definitions of improved functioning in women.

Feminist therapy and poetry therapy are relatively unrepresented in the empirical literature, so there is a need for theoretical and methodological studies relevant to the treatment of women. Because of this study, some encouragement may be given to others to experiment with clinical and non-clinical applications of feminist and poetry therapy, and some direction for the integration of psychology and literature may emerge.

**Definition of Terms**

**Feminist therapy:** Feminist therapies are derived from a set of beliefs, values, and techniques that are shared by feminist psychologists using various therapeutic theories and techniques. They incorporate some aspects of psychoanalytic theory such as different psycho-sexual developmental stages for boys and girls, and parental, especially same-sex, identification. They relate social learning theory to socialization into gender and its effects on the differential psychology of women. They view behavioral theory as influencing imitation and modeling
strategies for the external shaping of personality and values. They utilize cognitive-developmental theory which emphasizes that gender learning is perhaps the most elemental rational learning process of childhood and even infancy. They accept gender-schema theory which emphasizes the way persons selectively attend to and process information that is consistent with gender-typed expectations (Hyde, 1981).

Feminist therapy is a model derived from the hypothesis that women and men experience the existential contingencies of life in a selective differential manner because of physiology and socialization into gender. These factors have limited the potential and actual ability of women to achieve higher levels of self-actualization. Feminist psychologists and literary critics, also, emphasize the limiting and punitive impact of gender prescriptive language on the intellectual, affective, and artistic/creative development of women (Lakoff, 1978; Thorne and Henley, 1975). Feminist literary critics recognize that all forms of literature that may be used in poetry therapy may foster images of womanhood in roles that are debasing and even pathological; therefore, careful choices of poetry will be informed by feminist psychology and feminist literary criticism in order for therapists to act responsibly toward female participants.

The American Psychological Association considers some principles essential for the competent counseling and
therapy of women (APA Monitor, 1975):

1. Sensitivity to the psychological and social issues that have an impact on women's problems.

2. Awareness of the different socialization of men and women and the way traditional theories and practices have limited the potential of women so that no preconceived limitations on the direction or potential goals for women is ascribed.

3. Increased awareness of the impact of androcentric language on the way it structures reality in daily usage, or poetic form, and the way it generally reflects male experience.

4. Rejection of test-measurements that are not gender-fair.

5. Support of self-actualizing goals.

**Poetry Therapy:** Poetry therapy is an interactional process in which the therapist uses guided discussion of literature or creative writing to assimilate psychological, social, and aesthetic values into character and personality that result in value clarification and creative problem-solving (Hynes, 1986). Poetry therapists historically have circumscribed interpretations of poems and poetry therapy to traditional psychological and literary paradigms, and have used more traditional poetry in practice. One emphasis in the present study was to use poetry illustrating the unique experience and perspective of women represented primarily by
feminist poets. Emphasis is made on heightening perceptions, introjecting new values and attitudes via poetry, and the processes of consciousness-raising (insight), catharsis, existential problem-solving, and the assumption of responsibility.

Consciousness-raising: It is the assumption of this study that insight comes with the synthesis of perception, emotion, and cognition resulting in a greater awareness of choice, responsibility, and meaning for life. Poetry contributes to insight in the following manner: it comprises the cognitive aspects of form, structure, syntax, semantics, rhythm, figurative language, images, symbols, and metaphors that help synthesize intellect and emotion into a deeper experience of knowledge. By virtue of its special properties of metaphor and other figurative language, poetry expands perception, imagination, comprehension, and memory (Pavio, 1970). Poetry also presents the perceptions, values, and attitudes contained in the content and may produce modeling effects.

The great themes of literature that concern people--birth, death, love, hate, sex, and so on--come to the forefront of attention in poetry therapy (Leedy, 1968). However, poetry contains aspects of disintegration as well as integration, so, depending on how information is processed, participants may regress because of poetry's often baffling, provocative, and threatening themes
(Vitrello, 1981). The poetry therapist must be professionally qualified to recognize and assist the client who decompensates, and to predict the potential effect of specific poems on the reader (Lerner, 1979; Jackowski, 1980).

**Catharsis**: Poetry stirs the emotions and intensifies affect. Poetry, by its intense concentration on the present moment and specific, concrete, and associational aspects of the poem, may bring clients quickly in touch with repressed feelings and conflict which are pressing for expression and release of feelings in catharsis.

**Choice and responsibility**: When repressed feelings and conflicts surface, persons in therapy may be encouraged not only to think and feel about them, but to take a stand toward them which involves a process of value clarification, setting priorities, and making choices. Decisions require an acceptance of responsibility for consequences. Creative problem-solving requires the ability to recognize conflict, evaluate alternatives, and decide on a goal or course of action. The result is an original synthesis of new information not previously available to awareness which reflects new values.

Choice and responsibility are based on the self-actualizing theory that human beings are unique in their capacity to exercise freedom of choice and assume responsibility for it. The possibility for women to exercise
their freedom has been restricted because there is a lesser range of opportunities and few role-models of women with whom they may identify, empathize, or imitate. Poetry may present alternative ways of being and doing in the world, alternative life-styles, and rewards or consequences for various choices. It may aid in making more informed choices. A greater understanding of the participants' entire valuing process may emerge, and healthier values may be assimilated as a base for future choices and improved psychological functioning.

**Self-actualization:** Self-actualization has been operationally defined by Shostrum (1976) and the Personal Orientation Inventory (1974), and it assesses psycho-therapeutic progress and self-actualization. Generally speaking, low levels of self-actualization reflect pathology: lack of integration of thinking, feeling, bodily response, and inner-direction. Mid-levels of self-actualization represent normal, static processes of maintenance or adjustment. High levels of self-actualization represent an active process of becoming better integrated and continually examining one's assumptions about life and self. The two major factors of self-actualization are the Time Competency (TC) and the Inner-directedness or (I) Scales.

Time Competency (TC) assesses the degree to which one is able to live in the present without past recriminations,
resentments, regrets, and guilt, or in the future with idealized goals, plans, expectations, predictions, and fears or is able to bring past experiences and future expectancies into meaningful continuity. Time Competent persons' future aspirations are tied meaningfully to present working goals (Shostrum, 1966).

Inner-directedness (I) defines relative autonomy—a balance between other-directedness and inner-directedness; for example, other directed persons tend to be dependent, whereas primarily inner-directed persons are self-willed. The source of direction for the more inner-directed person is internal motivation (attitudes and values) to please the self. Other-directed persons tend to try to impress others with a facade, such as pleasing and insuring constant acceptance as a primary way of relating (external motivation or pleasing others). A healthy balance would be reflected by the relative autonomy between other-directedness and Inner-directedness. A self-actualizing person integrates these concepts of past/present, inner/other to achieve an optimal balance.

Theoretically, after therapeutic intervention, values become more like those of self-actualizing people and participants become more flexible in their application of those values. Self-actualization implies sensitivity to one's own needs and feelings, and the ability freely to express these behaviorally, high self-worth, acceptance of
weaknesses, the ability to accept anger, and the capacity for warm personal relationships, as described by Maslow (1968). He said that the distinguishing values of self-actualizing people are wholeness, structure, interconnectedness, completeness, justice, fairness, spontaniety, full-functioning, completion, complexity, intricacy, honesty, aliveness, uniqueness, individuality, beauty, humor, autonomy, independence, self-determination, and environment transcendence.

**Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of the study can be identified in the population examined, the research procedures, and the therapeutic techniques applied.

The study is limited to a sample of women in an adult outpatient clinical setting, and generalizations may be limited to those treated for acute and chronic dysfunctions. However, it is assumed that effects may be generalized to other settings where there are similar realistic problems of controlling the internal validity of the research. Subjects were not selected randomly from the entire population of out-patients; they were initially dependent on assignment to therapist. However, they were randomly assigned to groups in this study.

The design did not utilize a no-treatment control. However, the absence of a control group that receives no
treatment does not invalidate the comparison between two active treatments. Control groups are costly in time and money; it would be unethical to hold a no-treatment group in such a clinical setting, and it would not be fair test of therapies to compare them to no treatment at all.

It cannot be said that effects definitely are due to non-placebo factors. Because the researcher ran all treatment conditions herself and was aware of the assignment to treatment conditions, results may in part have been due to unconscious influences of the experimenter biasing the results. However, it is doubtful that the complex therapeutic relationship can be prevented from being contaminated by non-specific (placebo) factors such as participants' family's values, attitudes, and behaviors or occupational and other situational factors. Insofar as certain core conditions of the therapeutic relationship are linked to outcome, these remained constant as the same therapist conducted all groups. So, in this case, the therapist also is without specific activity for the condition being evaluated, that is, the effects of poetry therapy. Therefore, the design provides an appropriate test of significance for the main hypothesis (Wilkins, 1984; Patterson, 1985).

Although clients in feminist therapy differ little from other women seeking treatment, and both feminist and non-feminists seem to benefit from it, the study may not be
generalizable in method or outcome to groups in traditional psychotherapy. Because of the non-empirical nature of research in poetry therapy, comparisons and generalizations to the field may be difficult. However, it may encourage future researchers to develop a different conceptual framework for poetry therapists and to integrate poetry into their clinical and research practice.

The Adult Clinical Services Director, Clinical Supervisor, and Staff Psychologist of the research setting have encouraged, supported, and monitored this research. The research process was discussed with these supervisors and professional providers of clinical services. Progress/process notes of group meetings were kept in participant's clinical charts. The poetry therapy model was piloted in Harding Hospital, Worthington, Ohio, as a field experience. It was monitored then by Joseph Quaranta, Ph.D., Chairman of this dissertation committee and also by the administrators of the creative arts therapies at Harding Hospital.

**Summary and Overview**

The purpose of this study was to consider the inter-relationship of psychology and literature and its potential to increase therapeutic efficacy in terms of self-actualization. It demonstrated a need to address the problem that special aspects of women's psychological dysfunctions heretofore rarely treated in the empirical research of
psychology. It addressed the need to contribute to a framework for the practice of both feminist and poetry therapies, to delineate healthy outcome variables with some precision and relevance to the psychology of women, to conceptualize gender-fair research design and methodology which would include a perspective for poetry selection.

The significance of the study is that it addressed some of the research needs described by psychologists of women and poetry therapists alike. It does not add to the proliferation of analogue studies, but is centered in the investigation of women with real, specific, and concrete clinical problems. It is also significant because it articulates the unique contribution of the creative art of poetry to the mental health community. It enters into the subjective world of aesthetics and relates it to the subjective world of psychological theory. It attempts to communicate the complexity of theoretical constructs underlying the practice of feminist poetry therapy. The definition of terms was related to some global aspects of the study which are more concretely and operationally defined in Chapter III. The research questions were outlined in terms of the specific study of value orientation toward self-actualization and its relationship to the psychology of women and poetry therapy.
Organization of The Study

In this chapter, the following topics were covered: the purpose of the study involving the interrelationship between literature and its application to psychological problems, the utility of studying a clinical population for the purpose of comparing a type of psychotherapy (feminist) with an adjunct (poetry), the desirability of studying women as a separate and distinct population of persons needing psychotherapy, and the suitability of traditional psychotherapeutic interventions for treating women. The hypotheses were generated from the stated significance of the study. The relationship between the disciplines of psychology and literary criticism were demonstrated. Limitations of the study were stated, and a summary of the chapter was given.

Chapter II will cover a review of related literature; Chapter III presents the Data Analysis; Chapter IV presents the Results of the Study; and Chapter V presents the Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Study.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theory and Method

Because no well-defined theoretical or methodological bases for feminist poetry therapy were found in a single discipline, an extensive review of the literature was undertaken in an attempt to both provide a rationale for the conceptual formulation and methodology of this study and to illustrate the research problems addressed by various disciplines when they use a subjective or phenomenological approach to investigation. Reviewed in this chapter are parallel developments in literature and psychology, emphasis on the phenomenological method, a bibliotherapy/poetry therapy overview, the contribution of literary criticism to theory and method, transactional theory, subjective approaches to the psychology of the reader and writer, the primary elements of poetry, the problems of creativity theory and the creative process in women, and gender issues in poetry therapy.
Parallel methodological developments in literature and psychology

As noted in Chapter I, research, theory, and methods in both psychology and literature have been built around the objective empirical paradigms of the physical sciences, not well adapted for the social sciences or literary criticism. Both disciplines have moved away from an attempt to establish universal truths from pluralistic theories or to find simple cause and effect relationships among the complex interactions of human variables. In psychology, the movement has been toward a humanistic, holistic perspective, and, in literature, toward psychological, subjective, or reader-response criticism.

In both psychology and literature, there has been a movement toward phenomenological research, meaning that persons can know themselves through subjective, intuitive, as well as objective processes. They can gain immediate access to meaning and values apart from various kinds of mediation or intervention. They can better define reality as consonant with their unique experiences. Predominantly because of feminist criticism, research in psychology and literature has moved along lines more congruent with feminist's subjective, phenomenological approach to experience. Heretofore, women's experience had been viewed as part of the universal human experience of "mankind."

Research often has presented as facts of female psychology
prescriptions for behavior, instead of investigating actual experience (Richardson, 1981).

Prior to the past decade, the majority of psychological researchers had not directed studies toward women, specifically. They had not focused on the women in interaction with their social context, values or personal growth needs (Graham and Rawlings, 1980). Recent attempts by psychological journals, for example, to integrate a psychology of women into research have been described as "token" (Kahn and Jean, 1983). Neither feminist psychologists nor literary critics are of one mind about women being "mainstreamed" into either discipline. Some argue for separatism and self-definition because mainstream traditional psychology is based on theories, methods, and content areas applicable only to men; therefore, feminist psychologists think the disciplines need new female-based theories and methods because women are different from men in substantial ways. For example:

The separatist position holds that there is truth in the stereotypical beliefs about women; women are basically communal, introspective, intuitive, affiliative, warm and caring people...and that is good. (Kahn and Jean, p. 663)

However, in traditional psychology these qualities have often been viewed negatively:

...these positive female characteristics become translated into dependence, irrationality, instability, impressionability, and passivity. (Ibid.)

On the other hand, some psychoanalytic critics who take
an integrationist view, such as Chodorow (1978) and Dinnerstein (1976), would consider women as new variables to be studied within existing theoretical frameworks and traditional methods. They might doubt that focusing on women's experience alone would be more fruitful than focusing on men's alone. Others have criticized both traditional and feminist psychologies because they posit a world view that in fact only encompasses experience that is Western, white, upper-class, and heterosexual (Swartz and Abramowitz, 1974; Riddle and Sang, 1978; Bulkin, 1980 and 1982; Harding, 1986).

Similarly, in literary criticism, some feminists may use existing psycho-social theories and methods to inform literary works. However, a body of criticism has evolved around the perspective that there are critical differences in the literary writing of men and women, that "sexuality and textuality" both depend on this difference (Abel, 1981). Abel said that writing relates to gender. Attitudes toward sexual differences generate and structure literary texts, and so critical methods can disclose gender differences in literature.

Some feminist critics have argued for "separate but equal" theory and method. At first, they argued that psycho-social and gender bias of male authors limited the number and kind of female experiences appearing in literature. Later, criticism moved beyond the examination of male bias
and attempted to uncover the female response to reading texts by women authors. The distinctive features of female texts were emphasized, and criticism shifted gradually from discovering a lost tradition to examining female consciousness in writing. They called these "acts of revision, appropriation, and subversion" which seemed to characterize many female texts. Sexual difference was translated into literary differences of genre, structure, voice, and plot, Abel stated.

Nevertheless, no single theory or methodology has emerged to forge unity among feminist critics. Some critics have called for more fair representation of Black, lower socio-economic class perspectives, Hispanic, third-world, and lesbian writers: for example, Spivak (1980), Alacron (1981), Faderman (1981), Smith (1982). Some critics have become antitheoretical, such as Daly (1973, 1978, 1986) and Rich (1979), or Donovan (1975) and Petterly (1978), but they have also seen disadvantages to being outside main-stream critical discourse: for example, Auerbach (1980). Some find the strengths of feminist critics in their pluralism (Kolodny, 1980). Most feminists look to women's studies generally to inform both psychology and literature as to theory and methods.
While a well-defined paradigm has not yet emerged for either a psychology of women or feminist literary criticism, feminist paradigms are all similar in that they attempt to try something traditional research has not done; that is, they try to elicit and study the internal experience of women, their perceptions, emotions, interactions, and values. They try to gain access to women's phenomenological experiences and to represent these as primary, if not exclusive data (Brickman, 1984). Traditionally, women's experiences have not generated or grounded the theories from which researchers developed hypotheses. One purpose of this research is to be grounded in such a feminist paradigm.

Values in research

Problems inherent in studying the phenomenology of values, prescriptions, and intentionality such as those underlying the research study of this dissertation are complex. But, they reflect reality, and so such a study is more congruent with a holistic, less atomistic, research methodology for human beings. Feminists have criticized traditional research methods for their fragmenting, dichotomous approach to subject and experimenter saying they do not actually reflect a real research or therapeutic experience. Feminists who call for new research paradigms (Romano, 1980; Unger, 1983, 1985, for example) have been moving toward methods that incorporate the reciprocal
influence of subject and experimenter (Kimble, 1984; Henley, 1985). A paradigm that separates knower from known, subject from object, would not represent a value of most feminist researchers.

Values, although not often acknowledged, guide the selection of research projects and the application of findings that can be classed either as "scientific" or "humanistic" (Polkinghorne, 1984; Kimble, 1984; Krasner and Honts, 1984; Champion, 1985). Historically, researchers have valued the scientific over the humanistic mode. Capra (1982) found that the allegiance of the researcher was a good predictor of outcome for any given treatment. Therefore, scientific theory and method have been valued and perpetuated. In the past few years, feminist analysis has found women's problems, their number as subjects or researchers, and topics of interest to have been greatly underrepresented in the literature (Shapiro and Shapiro, 1983). Recently, however, psychological journals are calling for a re-examination of their policies for including articles outside the positivist paradigm. They have criticized their own professionalism, scientism, objectivism, and lack of focus on the unique characteristics of the human being.

The value of prediction and control is not the proper goal of psychological research because persons are active in forming their values and behavior. Therefore, research
practitioners such as Harre (1980), Rychlak (1977), and Bandura (1977 and 1982) advocate a return to the idea of the human being as responsible agent, not solely determined by learning and environment, whose behavior can be considered as meaningful action in the service of aims, goals, plans, intentions, and values. Life developmental influences are emphasized (Howard, 1984). So, the actions of people involve physical, biological, psychological, and sociological systems, and the interaction of these systems cannot be studied in unitary fashion and predicted.

A trend exists toward a more participative or transactional research model, rather than a mechanistic one. Several articles criticizing traditional research and advocating more complex phenomenological models have appeared in mainstream psychological journals since 1984. Scherman and Doan (1985) and Gelso (1985) found that most research studies published have been non-clinical or analogue in origin so are not generalizable to real life problems. One-half of 424 articles from 1978 to 1982 studied by Scherman and Doan failed to note this fact in their unlimited generalizations or conclusions. The authors suggested that the editorial policy, for example, of the Journal of Counseling Psychology, has been giving priority to research submitted from the academic community whereas a majority of counseling psychologists are employed in non-academic, clinical settings. They recommend that
research manuscripts be solicited from areas such as community mental health agencies and private practice so that research could be generalizable to real life situations. Gelso stated, on the other hand, that the editorial policies of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* currently favor articles that do not focus on university populations as research subjects or analogue studies. It is still the case that the majority of research in the psychology of women continues to be published in women's journals, rather than prominent traditional journals.

Ford (1984), Polkinghorne (1984), Howard (1984), and Patton (1984) have all argued that the methods used to study any phenomena should be appropriate to the nature of that phenomena. Feminists do not consider traditional methods adequate to study the phenomena of women's experiences. Ford addresses the need for a theory of personality to be presented for alternate research approaches, one that focuses on intentionality or the act of giving meaning to something. He criticized new methodological approaches as focusing strictly on cognition and consciousness, verbal thought or talking behavior. Non-verbal thought processes such as emotions are rarely mentioned. Patton's method is grounded in a theory of phenomenology. However, as Ducker's (1980) study indicated, academics do not train their researchers in such designs and methods. In his survey of doctoral programs, 90% of the accepted dissertations have
used research designs consistent with traditional ones. The least common were phenomenological (1%). This fact puts many feminists and subjectivist critics in an untenable position. Harding (1966) attempts to minimize the effects of these constraints by suggesting how conceptualizers would be able to avoid challenges to the adequacy of their theory or method by regarding the ambiguities as valuable resources with which to construct a new, creative and inventive model of theorizing.

Polkinghorne acknowledged that logical positivism is still very much valued; even so, it has come into question:

The difficulty of fitting this template over the fullness and complexity of human experience has been partly responsible for the unhealthy division between researchers and practitioners in counseling psychology. (p. 420)

He advocated an open systems theory. Open systems exchange information and energy with their environments. Semiological examples would be Barthes (1978), Saussure (1966), Bertalanfy (1968), and Wittgenstein (1968). There is no ultimate structure of reality such as scientism has assumed. The values of the observer or interpreter of scientific data determine their ultimate structure, and these values are dependent on the various theoretical, cultural, or psychological assumption that the investigator brings to the situation. For these reasons among others, feminists have criticized theory-building and method in both psychology and literary criticism.
Basically, research trends in psychology, subjective literary criticism, and feminist studies are all looking toward open research systems and theoretical paradigms. Forsythe and Strong (1986) posit a unificationist view of basic science and psychotherapy. They state that psychological scientists must be eclectic and draw on findings generated in fields other than their own. They contend that applied researchers cannot afford to adopt a myopic, single discipline focus because practical problems often involve variables that do not fall within the scope of any subfield of psychology. It is their belief that, from this perspective, psychotherapy research must draw on the findings of other fields to be successful.

The authors emphasize, however, that researchers tend to be so preoccupied with theory testing they overlook the critical role played by theory construction. Again, the literature seems to support the fact that feminist psychologists and subjective literary critics are concerned with theory construction.

At the same time it appears that some literature indicates that feminists have not demonstrated that they can produce theories, methods, and sustained research capable of providing an independent alternative to traditional psychology (Kahn and Jean, 1983).
Perhaps this may seem so because feminists have found little relevance in researching hypothetical questions they feel they have not been allowed to formulate. The criticism of feminist research may also accrue from the fact that their research is not often published in prominent journals. On the other hand, researchers in the area of sex and gender are numerous and increasing.


**Bibliotherapy and poetry therapy**

Conversely, critics in the field of bibliotherapy and poetry therapy have called for a more scientific, empirical approach to the study of literature and psychology. Feminist aesthetics or consciousness do not seem to be represented in the theory, research, or practice in these fields, either. Nor have the issues of sex and gender or the psychology of women been conceptualized, from the appearance of the research. Nevertheless, as early as 1940 bibliotherapist Waples advocated research on what he called the major factors which produce effects on reading: socio-economic status, age, occupation, and gender.
Bibliotherapy

Rubin (1978) traced the origin of bibliotherapy or the use of books to treat mental illness. From ancient times, it was the province of medical doctors who advocated bibliotherapy primarily for information about mental illness and treatment or as a distraction or escape from psychological problems. Physicians who used bibliotherapy extended its use when they incorporated some of the social reforms of the 18th and 19th century and began to use it for its socialization and recreational value, as well as for "moral treatment." With the advent of World War I, libraries for the recreation and treatment of the mentally ill became widespread in Army hospitals. Art, music and literature began to be used for "character training" (Starbuck, 1928). According to Rubin, Kathleen Jones became the first qualified bibliotherapist in 1904, and medical librarians became significant, if subordinate, members of the psychiatric treatment team.

In the 1930's, The Hospital Division of the American Library Association established the first committee on bibliotherapy to be responsible for reporting research proposals, bibliographies and progress in the field. In the 1950's, closer teamwork between patient librarians and psychiatrists developed, resulting in the recognition of bibliotherapist/librarians as "true therapists." In the 1960's, The National Institute of Mental Health began to
work in concert with the American Library Association, and the first national workshop on bibliotherapy met, with many different professional disciplines represented. A further movement toward incorporation of non-medical professionals occurred when teachers and educational counselors began to offer their perspectives and research on the effects of reading books.

In acknowledgement that poetry's forms and contents might have different effects from prose on readers, the Association for Poetry Therapy was founded in 1969 as a separate entity from the bibliotherapy association. However, they hold in common much of their theory and practice.

By the end of the 1960's, psychiatrists, social workers, and a few psychologists were the primary users of biblio/poetry therapy, whereas only a minority were librarians. The practice of bibliotherapy became more prolific but fragmented as to method, technique, and qualifications for practice. Research began to appear in the journals of nursing, occupational therapy, education, and psychiatry. In the 1980's, poetry therapy research has moved toward a more quantitative empirical "scientific" model in the journals of counseling and psychotherapy, as well as those of creative arts therapies.

There is no agreed upon comprehensive definition of either bibliotherapy or poetry therapy, and this remains a
point of conflict among theorists. They also have debated whether bibliotherapy is an art or science (Brown, 1975; Jackson, 1962), and whether it should be practiced by librarians, certified poetry therapists, teachers, or by psychotherapists only (Rubin, 1978; Lerner, 1979; Jaskowski, 1980 and 1984; and Hynes, 1986). They disagree about who is professionally entitled to use certain categories of bibliotherapy usually classified as either clinical or developmental.

Opler (1969) attempted to classify some main types of bibliotherapy which still seem operative: diagnostic, developmental, and clinical. Diagnosticians use reading to help assess a person's needs and personality somewhat as projective tests are used. Diagnostics and clinical bibliotherapy have been done by mental health professionals who have some interest or training in poetry therapy. They use it also for insight and for changing attitudes, values, and behavior of patients.

Developmental bibliotherapy refers to the use of poetry primarily to address the healthy aspects of the personality such as the need for self-actualization, and currently it may be done by non-mental health professionals who have specialized training in bibliotherapy and group dynamics. Before a concensual meaning for bibliotherapy can be reached, most practitioners agree that the field needs a body of experimental data and scientifically trained

Many biblic/poetry therapists are conflicted over the power engendered in the interpersonal relationship between therapist and patient or client, helper and helped (Glen 1971). Steiner (1971) defined psychotherapy as a political activity where one person dominates, directs, or even oppresses another. Wyckhoff (1977) has defined it as an enforcer of established values, and Rubin (1978) viewed bibliotherapy as a way to ameliorate the power aspects because the book or poem acts as a mediator or does the work of a therapist. The individual, in a transactional relationship with the text, shapes the text according to need and integrates its therapeutic properties into the reader. This non-authoritarian stance is congruent with the tenents of feminist therapy and research methods.

Halleck (1971) also emphasized the social control of psychotherapeutic techniques which moved the patient towards adjustments to societal prescriptions for behavior. Agel (1971) stated that psychology was more than a professional field, it was an ideology, a belief in appropriate normal behavior with coercive power to back up that belief. Biblio/poetry therapists usually equalize power by working as part of a treatment team and are concerned that these and other ideological aims, such as the politics of professionalism, will circumscribe the boundaries of
bibliotherapy and keep it tied either to the professions of medicine and clinical psychology, or to library science and the recreational/occupational or creative arts therapies. Such political separatism is a concern among feminists, as well. These distinctions do not work toward the integration of research and practice. Most practitioners recognize the necessity for an inter-disciplinary cooperation in building theory and method which will equalize the influence of art and science, practitioner and participant.

The evaluation of theory in biblio/poetry therapy

Certified bibliotherapists have assumed that they could function as therapists, at least as developmental or educational bibliotherapists, without being under the absolute dominance of either the psychiatric or psychological professions. In recent years, they practiced developmental bibliotherapy and so circumvented some of the restrictions of the medical model. Many used techniques based on self-actualizing theory which is directed toward development of the healthy aspects of personality rather than toward the cure of psychological illness. They tended to focus on those needs cited by Maslow (1954) that they believed the book-as-therapist could enhance: belonging needs of love and acceptance, the self-esteem needs of achievement and status, the self-actualizing needs of creativity and self-fulfillment, and finally the cognitive
needs.

Lerner (1979) and The National Institute of Poetry Therapy, on the other hand, are very much concerned that non-psychotherapists are practicing poetry therapy, and have issued strict standards for certification. They are demanding standardized guidelines requiring expertise (the Ph.D) in psychotherapy and literature. The Federal Government and the States of California and New York now license biblio/poetry therapists as psychotherapists. Teachers of literature who also do poetry therapy such as Jaskowski are very much disturbed to think that psychotherapists, whom they are sure do not really understand poetry or readers, are actually entitled to use poetry in therapy. Added to these, of course, are the feminists' concern that little, if any, attention is being given by these various disciplines to the politics of gender.

Early theorists such as Rubin and Rosenblatt (1938) and Powell, Stone, and Frank (1952) recognized that human needs and responses are not so neatly categorized or addressed in a hierarchical fashion as Maslow proposed, nor are the categories of education and psychotherapy, or clinical and developmental bibliotherapy so discrete. They also recognized the process of reading as a dialectical and dynamic one between reader and text, and one in which both text and reader are powerful determinants of meaning and
response. Few early bibliotherapists emphasized the power of emotive (poetic) as opposed to didactic (prosaic) literature to create response and influence behavior change.

Shrodes' (1949) dissertation remains the basic psychological rationale for bibliotherapy and poetry therapy. She related the dynamics of the reader's personality to dynamic psychology. Shrodes said that inasmuch as reading involved perception, apperception, and cognition, as well as attention and conceptualization, it could not be divorced from the desires and feelings of the reader. Therefore, not only the dynamics of personality, but also the interaction and counterclockwise between the personality of the reader and literature as a psychological field must be considered. Her position is congruent with most subjective, reader-response literary critics.

Shrodes viewed needs, emotions, and behavior as determined by present and future goals as well as past experiences. All were formed into a gestalt which gave certain symbolic meaning to experience. The symbolic meanings were personal, selective, positive, and negative responses to the language and imagery of literary themes. Reading provided an intense cognitive and emotional experience whereby resymbolizations of experience might take place. Shrodes incorporated elements of Freudian theory that symbolic change may take place through processes of indentification, projection, abreaction and catharsis, and
insight. She also emphasized Freud's theory of homeostasis, that personality seeks to balance the pleasure vs reality principles, individual vs cultural or societal needs and values. Some poetry therapists have emphasized the problem-solving aspects: problem-recognition, resolution, self-help, and shaping of developmental values (Cianciolo, 1968).

Lazarfield (1949) had used literature for twenty years as guided reading for patients' personal problem-solving. She emphasized the power of literature rather than the reader to effect profound changes in human behavior. She saw the main therapeutic property of literature as empathic identification. Readers could confront a direct threat while the book's necessary distancing properties allowed them to make an examination of their defenses, and a safe trying out of thoughts and feelings could take place. Therefore, from her point of view, the reader and the poem shared the primary responsibility and decision-making function ordinarily shared by participant and therapist. The poem's effect was even more immediate and direct than the effect of psychotherapy alone, because the person was engaged more quickly in relationship to a poem, perhaps because of its form and dynamic functions.

Few new theories for bibliotherapy have been proposed since Shrodes. Some elements of interpersonal theory (Jackson, 1962), learning theory (Fisher, 1968), ego-psychoanalytic theory (Holland, 1976), Rogerian theory
(Lerner, 1979) and self-actualizing theory (Hynes, 1986) have been incorporated for the practice of poetry therapy. But, basically, it has remained more intra-psychic, deterministic, and culturally relativistic.

Although bibliotherapists admit that research on personality theory fails to support any single theory concerning a cause and effect relationship between changes in attitudes or values and behavior as a result of reading or writing poetry, that such changes will occur has been and continues to be a major hypothesis. Bibliotherapists do not address the problem of inferring behavioral change from value change as a result of reading or writing. They circumvent this problem in many cases by coupling bibliotherapy with group process. In this way, they incorporate field theory and concepts of social learning, identification, and the modification of behavior through group pressure. Changes in values and behavior could occur through pressure to conform to group values or norms. Bibliotherapists generally preferred non-authoritarian group leaders and emphasized Rogers' concept that the group is also self-actualizing as well as conforming.

Research in bibliotherapy remains primarily descriptive, case-specific, and "non-scientific." Its practitioners hope for more reliable, conclusive, replicable and controlled experimental research.
Poetry therapy

Much of the theoretical foundation for the use of poetry in therapy has been drawn from a psychoanalytic dynamic model, and is well reviewed by Mazza (1982), Rubin (1978), and Hynes (1986). In the 1980's, bibliotherapy and poetry therapy range from more or less complete identification with psychoanalysis—the medical model—to a more educational or self-actualizing model. Hynes (1986) is the primary theorist/practitioner represented in the research literature, and, although she has worked mostly in clinical settings, she views biblio/poetry therapists as being only in adjunctive relationships to mental health clinicians. Such professional lines are still tightly drawn in theory, if not in practice.

In an overview of poetry therapy appearing shortly after Leedy (1968) published a series of articles in Poetry Therapy, Lawler (1972) criticized the articles as rhetoric and their claims for therapeutic outcome as having nothing to do with the effects of poetry in contemporary uses. He did not seem to think that bibliotherapy and poetry therapy assumptions could be related. He made the point that any reference to literary therapy should not confuse poetry with prose and its functions. He argued for a broader understanding of how poetry works, such as Forrest's (1965) or Meerloo's (1969).
Forrest emphasized the therapeutic elements of tone, syntax, levels of abstraction, logic, semantics, and figurative language, especially metaphor, which he said gives the greatest precision in meaning to the reader or listener of poetry. Meerloo emphasized the powerful effects of the rhythm of poetry to free the repressed, sooth the distraught, or stimulate the depressed. Lawler submitted his conditions for "an authentic poetry therapy," which was based on the theory of R.D. Laing (1965 and 1967).

Lawler viewed individuals as self-actualizing or fulfilling only to the degree that they could define themselves in their entirety. His point was that, because all the words with which man defines himself are limited, confining, and finite, ordinary prose could not reflect man's unlimited possibilities for self-actualization. These could only be reflected in the ambiguous, but synthetic, language of poetry, particularly metaphor. To Lawler, an authentic theory of poetry therapy would disengage itself from all the traditional notions which define poetry as rhetorical, consolatory, or inspirational and engage in a direct encounter with the poem. The poem, unfortunately, was unable to be directly perceived but only glimpsed through the distorting image of various socially enforced stereotypes. He was concerned about such negative effects of socialization and enculturation on individual perception. He felt that the very least a therapist could do was to create
an atmosphere where the reader's response, "however crude or primitive," was his/her own, not a teacher's or parent's.

The scientific research in poetry is sparse and usually has not been grounded in specific assumptions or testable hypotheses. Early poetry therapists such as Leedy (1969, 1973) and Lerner (1972), both psychiatrists, were different in their methods. Leedy was more psychoanalytic, directive, and prescriptive in his selection and application of poetry. He depended on a principle of matching poem to mood of the patient. He called this the "isoprinciple."

Lerner was less directive, more Rogerian or client-centered in his approach. Both believed that the poem should be determined by the level of the reader's need, therefore, they raised the questions of therapeutic skill in determining the reader's needs and predicting the reader's response to the poem--questions still unanswered.

Poetry therapists commonly have utilized Leedy's isoprinciple, providing poems for reading similar in mood and topic for their patient's problems. (Mazza, 1981) Sometimes they composed poetry with the patient in a round-robin style similar to that used by Koch (1978, 1974, 1970) and Evans (1974). Crootof (1969) reported that patients themselves often initiated poetry therapy by introducing poems prior to or during therapy. He used a non-directive, Rogerian approach based on the client-centeredness of this phenomenon of spontaneous poem-making in his patients.
Lessner (1974) used a problem-solving approach choosing poems that reflected a specific difficulty, conflict, or need experienced in the present time. Edgar and Hazely (1969), Bowman (1981), and Rice (1986) also used a developmental approach. Rice said:

No matter what the goal, therapeutic or artistic, the person engaged in that work has certain psychological needs for development that may choose to be fulfilled at any time...a poem that is chosen by the performer may become the facilitator or guide for a psychological rite of passage. (p. 250)

To Rice, the important point was that the reader was in the best position to determine his or her psychological needs and could be trusted to "work through" the experience, a position also held by Edgar (1979) and Hynes (1986).

Antebi (1986) described the struggle of patients to integrate their experiences as their own, often developing instead according to parent's expectations. As with Stainbrook (1978), and other developmentalists mentioned here, she emphasized a wholistic integration of emotion, cognition, and imagery. Her study was carried out in a private rehabilitative setting where various creative arts were used, the goal being the highest level of functioning for the individual. Her major foci were synergy of polarities in personality and closing the disparity between the "imprisoned self" and the "true self". She worked with patients in groups, and felt that group facilitation and peer identification are necessary for poetry therapy to be
most effective.

Gladding (1983, 1985) and Chavis (1986) used poetry therapy also for developmental issues, primarily in family therapy. Gladding used "rational poems" in a cognitive or teaching approach, and "extended family poems" or poems structured to examine family interaction and functioning. He found that family poems illustrated theories of enmeshment, power, and other unresolved developmental issues. He also advocated using Leedy's isoprinciple as the basis for poetry selection. Chavis (1986) used poetry to increase awareness of role conflict, communication difficulties, and creative problem-solving. She took a prescriptive approach based on her awareness that socialization into gender roles has serious effects on family harmony and individual growth. Chavis seemed to be the only practitioner who considered gender in poetry selection.

Recent research in Poetry Therapy

The most recent research does not include many examples of hypotheses testing derived from new research models. Case-study methods continue such as Geer's (1983) study of poetry writing to treat Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome in a Viet Nam veteran or Lack's (1983) work with acute patients. The therapeutic work reported is significant inasmuch as it represents a culmination of work over time and contributes in a subjective, qualitative sense. Gladding (1985) has
explored poetic expression and computer technology as tools for therapists. His recommendations may be the ultimate for self-help; however, they leave out the significant factor of relationship among client, therapist, or group members.

Various poetry therapists disagreed with Leedy's isoprinciple and prescriptive method. Mazza (1981) and Schloss (1976) claimed that a therapist's choice of a prescriptive or didactive poem could be harmful. It could invalidate the experience of the readers by attempting to convince them that their feelings were inappropriate, thereby inducing conflict and guilt, confusing their perceptions, and making them too dependent on the text or other outside resources. Neither Schloss' nor Luber's (1976, 1978) studies supported Leedy's isoprinciple or showed any consensual validation that poems could be matched to mood or therapeutic setting.

The prototypical method of poetry therapy was pioneered at St. Elizabeth's hospital in Washington, D. C. now a national volunteer training institute for developmental poetry therapists. The population using poetry therapy changed regularly, although there were many long-term chronic patients representing many psychiatric categories. Poetry techniques had to be highly flexible in order to be easily and quickly changed. Biographies of authors, who had suffered from various psychoses, as well as films, records, readings and writings were used. Patients were well able to
exercise this kind of autonomy in their choices. They did not want their materials censored for "adverse themes," and they were not censored by the therapists. The reason was that adverse themes were the subject matter for any therapy; however, it was advised that the capabilities of the poetry therapist and setting (as well as supervision) should determine the advisability of this practice.

The following review is not an exhaustive list of the latest research in poetry therapy, but is representative of the trend to make the research more well-defined and precise.

Most theory in poetry therapy has been based on observational research of groups and individual case studies, but this theory has the advantage of being based on clinical work. There have been few controlled experimental investigations in the area of poetry therapy that are clinically based, however. Most are being presented in unpublished doctoral dissertations such as Ross (1976), Davis (1974), Mazza (1981), and Phillips (1984).

Ross (1977) compared thirty-three patients between the ages of 21 and 51, randomly selected from male and female wards of a state psychiatric hospital. The major hypotheses were that patients would demonstrate a deeper level of self-exploration in poetry than in non-poetry group sessions, that there would be a greater number of communicative statements in poetry therapy than non-poetry therapy, and
patients would give a higher rating to poetry therapy than non-poetry therapy on measures of cohesion, expressiveness, and self-discovery.

In groups where poetry was introduced and patients were asked to discuss their feelings about the poem, all hypotheses were supported at high levels of statistical significance in comparison to groups begun by simply asking patients to discuss their feelings. The same therapist facilitated both groups. Instruments used were the Truax Scale for meaning and depth of self-exploration and the Moos Group Environmental Scale for measures of cohesion, expressiveness, and self-discovery. No pre-test measures of group cohesion were done but the two groups showed significant difference at the .05 level at post-test. Only a slight correlation between expressiveness and self-discovery were found; however, the poetry therapy group made significantly more communicative statements than did non-poetry therapy members. The Moos Scale was found not appropriate for hospitalized patients in group therapy in the sense that it asks patients to rate themselves on measures of self-control, whereas in a hospital, one's feeling of self-control is usually low. Nevertheless, this study lends empirical support to others.

Davis (1978) compared two groups of depressed women on measures of generated themes and amelioration of symptoms. Her methodology was complex in the number of variables
compared related to psychological states, physical symptoms, social activities, and the number of instruments used, so the conclusions were difficult to interpret. Davis did not find poetry therapy more effective than conventional therapy, yet she maintained that poetry therapy was instrumental in providing a safe atmosphere. She concluded that poetry therapy was suitable only as an ancillary technique, primarily because it did not effect outcome. Williams' (1978) results in comparing treatment and control groups on poetry therapy's effect on developmental issues were likewise inconclusive.

Mazza's (1981) dissertation provided an historic overview of theoretical, empirical, and practical foundations of poetry therapy, and related these to the properties of group counseling, especially its effect on interpersonal relations and communication. His is an example of a controlled, well-disigned research study, but it did not consist of clinical subjects. He specified the techniques to be utilized in his poetry therapy group model, his method of poetry selection based on the needs of the group. He explained the training and equivalency of group leaders. The groups (poetry and conventional) met for six consecutive weeks. Environmental differences were controlled for, the process was specified on a week-by-week basis, the subjects (32 undergraduate students) were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups, or stratified sampling
was used when necessary, and a pre-test measure of homogeneity (the 16PF Questionnaire) was utilized. The research design was a pre-test, post-test control group design with two comparison groups.

He used the FIRO-B Questionnaire as a pre-post measure of interpersonal relations, and the GES (Group Environmental Survey) as a pre-post measure of group climate. In addition, narrative reports by two observers were used to examine areas not suitable to statistical analysis.

Unfortunately, little of what could be called qualitative results were included in his report. Five hypotheses tested indicated that there were no significant differences at the .05 level of significance between poetry and non-poetry groups on the FIRO-B. However, on the Moos GES scale, there were significant differences in favor of the poetry therapy group on cohesion and self-discovery sub-scales. No significant differences on the other sub-scales were found. There was a trend favoring the poetry group on the Relationship and Personal Development Dimension. Mazza concluded that the poetry therapy model did not effect interpersonal behavioral change or other outcome. The study was not generalizeable to populations other than "normal college students," nor were the separate effects of reading poems and collaborating on writings, evaluated. Moreover, the period of time under study (six weeks) was short to generate differences on pre or post tests unless the
instruments were very sensitive.

Phillips (1985) believed that it was possible to chose poems in accordance with diagnostic categories. She advocated the use of poetic forms in case-specific situations; for example, strict form for obsessive-compulsive neurosis, so that concern for form could help defend the writer of poetry from uneasiness about content. The subject worked toward freer form and flexibility during therapy. The writing of free verse was prescribed for the narcissist to explore histrionic feelings. Eventually the subject achieved discipline by working toward a more strict and structured form.

Phillips' study was a design utilizing three case studies and an in vivo observation of poetry therapy illustrating treatment choice, diagnostic features in poetic expression, and theoretical rationales for interventions. She focused on poetry therapy as a means to self-expression and as an avenue to primary process material. She viewed poetry as facilitating "relaxed control" which aided in releasing feeling, memories, and images. Like Jaskowski (1984), Phillips maintained that the therapist using poetry needed to understand poetic art—its form, style and tone. She recapitulated poetry's emergence from strict and consciously controlled forms of the Classical Period to the beginning of "psychological" poetry—the Surrealistic and Stream-of-Consciousness type of modern Objectivism and Free
Verse—that culminated in the Confessional and Post-Modern Periods. Her paradigm might be helpful in selecting poems in terms of their style and form in interaction with the personality dynamics of the reader in therapy. Her suggestions for psychodiagnostic functions of poetry therapy were, of course, based on her psychoanalytic paradigm and would not necessarily generalize to other theoretical perspectives. In this sense, her research followed in the historical mode. However, much of it is helpful in making more concrete other's more general assertions.

These studies were representative and informative in terms of their implications for future studies, possible instrumentation, and simplification of variables in research design, but many methodological problems still exist, especially for field studies. Problems in the 1980's are similar to those twenty years ago. For example, Edgar, Hazely and Levit (1969) attempted to compare matched groups on poetry therapy and conventional therapy with hospitalized schizophrenics in a pre post test design. They used intellectual evaluation, projective tests, tests of organicity, and psychological interviews. However, due to attrition, hospital discharges, and so on, the research design as conceived could not be carried out. The sample was small, the instruments not necessarily meaningful in terms of testing any hypotheses. Such problems seem to characterize most of the attempts to study poetry therapy.
empirically.

In another study, Edgar and Hazley (1969) experienced similar problems with a sample of eight college counseling center subjects; the control group members left before completion of the study. Therefore, no conclusions or generalizations could be made. The hypotheses were unclear, as well. Various other studies were confounded in the sense that the combined modalities of poetry with art, movement, music therapy, and psychodrama were difficult to sort out and did not lend themselves to easy assessment of the effect of the separate modalities on the variables being manipulated. Nevertheless, the "parsing" concepts of Ross (1978) and the "action techniques" of Schloss and Grundy (1978) are examples of attempts to become more "scientific."

Berry (1978b) reported a series of pilot studies in order to propose a more scientific orientation toward research; however, these were conducted with psychology students as subjects. In the first pilot study, subjects reported on how and why poetry was used to cope with crises. The results showed some significant correlations between subjects's general reading frequency and the amount of written poems they produced. Berry advocated structuring groups to comprise some subjects who do creative writing. In the second, Berry found that a poem's subjective value to the reader was directly related to the frequency with which it was able to provoke feelings. However, as Berry noted,
his sample was small, the feeling categories of a broad range, and the range of poetry submitted for reading was narrow. His studies suggest that it might be possible to establish a normative classification for "poem prescription" and that factorial and cluster analyses might be helpful as methods to do so.

Tedford and Synott's (1972) study also showed some promise for using the Semantic Differential with poetic forms. Their study indicates that the structure of the poem in terms of the poetic foot effects the mood or tone of the reader's response, and so poetry selection should not be based on content alone. Luber (1978) used seven semantic differential scales for the same purpose of poetry selection; however, no significant differential effects on mood were found. The greatest weakness of the research methods, models, and assumptions reviewed, from this researcher's perspective, lay in their irrelevance to the issues of sex and gender and a unique psychology of women.

The contribution of literary criticism to theory and method

The major movement of the twentieth century in literary criticism has been psychological. Particularly, the psycho-analytic and subjectivist or reader-response critics have attempted to synthesize theory and knowledge to account for the power of the poem to move the reader, and the reader's power to derive many different readings or meanings from the
same poem. The methods of literary criticism have often been the same as those of traditional psychology: define, predict, and control a reader's response. So far, research in this area has not produced a method which could do this with accuracy.

Some of the most recent theoretical and methodological assumptions about subjective response to literature are being presented or formulated by feminist literary critics who take the position that language, especially the language of poetry, ought to reflect the unique experience of female readers and writers of literature.

Throughout the history of literature, the assumption has been that language and literature have the power to influence personal values, emotions, and behavior. Since antiquity, literature was believed to have a social as well as personal function, and was expected to produce socially desirable values and behaviors. In the twentieth century, literature became a way to analyze and understand as well as influence the psychological functioning of the individual. However, emphasis was on the author's ability to balance and control the psychology of the reader. At the same time, literary criticism as well as psychology was influenced by the scientism of the age toward a more objective method. The study of literature became more fragmented from the real reader's experience as The New Criticism shifted the focus from the reader to the analysis of literary texts (Tompkins,
In the past decade, three movements in literary criticism—the feminist and the subjective reader-response movements in this country, and the deconstructionist movement on the continent—have brought the reader back into the scope of critical focus. They represent the position that so-called objective analysis either of literary texts or readers is no longer theoretically or methodologically viable. They have advocated that research take a more phenomenological approach to the readers and their responses to literature.

These movements have coincided with developments in psychology and bibliotherapy toward a more humanistic, phenomenological base, but there have been few methodological strategies developed to test the assumptions of phenomenological theories either in literature or psychology. The scientism of literary criticism made such research nearly impossible by critic's emphasis on distance, detachment, impersonality, and objectivity. Traditional paradigms neglected the impact of literature on immediate experience. Slatoff (1970) said:

Insofar as we divorce the study of literature from the experience of reading and view literary works as objects to be analyzed rather than human expressions to be reacted to; insofar as we view them as providing order, pattern, and beauty, as opposed to challenge and disturbance; insofar as we favor form over content, objectivity over subjectivity, detachment over involvement, theoretical over real readers; insofar as we worry more about incorrect responses than insufficient ones; insofar as we emphasize the
distinctions between literature and life rather than their interpretations, we reduce the power of literature and protect ourselves from it. (pp. 167-168)

Feminists have inherited an elaborate system of literary criticism. They have been taught to analyze and classify authors, genres, themes, symbols, critical styles, and readers. They have been taught how to find determinant, valid meanings. But literary critics actually have very little determinant knowledge about how poems and readers effect each other or influence the psychology of readers in terms of values and behavior.

As Slatoff said:

We have an astronomical number of assertions that literature is not life and should not be confused with it; we have almost nothing to say about the danger of separating them, if viewing literature... [as] an object we can manipulate instead of a force that can help shape us. (p. 188)

Transactional theory

There are enough similarities among reader-response, feminist literary critics, humanistic psychologists, and poetry therapists to recommend a theory of poetry therapy called "transactional." Such theory values the intersubjectivity of communication where the psychotherapist, the reader, and the poem are participants in understanding, knowing, and engendering new meaning through such interactions or transactions.

The use of literature in psychotherapy involves a process of dynamic transaction between the personality of
the reader and the text. Late developments in poetry therapy focus on the reader's creative involvement in the reading process in much the same way that psychotherapists focus on the ability of the patient/client to participate creatively in his or her psychological treatment and growth.

The relationship of the poet/therapist and the reader/patient is also a dynamic transact. Therapists have found that the most incapacitated persons actively construe the experience of poetry therapy in a healing manner, tap the creative aspects of their own personalities, penetrate their own defenses, express and resolve conflicts, and utilize their own symbolic processes toward better psychic integration via poetry, as McKay (1976) said:

The mind is forced to make intuitive connection which are a foundation for metaphor; objects are linked to unconscious feelings and values. (p. 52)

Poetry therapists focus on the intersubjectivity of poet, therapist, and reader because all are shapers of meaning. The reader and the poem stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other: an emotional, cognitive, physiological, and existential relationship. Ciardi (1975) said that every poem is a transaction, a sympathetic contract between the poem and the reader. For example, the poem begins the transaction by commanding the reader's attention by its structure as a poem, reminding the reader that poetry teaches something different and important. The way the poem accomplishes this is dependent on the
reciprocal feeling between the poet's value structure and the reader's value structure. While it is restrictive to say poems have a teaching and values-clarification function, it demonstrates their importance to poetry therapists who believe that values are the source of meaning, motivation, and action.

The Psychology of the Reader

The subjective approach

Historically, hypotheses concerning the effects of literature on the reader are untestable. The therapeutic effect of poetry on the reader is a much more complex problem than conceived by ancient or even contemporary theorists. With the advent of modern feminism, especially feminist psychology and feminist literary criticism, the problem of postulating the effects of poetry on the psychology of the reader is compounded by the question of gender and differential affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning in the development of males and females. Human readers are male and female. They respond to language and literature in cognitive, affective, and evaluative ways that are gender-specific (Henley, 1985; Martyna, 1980; McKay, 1983; Shultz, Briere, and Sandler, 1984; Markowitz, 1984).

The recent development of subjective, phenomenological, and reader-response literary criticism—along with the earlier psychoanalytic criticism—contributed to a
psychology of the reader that includes differential subjective experience of men and women, boys and girls. At first glance, it might seem evident that the reader would be the center of attention in any interpretation of literature. But historically, at least since the advent of The New Criticism in the early part of the century, the reader was only tangential to interpretation. Reader-response criticism has come to be associated with the work of critics who are concerned about the psychology of the reader, the reading process, and responses to literature (Tompkins, 1980). Traditionally, literary criticism was centered around the author, "his" philosophy, the cultural influences that effected "him" (Harari, 1981). According to Tompkins, the emphasis changed over time to the present position where the objectivity of the text may be completely ignored, and the reader's subjective response becomes the center of study. This may be overstating the case because the actual study of the reader's response has been tangential and fragmented.

Prior to the 1950's, literary critics were text-centered, and the reader was simply a "mock" reader--an artifact. Prince (1973) did postulate a "real reader," a "virtual," and "ideal" reader. However, his emphasis was not really on the reader, but on what the text may cause a reader to experience. Riffaterre (1966) posited a "super-reader" of experienced poets and critics and virtually ignored ordinary readers. Poulet (1972) seemed to move
toward a more subjective study of the reader's experience. He is classified as a phenomenological critic for this, among other reasons. As noted by Tomkins, however, Poulet proceeded on the dubious assumption that the reader becomes "the prisoner of the author's consciousness," so his focus of attention really was the subjectivity of the author rather than the reader. Iser (1974), another phenomenological critic, stressed the active role of the reader in producing meaning from a literary piece. The reader acted as "co-creator" of the text. Nevertheless, Iser still held the text as primary because the reader could only and finally experience that which was encapsulated in the text and could not experience new sensations, perceptions, or cognitions in the true sense of the word.

Probably in the true sense of the word, subjective experience would begin at birth in the interaction or transaction between the individual's sensory experience, cognitions, and emotional reactions. It would build through the communicational aspects of relationship (Siomopoulos, 1977), particularly since parents and social and cultural institutions are transmitters of language use, values, and expectations about the nature of reality. Subjective experience would be colored also by certain properties of language and literature: texts which govern subjective meaning (Barthes, 1973).
The place of the text

In literary criticism, the post-structuralist influence has generated some significant concepts for new ways of looking at literary texts. Post-structuralism, like poetry therapy and the psychology of women, is characterized by theoretical ambiguity, methodological pluralism, diversity of approach and procedures (Harari, 1981).

Derrida (1976) viewed the task for post-structuralists to be "deconstruction," that is to break apart and expose long-forgotten meanings within the text, even to attack the structure of language itself. The text, then, is neither the author's nor the reader's but a method or strategy of both which implies active productions and transactions, Foucoul (1972) said that writing is a struggle among forces, incited by the politics of fiction and sexuality, and the text is the "battlefield" where language and discourse are "captured and controlled for social, historical, and psychological domination." The author is an ideological product, whereas the text is the product of the creativity and proliferation of meanings in the reader. The text is a starting point for a new creation only if the author's influence disappears into the text and the reader's comes to the forefront of experience. His vocabulary illustrates the political constituents of literature.

The issue of power of the written word was addressed by Foucoul (1972) who argued that texts were an
institutionalized system of forces, primarily political and sexual, maintained by a predominant culture where some voices are dominated, displaced, or silenced, where some literary values are given significance at the expense of obliterating others. It is the concern of feminist literary critics, also, that women as authors and readers are victims of such political functions employed through a predominantly male discipline. Feminist critics believe that female authors and readers are able to uncover, discover, recover silenced voices. They will be able phenomenologically, subjectively, and dialectically to explore and expose forgotten meanings by reading or writing about female (as opposed to "universal") experience.

Psychology and subjective processes

Differences of opinion over the functions of conscious and unconscious processes in the reader's response are probably the most prominent divisive factors among critics. Psychoanalytic critics have most often emphasized unconscious processes; however, some have consistently employed concepts taken from ego-psychology. All psychoanalytic critics make certain assumptions which are very discomfiting to feminists because they represent a specific male perspective that many feminists believe cannot be superimposed on feminine psychology or literary criticism without doing harm to patient or reader.
The gestalt psychologists treated both conscious and unconscious factors in aesthetic response. They assumed that human beings have an organic predisposition for certain subjective organizations. They attempted to account for the fact that a natural constellation of responses occurs based on relationships among stimuli. The gestaltists argued that an aesthetic object such as a poem was not directly perceived as a stimulus outside the observer, but was subjectively dependent on conscious and unconscious processes inside the observer. Subjective theory, whether in psychology or literature, comprises assumptions about perception, intentionality, and other subjective phenomena, as well as unconscious processes.

Whereas gestalt psychology dealt with the perception of surface gestalt patterns, psychoanalytic critics emphasized attention to the substructure of the psyche: the preconscious (Kubie, 1958) and the Unconscious (Ehrensweig, 1965, 1968). Current emphasis among critics on either the Conscious (Bleich and Fish) or the Unconscious (Holland and some feminists) continues to divide critics in terms of the way they conceptualize and study the psychology of the reader and the process of creativity itself.

Ehrensweig (1965) criticized the highly cognitive psychology of the gestaltists. He agreed that such organizations are part of the surface mind's "articulating tendencies," but said that by subtracting certain qualities
to get to the essence of perception, the gestaltists subtracted the most important constituent of any creative act, the inarticulate primary process of the subjective Unconscious. The undefined forms that were dropped from conscious perception (the gestalt) were often the most significant details needed to create awareness and insight, he said. Psychoanalysts, by refusing to give any less attention to the Unconscious than to the Conscious, reversed the process of attending only to the surface gestalt. Ehrenswieg recognized the creative interrelationship between the psychoanalytic primary, supposedly aimless, process and the later development of perception into the surface mind's organization which became the aesthetic object. That is, the poem would be a later conscious organization of earlier unconscious processes.

Confusion about the nature of creativity continues to permeate the critical community. Historically, the psychoanalysts viewed the creative process as a regressive, neurosis-linked one. The artist's vulnerability to neurosis rather than creativity seemed to result from shifts between conscious and preconscious material. However, in Kubie's paradigm (1958), the ability to "shift" was the most normal process because shifts were flexible enough to assemble and compare ideas. The freedom of preconscious processes allowed all data to be rearranged into new combinations on the basis of new analogies (a process similar to making metaphors in
poetry). The preconscious processes selectively influenced free association of all stimuli. Conversely, the Unconscious represented only memories of the past to which it was rigidly attached. The Unconscious could not even enter into Kubie's paradigm of the creative process because it was basically unhealthy, made of fragmented and rigid distortions of unacceptable realities. For Kubie, creative reading would be a process of recombining all data and synthesizing new patterns (or as Rosenblatt would say, creating the poem). The pre-conscious would direct the free association of ideas and symbolizations which would then be recycled to be assessed by the Conscious and perhaps formed into a poem. Because it would be impossible for the Conscious to be free if it maintained a censorial, defensive attitude, the more "normal" a person was, the more flexible would be the processes brought to bear on creative response.

Kubie posited a series of actions, ideas and feelings stored in the nervous system and anchored in the brain in some meaningful relationship via a kind of preconscious scanning. The conscious mind's selective attention could inhibit creative synthesis by prohibiting spontaneous thought. Inasmuch as the process of "scanning" exposed anxieties, fear, and guilt, readers risked these hazards whenever they started the creative process, too. However, the "normal" reader would be able to utilize these emotions in the creative task. The reader often would be exposed to
both potential creativity or incapacitating anxiety which could prohibit the assembly of new data.

To Crews (1970), the danger to the poet and the reader came in the possibility of "unconscious engulfment." Fear of surrender to the Unconscious was what Crews called the paramount obstacle to creative freedom and the reader's capacity for involvement. Ehrensweig (1971), on the other hand, located the source of creativity within the Unconscious. In his interpretation, the concept of primary process thinking needed to be revised. Classically, the primary process was, like Kubie's a static structure of unconscious image-making where all boundaries of time and space and other polarities collapsed. To Ehrensweig, the Unconscious was basically healthy; it did not require strong defenses, it did not seek stasis, it sought expansion and stimulation. If the psychoanalytic critics revised their concept of primary process as Jung, Maslow, and others did, and as feminists are doing, then one might see a dramatic change in the application of literature to psychotherapy. The unconscious would be assumed to be basically healthy, not diseased, trustworthy, not suspect, working toward growth and self-actualization, instead of defense and regression. Therefore, researchers might be looking for different outcomes and be more willing to experiment with clinical populations and poetry therapy. As it is, for many poetry therapists, the Unconscious still looms as a fearful,
suspect, unknown and unknowable quantity, accessible only perhaps to psychoanalysts.

Contrary to gestalt perceptual theory, Ehrenswieg believed that children were naturally born with a "syncretistic" vision that took in the whole, rather than the gestalt, giving attention to all parts of perception equally. The ability to abstract, analyze, and separate figure from ground was a later, learned development. The creative ability to have "syncretistic vision" was usually lost in the "normal" person, but retained or rediscovered in the poet (or in the reader reading creatively, perhaps). Ehrenswieg assumed a creative process similar in other respects to Kubie's Preconscious one, but allowed these properties to the Unconscious. He called the Unconscious a "precision instrument" for creative, intuitive scanning that was far superior to the logical process of consciousness.

Feminists might acknowledge that it would be difficult but not impossible to retrieve a "syncretistic vision." They believe that through "resistant reading" (Fetterly, 1978; Kolodny, 1980b and 1981) and "re-visioning" (Rich, 1979), or other kinds of feminist critical methods, readers could reach "reality" by first rejecting the reading experience, then assimilating it according to a new (female) phenom-enological construction of the reading experience. The feminist critic's task is to reconstitute the rules that produce meaning, to know how meaning is possible in the
female reader. Most infer that values underlie meaning as they recognize that male values underlie and dominate the Western psyche, so discovery of a female value structure would advance the feminist critics work.

Subjective or reader-response literary critics take the point of view that response to poetry involves either complete subjectivity on the part of the reader or some kind of limited transaction between the reader and the poem. Subjective Literary Criticism

Several theorists laid foundations for the theory and practice of psychological and subjective, reader-response, methods: Holland, Bleich, and Davis, who are literary critics, Rosenblatt, a researcher and critic, and Hynes, a bibliotherapist. The most radically subjective stance for literary critics was taken by Fish (1970). He emphasized the experience or process of reading as being more important to response than the poem. He studied the reader's cognitive actions only, not unconscious processes. He seemed to posit a "hypothetical reader" who had a certain amount of "literary competence" gleaned from learned interpretative strategies, not from the phenomenological confrontation or transaction with the text.

To Fish, readers were influenced primarily by the social constructs of language behavior assimilated automatically. Responses were, therefore, not individual phenomenological responses, but learned group responses. Such learned
responses, not the "objective" text, were responsible for meaning. Fish's subjective theory allowed for some change to come about during the reading process -- the reader could choose among "best" subjective readings. However, Fish's assumptions about the pure subjectivity of the text created problems for many critics.

Mailloux (1975) said:

> The reader is a limited God: constrained yet creative. In Fish's sense, the reader's experience can be objectively described by psycholinguistic investigation, but Psycholinguistics and Speech Act Theory are value-laden; that is, they proceed from the value assumption that readers ought to respond to certain 'conditions of utterance.' (p. 334)

Furthermore, these conditions are known only to "the informed reader," and do not necessarily apply to the "normal" or real reader. Fish's critical approach promotes certain subjective values, according to Mailloux: that confrontation with the text is "good," especially if it does not allow the reader the security of his normal patterns of thought and belief, or has a disorienting influence on them or if disorientation forces the reader to grow and change, thus making a better reader (more informed). Although Fish claimed the pure subjectivity of the reader's transactions, his theory was somewhat dependent on the perspective of the text that would disorient readers to the point of making them grow and change. Fish did not view the reading process as safe; in the subjective openness of the readers, they were likely to be confronted with fears and anxieties, as well as
potential to change to healthier values. It was difficult to see how Fish could claim this and at the same time claim that the text contributed nothing to the transaction.

Psychoanalytic critic Holland (1976, 1975, 1973) called his theory transactive. According to him, authors and readers projected their unconscious fantasies into their poems. The poem brought the reader satisfaction by managing hidden or repressed thoughts and especially feelings. Therefore, poetry performed a therapeutetic function in the transactions among the unconscious processes of the author/poem/reader. The act of reading could, on the simplest level, allow the reader to displace everything to a purely verbal plane so they could find pleasure in reading. On a deeper level, pleasure would come from the gratification of primitive fantasies. Intellectual gratification came from the meaning—the ethical or moral values—extracted from the poem. The text and reader interacted and shaped each other. The transaction, in Holland's sense implied a relationship where reader, text, or both were changed as a result, but only to a limited extent.

Holland (1973) explored the effects of personality on perception of the text. Borrowing from Erikson's and Lichtenstein's concepts of ego psychology, he offered that each reader's fantasies were developed into identity or "life-style" themes which accounted for their individuality.
He thought readers acted out variations on their identity themes, but acquired no new themes because these arose in childhood and comprised an unchanging, irreversible core. However, there was some room in his model for change as a result of group interpretations among readers.

Holland (1975, 1976) studied his own as well as other's responses to poetry. He also used the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception tests in an attempt to fuse Psychology and Literature in an interdisciplinary manner. After correlating responses and what he viewed as objective test scores, he found it impossible to find consistent relationships between poems and readers responses. Although Holland's readers were criticized for presenting responses which they thought their teacher was looking for, Holland concluded that reader's responses were so original and personal that they were as much to be considered as were the contributions of the form, fantasy, latent or manifest meanings of the poem.

Psychoanalytic critics such as Holland focused on the reader's ability to unite conscious and unconscious, inner and outer experiences. They did not, however, consider how this may constitute a major problem for female readers whose inner and outer realities are assumed by feminist critics to be very different. Holland's transactive teaching model (1976) consisted of (a) articulating the transaction between reader and poem; (b) analyzing each reader's subjective experience toward the transaction (the literary and
political values the reader brought to the poem); (c) analyzing the objective qualities in the poem to which the reader responded. Thus poetry was a way to understand one's social, political, and individual values.

Various phenomenological or subjective critics believe that the psychotherapeutic value of literature lay in the safe way that reading provided for the perception and management of disordered thoughts and feelings. For example, Bleich (1975) taught reading in a classroom setting that could be described as safely therapeutic. Bleich believed that readers felt emotions lingering from childhood, and that feelings and images preceded thought which was a later assimilation of those emotions. Bleich's aim as a teacher of literature and criticism was to discover and promote an inner motive for reading and thinking about literature, making literature a connection between cognitive knowledge and the emotional concerns of people's lives. He stated that the "scientific" attitude of literary critics in the past has created the dangerous and false impression that a work of literature was objectively independent and that it somehow functioned apart from those who wrote and read it:

The fact is that a work of art or literature must be rendered so by the perceiver... the work itself would have no existence at all if it were not read. (p. 3)

When Bleich said that perceptive processes were different in each reader, he was saying that reading was a wholly subjective process, and the nature of what was
perceived was determined by the personality of the perceiver. These internal motives for reading, he believed, could produce new values. His thesis was that the role of personality was fundamental to the act of reading and criticism because the reader's values must be engaged in order to show them that the act of reading could help the reader fulfill instinctive concerns of being alive: pleasure, self-esteem, intelligence, and love. He taught students how to explore feelings, how to distinguish feelings from thoughts, how to decide on the literary importance of a work and the relationship between intellectual judgement and emotional response.

Bleich's aim was to help readers discover the subjective events preceeding value judgements about a literary piece and to show their causal relationship to these judgements. The different styles of response were assumed to tell something about the reader. He believed all students were motivated to understand feelings better and, therefore, to read better, if they understood the relevance of literature to the way it could make the feel. Bleich also believed that the reader would adopt as a model the thought processes of the teacher, especially if the teacher were self-disclosing in the classroom. He emphasized group discussion and group values which were operative in the process of formulating individual meanings and accounted for similarities in meanings. He said there was no avoiding the subjective
authority of the community of responders.

Bliech differed with Holland and Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) and others in the sense that he did not believe that the essence of a poem lies in its structure or form, or in its manifest content, but in its subjective recreation by a reader and the public presentation of that reading (as a literary critic, for example). He also emphasized that the personality, tastes, and values of the reader are matters previously excluded from study and were ultimately detrimental not to know because they enriched the personal and communal experience of reading.

Davis (1978), like Holland, was called a transactive critic because he took the position that both text and reader were important in defining the subjective response of the reader. However, Davis was also speaking about a reader-critic, not a "normal reader." To Davis, the "best" reader would be one grounded in the humanistic, phenomenological pursuit of theoretical, methodological, and philosophical values. Davis said that literary critics as "best readers" have become caught up in assumptions and beliefs of which they are not aware -- "hidden dogmas and covert principles." To avoid these entanglements, he advocated that critics become more involved in self-criticism, self-discovery, and re-reading, and search for answers to the questions of how readers read and reason.

Davis outlined some shaping principles to give literary
criticism a most comprehensive method—four basic modes of human thoughts: (1) dialectical—the assimilation of everything into a complete model; (2) operational—a social and ideological mode of values and actions; (3) problematic—a problem-solving, disciplinary method; (4) logistic—a mode of thinking about elements instead of wholes. According to Davis, ours is a logistic age.

All these modes of thought have implications for thinking about the reader's response and methodology for doing so.

When logistic thinkers, for example, concentrate on style and imagery because they consider the aesthetic experience as a whole not amenable to analysis, they at least emphasize the stimulus properties of the poem, something some reader-response critics did not.

To the operationalist, literature reflects economic, class, and psychic conflicts made up primarily of thought or cognitive properties. Literature would be the communicator of cultural values and beliefs. One could study its principles, assumptions, and methods to improve the life of the culture. Form and content would both be important in creating response as content would convey the ideological concepts, whereas form (style, technique, and symbolic action) would be used to present these ideas in a persuasive way. The aesthetic experience, for example, would be one where the literature embodied society's "best" values put
forward in the "best" most complex symbolic expression of the basic forces of social life. Obviously the values implicit in deciding what is "best" would be a matter of great controversy.

The problematic mode emphasized the context in which the reader's response would take place, emotional as well as rational. It would be essential for the subjective critic to understand the context to determine the aesthetic value of the literature. However, the aesthetic value of the literature in the problematic mode would be the practical significance for the reader's existential problem-solving.

As Davis presented this problematic mode, it is very complex, made up of scientific, interpersonal, aesthetic, religious, and philosophic, as well as psycho-social and political values in a "grand phenomenology." Davis favored the dialectical model which attempts to assimilate everything encountered in experience to a comprehensive mode and subjects all experience "to a reflective process that is defined by contradiction and negation". In the dialectic mode of literary criticism, Davis says:

...poetic knowing is prized above other ways of thinking because it brings the 'soul' of man into activity, giving us an apprehension of lived experience which preserves 'the whole of things in an irreducible and concrete totality.'...an understanding of the world which other ways of knowing fail to provide. (p. 97)

Davis believed that there were other ways to look at the psychology of the reader and the critic than the traditional
Freudian analytic mode. He posed a critical question that concerns the feminist's need to develop a broader artistic and interdisciplinary understanding of fundamental human problems:

...why bow to Freud rather than Binswanger or Marx, Hegel or Heidigger, or even Jung for that knowledge. Why not all of them, or different ones in different cases. Does Freud offer the one universally valid theory of human motivation?

Whereas most literary critics of the subjective mode would answer yes, feminists mostly answer no: Freud's theory is not the only, the universal valid theory of human motivation. It is male-particular. Feminists pose a similar question. Why not go to Horney, Thompson, Fromm-Reichmann, Zilboorg, Cohen, Symonds, and certain other women-centered psychoanalysts, or to critics Rigney (1979), Pratt (1976), or Douglas (1972) who respectively have offered Langian, Jungian, or Erikson analysis (Showalter, 1981).

This question will not be resolved here, but is important to raise because the question reflects the values of the psychologist, literary critic or researcher who is asking the hypothetical questions and bringing theory and methodology to bear on their research.

The majority of reader-response critics—subjective, phenomenological, transactive, or other—speak of phenomenological experience from sensation to perception, to understanding, to self-conscious reasoning, as a process of knowing directly and immediately the object, for example,
the poem, or even the reader. Few proposed a method to get closer to immediacy as Rosenblatt does (1938, 1978). She focused on individual reader's perceptions as she formulated them from over thirty years of studying reader's responses. Readers' perceptions were studied in the situation in which they occurred—a situation she called "transactive." The interaction between the reader and poem was itself the object of her study.

Holland (1976) acknowledged his debt to Rosenblatt's (1938) concepts and her assumptions that relativistic values underlay the discipline of the social sciences, that language shapes perceptions, and that transactional psychology all lead to the demonstration that perception was a constructive act showing how people select, organize, and interpret cues according to past experience. She was also influenced by Dewey's anti-dualistic view of persons being in a reciprocal relationship with the natural and social environment, a concept valued by feminist critics, as well.

Rosenblatt's transactional theory rejected both the objective and the subjective bind and concentrated on the event of reading. She said that the event of reading was not the operation of an organism on the environment or vice-versa; it was a "lived through experience of the text." The process of "living through" this event began with the reader taking "an aesthetic stance" or an expectation that poetry experience would be different from that of reading prose,
for example. The goal of the aesthetic stance would be to have as full an experience as possible given the reader's capabilities, sensibilities, preoccupation, attention-span, judgement, and memories brought to the transaction.

Next, the reader "evokes the text," selects, synthesizes, and interprets, shaping the poem, conscious of the resulting ideas, images, and emotions or psycho-physiological states generated by the reading. Verbal symbols would activate a structure of ideas and attitudes (socially based codes and values) that applied to the world "evoked by the reader." The reader would analogize and free-associate, then look for metaphorical or practical explanations. Past experiences would be drawn upon, alternatives chosen from, a context sought for symbols and meaning, and the reader would test various hypotheses.

Third, in "the interpretation of the event," the reader's emotional responses to the poem, the sequence of ideas, the attitudes of the Persona, and the psychological assumptions that resulted would be identified. The reader would give a detailed account of emotion, ideas, and events in some causal fashion around an organizing principle such as a philosophic attitude. In this way, the reader would experience a transaction between the poem and the self.

As the reader would fuse the cognitive and emotive aspects of the experience, he or she would indicate the existential choices that were made as a result of chosen
behavioral codes and values. Thus the reader and the text in "transaction" would become different and more than the sum of the parts each plays in making meaning. In the transaction between the poem and the self, the original creative act of experiencing would be made explicit to the reader, who would be able to reexperience in the present circumstances, perhaps in a less mediated way, and to clarify or revise past experience into potential change or action. Rosenblatt gave no definitive answer to the question of which has the greater power or potential to create the reader's response--reader or poem. Her method is compatible with the theories and practices of subjective reader-response critics, including the feminists. It is also compatible with bibliotherapist Hynes' (1986) inter-actional theory and method.

Hynes (1986) overall concern was to build self-esteem and encourage growth of human potential or self-actualization. Her observations were thoroughly treated, derived as they were from years of experience as a practicing poetry therapist. To Hynes, the value of the literature depends strictly on its capacity to encourage a therapeutic response, that is, on its capacity to release feelings or insights related to self-understanding. Literature would be an intermediary tool between therapist and reader, according to Hynes, whereas Rosenblatt's reader would respond to literature in a more non-mediated,
Hynes' process of poetry therapy is similar to Rosenblatts': the initial recognition of poetry as something of importance; the acknowledgement of feeling responses and their sources in past patterns; the examination of the feeling responses and what catalyzed them; the juxtaposition of alternative responses, the affirmation of old responses or the giving of new meaning to experience with implications of value and behavioral change.

None of these methods or models addressed the situation of the female reader in transaction with a poem, because they did not address the influence of sex and gender whether on literature or female phenomenological experience, and this is a serious flaw in their theory and methodology.

The criticism of criticism

Various criticisms can be made of these pioneering efforts away from scientific objectivity toward a purer subjectivity. Fish did not satisfactorily present a case for the pure subjectivity of the reading process. He offered a profile of the "ideal" reader who did whatever he or she could to become well-informed linguistically, to be literarily competent, and to produce stable readings (Fish, 1976). He tried to account for the variability among meanings and readings. He seemed to change his emphasis from the individual act of reading strategies to those of a
community of critics (ideal readers) and their consensual validation or negotiation of meanings. The ideal reader would be able to shift back and forth among various validating groups. Therefore, pure subjectivity of meaning was lost or clouded. As his theory developed, he seemed to pose some textual causation of the reader's experience, but he differentiated the "meaning" embodied in the reader's experience from any objective meaning in the form or writer. As he said:

All aesthetics, then, are local and conventional rather than universal, reflecting a collective decision as to what will count as literature; a decision that will be in force only so long as a community of readers believes (as it is very much an act of faith) and continues to abide by it. (p. 30)

Early on, Holland was criticized because of his reductionistic superimposition of psychoanalytic theory on Erikson's extension of Freud onto every text and reader (Crews, 1975). The poem and the reader were sacrificed for the sake of method. Various psychoanalytic critics used similar strategies (Fraiberg, 1960). Holland's theory and method were particularly criticized by feminists who did not believe psychoanalytic theory posed a viable alternative for formulating a psychology of female readers (Friedman, 1975). Holland's impression that all readers were passive and could take in something from the poem only to the extent that they could use it to replicate their identity themes was particularly objectionable in its determinancy. Readers
organize and reorganize experience to impart meaning, as the gestaltists say, and that includes subjectivity. But it is a major defect of his theory to infer that the boundaries between self and other, reader and poem, are so impermeable.

Holland did, however, contribute much to theory by his emphasis on the unconscious processes of the reader and his own willingness to "read himself" in public, as it were, whereas Bleich and Fish emphasized conscious processes only. Fish was particularly vulnerable to the criticism that his theory of interpretation ignored the unconscious determinants that effect the reading and writing of literature.

The weakness in Bleich's and Fish's theories was their dichotomous approach to the objectivity/subjectivity of poem and reader. They distinguished themselves from Holland primarily by denying any of the poem's autonomy or the properties of the poem that structure the reader's response. Bleich seemed to want to retain some "common subjectivity" of reader-critics, rather than a phenomenological subjectivity of ordinary individual readers. There did not seem to be any other substantial difference between Holland's transactional text and Bleich's subjective/symbolic text, except as they stood vis à vis the reader. Both posited a personal "style" of responding. Their readers shared responses and collectively created "true" or "best" meanings. Both held that a response must be the
starting point for the study of aesthetic experience. Both related meaning to the values of those who sought it. Holland's reader sought to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Bleich's reader was motivated to enhance the sense of self by organizing a new sense of self more commensurate with most recent or current experience.

From the phenomenological perspective, these critics illustrated that it was the interpreter's intention and underlying values that were always being worked out in any interpretation. But in the case of Holland or Bleich, the reader would not be interpreting phenomenologically (or resistively, as feminists would hope) because these critics were at base psychoanalytic in their assumptions about the reader's experience. Many feminists would find psychoanalytic assumptions about female phenomenological experience spurious, presumptive, or even offensive. Bleich's and Holland's seem to be more closed systems restricted to the illustration of pre-determined ideals concerning the conscious and unconscious processes of feeling and cognition. Fish's and Davis's seemed to be models more open to pluralistic interpretations of literature and readers.

Davis's transaction theory was the most encompassing. To him, the transaction between poem and reader would be ideational, emotional, imaginative, creative. The poem invited the reader to undergo and increase involvement in
action. In this sense thought functioned to shape the reader's emotional response to action; therefore, it was different from Holland's and Bleich's emphasis that readings shaped feelings and values that might result in actions. To Davis, poetry would not be statements or meanings but a structure of action representing the process of choice contingent on character within a general situation. Davis did not however, address the particularized situation of female readers, no matter how encompassing his theory.

Davis said that we cannot ignore the significant insights into human nature that recent developments in psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and linguistics have put at our disposal because all theories of human nature imply some understanding of "the nature of man." He did not say that insights feminist literary critics feel they can bring to "a nature of woman" were important for theory or method. He does advocate a phenomenological methodology to get closer to the ground of experience. This is one of the first postulates of feminist criticism, as well.

Feminist critics believe that the directive for a total phenomenological method such as Davis advocates or the wish for a completely autonomous reader are illusory. Some feminist critics would say that opposition such as reader and poem or other false dichotomies such as self/other are "male" constructs arising out of differential socialization
into gender (Richardson, 1981; Gilligan, 1981) and that autonomy is an ephemeral and highly over-valued construct. Feminist critics might be more comfortable with Holland or Bleich if their theories do not have to be accepted along with their methodology. Holland and Bleich are too psychoanalytic in orientation for many feminists, Fish too exclusive and piece-meal, Davis too overwhelmingly inclusive, and none consider the female reader's particular position. Rosenblatt's and Hymes methods may be more compatible with feminists' because they seem to be the more "purely" subjective.

In summary, the major assumptions about a psychology of the reader derived from the interdisciplinary study of psychology and literary criticism, in this investigator's opinion, is this: how one constructs interpretations of psychology or literature depends on the values, intentions, and purposes of the reader/interpreter. This is true even if the interpreter is a "scientific," objective researcher. The constructs of psychology or literature are symbolic, semantic, and culturally conditioned, therefore, ideological, political, and subjective in values and judgements. In addition, there is a large component of individual dynamics that is operative and which demands phenomenological or subjective recognition.

One important factor in coming to these assumptions was the recognition of the dualistic or dichotomous nature of
disciplinary knowledge itself where objectivity is valued over subjectivity, the logical over the emotional, the conscious over the unconscious. Another important factor was the recognition that psychology has presented an ambivalent or ambiguous construct of creativity which has strongly influenced psychological literary criticism. A third major factor was the discovery that traditional male constructs about either psychology or literature had, until very recently, obliterated those of female or feminist psychologists, literary critics, and others, therefore, uncovering another dualism in knowledge: male/female. A value underlying the resulting research study was that knowledge should be whole, not dichotomous, and that the research methods should reflect these values, even if they include "separate but equal" attention to women.

The psychology of the writer

Poetry therapists seem to have more to say about the psychology of "normal" poetry writers than about readers. They tend to view poetry writing as part of a healthy, integrated functioning (rather than as sublimation, for example). Even seriously disturbed persons can enter into creative writing and benefit from catharsis and creative problem-solving. Most of the misunderstanding surrounding the creativity of so-called normal and abnormal poetry writing seem to have arisen from an inability to incorporate
some concepts of ego psychology that emphasize cognition and problem solving. Some psychoanalyists, for example, the gestaltists, especially differentiated between neurotic verbalizing and poetry as being thus: neurotic communication is described in terms of dissipating energy which is catharsis' affection function (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1957) while poetry writing was considered from a problem-solving (cognitive) perspective (Mazza, 1981; Zinker, 1977). Historically, literature in general concerned the transformation of instinctual impulses into creative activities and particular works of art.

To ego-psychoanalytic critics, artistic, creative activity is not only the result of inner instinctual or neurotic strivings, but also is an adaptive response to culture, an attempt at mastering outer reality, and results in the pleasure of transforming chaotic, unconscious or unstructured emotions into a creative project. Unfortunately, most critics emphasize the inhibiting function of the ego which has only a tentative hold on the energy of the primary or Id processes. But, it is also the ego's operation on the secondary process that constitutes creative thinking. The artist is able to use both processes equally. The reader undergoes an analogous experience. The ego of the poet handles dangerous unconscious material, remains in control of it, and transforms it into the aesthetic product the poem. The reader follows or
transcends the poet to have his or her unique aesthetic experience.

Various forms of writing have been said to be therapeutic. Greening (1977) wrote on the use of autobiographical writing in therapy. Nichols (1973) investigated journal keeping in creative problem-solving. Progoff (1975) refined a most structured approach to "intensive journal keeping" that also goes beyond psychotherapy toward a non-medical, wholeness model. Maultsby (1971) was one of the most direct proponents of writing exercises as an adjunct to Rational-Emotive Therapy and as a means of providing self-management in emotional crisis. Millard (1976) found that writing assignments augmented self-disclosure and provided enhancement of thought processes because they added concrete form, order, and objectivity, thereby assisting the individual in developing a cognitive structure from which to approach goals.

Parker (1969) saw the writing process as "re-organization." Harrower (1972) saw it as "an act of creation and self-sustaining experience." Brand (1979) believed that creative writing as well as reading moved patients toward "self-regulation" and away from the authoritarian position assumed by traditional therapists by making the writer and the poem therapeutic active agents. Barber (1979) also found that the writing of poetry helped
people to move beyond cliches and confusion in cognition and affect toward clarity. Luber (1978) described the ability of even seriously impaired persons in hospital settings to exercise highly cognitive functions in poetry writing. Moreover, he used very sophisticated forms of poetic structure—the Cinquin, a highly cognitive form and the Haiku—a highly symbolic and affective form, in treatment. He found these patients able to transcend both their own psychological boundaries and those of form and content to a higher level of functioning.

Bell (1982) found that poetry writing helped patients to define an illusive reality through symbol formation and reformation, an idea also expressed by Siomoupolos (1977). Bell believed that poetry aided in reaching depth of meaning quickly, easily, and intuitively. He thought poetry increased a sense of dignity, self-esteem, power, and the strength that comes with self-knowledge.

Writing poetry alone may not be sufficient to engage all of a writer's creative potential. Parisi (1974) included group discussion as an adjunct to creative writing because it lessened the person's conceptual egotism, (as Piaget called it), by engaging the writer in the social aspects of interpretation. Thus the writer might be able to see new possibilities for meaning in various poems. Piaget suggested that psychotherapists may be reluctant to utilize creative writing because that means they must abandon their
traditional reflective posture. Some also may be inhibited by the past theoretical and methodological problems which confront pioneers in other creative arts therapies. For example, the charge of solopsistic methods of interpretation was one which few critics save Holland were able to rise above and transcend in practice.

In the manner of most researchers in poetry therapy, Silverman (1977) offered no substantial evidence to indicate why he believed that through poetry therapy the clinician may effectively treat anxieties, difficulties in adjustment, psychosomatic disorders, phobias, disturbed interpersonal relationships, marital upsets, and personality malfunctioning, although his citations and arguments are impressive. He simply asserts:

Poets have a greater awareness of life; the poet understands and shares fears, angers, hopes, and struggles; poetry is deep and expresses itself in high seriousness all the sincerity of which man is capable. (p. 19)

In summary, the therapeutical properties in writing are reported to be similar to those described in relationship to reading poetry: universalization of emotion. Poetry becomes a personal metaphor for the psychic state, and writers recognize that they have a private symbol system to communicate and a method to investigate the same phenomena as their therapists have.

The use of creative writing in therapy may allow the therapist a deeper understanding about the client's
communications. Both client and therapist have a chance to view the problems from the perspective of the poet's sensibilities and to compare life philosophies with the poet. Because, in the use of creative writing, an emphasis may be made on the shaping of a poem as an artistic product as well as a communication, the client and therapist may be able to experience communication carried to the highest extent. For the client, this often means improved communication, better awareness and insight into patterns of communication (Guerin, 1976), improved self-esteem (Hynes, 1976), a sense of personal power that comes with self-knowledge (Bell, 1982), and an ability to see new possibilities for meaning (Parisi, 1974). It may also provide greater cohesion for group poetry therapy (Mazza, 1981).

The goals of poetry therapy and psychotherapy are very similar: awareness, insight into unconscious symbolic processes, catharsis, and problem-solving. Both utilize language as the primary vehicle for therapeutic interaction. Some additional goals have been set forth by bibliotherapists that revolve specifically around literature as therapy. The two primary methods of poetry therapy are used: reading and writing. Hynes (1986) summarized present goals of a specific kind of poetry therapy which focuses on creative reading in groups.

(a) to stimulate and enrich mental images and improve the capacity to respond.
(b) to increase self-understanding, self-perceptions, and self-development.
(c) to improve awareness of interpersonal relationships.
(d) to improve reality orientations.
(e) to experience the liberating and pleasurable quality of the aesthetic object -- the poem -- in its intellectual and sensory impact.

Rolloff (1983) Luber (1978) and Brand (1979) outlined similar goals for the use of writing in poetry therapy.

(a) to help to make the unconscious conscious
(b) to cultivate under-developed capacities or functions.
(c) to develop alternative modes of expression.
(d) to achieve self-actualization, catharsis, and self-expression.

While there are some differences in method between the uses of poetry reading and poetry writing, the major distinction seems to be that those who use reading envision it as a kind of transaction or interaction between the poetic work and the reader as joint therapists, whereas those who use a writing mode see it more as a process of synthesis within the self-as-therapist. And because the methods reflect those used primarily to meet guidelines for developmental rather than clinical poetry therapy, the place of the psychotherapist is virtually ignored or one person "facilitates" the group process. Because the facilitator is sometimes therapist, sometimes poet, sometimes just someone interested in poetry, there has not been much study about the elements of the poem which are thought to be therapeutic.
The primary elements of the poem

Affective and Cognitive Synthesis.

The major themes of poetry and psychotherapy are love, pain, beauty, tragedy, and the human potential for health and development. Poetry and therapy have in common, also, words. Poetry is the language of experience, and psychotherapy is primarily a process of talking about experience as it is felt, thought, and acted out. Poetry and therapy are processes of awareness: a fresh way of looking at things. Stainbrook (1978) said that feelings of hysterical joy, abject despair, panic, or blind rage must be transformed into cognitive and linguistic behavior if they are to result in changes in the attitudes and values that are assumed to underlie behavior. He emphasized the necessity to give up the long-held dichotomies of feeling/intellect, thought/emotion, and rational/irrational. Cognition and feeling come together with language and logic for evolving, symbolizing human beings. He emphasized the cognitive and linguistic properties of poetry that make it a vehicle for aesthetic organization from which readers can feel thoughts and imagery, and imagine and think feelings.

The connection of thoughts and feelings with words discriminates poetry therapy from music, art, or other creative arts therapies. Poetry therapy is a highly cognitive, as well as affective, therapeutic technique. Therefore, the conception of cognitive/affective synthesis
and how this may be accomplished are of primary importance in the choice of method and poetry for this kind of integration.

The affective tone of unconscious wishes or feelings is communicated to the reader via the poem or in relationship to the therapist in this safe sharing situation of psychotherapy, whether it happens alone, in groups, or with another person who is a designated psychotherapist. But it is not only the feeling aspects of communication, but also the cognitive states of reader and therapist that are shared. It is in this synthesis of cognitive and affective states that the process of resymbolization, restructuring, and reformulating takes place in a dialectical fashion, and psychic integration occurs on a higher level.

Cognition and language use (especially as image, symbol, and metaphor) are inextricably related to feeling. Tompkins (1980) said that the primary goal of poetry until the last hundred years, to move the feelings or affect, fell into disfavor because literary critics wanted to adopt the scientific methodology of detachment and objectivity. She asserted that emotions are the primary data of reading experience whether emotions occurred before, after, or simultaneously with cognition. Some literary critics such as Bleich proceeded on the basis that cognition came prior to feelings, and still others, such as Davis, felt that the reader responded first to the symbolic action of a poem with
a feeling and after that a thought. So, the primary response of the reader seems to be rather an arbitrary determination; however, traditionally, poetry therapists have valued poetry for the way it intensifies feeling and provides catharsis.

Affective functions: intensification of feeling

Non-verbal creative arts therapies such as music, movement, and art therapies traditionally have focused on the intensification and release of feeling as the primary goals of therapy. The idea that an art form can effect feelings and thoughts was expressed by Aristotle in *The Poetics*. McKinney (1976) questioned whether the release of tension in catharsis is temporary or whether it permanently influences thoughts and behavior. Lesser (1962), a psychoanalyst and literary critic, believed that literature often left readers purged and refreshed. Leedy (1973) and Lerner (1978) especially emphasized the utility of poetry to help synthesize and synergize feelings, cleanse the reader of unwanted, painful grief, depression, hostility, and suicidal feelings. Pietropinto (1973) and Ciardi (1975) found poetry useful to impart joy, as well.

Catharsis

Edgar (1979) emphasized the cathartic, healing aspects of unwanted emotions being brought into awareness, endured, and expressed as a result of poetry's ability to tap the
repressed. Repressed anger and rage that are left unexpressed lead to symptom formation. Poetry was thought to assist in ventilating such emotions in a safe manner so that psychological and physiological balance could be restored (Heniger, 1978). Griffin (1980) said that emotionally sick people who are afraid of what their feelings or other people's feelings have done to them need to be reassured that it is not inevitably dangerous to experience their feelings. Luber's (1978) study illustrated numerous examples of participants' poems representing specific expression of affect and discharge of feeling in catharsis.

Some of the themes were: frustration over existential problems and lack of psychosocial, financial, intellectual, and interpersonal resources, loneliness, identity loss, lack of meaning, achievement, material acquisition, or religious faith.

Research, however, has failed to confirm the fact that catharsis alone resulted in mood change. (Tedford & Synott, 1972; Luber, 1976 and 1978; Nichols and Efran, 1985). Yalom (1975), found that catharsis itself was inadequate to bring about any therapeutic change, and advocated group therapy to intensify the fusion of catharsis and insight that comes from interpersonal learning. Various poetry therapists acknowledged the necessity for intensification of feeling and catharsis to be parts, not the whole, of the poetry
therapy process, because there was no evidence that poetry by itself accomplished any therapeutic change (Berry, 1978a; McKinney, 1975). Nevertheless, catharsis continues to be an important therapeutic goal of poetry therapists for healing emotional blocks, providing systemic relief, relieving stress, releasing energy for more productive use, and weakening repression as a defense mechanism.

Because catharsis is inadequate to purge or relieve persons of painful feelings once they have come into consciousness, or guide them toward more healthy feelings, attitudes, or behavior, other poetry therapists have voiced the need to synthesize emotional experience and cognitive insight (Heniger, 1970; Lesser, 1966; and Berry, 1978a).

Cognitive elements

The poetic control of cognitive and affective elements traditionally has been derived from the conceptual influence of psychoanalysis which focused on the power of artistic creations such as poetry to elicit information from unconscious and preconscious processes and translate them into communicable thought. Recent practice of psychology has emphasized the primacy of cognition (Lazarus 1984). Recent theory in poetry therapy has often centered on consciousness rather than repressed content. Poetry therapists assert that cognition is accomplished best through the elicitation and communication of linguistic
symbolizations and metaphors in the poetry therapy experience. The cognitive processes include representing, storing, transforming, creating, and communicating sensory and affective experience. In this way, emotion, cognition, and poetic imagery coalesce toward the creation or recreation of the reader's personal meaning and values.

Cognitive properties of image, symbol, metaphor and defense

While the cognitive and affective components of poetry are intertwined, the distinguishing properties of poetry lie in their ability to elicit thoughts and feelings by way of images, symbols, and metaphors from poetry which cannot be accomplished in the same sense through the reading or writing of prose. Little in the literature of poetry therapy can be found that tells what or how these properties work to create a cognitive/affective synthesis, inasmuch as they do not discriminate among these figurative terms or relate them to cognitive or affective responses. The reason for this may be that such a study poses too many phenomenological questions not readily addressed by present methodologies.

According to Holman (1972), an image is a literal and concrete representation of a sensory experience of object. In poetry, an image is used to communicate the richness and emotional complexity of sense experience. Images may have a common meaning or a rich or unlimited subjective
associational value. All language is symbolic, but a symbol in literature functions differently from an image because it goes beyond the literal and sensual properties of image and points to subjective meaning. Metaphor is different still in the sense that it implies an analogy between the emotional or imaginative qualities of one idea or object and another in order to convey a truth not communicable by any other means. When a metaphor performs this function, it may become a symbol. The entire nature of language is metaphorical, but metaphor itself has been shunned by psycholinguists as a subject for study. Metaphor has been thought to lower defensiveness (Gore, 1977), used to examine cognitive capability (Suit and Paradise, 1985), viewed as a catalyst for insight and problem-solving (Verbrugge, 1977; Pollio, 1982) and as a symptom of psychopathology (Forrest, 1965; Laing, 1969; and Arieti, 1976;). Metaphor is basically a catalyst for change in understanding, but it is used differently by different people (McMullen, 1985). As such, it deserves closer scrutiny in terms of its use in poetry therapy and implications for poetry selection. The role of images and symbols to promote rapid associations and to direct verbal processes has been accepted by some researchers, but historically has been ignored.

Philosophers from Aristotle on recognized that figurative language such as metaphor could produce great insights, but also insinuate ideas which create passions
that mislead the judgement. Developmental theorists saw early processes of cognitive growth characterized by metaphoric and fused thought processes which were later followed by logical, linear, language-based cognition (Miller, 1982). In the 1970's, linguists became more interested in metaphor and its significance for imagination, perception, language comprehension and artistic expression, however, educators who knew that problems in reading and writing often involved poetic or metaphorical language gave little attention to these, relegating them strictly to the study of poetry.

The function of metaphor in the development of meaning and values through the connection of conscious and unconscious elements has been accepted but rarely studied (Feinstein, 1982 and 1985; Roloff, 1983) because researchers emphasized the cognitive over the affective, the conscious over the unconscious, as the primary aspects of metaphorical thinking.

None of the psycholingistic models provides a satisfactory account of language from a psychological viewpoint. The process of studying the cognitive aspects of linguistics is very complex and not as amenable to direct investigation as it would seem. Chomsky (1965) suggested that internal states be considered in the study of language behavior. Honek and Hoffman (1980) also emphasized the internal states that the comprehender experiences as he/she
constructs meaning. Psycholinguistics does not lead to unambiguous statements about the verbal meaning of a sentence.

Available theories of language structure and processing have not yet captured the relationship between literature and figurative meaning, cognition, and affect. Analysis of metaphorical structures make assumptions about the psychological processes in metaphor users and researchers as well, for example, that they have learned a limited set of metaphoric classifications deemed culturally appropriate and culturally valued. For the most part, as "natural" as metaphorical thought is in everyday conscious or unconscious processes, researchers previously decided to define it as deviant and relegate it to art and psychopathology (Miller, 1982).

There is much suggestion that the creation of metaphor is natural to infants (Vygotsky, 1962; Siomopoulos, 1977), to clients in therapy (Mathews and Dardeck 1985), and reflects the originality with which one alters one's way of structuring reality (Wittgenstein, 1969 and 1953; Whorf, 1956). Because metaphor extends language, it extends the boundaries of insight and generates new concepts. Metaphors are indispensable for many cognitive and affective functions, even those that involve the intuitive thinking processes of scientific conceptualizations (Bronowski, 1958; Royce 1967). Some believe cognition is a precondition for
emotion (Lazarus, 1984).

Miller (1982) implied that all thought is metaphor because all thought required classifying, perceiving or making relationships between dissimilarities. Metaphor was even more economical than the "scientific method" of logical, linear, language based cognition. Miller related poetic metaphors to the "dream's economy" because of their elements of condensation and disguise. The ordinary language of prose, on the other hand, was viewed as repetitious and redundant. Poetry was "pure language," and so approximated "pure thought." Language might obstruct thinking, but metaphorical (poetic) thinking would create understanding (Lakeoff and Johnson, 1986).

Although researchers have acknowledged the inner/outer, private/social relationships of language to thought and thought to motivation and values, few have studied the ways that either language or thought are determined by values. To poetry therapist Shiryon (1977) the meaning one gives to a poem or image, symbol, or metaphor of which a poem is made reflects the core of one's belief system (values). Feinstein (1982, 1985) stated that metaphor was an active shaper of meaning:

... metaphor generates new associations, thus tapping new, different, or deeper levels of meaning ... in so doing, it reorganizes and vivifies, paradoxically condenses and expands, and synthesizes elements that are often disparate. (p.157)
Metaphor is needed to convey experience and meaning because feeling forms and discursive forms are logically incommensurate, she says. Poets, through the use of metaphor, especially, confront the limits of language because poets are engaged in a constant battle to say what cannot be said (Romano, 1980).

From time to time, it has been recognized that cognitive and affective states were parallel in development. Vygotsky (1962) emphasized that thought processes are not separate from personal needs and values, and should not be studied as such. For the most part, however, linguists have attempted to study language acquisition as a learned system of signs unrelated to meaning or values. Some, such as Saussure (1907–1911, 1916), viewed language as multivariate in nature and as a physical, physiological, mental, individual, and social act. He recognized language as a social institution and system of values. It has been a long time since Saussure postulated this and few have followed in this paradigm.

Cognitive and affective synthesis takes place within a language system whose values dictate and are communicated in the process of language acquisition. It is a value choice not to include poetic language within the scope of investigation.

In an inclusive definition, one that is congruent with phenomenological and feminist perspectives, Barthes (1978)
proposed a semiological definition of language. His definition comprised verbal and non-verbal language, imagery, gestures, sounds, and the complex interaction of all these which determine meaning and form the context of conventional use. Barthes suggested that language and, by extension, the study of it, is elaborated not by the speaking mass, but by a "deciding group" in a unilateral decision. Users might follow the language, but have no part in its elaboration. They are bound by certain principles of sociability and an inability to communicate anything except their eccentricities, unless they conform.

Barthes stated that changes might take place in the language system when certain conditions arise such as new needs, ideologies, and "the imagination of an epoch." Feminists have attempted to appeal to the imagination of this epoch to recognize the patriarchal values inherent in the structure of the language system, but have not succeeded to the point that they are the speaking mass or deciding group.

The defensive functions of poetry

Meaning (feeling, thought, or action responses) are often not articulated because they are hidden from experience by mechanisms of defense. The utilization of poetry in therapy historically has centered on the facilitating nature of poetic language to circumvent
defenses, allay anxiety, and promote well-being. Defensive behavior does not involve conscious thought, it is unconscious, pre-verbal, and unverbalized.

Shiryon said that the functions of poetry therapy were to examine the defenses which inhibit personal feeling or functioning, to take a second look at one's beliefs and values, and to lower the natural resistance to examining these. Literature creates a safe distance from which to view oneself, but allows for maximum involvement at the same time through identification with characters, ideas, and emotional experiences. Thus it reduces the difficulty of making the transition from objective to subjective meaning after which insight could come. This concept of defense has been articulated by Weiss (1971, 1972) and Jaskowski (1980), too.

Shiryon pointed to the metaphor as the major defensive agent in poetry. The use of metaphor allowed the readers to take safe risks or defend themselves without relying solely on the therapist for assistance. He said that the defensive aspects of poetry therapy could reduce the time spent in psychotherapy because the more traditional methods necessitate a very direct look at the ideas and beliefs which have constituted and perpetuated crippling anxiety and generated even more fears and resistances. Shiryon believed poetry to be a non-directive natural medium for therapy because it relaxed the defenses so the therapist did not
have to cut down and break through resistances.

Form also was thought to contribute to the defensive function of poetry. Genre and other stylistic devices such as tone and point of view could direct the dynamics of response toward involvement, synthesis and integration. These minimize anxiety.

For example, Lesser (1962) said that in comedy, attention was displaced onto the level of language; in tragedy, distance was provided by the language because of the greatness of the anxiety potential. Because figurative language is naturally ambiguous and has many layers of meaning, it conceals much from the consciousness which would be too threatening if it emerged in direct form, but it also communicates anxiety provoking information to the unconscious.

Holland (1979) believed that the literary devices of form and texture allowed readers to set up defenses to control and limit the range of affective and cognitive responses, to the extent that their control was virtually unlimited. Rosenblatt, Bleich, and Davis, and some feminist critics, did not so strictly limit the reader's ability to get beyond the poem's defensive structure.

The concept of form or the differentiation between the effects of form vs content were vague and contradictory in the literature. Form was viewed as a defensive mechanism or structure that allowed in-depth participation, but it was
not only the poem which provided structure. Form and unity were properties not only of the poem but also of the reader's structuring, forming, unifying activities under the guidance of the poem (Rosenblatt, 1978). The poetry allowed the reader to become as close to or as distanced from the material as was helpful. Thus defended, readers might examine values, attitudes and situations for the first time. They could make new and unexpected connections and decisions in creative acts or see analogies in a novel fashion.

Because poetry is a distillation of affect and cognition, it aids in the release of unconscious and conscious material to which the reader may give new meaning. Because poetry deals in images, symbols, and metaphors, the meaning of a poem may be ambiguous and so allow self-probing and self-understanding without endangering self-preservation. Healthy response patterns may be evoked and strengthened, perceptions and reality merged, and conditioned responses challenged by the heightened sensitivity and insight of the poet.

Recent research does not support the hypothesis that literary devices limit the poet or reader or direct the dynamics of response. Reader-response or subjective literary critics indicate that the creative drive toward originality cannot be contained within the boundaries of form or content. Therefore, the original creative responses of the individual have become of greater interest to the
researcher. At the same time, creative responses become of great concern because of the disruptive, disorganizing aspects of literature and the fear among therapists as well as clients that the unconscious will erupt beyond control of either.

The fact that literature has had powerful disordering effects on people's lives has led many to associate artistic creativity with neurosis or insanity: As Slatoff said:

Little of our work contemplates the extent to which most of our greatest literature involves a disordering as well as ordering of experience and the extent to which the life and power and even form of a work may come from that disordering or from the very struggle or even failure of the artist to provide order. (p. 14)

These fears have led to the tightening of disciplinary lines around those who feel only psychotherapists should be allowed to us the tool of poetry. There is a disquieting feeling among poetry therapists who feel as the psychoanalytic therapists do, that it is easier to transmit regressive forms of communication through poetry than it is to create healthy alternatives. It is such concerns with the power of poetry through image, symbol, metaphor, rhythm, tone, and so on, to create chaos and exacerbate emotion that has caused The National Poetry Therapy Association to set strict standards for the practice of poetry therapy.

Several poetry therapists are concerned about the therapist's ability to facilitate responses arising from the poem and the reader's interaction which encourages
exploration of feeling, depth, and range of emotional response and release of feelings (Rubin, 1978; Hynes, 1986; Lerner, 1978). Basic questions of credentials and authority seem to center around the disordering effects of poetry rather than the effects of creative synthesis. They seem to involve strongly held traditional beliefs that the unconscious (latent) content of people and poems should be censored and untapped, but these values are more often held by psychoanalytic than other poetry therapists.

Most poetry therapists are in consensus that the poem and the participant can be trusted to make something creative and healing happen in the process of reading or writing a poem, that the ability is primarily unconscious or preconscious thought processes, and these processes are, at base, healthy, creative, and self-actualizing. Differences in beliefs about unconscious processes are rarely articulated among poetry therapists. Of those suggested, basic differences can be found in the question of whether the creative process itself is a healthy or disease process belonging to conscious ego striving or to the mysterious and suspect realm of the Unconscious. To some theorists, such distinction would be artifacts of the dichotomous nature of Western thought.
The creative process

The creative process remains somewhat mysterious, but is of great importance to any theory of poetry therapy or psychology. The mystery of creativity reflects the basic confusion of mental disease and mental health. Practitioners will adhere to a theory or method which best represents their thinking about these two concepts and they will be reflected in the therapists' research methodology or practical techniques. Without clear criteria for mental disease or health, each practitioner will establish treatment goals and outcome criteria consistent with his or her own theory.

Literary artists and critics such as Poe and Coleridge viewed the creative process as highly rational. They saw a poem as a consciously crafted entity. Creativity has been defined primarily as stages of cognition: gathering information, making rapid associations, conscious or unconscious reworking of the information or idea, a coming together of cognitions in the form of a product, and a final revision that is congruent with a specific goal (Rothenberg and Hausman, 1976).

Psychologists such as Maslow and Rogers elaborated the definition of creativity to comprise more than a product or goal. Maslow defined it as encompassing psychological development, activities, values, and attitudes or motivations for behavior. His definition emphasized the
person, rather than the product, the attributes of openness to experience, flexibility, spontaneity, expressiveness, curiosity, self-esteem, the ability to reconcile opposites such as feeling and cognition, non-conformity, self-acceptance, and courage.

A primary motivation to create has been offered by Shactel (1976), and Rogers, (1954) as the need to relate to one's world in some meaningful fashion, particularly through artistic products. Rogers defined creativity also in terms of individual psychological characteristics such as openness to experience, the ability to "play" with elements and concepts, to juxtapose improbable equivalents. He stated as the most important aspects of creativity an inner locus of control and evaluation or judgement. The necessary conditions of creativity are psychological safety or self-acceptance of worth, a climate where external evaluation is absent, where empathic understanding is present and complete freedom for symbolic expression exists. These conditions are taken from Roger's experience in psychotherapy.

Research on creativity, especially literary creativity, has centered on the person, the product, and the process (Rothenberg and Hausman, 1976), or the person, the text, and the poem (Rosenblatt, 1978). For example, the personality attributes of creative persons have been investigated (MacKinnon, 1962; Barron, 1973, 1957, 1953; Guilford, 1967; Getzels and Jackson, 1962, 1960). Kris (1952), Crews,
(1970, 1975), Kubie (1958), and Ehrensweig (1971, 1965) are some of the authors who have focused on the creative process. Various philosophers, aesthetes, and some subjective critics and post-structuralists have explored all three: the person, the process, and the product. Not all three are equally amenable to investigation, however. For example, creativity does not always result in a valued creative project.

Not all novel creations are truly new or creative in the sense that they have enlisted all of the creator's capacities in the process. Not all creative persons are artists or creative geniuses. Psychologists Maslow, Rogers, May (1975), and Torrence (1954) view creativity as creative problem-solving of which even "normal" people can partake.

Creativity has been correlated with positive measures of mental health. Researchers found that creative persons were healthier and more self-confident (Garfield, et. al., 1967). MacKinnon (1961) reported the creative person as being more flexible, independent, and self-accepting. Getzels and Jackson (1960, 1962) found creative persons "more stimulus free" and "less categorical" than non-creative people. The assumptions about creativity have moved from the position that it is related to neurosis to a position that creativity is a major distinguishing characteristic of healthy persons.

Freud considered creative activities more a form of defense-sublimation or mastery of instinctual, anti-social
impulses. As time went on, other psychopathological processes such as displacement, projection, reaction formation, introjection, and repetition compulsion were attributed to the creation of artistic works, including poetry. Freud's emphasis was on the poet's motivation and not the product. Freud's (1914) study, "The Moses of Michangelo," was an explication of his method. Unfortunately for Freud, the power of the sculpture to move observers was still "an unsolved riddle," even though he felt he had resolved the question of the artist's intention. Freud's central work in regard to poetry probably is "The Relation of Poetry to Day Dreaming" (1908).

While Freud dwelt more on the neurotic components of artistic creativity, Jung was proposing a more expansive model. Jung emphasized the impossibility of employing a single method of finding causal connections between an artistic product and the process of artistic creation. Whereas Freud saw a cause and effect relationship between artistic products and the psychological processes of the artist, Jung declared that the creative act was much more complex. He also emphasized the differences of approach between the psychologist's examination of a literary work and that of a literary critic; the psychologist focused on the psychic disposition of the poet, whereas the literary critic focused on the work of art in the most elemental sense; however, both cross over these disciplinary lines in
a myriad of ways. Jung's central work in this regard is probably "On the Relation of Analytic Psychology to Poetry" (1922). Jung found the creative process so mystifying that he drew upon his concept of the Collective Unconscious in order to distinguish its richness from Freud's concept of art arising only in the personal unconscious of its creator. Even so, Jung did not explicate the observer's response to the artistic work.

Adler (1927) took the position that the verbal-symbolic response of the individual was a most important class of human responses because he believed that it was through symbols and language that we develop interpersonal relationships, a point later expounded by Siomoupolis (1977). It was the poet's utilization of symbolic language that Adler admired the most, because he believed that the artist had the greatest insight into absolute truth.

Rothenberg (1972) was among the earliest poetry therapists to describe some components of the creative processes involved in poetry and psychotherapy: both are verbal communication modes, both aim toward conscious insight, catharsis, dream-thought, free-association, and transcendence. He cited, from his own experiments with leading poets of the United States, the components of their poetic processes as they experienced them. These were similar to Mooney's (1953), Rosenblatt's (1978), and Hynes' (1986). The poets investigated stated that the poetic
process begins not with "inspiration," but with a feeling of tension of heightened emotion associated with the impending breakthrough of preconscious or unconscious material and an attempt to defend against this. The tension might not be relieved until hours or weeks later when even the poet (as the patient in therapy) has had to wait to find out what the poem or tension meant. This moment when tension is relieved is described as the moment of catharsis and/or psychological insight where preconscious and unconscious material are creatively assimilated consciously by the ego.

From his studies, Rothenberg concluded that poems begin in a state of conflict, but end in a state of knowing how the poet stands in relation to that conflict. The poetic process often starts with an image or metaphor for the internal state of the poet which may either defend against the underlying aspects or reveal them in fullness. However, the material is only partly defended against and enough tension is left over "to stimulate discharge through the creative process." The defense itself also provided gratification. It allowed the pursuit of fantasy. "Inspiration" might occur later on in the process of the poem as a dramatic "aid" to working with deeper levels of consciousness.

Verbalizing this as a "disease process," however, Rothenberg concludes that interception and inspiration, as constituents of the poetic process, are analogous to
"symptoms." So it is with psychotherapy; it is often viewed as beginning with a complex of symptoms—anxieties and defenses. As such, these are gratifying in their own way because they reduce anxiety, but are also painful enough to induce the client to move on toward a better solution. If insight were achieved, the symptoms (and the poem) might recede from significance. If full insight were not achieved, however, the poet (or the patient) could return again and again to the same image or metaphor in a kind of "repetition compulsion." Rothenberg's logic leads to the conclusion that the creative processes of poem-making and psychotherapy are the same.

However, poems are not just psychological sublimations or symptoms and resolutions. Psychological symptoms reflect habitual stimulus-response modes of experiencing, not creative synthesizing (Hynes, 1986). The reader may return to a poem again and again because it contains, in its images and metaphors, many undiscovered possibilities for being. The potential for increased insight is always there, and the poem takes on new significance with each new reading. The poem attracts; the symptom compels. Various therapists view schizophrenia and the language that often accompanies it as a chosen strategy for expressing the particular alienation they feel. Laing (1967) believed that all language, including schizophrenics', was purposeful and goal-directed, and not necessarily a symptom of illness or madness at all.
Such differences in conceptual frameworks seems to result from the attempt to fit healthy, creative, and possible "normal" thought processes into an historic, but no longer very defensible psychoanalytic disease model of mental and emotional functioning where all creative strivings are mere sublimations or other mechanisms defending against unacceptable impulses. There does seem to be some areas of common agreement about the creative process, however.

Mooney (1953), over thirty years ago, suggested some twenty postulations that seem to be congruent with contemporary poetry therapists such as Hynes (1986) and affirm creativity as a transactive, self-actualizing process. They include the primacy of feeling, heightening of sense awareness, an open, non-defensive, interactional stance to what is outside awareness, a restructuring of past experience in some kind of progression (not regression), and a value of experiencing. This experience is valued as revelation, discovery, and invention toward a new construction of reality. A reorganizing of values and relationships occurs in an all-at-once gestalt from the transaction between the "outside" with the "inside."

Mooney also stated that the creative process, like the psychotherapeutic process usually started in some state of confusion, conflict, splitting, anxiety, and anticipation. Next, these are ordered, dichotomies synthesized, and
paradoxes resolved in a process catalyzed by the self-system. The process and the self are limited, however, as a painter is limited by the canvas, a poet by the form of the poem, and the thinker, by the structure of thought.

Khatena (1969, 1972, 1975) provided documentation about creative thinking and imagination as "normal" phenomena. He also emphasized language as the hallmark of creative imagination, but he did not couple creative imagination with psychopathology. His thesis was that creativity or originality (terms he uses interchangeably), were the result of the power of the imagination to break away from the perceptual set so as to restructure new associations, ideas, thoughts, and feelings into novel ones—a metaphorical, poetic process. Khatena and Torrence (1973) thought that creativity occurred in the preconscious where images and associations are changed into verbal output.

Khatena (1968) illustrated how five strategies that "normal" people use increased original image production. These were: (1) breaking away from the obvious and commonplace, (2) transposition, (3) analogy, (4) restructuring, and (5) synthesis. These are somewhat similar to Hynes' (1986), Rosenblatt's (1978), and Mooney's (1953) formulations of the poetic process. Khatena's conclusions were that the "common person" could be stimulated to produce highly original verbal images; therefore, less creative people and highly creative people,
alike, could benefit from training in the creative, poetic process. One reason "normal" people seemed not to develop their creative potential was that they did not receive adequate reinforcement for doing so. Currently, most poetry therapists reinforce the participant's creative as well as disorganizing functions during the poetic process.

To Hynes (1986) the creative process climax ed in poetry therapy where the concern was not with an artistic product or achievement, but with the process of creative growth:

Whenever an individual makes a new and unexpected connection among attitudes, feelings, or experiences—a connection that results in personal growth or feeling—that person has engaged in a creative act.... The (poetry) therapist is facilitating the essential link between the recognition and examination of an idea or feeling, and its application to the inner self.... The language of literature is the catalytic tool that initiates the creative process. (p. 56).

She outlined the creative process of poetry therapy as being one of recognition, examination, juxtaposition, self-application, analysis and synthesis. Values, attitudes, situations, and actions would be recognized and examined for the first time, perhaps. People would make new and unexpected connections among juxtapositions and decisions—both creative acts. They would see analogies in novel fashion.

Self-application refers to the reader's judgement about and integration of new feelings or values. Analysis and synthesis refers to the process of dividing a feeling or idea into parts and seeing their relation to the whole
response. Synthesis occurs as images, emotion and responses are combined, healthy thought patterns are evoked and strengthened, and differences between perceptions and reality merge. Choices and alternatives become more easily recognized. Conditioned response is challenged as cognitive dissonances or tensions are elicited. These are, however, experienced in protected situations and at an "artistic distance," so that the reader is able to preserve the integrity of the ego.

In such analyses of the creative process, one can see all modes of thought described by Davis (1978): the logistic, problematic, operational, and dialectic. However, such inclusive analyses have not considered creativity in women as it has been presented historically, and particularly in its socio-cultural and phenomenological implications.

The creative processes in women

Arnheim (1977) said that the use of the arts in therapy required a norm image of the kind of man to be striven for: the "end product" of creative arts therapies. In response to Arnheim's statement, one must acknowledge that most of what we believe about creative processes are centered in male-dominate perspectives. Moreover, adult women traditionally have not been taken seriously in psychology or literary criticism, as "the kind of norm image or person to
be striven for." There are few models for creative women that involve strength and endurance (Cohn, 1983). The female socialization process does little to promote the idea that women can be creative. For example, Sang (1981) says:

...creativity involves the ability to go beyond the known, to take risks, to be autonomous, and to seek adventure -- most women have been trained to value security, conformity, mediocrity, and social approval. (p. 42)

Sang cites various research that supports the hypotheses that women are innately inferior to men in creativity, and similar hypotheses underly the majority of theories regarding personality development generally (Castellejo, 1973; Greenacre, 1971).

Certain creative qualities are viewed as threatening to women, such as competence, independence, and mastery (Hoffman, 1972; Alper, 1974). Several studies show that women who are impulsive, rebellious, and rejecting of outside influence are more likely to show creative achievement (Bachtold and Werner, 1970, 1972; Helson, 1972). Sang states that this means that for women to engage in creative endeavor's they must deviate from the social norm for women. She cites other existential reasons why women themselves do not think they are creative: the educational establishment does not consider women seriously creative, and they rarely see women in creative and innovative roles. Women have more limited opportunities to present their work (Chicago, 1975). Time constraints of women are not
conducive to creativity because women are socialized to think of others before themselves, and do not find it easy to set limits on the demands imposed by their environments (Sarton, 1973; Adams, 1974).

Because women are socialized to be "other-directed" rather than "inner-directed," it is difficult for them to accept the idea that creativity is a personal constituent of every female's selfhood. Some researchers have documented a high degree of originality in women's artistic creations when they can exercise their creativity in socially acceptable ways, for example, in the composition and design of samplers and quilts (Dewhurst, MacDowell, and MacDowell, 1979). But it is more difficult to defy socialization. Even women experiencing a certain degree of creative success feel isolated, unable to share their creative thoughts and feelings, fearing disapproval as they do, and rarely having a mentor to affirm their creativity.

The process of women's creative development needs further investigation, because current research among creative artists who are female suggests many problems indigenous to the common condition of being socialized into gender, and experiencing social and institutional constraints (Helson). It seems reasonable to assume that even "non-artistic" women could benefit from such research.
Sang says:

"...there are many forces, some of them subtle, and some of them fairly obvious, which make it more difficult for women to use their creative potential. Many women, unaware of these forces, tend to blame themselves for their failures, and in doing so preclude the possibility of making the changes necessary for their own growth and development. (p. 48)"

According to most researchers, women who create are viewed as not having the right to create, creativity in the artistic sense being a male domain (Bernard, 1964). At the same time, women push creatively beyond the boundaries of their prescriptive role in spite of institutional and personal barriers (Guber, 1981; Ozick, 1969; Nochlin, 1971; Chicago, 1975). Sang said that when women have attempted to create within the boundaries of social acceptance, they have had to draw on their personal experience as women and fuse it with the creative task. Their art is then in touch with inner vitality and passion which are basic components of creativity.

However, Sang assumes that most women are not in tune with themselves, that they do not know how to pace themselves, that they do not have discipline and self-direction, are not able to set goals, do not possess the playfulness or spontaneity that male creative types have, that they are more product-oriented than process-oriented, and are unable to make long-range commitments to their work because of a distaste for drugery and hard work. She thinks women who would attempt to be creative become easily
discouraged when they encounter the difficulties of creation. She seems to take the by now unsupported view that women have a fear of success, as well.

Sang's conclusion is that there are many forces subtle and obvious which make it more difficult for women to use their creative potential. She does not seem to recognize that her subtle assumptions undermine women's experience. She fails to recognize that women regularly face the existential problems of ordinary existence that require self-awareness, spontaneity, discipline, self-direction, goal-setting, and so on. Nor does she emphasize the overt cultural and social obstructions that militate against women's ability to exercise their creative functions and be recognized for them. Although these factors were brought out in the earlier writings of the women's liberation movement, they sometimes had the same condescending, discounting flavor toward women's experience Atkinson-Lyndon, 1977).

Cohn (1983) studied women artists in therapy and believed the process common to them was one of self-actualization which Cohn viewed as an interaction between the social, cultural, and personal. She found that the need for self-expression was often felt as a threat to personality by women artists because it created a conflict between that need and her prescribed social roles.

Cohn outlined three stages toward self-actualization
through which a woman artist must pass: (1) avoidance of the conflict by totally internalizing the cultural role prescriptions for being a "good woman," totally absorbed in her family, or by rejection this role totally; (2) displacement of the conflict where women begin the self-doubting process and suspect their inner motivation to work productively. This leads to more self-doubt and a belief that they will fail. This conflict may put them through emotional collapse and send them into therapy. The third stage (3) is resolution where women may find renewed confidence in their ability to fuse the personal with the artistic, to see themselves less as woman, more as artist.

The woman artist therapeutically can be enabled to recognize the social myths surrounding women and creativity, for example, that the obstacles to creativity lie within her rather than in her delimiting social position. Cohn believes that women have an inner reality to communicate to others, a depth of perception and understanding of life unique to their experiences as women.

So far, the review of related literature has touched on similarities and contrasts from an interdisciplinary point of view, in the relationship of psychology to literature. It has covered general assumptions about the psychology of the reader and writer, the functional properties of the poem, and some observations about creative process particularly in poetry therapy. The assumptions about
creativity in women complicate the understanding of the effects of poetry therapy because they introduce the concept of gender differences in the reader's or writer's responses to literature. Some examples:

(a) Does poetry have a gender?
(b) Is poetry supposed to express universal experience and, if so, is women's experience to be found universally in historical records, past literary history, or contemporary works?
(c) Are standards for judging women's poetry the same as those for judging men's works, and if so, how has this affected the selection of poetry from the accepted canons of literature?
(d) Does "good" poetry focus on women's experience, on their divergence from men, or on men's experience of women; can "sexist" poetry be "good literature?"
(e) Is woman's poetry more or less complex, diffuse, rich, than men's art, and, if so, what implications does this have for poetry selection in therapy?

In terms of these questions and their relationship to poetry selection for women, the investigation of literature and sexual differences may help in an attempt to generalize theoretically to participants in therapy. These questions arise directly from the theoretical basis of feminist literary criticism.

Feminist criticism: gender issues in poetry therapy

Traditionally, neither psychologists or poetry therapists have considered gender as a significant factor in research or practice. In the past ten years, feminist psychologists and literary critics have gathered strong support for their proposition that gender effects language acquisition and, therefore, the writing, reading, and
experiencing of literature. Many critics have raised the issue of differences in the ways men and women utilize language (Daly, 1978, 1985; Valian, 1978), in the ways they think (Jagger, 1978; Miller and Swift, 1977) and in the says women verbally define their values (Bartky, 1975). Others have demonstrated that women's writings often express perceptual organizations different from men's (Millett, 1969; Daly, 1985; Woolf, 1956).

Women's reading and writing take place in a psychological context which incorporates the experience of sex and gender and also assumptions about femininity, female language development, socialization, and education founded on male paradigms. These factors include the conscious and unconscious images, symbols, and metaphors that make up the thinking process. Some of women's reading and writing differences may reflect what feminist critics call their generalized literary and linguistic disadvantages which are maintained and mediated by male-dominated institutions, including familial and educational. These are augmented by the disadvantages of race, class and sexual orientation of women (Gardiner 1982; Bulkin, 1982; Patterson, 1982; and Smith, 1982).

On the other hand, contemporary women's readings and writings may, in the hands of aware readers and critics, reveal their intuitive more or less "pure" phenomenological perceptions of female experience, (Kolodny, 1981). An
exploration of female experience in either psychology or literature requires new paradigms and methods free of sexist bias (Register, 1975). Readers will not know what female experience really is until, as Woolf said, women have expressed themselves in all the professions open to human skill. Neither the professions of literary criticism nor psychology have been very much open to women.

Women and sexist language

Feminists believe that there are particularly unlikely to arrive at a purely female aesthetic when the language of poetry that communicates feelings, thoughts, its forms, images, metaphors, and so on, are not their own. The examination of language use is no longer the property only of linguists, but belongs also to psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and feminist studies. In the past ten years, scholars have demonstrated how gender is reflected in and reflects language structure (McKay, 1983; Duffy and Redinger, 1981; Moely and Kreiker, 1984).

Some findings show that the structure of the language may have changed to accommodate federal and other institutional pressure for the use of non-sexist language, and also increase awareness that gender-biased language is usually interpreted to be sexist and discriminatory (Murdock and Forsythe, 1980). The impact of regulation on language, for example in university documents, showed that sex-linked
language had decreased (sex-neutral language had increased) but sex-linked stereotypic designations and evaluation had not decreased over a ten year period). Furthermore, sexist language decreased only where enforcement was strong, particularly by federal regulatory boards, but feminists seem to be able to exert pressure toward language change (Markowitz, 1984).

Showalter (1981) stated that there has always been some concept of a separate, secret women's language that reflected their particular feelings, values, and experiences. Women's language seemed to be "secret" because women were usually not part of the deciding group of social or literary policy makers who control language and literature. Anthropologists have found a sort of secret language when examining a culture from the women's perspective, and so have had to modify their data. Their different language seemed to have arisen out of their need to resist the silence imposed upon them in public life (Pomeroy, 1976).

Yet quantitative linguistic analyses of language texts by either men or women have been ineffective for the reason that most linguistic studies have failed to treat the context and have only treated language apart from the meanings of words, the associations, and even the genres which may arise solely from women's intuitive or private experience.
Some feminist critics speak strongly for the position that readers should be sensitized to the need for a language for women. As Furman (1978) said:

It is through the medium of language that we define and categorize areas of difference and similarity, which in turn allows us to comprehend the world around us. Male-centered categorizations predominate in American English and subtly shape our understanding and perception of reality; this is why attention is increasingly directed to the inherently oppressive aspects for women of a male-constructed language system. (p. 182)

Women learn how to speak and think in male-centered language and logical paradigms, but this feels unnatural to them. Burle (1978) said:

Hence, when a woman writes or speaks herself into existence, she is forced to speak in something like a foreign tongue, a language with which she may be personally uncomfortable. (p. 851)

It has been a concern of many feminist critics to appropriate the language and force it to say what women need for it to say or to find a separate but equal language--a concern still unresolved. Ostriker (1982) approached the problem from the point of view of the genre of poetry and the need to reveal the language so that feminine poetic language is retained, but the images, symbols, or metaphors that are evoked are transformed in the very use. Then they would no longer have their foundations in a collective male fantasy (Friedman, 1975; Griffin, 1978; Sexton, 1971). As Ostriker said:
the verbal strategies these poets use draw attention to the discrepancies between traditional concepts and the conscious mental and emotional activity of female revision. (p. 87)

Feminists see the language structure as a social structure (patriarchal) dramatically affecting their personal and professional lives. Feminist poetry therapists should consider that women's psychic organization, their biology, their linguistic usages, and socialization all effect their responses to a poem. Even as men's responses cannot be predicted from reading male-centered literature, how much more problematic could women's responses be? How could one predict at all?

Gardiner (1981) said that one way to explain differences in the way women read and write is to look at literature from the point of view of women's psychology or identity as presented in their writings. Gardiner sets forth some hypotheses for further study of sex and gender differences in writing, reading and response.

1. The female author is engaged in a process of testing and refining various aspects of identity chosen from many imaginative possibilities, using her writing as a continuing process of self-definition.

2. The female author creates her characters as extensions of herself, her values, and ideals but circumscribed often by literary convention and social reality.
Presumably, the female reader undergoes a somewhat analogous process as she shifts her empathic identifications and both immerses with and separates from the text as she reads. Thus, a process of individuation may occur—a process that is denied, for example, by a paradigm such as Holland's identity theme. Gardiner's theory centers around the theme that bonds between women can be forged through reading and writing about women's experience and psychology because bonds between women structure the deepest levels of female personality. She says:

Contemporary women's literature promises that a sense of full, valued, and congruent female identity may form in the continuing process of give and take that re-creates both self and other in a supportive community of women. (p. 361)

There are several reasons why women's writings may not be able to fulfill this promise. First there is no agreed upon female psychology ideal. Because of literary convention and social reality, women have not recreated a full congruent identity through their writings, particularly their fiction, and the writings they do produce have not been readily accessible. Convention and reality reflect a double standard: where there is a double standard of mental health, as previously noted, there is also a double standard of literary criticism which has relegated women's literary products to a sub-category status. One category is "serious art," and one is "popular art." Women may write "lyric" poetry, but not "epic" poetry. There is a psychological

Gardiner, however, insists that the female reader forms her own identity from the values presented in literature and these values underlie the meaning she gives to her existence and her psychology. Gardiner emphasizes the loss of black, lesbian, and other third-world writers and critics to feminist critical paradigms as additional evidence of sexist, racist bias.

The contemporary writings with which most women are required to identify (chiefly novels) require them to dissociate themselves from the very experience engendered by the literature (Millett, 1969). For example, many male writers produce heroines that depict the "natural inferiority" of women. By ignoring women-to-women bonding, some male writers have emphasized the myth that women cannot trust or have meaningful relationships with each other. Some literature has perpetuated the myth that women's sexual or emotional expression must be linked to self-destruction. By conforming women's rich and diffuse sexuality to male fantasy, female characters are often one-dimensional, primarily determined by sex, instability, irrationality, and martyr-complexes.

Through feminist writings and literary criticism, new themes are emerging which present women as more realistic,
less idealistic. However, their techniques to do this are often oblique, or misunderstood (Kolodny, 1981).

For example, female sexuality is being re-defined due to women's frank exploration of their individual and collective experiences as heterosexual, lesbian, or androgynous persons (Homans, 1985; Libertin, 1977; Rich, 1976). Women are writing against traditional representations of their experience and are refusing to identify with a masculine perception as the universal experience of sex or any other experience. Because of the differences between fiction and poetry and the function of figurative language in either genre, perhaps different responses in readers may have to be investigated by different methods and assumptions from fiction.

The emphasis on gender differences in poetry therapy and psychology could create a greater sense of trust in women's self-perceptions. Self-identity may be enhanced if women's developmental experience is confirmed by what they read about themselves from poetry written by and for women. For example, they might see women's friendships depicted as fulfilling significant emotional needs not now fulfilled in the traditional male/female, mother/child representations. Female readers may share or extend female experience through androgynous and/or utopian feminist literature. Such literature could contribute to self-knowledge and psychic wholeness in a way non-feminist writings often do not.
There is no one female experience, but a collage of many experiences based in individual, gender, class, race, and cultural integration.

The likelihood of writing by and for women receiving wide circulation, however, can be questioned by research in education curriculum materials, such as books, study problems, and visual aids, which teach gender-stereotyping (Jacklin, Heupers, Mischel, and Jacobs, 1972; Seeman, 1974; Kiamar, 1978; Lakoff, 1978; Gaib and Richardson, 1980; Sadker and Sadker, 1980; Cobb, 1982). Such studies demonstrated that females have been under-represented and appear in a significantly different grouping of activities than males in textbooks. Children's dictionaries indicate that boys and girls are being taught separate sets of values, expectations, and goals (Richardson, 1981). Research demonstrates that even the earliest months and years of a child's life are not gender-free. Recent research suggests that institutions of various kinds generate language harmful to feminist perspectives (Ferguson, 1984; Markowitz, 1984).

Toward a feminist aesthetic

A feminist consciousness and aesthetic are important for the selection of poetry for therapy. Feminist values could bring awareness of what it means physically, psychologically, materially, and spiritually to have a female
consciousness, to be a self in a male-centered cultural, literary and psychological system.

The poetry selected would elicit women's phenomenological, intuitive, more or less unmediated experience. It could encourage subjectivity and pride in femininity, whereas traditional literary images are cultural and psychological prescriptions for attitudes and values which often lead to self-doubt and self-denigration.

Literary critics make subjective value judgements, just as psychologists do, thereby limiting the meaning experience can have for women. It is a rare writer or critic who can refrain from creating stereotypical characterizations or motivations. Most feminist critics would agree that the selection of poetry or other literature used in psychotherapy must be based on a raised feminist consciousness and presented with the knowledge that literature generally has failed to create authentic, self-actualizing female characters that could be role models.

An acceptable feminist methodology, then, might be one that unites subjective responses, self-knowledge, and objective "scientific" analysis. Feminist literary criticism, like feminist psychology, repudiates some previous formulations about women (Penelope and Wolfe, 1983; Holly, 1975). It attempts to measure literature and psychology against standards of an authentic female self-actualizing identity not usually presented in those
disciplines, at least not in their research. While it may be true, as Martin (1970) said, that literature should instill a positive sense of identity by portraying women who are self-actualizing, feminist poetry per se has been described as inadequate to resonate with women's private experiences. Women's writing has been criticized as being political, didactic, social commentary (Jong, 1973 and Morgan, 1972), and often reflecting white upper-middle class values.

Some researchers indicate that conflicts among women readers and writers about questions of self-identity frequently have not been discussed in feminist critical scholarship. There is no agreement as to whether explicit feminist poetry is "better" than poetry of women who are not feminists. Burke (1985) and others have emphasized that female poets may use a masculine Persona to evade traditional identifications of feminity. Also others pose the problem of women's search for identity as a wish to find a stable position of female self-hood vs a need to assume a self-in-process. The literary self is not the same as the literal self of female poets; however, the female and the poet are capable of self-transcendence through poetry writing. In the meantime, female poets pass through what Kristeva (1980) called "the crisis or unsettling process of meaning and subject," and writer (and readers) may keep reinventing new personnae for themselves. In this sense,
women's lives can be the source of self-actualizing poetry, if it is published and read by others especially.

Juhasz (1986) has emphasized that a decision to be a poet requires some form of renunciation of the self, usually that of the traditional role of women, even in contemporary feminists writers. She presents a picture of such a writer as Atwood as being continually haunted by the need for connection and love, particularly from a man and child, so the poet adopts the ways of the world and its language in order to remain in it, rather than renunciate it. According to Pope (1984), on the other hand, "self-split" is one category of a poet's development. It is often exhibited as the theme of anger (Ostriker, 1982) about the dualisms of self/other, male/female, which female poets continually must negotiate, as perhaps Atwood has.

Heilbrun and Stimson (1975) also suggested that women could call on their own experience and that of women before them so as not to read in "the accepted way." In order to do this, women readers must find experiences peculiar to women (such as women's rage) that are hidden from or absent in literature. Theoretically, women readers could increase the range of their responses from the depiction of experience and their consequences in literature, whereas it might take years of preaching, advocating, legal maneuvers, or psychotherapy to achieve the same level of insight and action. They could find a new consciousness within the poem,
for example, assimilating attitudes and values that heretofore have limited their view of what might be changed in their lives.

However, as feminist critics have emphasized, a woman's consciousness of her psychological and sociological position often outpaces her possibilities for action, and this could make her feel worse, rather than better about her identity:

The tragic man [the hero] acts before he thinks; the tragic woman [the heroine] thinks and knows that she cannot act. (Holly, p. 68).

Even if a woman knows her equality and worth, she still cannot go into systems and make changes unless she plays by the rules of the game she has no part in making. It would be one task of poetry therapists to help female readers deal with the conflict posed by a raised consciousness and a culturally circumscribed potential for action.

Problems of feminist theory and methodology

As previously noted, there are problems with feminist criticism and methodology. One such problem has been posed by Register (1975) who says that the final test of subjective response to literature by the female reader is whether she recognizes aspects of herself her own experience. But women's experience is varied, and generalizations to all female readers on the basis of what is now known is impossible. Women are estranged from their experience in part because they do not see it in literature
(Showalter, 1971 and 1977), and in part because they rarely discuss it in depth with other women (Gilligan, 1981). Literature presents conflicting roles for women to play out in their natural lives. Showalter said that women readers are given little hope when they are depicted as wasting their lives tied to worthless men or driven to suicide by the very awareness of their position. They vacillate between anger, depression and guilt. These are, of course, the most prominent symptoms of women's "mental illness," and anger is one of the most prominent themes in literature written by women (Ostriker, 1984).

Showlater said that female readers will respond to traditional literature as confirming everything else that society has taught them: that the masculine viewpoint is normative, the feminine viewpoint derivative, and that female experience is peripheral to the central concern of literature—the human (male) condition. Because women writers as well as readers are socialized into stereotypical images of women in literature, it is difficult to decide what is an authentic representation of female experience. Female readers, according to feminist critics, have a need to see their own experiences mirrored in literature, and some have derived a paradigm to help women do this called "prescriptive criticism."

Register said that literature must give an authentic, realistic representation of women's experiences. Firestone
(1971) said that female literature should be personal, emotional, subjective, true to female experience and delivered in non-traditional style and form. Most feminists agree that literature should provide role models that instill a positive sense of femininity by and for women as self-actualizing, whose identities and not dependent on others, especially men. Literature should show women in non-traditional roles.

Some critics believe they can find a multiplicity of distinctive female images in writing relating to self-actualization. Kimball's (1984) overview indicates some patterns in contemporary works: return to the spiritual/mystical wisdom of the prophetess; oneness with nature; anger over powerlessness; search for alternative family structures; and respect for women's actual lives and experiences as the appropriate content of art. Their reclamation of sensuality and concern for wholeness of personality are subjects for women's writings. However, images of confinement, enclosure, pressure, barriers, and constrictions are characterized and as prevalent as those of intimacy, connectedness, familiarity, and female bonding.

Gilbert and Gubar (1980), Showalter (1971), and Gardiner (1981) believed the quest for self-identity, self-realization, or self-actualization is the main theme of women's literature. In this sense literature could offer perceptions that psychology may not. Feminist critics
believe that women poets have a special perspective to offer a woman in her quest for self-identity in its most basic form—gender identity. As Brinkman (1984) said:

Feminists believe that women have been custodians of some special and important values in the world, and that they must become part of the mainstream or dominant culture.... By bringing the traditional strengths of women (nurturance, caregiving, flexibility, responsiveness, relatedness, empathy, depth of feeling, altruism, warmth, creativity, spirituality) from the private to the public arena, there may be a chance to redress the balance that is threatening the world. (p. 61)

Specifically, prescriptive critics believe that women are entitled to read about feminine identity that depicts them as creative, adventurous, curious, brave, autonomous, and perserving rather than passive, dependent, vain, and hysterical. Women need to be shown through literature how they have made existential choices in a deterministic world (for example, Kolodny, 1980; Dulkin, 1982). Instead, women are forced to communicate about fears, needs, and anxieties without actually even mentioning to anyone what they really are: difficult existential choices over life and death matters -- pregnancy, abortion, relationships, childlessness, career, job discrimination, autonomy over their lives, and so on. The range of poetic literature that addresses these choices or subjects is extremely narrow and does not fully illustrate the psychic effects on them and how they are handled by the women who must make them. These subjects are being addressed by feminist philosophers (Vetterlin-
Braggen, Eliston and English, 1977; Reutezig 1971).

Knauff (1982) said that writing like a woman means combining writing with jobs, mates, children, political commitments, and finding the time and justification to write at all in any case, as this is actual experience for most women's lives. Women's style, images, symbols, and so on will differ according to their actual existential contiguencies, especially those of sex, race, political ideology, cultural heritage, and class (Olsen, 1971; Robinson, 1971). The search for Black and Chicano women, "third-world" and Lesbian women's experiences must be included.

But, there are problems in finding literature which defines women's strengths. There are also problems in finding female readers who recognize them. Holly (1975), for example, attempted to compile literature providing strong role models for women from fellow academics in women's studies (informed readers). She discovered that they did not expect normal females to have many strengths, to confront difficult personal and social conflicts, or seek fulfillment and growth in the same way they expect "normal men" to do. In other words, Holly found that privileged, academic women often viewed themselves as deviant from the norm, not identifying with normal women's experience. They viewed women readers as incapable of the necessary soul-searching done by men and other privileged members of the
reading public.

Holly concluded, as Davis did, that reader/critics must question their own biases. Especially, feminists must examine their own assumptions underlying their search for theory and methodology and, not imagine one psychology for all women, or one literary mode that would help transform the consciousness of all women. Unless feminist reader/critics confront all the stereotypes of women in their own reading and psychology, the distorted perspective Holly found in her research will formulate the hypotheses about female reader's response.

The question surrounding female readers' responses make the selection of literature for therapy generally more uncertain. The problem is probably compounded in the genre of poetry, but on the other hand, poetry because of its formal properties of image, symbol, and metaphor, and its subjective potential, may make possible the transcendence needed for women's self-actualization via literature.

In summary, there does not seem to be a specific feminist aesthetic concerning poetry that encompasses style or language different from men. Feminine linguistic style (rules of language) may be different from men's. Feminists believe that women's literature has a certain aesthetic sensibility and authority about women's experience that a man's writing cannot have, even though female writers are caught between the way they experience and the male ways
they have learned to structure that experience in order to communicate it. They emphasize the paradox that women are socialized to be quiet and passive whereas a writer must be active, articulate and independent.

Because of women's highly personal use of language, the aesthetic value placed on women's writings tend to vary with the critic's values. Women's writings often are thought to be lacking in value because they do not explore the profundities of the human (universal) condition. Because male-identified critics, whether males or females, often do not enter an author's consciousness, they may report the writings as rhetorical, soft-headed, illogical, and so on. On the other hand, women writers find male language, logic, concepts, and values inadequate to express female experience, and so create new language, to make the strange familiar, using new metaphors, images, and symbols in a transcendent way, for example (Daly, 1978; Ostriker, 1982).

Feminists, as other phenomenological critics, have attacked the Aristotelian way of looking at phenomena. They feel that women's lives are much too complex and multifocused to be represented by traditional categories or forms. Female poets may not see issues in a dualistic, linear, hierarchical fashion. Women's writing styles may reflect particular qualities of their experience: richness, diffuseness, creativity, perceptiveness. By using their insights in a language of their own, feminist writers could
liberate women from male value systems, and redefine women's values, for example, of love, work, and power. Feminist critics would value more language freedom and a body of literature with a novel and, in their view, radically different interpretation of female experience than that represented in the traditional literary canon.

In the recent past, phenomenological criticism has maintained that by examining the structure of an author's collected work, certain experiential patterns occur with great frequency. They believe these are found in memory, cognition, emotion, perceptions, contents, and linguistics. Even if phenomenology is a recognized critical method, it is too early perhaps to find experiential patterns in the structure of feminist poetry that can point to certain experiential patterns in women's lives. Even if this were possible, such a strategy might restrict the flow and dimensionality of female writing. However, feminist critics have attempted to resurrect lost women writers and reinterpret well-known writers utilizing methods of linguistics, anthropology, art, and social history. There is no specific critical method, recurrent structure, content, language, image, symbol, theme, way of writing, and so on, that can be identified as feminist on which a number of critics agree or apply to theory. Nevertheless, there are theories and methods being used and articulated. And Neeley (1971) said that the value for feminist critics was
precisely that they were not confined to having to relate their research to "core" theoretical texts.

Female writers, critics, and readers, as Burke (1985) said, are caught in the tension between a desire to write from within a female subjectivity and their consciousness of the problems surrounding subjectivity itself, the tension between concealment and revelation, a tension between a fixed female identity, and a fluctuating, shifting subjectivity. The "old self" of many women is lost forever, yet it still exists to some degree in the present. In this sense, as Rabuzzi (1982) said:

To internalize Otherness is almost definitionally to be unable to speak the language of the self... to experience an Other is often to feel schizophrenically torn, that not even a clandestinely authentic 'I' dares to speak (p. 176).

But in terms of transcending history and transforming the self for the future, the female poet and reader must immerse herself in subjectivity -- a very stressful but also potentially self-actualizing place to be. Perhaps poetry therapy can facilitate these transformations. As Atwood (1981) said:

Is this your fate, to enter poetry and become transparent?...no ground under you? ... Let's believe you know your way. (p. 77)
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a description of the methodology used in this study. It describes the setting of the study, the subject selection, the validity and reliability of the instrumentation, research design, treatment procedures, statistical hypotheses, and procedures.

Setting

The sample of forty-four adult females was taken from a population using the services of a community mental health center. Of the four hundred fifty adult outpatients utilizing the services during the time of this research, two hundred three persons entered into therapy with this research practitioner. Not included in the population were forensic clients, gerontology clients, short-term crisis patients, and case-managed clients because they were assigned to specialists in these areas. Adult outpatients in this population were approximately eighteen to fifty-five years of age, primarily Caucasian, and suffering from depression, anxiety, relationship and economic problems, as well as major affective and thought disorders.
Subject selection

Participants were referred to therapists on a rotating basis and, therefore, not randomly selected from the population of adult out-patients. They were routinely evaluated for suitability to group therapy when it was the clinical judgement of the therapist that clients would benefit from group therapy. From this pool, subjects were randomly selected for group therapy because groups were to be small due to time and space constraints. The criteria for exclusion from group therapy were that they not be actively psychotic, substance abusing, or diagnosed as having personality disorders.

Instrumentation

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) consists of 150 items of paired opposites. Each concept is presented to the subject in terms of a positive and negative statement on a continuum or dichotomy. The subject is asked to select one statement for him or herself, and the raw scores are used to compare the subject's responses to normative and other defined populations.

Scoring of items is done by dividing them into two major groups: Time Competency (Tc) and Inner-Directedness (I); and ten minor scales representing five major areas: Valuing, Feeling, Perception, Synergistic Awareness, and Interpersonal Sensitivity. Each of these areas has a
related but contrasting sub-scale. Sub-scales comprise ten factors: Self-Actualizing Value/Existentiality; Feeling Reactivity/-Spontaneity; Self-Regard/Self-Acceptance; Nature of Man; Constructive/Synergy; Acceptance of Aggression/Capacity for Intimate Contact.

The two major scales, Tc and I, contain twenty-three items and 123 items, respectively. The ten sub-scales include nine to thirty-one items.

**Construct Validity**


Several later studies have focused on the two major scales (Tc and I) because they seem to be the most independent ones. The other sub-scales display item-overlap. Osbourne and Stevens (1981) supported Getsinger (1975 and Yonge (1975) in their conclusions that self-actualized persons were more time-competent. However, other
studies indicate that the I scale alone, the more consistent and stable scale, or the I and Tc scores combined are the best overall predictors of self-actualization (Damm, 1969, 1972; Wise and Davis, 1975, 1977). Several studies have demonstrated the sensitivity of the POI to changes resulting from a variety of group therapy techniques (Foulds and Hannigan, 1976; Nidick, Seeman and Dreskin, 1973).

Some criticism of the diagnostic effectiveness of the POI have been made. In an extensive review, Tosi and Hoffman (1972), Raanan (1973) and Tosi and Lindamood (1975) stated that the norms were biased toward a college population. However, Shostrom (1973), Sciz and Forest (1980) and Forest (1980) demonstrated that Shostrom's Manual for the POI does in fact print data on a normal adult sample, rather than college students, which corresponds with the T Scores on the Profile sheet. Therefore, this criticism was not supported.

Some researchers have emphasized the need to include gender as a factor when using the POI (Wise and Davis, 1977; Schroeder, 1973). Although Wise, et al. found women to score higher than men, the gender factor accounted for only 3% of the variance. Getsinger (1975) and Daum (1969) found no significant gender differences on the two major scales; the authors did find a tendency of women to score higher on pre-test and show greater gains on post-test,
however. Hjelle and Butterfield (1974) found that women with pro-feminist attitudes scored significantly higher on POI measures of self-actualization. Doyle (1975) gained support for his hypothesis that self-actualizing males and females are more likely to espouse pro-feminist, non-traditional, and egalitarian values with respect to sex-roles, a conclusion also supported by Crystell and Dean (1976).

**Concurrent Validity**

Early studies in concurrent validity such as Shostrom's (1964, 1966), Knapp's (1965), and Doyle's (1966), have been supported by Osbourne and Stevens (1981) and Martin, Blair, and Cash (1981). These authors have demonstrated correlations with other standard measures of personality and other inventories that attempt to measure feminist attitudes or psychological androgyny such as Spence and Helmrich (1978), Doyle (1975) and Bem (1974).

**Reliability**

Wise and Davis (1975), Getsinger (1975), Wise (1977), and support earlier studies such as Klavetter and Mogor's (1967), Silverstein and Fisher (1968), or Katt's (1972) which found reliability consistently higher across studies, especially for the major scales, I and Tc.
Research Design

The research design was a mixed hierarchical experimental model with non-equivalent treated control groups of unequal size and non-random selection (Myers, 1979; Campbell and Stanley, 1971). Treatment types (feminist therapy and feminist poetry therapy) served as a between subjects factor. The effectiveness of therapy was examined through the use of a pre/post-test repeated measures factor. The contribution of having subjects nested in separate therapy groups was examined as a hierarchical factor.

The advantages of this design were in its clinical relevance because actual outpatients participated. Also, it was cost-effective in terms of time, space and money because groups that control for placebo factors did not have to be used. O'Leary and Bockover (1978) discriminated between the need to control for placebo effects and the need for placebo groups, and recommended the elimination of placebo groups from psychotherapy research. Precautions were taken to control for internal and external validity. Reasonable time was set for treatment effects to occur, yet not so long that major events might take place to greatly alter group results. It was determined that twelve weeks was adequate to control for history and maturation. Reactive effects were minimized. Clients were not aware that they were undergoing any kind of research procedure, rather pre and/or post-testing were presented to clients as
part of the way effectiveness of treatment was evaluated. In order to exercise some control of multiple treatment interference, records of group members on medication during the study were kept.

Treatment Procedures

The Poetry Therapy Model

The poetry therapy model used in this study was an adaptation based on those models suggested by Bleich (1975), Rosenblatt (1978), and Holland (1973, 1975, 1977). In those paradigms, the reader reflects his or her perceptual style, personal organization, and expression, because it is a natural tendency for readers to reconstruct the poem in a creative, personal way. The readers participate actively and assertively in a transactive manner with the poem proceeding toward the construction of meaning. This process is based partly on the reader's unique experience of personal or collective gender-specific factors: therefore, one problem in the selection of poetry was to provide a frame of reference and which traditionally has not been provided for female readers by the literary canon (See Honton, 1981 for examples of poetry used).

The group techniques incorporated for Bleich, Rosenblatt, and Holland were

1. Introduction of a poem at the beginning of group session.
2. An invitation for reactions to the poem, first for a feeling or affective response, then for responses of a cognitive nature. The aim was to heighten contradictions between learned response and present felt discomfort or cognitive dissonance. These responses were exchanged in the group therapy format.

3. Verbal summaries of the group process were given at the end of each session to give continuity and to encourage creative expression; individual reactions to the poems were incorporated into the summaries.

Treatment Procedures

Entrance and exit clinical interviews were conducted with all the subjects. The poetry and non-poetry groups met for twelve weeks of one and one-half hour sessions. A thirteenth meeting was devoted to post-testing assessment.

The poetry group procedures were

**Week I**

**Objective I:** to inform the group about testing and explain pre/post-test assessment. Participants were asked to fill out the inventory as a baseline test for attitudes and values.

**Objective II:** to explain the elements of group therapy and how it was related to participants' needs or goals.
Objective III: to explain that poetry was to be used as a catalyst for group discussion.

Objective IV: to introduce poems with reference to their potential for producing insight, conflict, choice, or change as elements of the therapeutic experience.

Objective V: to facilitate group discussion elicited by the participants' responses to the poem via the poetry therapy model. The group members were invited to bring a poem either to introduce themselves or to summarize their goals in the second meeting.

Week II through IV

Objective I: to give a verbal summary of the first group meeting.

Objective II: to suggest uses for the individual study of the poem; for example, the participants were encouraged to write down their initial responses as a basis for future comparison and as a springboard to creative activity.

Objective III: to stimulate feelings by emphasizing the various ways consciousness emerges: through visual or auditory imagery suggested in the poems, or suggestions of the elements of other sensory processing, and to read poems that could be assumed to enhance the readers' sensual awareness related to the organs or perception such as sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste to "evolve the poem."
Participants were encouraged to report their subjective responses and associations to "reflect on the poem."

Objective IV: to stimulate perceptions arising from poetry reading and related to their immediate experiencing; for example, to explore pain and conflict. Clients were encouraged to focus on their responses between group sessions in order to "live though" the poems.

Weeks V through VIII

Objective I: to introduce poetry to enhance individual and group recognition of conflicts presented in the poetry selection and related to their own conflicts.

Objective II: to facilitate catharsis or corrective emotional experiencing.

Objective III: to emphasize the elements of gender-learning represented in the poems which motivate choices, decision-making, and responsibility to self and others. Poems illustrating various types of conflict were introduced to help clarify the nature of the subject's own conflicts; intra-psychic, interpersonal, and socio-individual.

Participants were encouraged to identify their own conflicts in relationship to the poems. Poems illustrating the dilemma of choice and responsibility of decision-making
were introduced and implications for change were processed.

**Weeks IX through XI**

**Objective I:** to clarify choices and assume responsibility for acceptance or change of attitudes, values, and behavior. More emphasis was placed on cognition at this stage.

**Objective II:** to promote cognitive restructuring. Participants were encouraged to see relationships between feelings, thoughts, and behavior patterns from their processing of the poems, and to synthesize this knowledge into attitude and value changes.

**Objective III:** to do general problem-solving of an existential nature.

**Week XII**

**Objective I:** to tie together the strands of the therapeutic process.

**Objective II:** to encourage subjects to place some poetic closure on their experiences. The subjects' own poetic productions were solicited and self-helps for creative writing were given. Poems were introduced to illustrate alternative ways of viewing one's existence. Responses were elicited based on members' assessment of their homeostasis or change during the twelve weeks in relation to attitudes or values, feelings, behavior and/or therapeutic experience.
Week XIII -- Assessment

Objective I: to fill out the POI as a post-test measurement of change.

Objective II: to explain the research aims of the POI pre and post-test.

Feminist Therapy

The feminist therapy group also met for twelve weeks of one and one-half hour sessions. A thirteenth week was devoted to post-testing assessment.

The feminist therapy group procedures were as follows:

Week I

Objective I: to inform the group that pre and post assessment would be done. Participants were asked to fill out the Personal Orientation Inventory as a pre-test baseline for attitudes and values.

Objective II: to explain the elements of group therapy and how they related to clients' needs or stated goals. No use of poetry or any other adjunctive technique was used to orient the group meetings. The members were told that the group process would focus on introspection, perception, insight, choice, and responsibility. Group members were encouraged to summarize their goals at the beginning of the session.

Week II through IV

Objective I: to give a verbal summary of the preceding group meeting and to encourage members to make
their own process summaries in writing to help them "live through" the experience.

**Objective II:** to stimulate feeling responses by emphasizing the acquisition of insight through perceptual senses, emotion and cognition.

**Objective III:** to explore feelings related to unconscious conflicts and choices as they are present in immediate experience.

**Objective IV:** to encourage members to verbalize feelings. Groups proceeded by using a feminist model to emphasize the different kinds of conflict: intra-psychic, interpersonal, and socio-individual conflict.

**Weeks V through VIII**

**Objective I:** to explore the types of conflict in individuals and how they are related to those of other participants.

**Objective II:** to encourage catharsis and corrective emotional experiencing.

**Objective III:** to emphasize elements of gender learning which motivates choices, decisions, and responsibility to self and others.

**Weeks IX through XI**

**Objective I:** to clarify choices and assume responsibility for attitudes, values, feelings, and behavior. A more cognitive approach was taken to promote
synthesis of thought and feeling, and restructuring of attitudes and values.

**Objective II:** to do general problem-solving of an existential nature.

**Week XII**

**Objective I:** to synthesize the various strands of the therapeutic process.

**Objective II:** to place closure on the process.

**Week XIII**

**Objective I:** to fill out the POI as a post-test measure of change.

**Objective II:** to explain the research aims of the POI pre and post-testing.

The work of the facilitator of poetry therapy

The therapist attempted to engage the participants in the appreciation of poetic work, to give them time to savor the sound, feeling, mood, and sense, of the poetry. Readers were encouraged to paraphrase the poems; to give, first of all, emotional responses, then later, cognitive responses or ideas, and philosophical assumptions that seemed to cause the linkage of feeling, thought, and physical sensations associated with the poem; and to find a "theme" for themselves. Discussion, then, would be opened to the group to check the responses of members against the responses of others; the goal being the uncovering of
structuring principles, and relating or generalizing these principles to broader social constructs such as to the way the participants relate interpersonally or to their environment.

The therapist watched for and encouraged the participant/reader's capacity for involvement, especially in more complex poems; took note of flagrant mis-readings, irrelevancies, or trite responses; challenged assumptions and facilitated the exchange of interpretations; helped members "live through" the experience of the poem under the guidance of the text as fully as possible; suggested fuller, deeper, or more complex interpretations if these were viable; and helped examine the ethical, social or philosophical, as well as personal, consequences of holding these beliefs (Rosenblatt, 1978).

It was very important that the therapist was aware and wary of fitting the participant/reader's responses into a specific framework that would be reductionistic, even a feminist framework. Therapists should have a rich association with a variety of poems, and be able to elaborate their potential for meaning.

The credentials established for the practice of poetry therapy without supervision has been the Ph.D. in Psychology or the M.D. in Psychiatry. This has been based on the assumption that practitioners of this therapy will have better training in therapeutic techniques and
facilitation of group therapy, and that one of the main goals is that the patient will not come to harm from "well-intentioned individuals who have little or no training in therapy" (Lerner, 1976). In all cases, clinical/counseling psychology, literature, and library science courses in Bibliotherapy beyond the Master's level is to be part of the training. Poetry therapists working as part of an interdisciplinary mental health team may work under supervision after a two-year or more training program. No specific training in poetry itself is mandated.

On the other hand, professors of literature who use or teach poetry therapy maintain that inadequate training in poetry can be damaging or unethical if misused by therapists (Jaskowski, 1980; Rice, 1986). This can happen when poetry therapy results in unchanneled feelings, increased anger or anxiety, suicidal impulses, racist or sexist ideas. Training in both psychotherapy and literature is necessary if either is going to reach its potential for healing and self-actualization.

**Statistical Hypotheses:**

1. Feminist group therapy will cause significant increases in self-actualization in participants.

2. The addition of poetry therapy as an adjunct to feminist group therapy will result in significantly higher self-actualization in participants.
Statistical Procedures:

The statistical procedures were a two (treatment: feminist vs. poetry) by two (time: pre vs. post-test) hierarchial mixed analyses of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on the time factor and examination of the effects of having subjects nested in the groups. All demographic characteristics were coded numerically and, along with the scores on the POI, were fed as data into a computer. All subsequent statistical tests either were computed by hand or obtained using the SAS (1985) statistical software package.

Summary

This chapter discussed how the sample was selected from the particular research setting; the instrumentation was described in its validity, reliability, internal consistency, and its lack of susceptibility to faking; and response sets were reported. The major instrumentation (the POI) was discussed in its effectiveness as a gender-free measuring device. The therapy models and treatment procedures were described in detail. The internal and external validity of the research design was described, and statistical design and hypotheses were stated.

Chapter IV presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study. Chapter V offers a summary, conclusions and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter contains the findings accomplished from the study. The group was examined in two different ways based on statistical and qualitative analysis. The first part of this chapter, then, comprises the statistical data. The second part discusses the qualitative data in terms of group processes and case examples with reference also to POI sub-scales.

In order to test the previously described hypotheses, to determine if demographics were to be included in this study, and to determine whether the groups were relatively equal with regard to demographic variables, these characteristics of each subject were coded numerically along with her score on the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI); specifically, the variables on Time Competence (Tc) and Inner-directedness (I), were fed as data into a computer. All subsequent statistical tests were either computed by hand or obtained using the SAS (1985) statistical software package.

Table 1 contains mean pre- and post-test scores for Time Competence and Inner-directedness as a function of Demographic Variables. Results showed no significant
difference in age, marital status, education, or diagnosis. Income showed a weak to moderate negative relationship to Inner-directedness scores. (See Table 1.)

Description of Subjects

Subjects were forty-four white female out-patients judged to be suitable candidates for group therapy. The median age was 35.9 years. Approximately 36.4% of subjects were married, 15.9% of subjects were single, 43.2% of subjects were divorced, and 4.5% of subjects were widowed. The median level of education was thirteen years with a median income of $13,358. Subjects were diagnosed as follows: 56.8% Dysthymic Disorder, 20.5% Adjustment Disorder, 9.1% Major Depression, 9.1% Bipolar Disorder, and 4.5% Anxiety Disorder.

Remaining statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether the therapy groups differed with respect to the demographic variables. In order to test for differences in age, education, and income, a series of 1-way analyses of variable statistics were calculated with membership in the different therapy groups as the independent variable. These analyses revealed no significant differences in age, education, or income among the therapy groups with $F(6,37)=0.97 \ (p>.05)$, $F(6,37)=1.49 \ (p>.05)$, and $F(6,37)=0.37 \ (p>.05)$, respectively.

Chi square statistics were also calculated to test for
differences in marital status and diagnoses among the therapy groups. These analyses also yielded no significant differences in the distribution of marital status nor diagnostic categories among the therapy groups with $X^2 = 20.08 \ (p > .05)$ and $X^2(24) = 35.06 \ (p > .05)$, respectively. These chi square statistics must be viewed with caution, however, because the number of categories involved with each computation was such that the expected value of the cell frequencies was less than 5. In general, though, it would appear that the therapy groups involved in this study were constructed similarly with respect to the demographic variables.

**Demographic Variables**

**Time Competence and Inner-directedness**

Table 1 contains means and standard deviations of the dependent measures (Tc and I) used for the tests of the main hypotheses, grouped according to demographic variable.

Statistical analyses were calculated in order to determine whether the demographic variables were related to subjects' scores on the dependent variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were calculated between level of education, age, income, and post minus pre change scores on Time competence and Inner-directedness. Income showed a moderate, negative relationship to the change in Inner-directedness scores ($r = -0.28, p < .05$) indicating that
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE</th>
<th>TIME COMPETENCE</th>
<th>INNER DIRECTEDNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 - 5,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6-10,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11-15,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.29</td>
</tr>
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<td>$16-20,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.40</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>13.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>$26-30,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31-35,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ &gt; $36,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysthmic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
subjects with lower incomes tended to demonstrate greater changes in Inner-directedness. Of the remaining relationships to subjects' performance on either Tc or I, none achieved statistical or practical significance ($r < .20$, $p > .05$). (See Table 2.)

Time Competence

In order to test for differences among the diagnostic and marital status groups for the dependent variables, a series of two-way mixed design analyses of variance statistics were calculated with the change from pre- to post-treatment as the within subjects, repeated factor and each of the demographic variables as between subjects factors. Results of the analysis on diagnostic categories for the time competence revealed no main effect for differences in diagnosis ($F(4,39) = 0.50$, $p > .05$) nor any interaction between diagnosis and pre- to post-change ($F(4,39) = 1.26$, $p > .05$), but the pre- to post-treatment main effect was significant for Time Competence, ($F(1,39) = 13.00$, $p < .001$). (See Table 3). The analyses on marital status for Time Competence similarly revealed no main effect among the different marital groups ($F(3,40) = 0.77$, $p > .05$), no main effect for pre- to post-treatment changes ($F(1,40) = 1.00$, $p > .05$), nor any interaction between marital status and pre- to post-change ($F(3,40) = 1.26$, $p > .05$). (See Table 4.)
TABLE 2

Correlation of education, age and income with change scores in Time competence and Inner Directedness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in Time Competence</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Inner Directedness</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=44
*p < .05

TABLE 3

Repeated Measures analysis of variance of Pre and Post Test Time Competence scores on diagnosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS (adjusted)</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.72</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>518.14</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85.70</td>
<td>85.70</td>
<td>13.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post X Diagnosis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.29</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>257.07</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001
### TABLE 4

Repeated Measures Analysis of variances of Pre and Post Test Time Competence scores on marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS (adjusted)</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.89</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>514.98</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Marital status</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24.99</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>265.38</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5

Repeated Measures analysis of variance of Pre and Post Test Inner Directedness scores on diagnosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS (adjusted)</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>710.91</td>
<td>177.73</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11,535.03</td>
<td>295.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,930.00</td>
<td>2,930.00</td>
<td>33.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Diagnosis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>719.52</td>
<td>179.88</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3,451.06</td>
<td>88.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *p < .0001*
Inner-Directedness

Similar results were obtained for Inner-Directedness dependent variable. The main effect for diagnosis was not significant ($F(4, 39) = 0.60, p > .05$), nor was the interaction between diagnosis and pre- to post-change ($F(4, 39) = 2.03, p > .05$). The main effect for pre to post change (controlling for diagnosis) was significant ($F(1, 39) = 33.11, p < .0001$). (See Table 5.) The main effect for marital status on Inner-directedness was not significant ($F(3, 40) = 0.80, p > .05$), nor was the interaction between marital status and pre- to post-treatment change significant ($F(3, 40) = 0.17, p > .05$). However, the main effect for pre- to post-treatment change (controlling for marital status) was once again significant ($F(1, 40) = 12.02, p < .01$). (See Table 6.)

Tests of Hypotheses

Table 7 presents mean pre- and post-scores for Time Competence and Inner-directedness as a function of Therapy Conditions and Group Membership.

**Hypothesis I:** It was hypothesized that feminist group therapy would cause significant increases in self-actualization in participants. Research findings indicate that the main effect for pre to post treatment was significant controlling for demographic characteristics. Therefore, this hypothesis was supported.
### TABLE 6

Repeated Measures analysis of variance of Pre and Post Test Inner Directedness scores on marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>690.01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>230.00</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>11,555.94</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>288.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1,237.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,237.33</td>
<td>12.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x marital status</td>
<td>54.01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>4,116.57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>102.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2 = .001

### TABLE 7

Mean Pre and Post Test scores for Time Competence and Inner Directedness as a Function of Therapy Condition and Group Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THERAPY/GROUP</th>
<th>TIME COMPETENCE</th>
<th>INNER DIRECTEDNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Group 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.29</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.40</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-poetry Group 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.31</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hypothesis II:** It was hypothesized that the addition of poetry therapy as an adjunct to feminist group therapy would result in significantly higher self-actualization in participants. Results were mixed. (See Table 7.)

The second hypothesis predicted that the addition of poetry therapy to the feminist group therapy would result in significant increases in both Time Competence and Inner-directedness on the POI. As suggested by Schroeder (1973), Wise and Davis (1975), and Damm (1969), Tc and I were both considered for analysis even though I, alone, is probably the better measure of overall self-actualization (Shostrom, 1966). Minor scales were not analyzed separately because of considerable overlapping characteristics and the questionable relevance of the sub-scales of the inventory. In order to protect against inflation of the Type I error rate caused by analyzing highly related dependent variables separately, (Harris, 1985), a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated between the Time competence and Inner-directedness scores. This analysis revealed a moderate relationship between the two measures with $r = .52$ ($p < .001$) between pre-Tc and pre-I. While these values are low enough to warrant individual analyses on each independent variable, interpretation of the statistical results should take into consideration the level of relationship between the dependent variables. The variables Tc and I are not highly related, and, therefore not likely
to produce a Type I error. The value (.52) is low enough to say that the mixed results or similarities are possibly due to this relationship. It may indicate that, again, the I scale is more sensitive to change, more consistent, and more stable. On the other hand, if the combined I and Tc scores had been analyzed together, further differences may have been obscured.

Tests of the main hypothesis involved calculation of a two-way, mixed model, hierarchical analysis of variance for each of the dependent variables (Myers, 1979). Effects due to the differing cell frequencies among the various factors were controlled through the use of estimable functions (SAS Institute Inc., 1985). Therapy differences (Group vs Group Therapy and Poetry) served as the between subjects factor. Treatment changes over time (Pre- vs Post-) served as the within-subjects, repeated measures factor. Since subjects were nested within the various therapy conditions, and since different group dynamics can influence outcome, treatment groups served as an hierarchically nested factor in the analysis.

Time competence

Relative to the Time Competence dependent variable, the interaction between pre- to post-Treatment change and Groups nested within the Therapy conditions was significant ($F(5,37)=3.33$, $p<.05$, $\text{MSError}=5.36$). (See Table 8). This
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS (adjusted)</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>( F^A )</th>
<th>( F^0 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (therapy)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95.57</td>
<td>19.11</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>445.73</td>
<td>12.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53.06</td>
<td>53.06</td>
<td>9.91*</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Group (Therapy)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>89.31</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>198.19</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*p < .01 \( F^A \) using error terms \( F^0 \) using interaction as error
would imply, therefore, that differences between the Therapy conditions and their interaction with treatment over time was to some minimal extent dependent upon Group membership. An ad hoc Tukey test (Keppel, 1982) requiring a more stringent level of significance was calculated for comparison among the means. This required a minimum difference of 4.65 for significant differences. Three of the four groups (Groups 1, 2, and 5) which received the addition of poetry therapy demonstrated pre to post increases in Tc, but these changes did not reach the statistical criterion of 4.65. Only one of the three groups (Group 7) which did not receive poetry therapy demonstrated a pre- to post- increase in Tc and this change was significant.

The interactive factor of Groups nested within the Therapy Conditions was not significant ($F(5,37)=1.62$, $p>.05$, $M_{\text{error}}=12.05$). The main effect for Therapy Conditions was then analyzed using this interaction factor as the error term in order to provide an appropriate comparison of the variance estimates as necessitated with this hierarchical design (Myers, 1979). The result of this analysis for Therapy Conditions was also not significant ($F(1,5)=0.26$, $p>.05$, $M_{\text{error}}=19.51$). Since the three-way interaction of pre- to post-Treatment changes with Groups nested in Therapy conditions was significant, it too was used as the error term for testing the pre- to post-
Treatment main effect and the interaction between pre to post Treatment effects and Therapy conditions (Myers, 1979). Neither the main effect for Pre- to Post-Treatment Changes nor its interaction with Therapy Conditions was significant for Tc \((F(1,5)=2.97, p>.05, \text{MSerror}=17.86, \text{and} F(1,5)=0.38, p>.05, \text{MSerror}=17.86)\), respectively. (See Table 8.)

Inner-directedness

Analyses with the Inner-directedness dependent variable yielded similar results. The interaction effects of Groups nested in the Therapy Conditions were significant \((F(5,37)=2.57, p<.05, \text{MSerror}=213.80)\). (See Table 9.) Additionally, the interaction between treatment changes over time and Groups nested in Therapy Conditions were also significant \((F(5,37)=5.42, p<.001, \text{MSerror}=65.01)\). This would indicate that group membership had some influence on the effects exerted by the Therapy Conditions and Treatment changes over time on I. A Tukey test was, once again, calculated and required a minimal difference of 16.20 for significance. Comparisons among the group means revealed that two of the four groups which received poetry therapy (Groups 1 and 2) demonstrated significant increases in I over the course of therapy and a third (Group 5) approached significance. Only one of the three groups which did not receive poetry therapy (Group 7) demonstrated a
TABLE 9

Repeated Measures analysis of variance of Innerdirectedness Pre and Post Test scores using a Hierarchical Design: Group (Therapy)x Pre-test x Post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE OF VARIATION</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F^A</th>
<th>F^o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,834.70</td>
<td>1,834.70</td>
<td>8.58*</td>
<td>3.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (Therapy)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,752.16</td>
<td>550.43</td>
<td>2.57**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (between subjects)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7,910.74</td>
<td>213.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,834.99</td>
<td>2,834.99</td>
<td>43.61***</td>
<td>8.05**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.14</td>
<td>43.14</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Post x Group (Therapy)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,761.94</td>
<td>352.38</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (within subjects)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2,405.28</td>
<td>65.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .01  
** p < .05  
*** p < .0001

F^o using error terms
F^o using nested term as error
significant increase in I as a result of treatment.

Since the interaction terms involving Groups nested in the Therapy Conditions were significant, they were used as the error terms to provide appropriate tests of the main effect for Therapy Conditions, the interactional effects between Therapy Conditions, and Treatment changes over time (Myers, 1979). The main effect for Therapy conditions was not significant ($F(1,5)=3.33$, $p>.05$, $MS_{error}=550.43$), nor was the interaction between Therapy Conditions and Treatment change over time significant ($F(1,5)=0.12$, $p<.05$, $MS_{error}=352.39$). The main effect for Treatment changes over time was significant for Inner-directedness ($F(1,5)=8.05$, $p<.05$, $MS_{error}=352.39$). Thus, once again, the effects of the two treatment conditions were, to an extent, dependent upon group membership. (See Table 9.)

Overall, the effects of the variables manipulated here were somewhat mixed. Poetry as an adjunct to therapy appears to have impact for some groups but not for others. Most of the forty-four participants benefitted from treatment pre- to post-test, and some benefited quite a bit. For some, the addition of poetry led to significant increases on the dependent variables, Tc and I; for others, the results were less conclusive. It appears that the main effect of treatment changes pre- to post-test supports the hypothesis that feminist therapy may be effective for dysfunctional women in an outpatient psychiatric setting.
Results of the second hypothesis are mixed. The use of poetry as an adjunct to therapy may increase its effectiveness in improving self-actualization inasmuch as three out of four groups improved to a great extent on Inner-directedness. But this may also be an artifact caused by differential membership in groups. Perhaps a larger sample would have elicited significant differences. The sample was small and stringent levels of confidence were used to test the hypotheses. It is possible that the time limit of twelve weeks was inadequate to produce more significant results for poetry therapy groups.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 show composite profiles on the two major scales and ten sub scales pre- and post-test. Figure 1 illustrates the feminist poetry therapy profiles. Figure 2 illustrates the feminist non-poetry therapy profiles and Figure 3 is a composite profile of all groups tested.

The composite profile of groups on pre-test are similar to those described by Knapp (1965) as highly neurotic, are lower than those described by Shostrom and Knapp (1966) as out-patient beginners in therapy, lower than those described as non-actualizing (Shostrom, 1964) and more similar to those of hospitalized psychiatric samples (Fox, Knapp, and Michael, 1968). In this sense, they approximated the population described by Alyn and Becker (1984) as chronically disturbed women with low self-esteem, learned helplessness, poor problem-solving and self-support skills,
![Composite Profiles of Feminist Poetry Therapy Groups](image-url)
FIG. 3 COMPOSITE PROFILES OF ALL GROUPS TESTED
as well as other kinds of affective, behavioral, and functional problems. As with their population, the participants in this research study suffered from problems frequently overlooked in treating such a group, specifically those problems related to sex and gender: vocational problems, lack of money, legal problems connected to divorce and child custody, single parenting, sexual harrassment, incest, battering, pathological dependencies, and so on, that have been demonstrated to be largely related to cultural sex-role stereotyping.

In addition, many of the subjects posed a significant, but not imminent, danger to themselves. Suicidal ideation was not uncommon, and past attempts had been made by a number of participants. Few had any outside supports, and the only way they could afford psychotherapy was through subsidized community mental health services.

Due to budget cuts, women with similar problems are being overlooked as candidates for psychotherapy unless they are imminently suicidal or otherwise "profoundly and chronically disturbed," having psychotic ideation, or a history of psychiatric hospitalizations, and, for the most part, requiring medication and maintenance. Therefore, the persons most likely to benefit from feminist therapy would not be considered as a high priority population to treat. The results indicate that such an out-patient population would be expected to improve in feminist therapy.
On post-test, the composite profile indicates that significant improvement occurred on overall measures of self-actualization. Values appeared to change toward a more actualizing framework, and self-worth improved. The ability of subjects to integrate anger more productively into the self-system, and their capacity for interpersonal relationships and intimacy increased significantly. Inner-directedness and Time Competence rose dramatically. There were no effects of other treatment during that time, for example, any participants on medication were stabilized prior to group therapy, and no participants were introduced to new medication during those periods. These results support the extension of feminist therapy and feminist therapy research to a more severely dysfunctional population which, ironically, is often classed as "the worried well" by funding sources.

The profile indicates a movement into a more "normal" type of functioning and so falls short of self-actualizing norms. Nevertheless, self-actualizing is a process, not a product, of moving from normal maintenance or adjustment toward growth and fuller development through examining one's values, expanding one's cognitive, affectiveness, and behavioral repertoire. In this sense, the groups appear to be in the process of self-actualizing; therefore, the results would appear to support a relationship between time in therapy and self-actualizing profiles described in the
Karle et al. study. Furthermore, the impressive movement of therapy over a twelve week period suggests the cost-effectiveness of therapy emphasizing a humanistic value structure, goals highly related to personal growth, the development of high-contact personal relationships and other skills leading to positive psychological functioning. Therefore, perhaps other researchers will be encouraged to follow the recommendations of Shapiro and Shapiro (1982) and Scherman and Dean (1985) to research clinical problems in the field with small samples so as to alleviate the severe limitations on generalizability to everyday practice and assist in policy formation for service providers and professional training and development.

Group and Individual Observations

The second research examination of the treatment was that of a qualitative analysis of the individual and group processes during the twelve weeks of group therapy. This analysis complements the quantitative analysis accomplished through a statistical treatment of the results of the POI. In terms of the Time Competence variable, both statistical and qualitative analysis indicates that becoming disentangled from the past is a difficult process in any therapy and such a process takes longer when people exhibit the high levels of denial and defensiveness that members of this group did. For example, one participant wrote of her
ambivalence toward therapy and her resistance to feeling the emerging pain repressed for 45 years. She had been a childhood victim of incest and this poem was written in the growing recognition that it had had an enduring and presently experienced effect.

Do poems often make you sad
For a loved one you once had?
A child made a decision never to tell
Of the abuse, the torment, and the hell
A woman lived out in a silent lie
And often found that she wanted to die.
But now that she is free to tell
With salt and pepper in her hair,
Does she have anything left to feel or share?

Other poems reflected the temporal organization of members. For example, one poem reflects the process of getting in touch with long-repressed feelings for one highly defended woman whose mode of being was almost entirely cognitive. In the poem, she worked from past to present:

Feeling
sunshine
light and
happiness
Feeling
fulfillment
enchantment and
adoration
Feeling
you
electricity
your energy
Feeling
hope
anticipation and
exactement
Feeling
apprehension
sure it wouldn't last
sure it wouldn't last
Feeling
pain when it didn't
punished because i couldn't
see what was wrong.
Feeling
my heart die.

Another, in feelings of depersonalization and
derealization, wrote in a depressive phase of her bi-polar
disorder:

Where did I lose me?
Who was me and
When was me?
Was it from the beginning of time
That I was lost
Or, was I in the beginning
And learned to be lost?
Where was the learning and
What was to be learned?

A woman suffering from a major depressive disorder
wrote:

I've been here, there,
Nowhere,
And everywhere, but
Where I need to be.
All my armour
Has been weighing me down
No more protection
Only
Isolation
All this old stuff
Is gonna go
And all the new stuff
Will start to show
Its self
Is myself.

Case study data from many participants indicated some
awareness of change based on a new appreciation of their
experience as women, a reinterpretation of what it means to
be a "new woman" who is more self-defined, inner directed.
For example, close to the end of treatment, a chronically depressed woman wrote the following:

What happened to the girl who said **YES** all the time, Although she wore a frown? Where's that push-around-**lady** who always looked down? I haven't noticed her lately, of this I'm sure. She must have gotten tired or found a miracle cure!

I've noticed a difference, and it started about Twelve weeks ago...

It sure is a puzzlement She hasn't changed, she's still the same **Woman,**
this I know. Her ideas, feelings, actions And values are still the same, But her reactions to people are handled In a more secure way, not playing a subtle game. I guess she was shocked to learn that all The feelings in her life she ever had, Yes, these same feelings were experienced by other **Women.**
Even those feelings that were very bad. This lady is no longer intimidated, manipulated Or put upon in a stressful way, She won't allow a situation within her control To ruin her day. Her family and friends have noticed that She's different, yet still the same. And I laugh to myself and say, "I came a long way, **BABY!"** **NO,** I haven't changed, I've just learned a lot about myself and I like **ME.**

Growing recognition that their values were changing to a more inner-directed locus of control was expressed by another participant who wrote in response to Frost's **Two Roads:**

How did I get here from where I was Or where I thought I would be? Where were the signs along the way? Who moved them? Covered them? Was I Too busy, carefree or afraid to see? (They must have been posted somewhere) Other women came this way before me,
How did they find their way?  
Did they get lost too?  
My map was different than the others,  
Not better or the best. Oh,  
Our roads were different,  
Some paths were different, too.  
(But some of us came to the same place)  
I'm not staying long, though,  
I've found a new road to travel, even  
My map has changed.  
Most signs I'll see now --  
I'm on the road again!!!

There were many examples of poetry written in these  
groups that suggested an emerging locus of control within  
themseleves built out of their identification with other  
women, an emerging value system built on women-centeredness:

If you look into my eyes, you'll see no judgment there.  
But please, do look closely and what you'll see  
Is that I care  
For the pain and suffering you were forced to endure.  
I, myself, may have gone through the same pain  
And, along with you, have cried, "God, no more."  
Or  
I may only listen with great concern  
As you speak of the torment and anguish forced  
Into your life.  
I will grieve compassionately as I hear what you  
Have to say  
While the air is so heavy it cuts  
Like a knife.  
The still, hard silence as you speak is not  
An unspoken statement that you are wrong,  
For in this quiet, soundless moment,  
It is now that I want to reach out to you and share  
Your pain,  
To let you know that  
You are not alone, you are not at fault  
For another's madness, you are clean --  
NO STAIN. Let go  
With us, your sisters.  
Be free without worry in this room  
We have all been through hell, My hell may have been  
Very different from yours, or very much alike,  
But our feelings come from the same  
Well.
As time passes, you'll see, we are alike
Yet different.
We have experienced the same
Ups and downs, it's tragic,
But in trust and in time through discussions
We'll laugh and cry and feel so much
Better, like magic.

Similarly, based on overall increases in measures of
Feeling Reactivity and Spontaneity as well as Inner-
directedness, it was observed that the group dynamics were
also conducive to developing trust in oneself as a woman and
the female gender. The case of a 31-year old woman,
suffering a major depression, in a non-poetry group, is
illustrative. She was feeling great pain trying to learn to
trust other women in the group. By the end, she had made
significant strides in trusting. In her first poem, she
wrote, "A Hug for the Group:"

Half broken, still living
but not fully
like a sparrow
with half a wing missing
hopping along, trying to
fly, but only able to
jump,
Needing flight
its natural course of life
not knowing what
but knowing something is not
quite right,
the sparrow meets the bluebird
with its broken beak
who cannot sing
much less speak,
Together they stand looking
out on the water of a lake
feeling more like its an ocean.
The trees, once home in the sky,
now loom over them, towers
of gloom, misery and fear.
Homeless, yet together,
the sparrow and the bluebird
look through the trees
to the sky.

Along with increased scores on Feeling Reactivity, Spontaneity, and Capacity for Intimate Contact observational data on interpersonal learning also indicated that cognitive as well as affective needs were being met and that learning was a cognitive/affective synthesis. Members often referred to therapy as "class" or frequently commented that they had learned a lot. Warm feelings toward group members and therapist alike were often expressed, sometimes as a surprise among women not accustomed to thinking of other women as capable, strong, trustworthy, or potential role models. "Working" group members were often admired by other participants as "courageous, strong, assertive, sensitive, admirable" and persons others wanted "to become more like."

From the pre- to post-test changes in self-perception scores and observations, it was concluded that many came into therapy with a "failure identity" and left with a more tolerant attitude toward themselves and other women and greater self-esteem. This seemed due to awareness that societal attitudes and role-conflicts often produced failure identities in women who had dealt with pain and suffering of heroic proportions. When other women came to validate their struggles as part of their common bond of sharing female experiences, they tended to think of themselves as possessing "survivor strength." They developed a more
positive pro-woman attitude as they came to understand the part sociocultural factors play in their conflicts and often tried to redefine their roles. The significant others in their lives sometimes questioned whether the results were therapeutic if it necessitated changes in interpersonal relations; on the other hand, such understanding of gender learning sometimes was extended to males for being caught in similar role conflicts and societal prescriptions, as well as to mothers, sisters, and friends.

Group cohesion was often observed by participants lingering in the waiting room to talk or gathering there early, observing birthdays, and so on. The staff often commented on the way group members seemed to look forward to meetings, exchanging conversation and laughter in the waiting room, and consistently attending group meetings. Group members reacted strongly if someone were absent "for no good reason," indicating that group participation and cohesion were important to them. Based on these findings, perhaps future studies of poetry therapy should include the measurement of cohesion of other group dynamics, as Mazza (1981) and others did to see if groups differ significantly in this aspect with the addition of poetry therapy.

Increased scores on Feeling Reactivity and Interpersonal Sensitivity and observations led to the conclusion that attitudes toward self-disclosure on the part of the therapist were positive. Whether it was an original poem
contributed to the group or part of the facilitation of the group, attitudes were often revealed by expressions that "You don't seem like a therapist, you seem like a real person," or "I feel you understand what it means to be a woman and live the way I do." Modeling effects were noted when participants expressed wishes to learn how to "handle anger the way you do," or "to be strong and assertive, like you." On the other hand, participants frequently would challenge therapist shows of feeling: "I think you are angry with us; I think you were unfairly picking on so and so last week;" or "I think you are wrong about such and such," and they would expect a thorough accounting for opinions, attitudes, and values in the same way they expected others to contribute to the group. In such an impressionistic, sense, the emotional response and self-disclosure demanded of a feminist therapist seemed to contribute to an environment where there were open and equal opportunities to explore values and attitudes, where meanings could be expressed and exchanged, where negative and positive feedback were valued, and the possibility of value change might be enhanced. Based on the overall increase in measures of self-actualizing values and Existentiality, it was concluded that in feminist therapies, there is ample opportunity for therapists' personalities and values to be intermingled in the subjective values of feminist therapy, for assertive behaviors to be modeled, for productive uses
of anger and its control to be learned, for constructive confrontation to take place, and for the traditional "feminine" values of emotional involvement and altruism to be internalized as strengths. In these respects, the results of feminist therapy support those of Carter (1973), Rice and Rice (1973), and Chambless and Wenk (1979).

An interesting finding was the significant interactional effect of groups nested within therapy conditions which implied that the effects of the two treatment conditions were dependent on group membership. Groups 1, 3, and 5 (Poetry Groups) demonstrated pre- to post- increases in Time Competence (Tc), Groups 1 and 2 (Poetry) demonstrated significant pre- to post- increases in Inner-directedness (I) and Poetry Group 5 demonstrated increases approaching significance, whereas only one non-poetry group (Group 7) demonstrated a significant increase pre- to post- on either variable (Tc or I) as a result of treatment. These findings lend support to other studies of poetry therapy in groups such as Ross (1977), Davis (1978), Mazza (1981), and Lessner (1974) which suggests poetry's contribution to group cohesion and interpersonal communication. Mazza (1981) found that poetry as an adjunct to group therapy positively influenced group climate and interpersonal relations. Hynes (1986) outlined how the group dynamics of poetry therapy contributes to growth through peer pressure or validation, by acting as a mirror of the society and culture, through
reality testing, modeling effects, interactions that increase cohesiveness, and through the poetry itself. Lerner (1982) believed that the work of poetry therapy is less cognitive and more feelings-oriented, but also emphasized reality-testing, validation of feelings, interpersonal learning, and the development of new attitudes and skills. In short-term therapy, such as is conducted by Lerner and others, the amount of time it takes for group members to develop a sense of trust or cohesion and to start working productively is crucial. A group therapist may work very hard to build cohesion in the early stages of group while, at the same time, opening up painful issues. For the most part, the poetry groups under study developed cohesion rather quickly.

In the poetry therapy groups, some members may have greater difficulty than others getting over inhibitions about poetry, and still others may find the written word too powerful or overwhelming emotionally or intellectually, the themes may not be broad enough, the therapist may be letting his/her own or subgroup values and interests dominate, thereby rendering others' selections irrelevant to the discussion, as Hynes says. And sometimes members consistently may refuse to confront the issues raised by the poetry selection. But for the most part, the findings of this study were that the few inhibitions to poetry that did arise were overcome rather quickly with the exception of
Group 4. Furthermore, although written poetry was not encouraged, it arose spontaneously in most groups as a response to the reading of poems. These were individual, not group, responses.

Hynes states that some members may assume more "task-supportive" roles or responsibilities than others, especially in more highly functioning groups. These responsibilities were defined as being information-seeking, information-giving, clarifying, and elaborating, as well as other expressive ones such as initiating, coordinating, orienting, summarizing and giving opinions. Again, from observational data, the findings are that most participants in the poetry therapy groups took on more task-supportive and expressive roles than could reasonably have been expected of persons pre-testing at such low levels of non-actualizing. It is concluded that poetry led to greater group cohesion. In Group 4, various non-productive interactions prevented communication and constructive problem-solving; however, two of these members utilized writing as their primary mode of functioning. Such resistances as occurred were dealt with by direct confrontation and reference to rules for group cohesion.

All groups were given the same structure or guidelines for effective group participation prior to therapy sessions; however, it was found that they differed in terms of their willingness to take responsibility for group functioning, as
well as in their abilities, self-esteem, and assertiveness. Poetry Groups 1, 2, 5, and Group 7, whose scores on post-tests were statistically significant, appeared also to be the most cohesive, although no formal measure was taken. Three of these groups were poetry groups. Based on this information, it is recommended that future studies might continue to investigate group cohesion in relation to poetry, the value of written vs read poetry, and a more flexible structure for differences in group cohesion or functioning may include the elements of severity of diagnosis and defensive style. For example, Group 1 was characterized by highly defended subjects in moderate discomfort. Of all groups, they were most enthusiastic and productive in their own poetry writing, both within the group and between sessions. Based on these observations, one may conclude that the poetry was able to circumvent defenses in ways that allowed insight and catharsis without serious disturbance of equilibrium. Also, few members of the group had any resistance to poetry as a medium. Two members of six had kept diaries or journals, and so were familiar with writing as self-help. Another, an artist and amateur poet, was used to creative expression and organization of thoughts and feelings. Another, because of the nature of her interpersonal problems, could not directly resolve them, and so made prolific use of writing.
The catalytic properties of poetry are reported by many studies and are confirmed in this study by further qualitative data. All members of Group 1 except one participant contributed regularly with unsolicited poems of their own creation which were responses to the introductory ones given by the therapist. They also brought in poems by other authors which they considered "better" (more relative, easier with which to identify, and so on) than those of the therapist. Their high level of involvement in the poetry process seemed to increase their involvement with each other so that therapeutic factors such as interpersonal input and output, group cohesion, trust-building, altruism, openness to new solutions, and identification could take place. Their level of cohesiveness was apparent in the fact that these members were highly motivated to bring in poems for other members which they thought would be helpful for insight and problem-solving. Much group discussion centered then around group responses to the poetry introduced by other members and by their own spontaneous poetry writing. They seemed to present these poems as gifts to each other as well as evidence that they were working on their own issues.

The observation of Group 1 and post-test scores of Feeling Reactivity and Spontaneity indicated that members were able to share feelings in a non-threatening but still highly personal way because they claimed ownership of feelings and problems presented in the poems or writings.
They felt that the poems expressed more succinctly and economically their conflicts, insights, and growth, for example, by saying that a particular poem represented exactly how they felt. The fact that they were able to express in poems, their own or another poet's, the fuller dynamics and nuances of their feelings and judgments was impressive because, outside the poetry mode, most of the members of this group came with little inclination for or experience in disclosing feelings to others. Poetry as a catalyst seemed to move this group along with a high level of energy and trust unusual for such group composition.

At the same time, Group 1 was also characterized by a high need to appear rational and intellectual, and seemed to defy the stereotype that women are more emotional and lacking analytic ability. It could be that poetry also lent itself well to their familiar rational mode of functioning without allowing the process to become an unemotional intellectual exercise. Therapy and poetry are both learning processes that involve the mastery of judgments and values, because they transform feelings (Powell, et al., 1952). Based on this observation, one may conclude that the verbal-intellectual mode which is considered inappropriate in many group therapy models was rewarded in this poetry therapy group.

Based on case study and interaction in group, it seemed that the members of Group 2 were characterized by greater
naivete and inability to express verbally their thoughts and feelings, but were often in interpersonal difficulties because of their inability to control spontaneous acting out of them. Their general mode of operation was excessive altruism, people-pleasing, and self-sacrifice characteristic of the most traditional women. The extent of dysfunction was greater in these members than Group 1, four out of seven being in decompensating phases of bi-polar disorder, major depression, and severe anxiety reactions. All were taking psychotropic medications. Suicidal ideation, expressions of hopelessness and despair were frequent themes in the group work. Yet it is surprising that despite the severity of their dysfunctions at this time, they were able to concentrate on and produce reactions to poetry to the extent they did.

Unlike Group 1, the members of Group 2 were unsophisticated in the reading or writing of poetry. Their defenses were low; they were in pain and highly motivated to experiment with the poetry as self-help. In the course of their therapy, they were able to find that some of their distress could be managed by expressing themselves in writing in reaction to the specific themes that arose from the poetry rather than expressing them behaviorally. Anger was a pervasive theme in this group as well as other groups. The threat of further endangering close interpersonal relationships by ventilating in some explosive or indirect
manner seemed diminished by the structure of the poetic process. Participants were encouraged to turn feelings into poems or poetic imagery for reality-testing before or instead of communicating them to others outside the group, to see that the value of "emotions recollected in tranquility" had clearer and stronger implications for creative problem-solving. The following is a case observation illustrating how one participant used writing to express the unspeakable anger she felt toward her mother:

The day daddy died, I held you and said you did the very best you could. What I really wanted to do was shake the hell out of out...to hit you and hurt you for all the hurt I suffered because of your giving up your life for your mother and sisters. I learned that the only reason I was born was to hurt and be unhappy, to sacrifice myself so someone else could be happy. You always said I was just like you, born to be a woman.

This woman was incapacitated by anger that she had never expressed until she had a brief psychotic reaction. This letter was just the beginning of understanding how the pattern of self-sacrifice had contributed to her later patterns of victimization. Learning that she could handle her anger with writing allowed her a safety valve where as it could have caused further disruptions with various members of her family who were not connected with the major underlying causes of her depression. She was also able to forgive her mother when she was able to identify their
similar tragedies as women in that particular family and redirect her anger at more appropriate targets. She was also able to defer direct confrontation with appropriate targets until she was prepared to present her case forcefully. She was able to shed her victim-identity.

The following case observation illustrated how writing poetry enabled another woman to test out her fantasies behaviorally and resolve them. She suffered generalized anxiety with panic attacks, psychosomatic problems, and obsessive-compulsive traits. She was able to overcome an obsession that she had had for three years by way of poetry therapy. The following excerpt was taken from a process-recording based on her self-report. It is included here because it seems to reflect, for the majority of participants in this study, the general opinion of what occurs during poetry therapy. It is recorded here also because of the dramatic nature of its use to free this woman from obsessive-compulsive thoughts and behaviors connected with her ex-husband, and because she was able to be free of these obsessions and compulsions a full two years after what she viewed as her "cure" during a poetry writing session. Her reference is to her poem, "Guilt and Its Journey:"

Guilt creates the thought.
Expanded thoughts become fantasies.
Fantasies develop into

Unconditional necessities.
Remove the urgency of the necessity,
You burst the fantasy.
Disillusionment of the fantasy
Removes the guilt.

Participant: Just before I wrote this poem, I had been to
group therapy and someone remarked to me that
it seemed as if my ideas about getting back
with my ex-husband were more a fantasy
than a reality.

Therapist: The group had challenged you on this before, I
remember.

Participant: Yes, I even wrote a poem about ending the
fantasy about six months before when he had
taken up a new serious relationship with
another woman, "It's over now."

It's over now
Sick. Confused.
One bad decision causing so much pain.
So easy to throw away and
impossible to regain.
Reasons so real, so senseless now.
Time to forget, if I only knew how.
New lives built and not to be disturbed.
My feelings, now, are put on reserve.
It's over now.

But it was far from over until she could take some
direct action, and she had not been able to act decisively
before, partly because her ex-husband appeared to be
indecisive, as well, giving her mixed messages about his
availability. This particular night, however, she decided to
call him again, pose a blunt question, and to act on
whatever his answer was.

Participant: The first words out of his mouth were, "Hi, I
don't want you to call me again."
There was my answer. But I was very, very
angry. I began thinking about him, now in a
more negative way, remembering all the
negative aspects I had forgotten over the
past three years. I was crying profusely, then
I decided to write a letter to him, pouring
out my heart to him, because I was also
starting to remember all the positive things,
as well. I began the letter, pointing out all
this, crying all the while. I wrote pages of
stuff in a kind of frenzy until I had come
to the point of tearing it all up and throwing
it in the waste basket. But immediately after
I had torn it up, I wrote the poem, "Guilt and
Its Journey."

Therapist: What do you remember about the process of
writing the poem?

Participant: I don't remember any pause between tearing up
the letter and writing the poem. The letter
pouring out all the anger and hurt didn't
really stop it, as I remember I was still very
hurt. It must have been the structure of the
poem--short and to the point, whereas the
letter was many pages of rambling on with no
structure to the thinking, purely emotional
getting it out, releasing it, almost like beating a window or wall. The words just appeared as I thought them, periods and everything, all at once. Then I stopped and read it, and there it was. I have a logical mind, and I think it just seemed so logical, so black and white. I read it and said, "Look at what you've been doing to yourself all these years; it's time to stop." By that time it had already stopped. I didn't even have to make a decision to stop, it was stopped when I wrote it down.

Through the writing of this poem, she felt she was able to define the dynamics behind her self-punishment and come to the realization that she had many compulsive traits. The fantasy that she could get back together with her husband was the result of her elaboration of the wish to be free of the guilt of leaving him, she said. This wish led to the belief that, therefore, she had to get back together with him, and she became obsessed with this "unconditional necessity." She decided to test out her fantasy by telling her ex-husband her thoughts, to act on the incongruity between her fantasy and the unrealistic feeling it had for group members, although not for her at that time. She said:

Participant: I removed the urgency of the necessity by making a decision to test the reality of it.
Confronting the "necessity" to find out what was real began the process. His answer "burst the fantasy." I then began to see to what extent my thinking process had become so unrealistic. When I decided that the fantasy had not been worth all the guilt, anxiety, and pain, I was able to give it up. I think it was just the logic of it, there in black and white that did it.

**Therapist:** You say you have a very logical mind, and yet logic was not able to help you before to resolve this.

**Participant:** I know, I think from my head, but I've always written from the heart, from the feelings, but a combination of where it came from and how it got put down really jolted it into me. I still don't know what made me think these words or put them down.

**Therapist:** It is difficult to see how writing a poem can cause you to have closure on something so compelling as you were living under, something previously unresolved for three years, unresolved in therapy. Let's see if I have understood what happened in the process of writing this poem. The first poem you wrote, "It's over now," didn't really release you
from obsessive thoughts and compulsions about your ex-husband. You said, "It wasn't really over until I wrote "Guilt and Its Journey." The letter pouring out anger and hurt did not really stop it. Something about the poem itself did seem to stop it. It seems to me that as you recollect your actions at the time of writing, that out of all the voluminous writing preceding the poem, this poem was the distilled essence of all the emotional frenzy you had been through.

Sometimes it seems that the process of writing a poem is very mysterious and that's how it seemed to you -- it just appeared on the paper, periods and all. Perhaps this is the thing some people have called "inspiration," a sort of unconscious processing of thoughts and feelings that one is not in touch with, but which lies down deep inside and is being structured somehow. It seems that you created something out of nothing because all at once your product is there and it looks so plain and so clear you can say, "Oh that's what I have been trying to get to." But you still don't know you got to it. For one thing, you say it had a form and structure -- blunt and
to the point, black and white, very concrete, whereas the letter was voluminous and unfocused. Therefore, the logical order of events in the poem was more convincing than what we call the abreaction or heightening of feeling and the catharsis or release of feeling. And yet, the writing about feelings was necessary.

**Participant:** That's exactly right.

**Therapist:** Do you think that feelings and conscious "logic" are both necessary for solving problems, and will you use that mode more in the future?

**Participant:** Well, that depends. If I were looking for a job, I would probably try to present myself very logically, or even if I were talking to friends who don't really know me and I don't really know all that well. But with close friends, who really know me and I'm comfortable with, I would use both logic and feelings to express myself.

**Therapist:** You know, Kathy, "removing the urgency of the necessity" is a psychotherapeutic problem of great magnitude. Helping people to place where they modify their thinking and feeling is one thing, but getting them to be able to give up
--not just change--compulsions (laughter), where they are able not only to have a feeling understanding along with intellectual comprehension, also to give up the action or compulsive behavior, is astonishing to me when it happens so quickly and dramatically! It's pretty amazing. It's something we strive for in working with compulsive traits, but too rarely achieve.

**Participant:** Yes, I guess I am pretty compulsive about things, but not about this anymore.

**Therapist:** This seems to be something you did yourself in the process of expressing your feelings, and the understanding that emerged was very sharp and clear and linear, and logical, and persuasive! (Laughter). And you were able to say, Oh, I see now. O.K. I can give that up. I can quit that. (Laughter).

**Participant:** Yes, I can quit that! Yes. It was really easier than giving up cigarettes!!!

Obsessional behavior has not returned to her. But she reveals that she has learned to speak the "language of patriarchy"—logic apart from feelings, even though she acknowledges that, for her practical problem-solving was best done by the syntheses of logic and feelings or affect and cognition in the language of poetry.
Through the introduction of sensory imagery in poems during the group, she came to understand the automatic reactions learned over time, especially as sense experience, is translated into psychological states such as excitement or anxiety. With her first experience in responding to sensory images, she discovered that she could learn to re-experience her senses and perceptions in circumstances that were peaceful and joyous, first in the fantasy of a poem, then in action and poetry writing of her own. She was typical of the women in therapy who had been plagued with so many somatic complaints which left them feeling that their bodies were capable only of illness and betrayal. She wrote this poem after her first poetry therapy meeting:

The Tree of Strength
A tall bold oak tree giving
shade in the field of green.
Daisys laying over in the cool
steady breeze.
Running, Playing.
The wind blowing through
my hair.
A gentle cool touch on my face.
My arms and legs tingle.
My whole being is happy.
My spirit is free.

This was a reclamation of her body as being sensual and capable of pleasure, not a small consideration in the treatment of the anhedonia that often accompanies women's psychic pain.

Another case example shows how one poetry group member, an incest victim, was able to recognize and validate her own
childhood perceptions, evaluate the irrational behavior of her mother and grandmother which had strongly shaped her to deny the impact of sexual abuse, and to relate past to present in such a way that she was able to confront her feelings for the first time in poetry. Eventually she was able to confront her incestuous brother, alleviate anger and guilt feelings, and improve her self-esteem and spontaneity of expression. She was able to link the incest with the loss of her religious faith and to reclaim it at a more evolved stage.

Looking back and forth
Did you ever look back at what
Was?
Somehow I believed I was only allowed to love
God
And
Tommy,
In that order.
But I was very sure I did not want my God
To love me. Why?
Because Tommy loved me, Or
That is what he called It.
Now, thinking back, Tommy was only a boy -- What could God have done to me if he wanted to
Love me? I didn't even want God to know I was here.

God was male and she associated maleness with exploitiveness, humiliation, and abandonment. By a process of identifying the feminine attributes of God, identification with the nurturing life-giving, and creative aspect of her own motherhood, she was able to reclaim her
spirituality, and define a new kind of God worthy of her trust. This brought her great peace of mind and new self-regard. She credited therapy with "giving me back my god." Having been abused from the age of three by her 16-year-old brother, Tommy, and unable to tell anyone, she had been unable or unwilling to speak until she was six years old. She felt she was too poor at oral and written communication to share her poetry with the group, and the incest per se was not discussed at length in the sessions. But she was able to utilize the poetry to work out this problem and to improve her feeling of developing inner strength and responsibility. So, in this case, poetry was the primary modality by which she seems to have made such dramatic gains as her test scores show, particularly those poems stressing female energy and spirituality. Eventually, she was able to read aloud her own poetry to the group and pass around her handwritten copies:

She grew up with anger,  
Fear, doubt, and feeling like nothing.  
Anger at being a female,  
That she deserved anything  
Good out of her life.  
She selected a mate who  
Would duplicate these feelings in her.  
She went from the role of child to  
Child-wife. She didn't know who  
She was other than someone's daughter,  
Someone's wife, and someone's mother.

Yet she stopped living through another.  
She learned to live through the bad days  
And enjoy to the utmost the good days.  
Once independent psychologically,  
She was no longer paralyzed, no longer  
A victim, but a winner.
She would like to be remembered as a woman
Who was able not only to
Change horses in the middle of the race
But to come in First!!!

Based on observation of group interaction, it seemed that Poetry Group 5 was characterized by fewer severe or chronic disorders, but more so by "frozen feelings" and control needs typically seen in participants whose problems are complicated by substance abuse or relationships with substance abusers. To an extent not found in members of the other groups, these women had grown up in families made dysfunctional by alcohol abuse, and four out of five had repeated similar relationships in adulthood or had abused substances themselves. It is interesting to note that Group 5 also showed the highest pre-test mean score on Tc and I, which may reflect the fact that several members were already accustomed to working with the one-day-at-a-time philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous.

However, analyzing process notes and profiles showed that the members of Group 5 tended to be excruciatingly enculturated into sterotypical, feminine, "lady-like" behaviors. They saw their feelings as being very much at odds with prescriptions for behavior: that they should not feel angry or want things for themselves or assert themselves. They were overly controlled types who tended to vacillate between repression, extreme rationality, and mild acting-out. Two out of five members were accustomed to
writing journals or short-stories as part of their need to be creative. Three were very inhibited by their view of themselves as "non-artistic" and unable to write "good" poetry, so they had a tendency to introduce "real poets" to speak for them. Usually these tended to be didactic or moralizing and generally reflected how they "ought" to feel rather than how they actually felt. One member responded only by letters to the therapist.

Another case example illustrated how poetry was able to increase flexibility and alleviate control needs. This participant was finding it difficult to relate to another who was more spontaneous and dramatic in her poetic expressions. She was contemplating leaving group because she found this member's "histrionics" disturbing. However, as she began to monitor her reactions to this member for the insight she might obtain, her poetry illustrated that she was not as cold and unfeeling as she had thought, but she was very fearful of the feelings of vulnerability elicited by the other's poetry. Since childhood she felt extremely inadequate when reacting to other's pain, and felt angry and resentful that the group member was able to draw empathetic feelings from her. This insight was expressed in her poem:

I watch her cry
And winter floods my veins
Her tears tumble repeatedly
Insisting on streaks of permanence
And I step away
To watch her torture from a distance
I see her slashed with savagery
The venom of her passion
Remnants of sparks cross space
And penetrate me with quick piecing jabs
It is then I know
I cannot lift her weight.

She describes herself at that time:

Her lips sing with cool freshness
But heated coals scorch her center
She wants to look
But the flame is blinding bright
So she tempers smolder with ice

This participant was very fearful of her own impulses and feelings. She distanced herself from other members of the group and attempted to protect herself from feelings by denial and repression. She felt alienated and like a bad, non-compassionate person. This poem illustrates her raised-consciousness that she attempted to distance herself from feelings because she feared that she did not have the strength or skills to manage them. Therefore, she never experimented with new feelings or behavior because she did not trust herself, especially her "womanly" feelings. Eventually she became more comfortable with increasing levels of feeling reactivity and developed a larger behavioral repertoire built on her own standards and strengths. She was better able to trust her emerging sensuality and relate more naturally to her inner promptings. Within one month's time, she wrote the following response to Frost's "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening," which illustrated a new-found sense of ease with herself as a woman with fully human impulses, a measure of
trust in herself, and a willingness to take risks to express herself.

The woods are lovely, dark, and sleek
Descending the mare to take a peak
I look to the limbs for what I seek,
And venture to revel with Nature's mystique.

She also stated that her writing of short stories had improved because the characters she created were no longer so one-dimensional as she, herself, had been.

On post-test, these group members' scores on sub-scales generally indicated greater spontaneity and acceptance of feelings, particularly anger, less rigidity, more flexible approaches to problem-solving. Although some significant aspects of these participant's problems—substance and other abuse, including incest—are not situations readily found in poetry, poems representing victimization generally may have been strong and concrete enough to elicit underlying dynamics and overcome the mechanism of denial so characteristic of this group. Such cases underscore the need for the selection of poems that speak to a wide variety of existential problems.

Group 6 was the one poetry therapy group whose scores did not show increases with addition of poetry therapy. Certain uncontrolled variables may have affected the outcome. This group was characterized by a high number of chronic dysfunctions. In addition, it comprised a higher percentage of participants on medications in contrast to the
other groups. They tended to approach therapy in a very passive resistant manner, being more trusting of medication than psychotherapy. Concentration was poor, possibly due to the effects of medication. Dependency needs were very high, and they tended to place the therapist in an authoritarian position and to abdicate control over any aspects of their therapy. In this instance, interim writing or poetry turned out to be the primary "therapist" because attendance was more sporadic than other groups due to higher incidences of physical illness, vacations, and termination of the group after only ten sessions, because of the therapist's emergency hospitalization. Therefore, it was difficult to establish a level of trust or to follow up from one meeting to another with consistency, especially when this group was the largest of all. Because poetry therapy has been reported to be effective with medicated patients, it may be concluded that some selection-maturation and history interactions account for the fact that this group did not show much improvement on post test. The following case example is interesting because it illustrates some dangers involved in poetry therapy. One participant of Group 6 utilized a writing mode rather than verbal response to poetry and she found that writing elicited feelings and insights that caused her to decompensate and exacerbated serious suicidal feelings resulting in hospitalization. Scores on all variables
declined for this young woman pre- to post-test. A six month follow-up, however, indicated that, once through that crisis, she was able to resume writing productively, and continued in later group therapy making significant therapeutic gains. Such an event is dramatic illustration of some possible, if temporary, dangerous effects of solitary, unguided, or unprocessed writing in therapy. This participant had shared her writings neither with group members nor therapist and was overwhelmed by the burden of thoughts and feelings that emerged and which made her suicidal. Neither catharsis or insight could be achieved in this period, although eventually she was able to utilize her writing for insight, behavior change, and greater verbal participation in group work.

Group 7 was the single non-poetry group which showed significant increases on both Tc and T. Pre-post scores and observational data indicated that members of this group were characterized by extremely low self-esteem and were having difficulty functioning on a daily level, although they held, for the most part, responsible jobs. They were very other-directed, having strong feelings of inferiority or powerlessness. They appeared similar in the sense that they characteristically had resorted to splitting or compartmentalizing thoughts and feelings, body and mind, and so had no real sensory, perceptual data base that would allow them to hold consistent values, feelings, judgments or opinions,
or to be congruent in feeling and behavior. They did not trust themselves. They lacked ability to know what was valid about their own experience. On the surface, they appeared to be functioning on a level higher than participants of most other groups. But on the pre-test, their scores on self-actualization were lower than any other group. Yet, this is the only group whose scores on both Tc and I showed statistically significant gains. Their scores on post-test were more similar to "early therapy" groups described by Karle, Corriere, Hart, and Klein (1983) who had been in therapy up to twelve months. Yet only one member of this group had any previous experience with psychotherapy. The therapeutic gains could be explained by the fact that even though this was not a poetry therapy group, the two main hard-working members in this group spontaneously introduced poetry to the group sessions. One of these members wrote about her existential choice for life after suicidal attempts. The only power she felt in life was the power to take her own life. She found strength in learning that she also had the power to decide to live.

**Battle Within Myself**

I'm glad she's gone for now.  
I needed a rest and she was always make me fight.  
She wanted to kill me somehow.  
Fortunately, she left me without robbing all my light.  
That little light began to grow,  
It got bright enough to even shine  
And generated energy to show off its glow.  
This light is my lifeline.  
She had instilled me with fear about doubt
And is still even now trying to keep her presence known.
But, now I know how to keep her from blowing the Light totally out.
I rebuke her and let her know, her old patterns I will not condone.

She tried to shout out what people would say.
And wanted suicide to set her free.
I know some of her will probably stay.
I'm on an energetic incline and look at her and say,
"I can't believe she is or ever was ME!"

I want to work together with her and hope everything
Will be fine,
And keep the part of her that was strong.
Let us put the good together and help us intertwine
Then I think we will both know in life we DO belong.

The poem is a good example of the synergizing or synthesizing that may take place in self-actualizing therapy; in this case, the synthesis of life and death impulses. This also helped her to work through feelings connected with the approaching death of her young mother. The group was very interested in hearing about how she worked out conflicts by writing poetry. Her example caused another participant to write about how she had deceived herself about suicide and how she was able through this insight to manage suicidal impulses and integrate inner and outer.

There's a world
You cannot live without
You must dwell in
You can make it your
Heaven
Or your Hell.
If you look to the skies
You may see a glimmer of light
So small yet so clear
You'll begin to want to try
To end your life
As a living hell
And
Begin
To be part of
The Light
You thought was shining from the sky
That was all in your mind's eye.

There were many ways that this extraordinary member moved the group forward. In many ways, she functioned as a poem, herself. She presented to the group a rich repertoire of moods and feeling vocabulary. She was not given to cliches and challenged these in other groups members, using fresh and concrete images. She was able to move along various contradictions within herself, sometimes presenting herself as ambiguous, posing various opposites which she was attempting to reconcile, such as weakness and strength, anger and love. She sometimes was very strong in her convictions, other times she provided a rather enigmatic personality for others' projections. Yet she was empathetic and responsive enough to provide a relatively safe atmosphere for others to react to non-defensively. She was often described by other members as a strong, courageous, good role model, someone they would like to emulate. She was particularly admired for the way she challenged her own thoughts and feelings, pushing toward personal development and integration. This seems to be her "organizing principle." She was viewed as helpful to others'
development, and she made the work of the facilitator much easier because she was such a fine catalyst. Her first poem was "Hug for the Group."

So, one cannot necessarily assume that poetry itself did not influence the dynamics of these non-poetry groups. For example, in this group, death was a persistent but largely avoided theme. Several had family members who had recently died or were dying, most often their mothers. One participant had not been able to complete the grieving process, even after ten years, partly because of her ambivalence over her mother's death of Alzheimer's Disease. She felt it unfair that her mother's life had been spent for others, had been so hard, that she had lingered and suffered so long, but was glad when it was finally over. As a result of seeing a painting at an art gallery during this time, she spontaneously produced this poem which she felt provided some resolution for these feelings:

A Poem in a Picture

I saw a painting today of a young girl
In a plain, white, thin dress.
She was sitting by a stream watching the sunset,
A trite poetry on canvas, I guess,
But it made me stop.
"That's my mother, I said." Then I knew.
I knew that when she left the dress she had on--
The tired, worn body which had outlived
The tired, worn mind--
She would stop
And pick up the face and body of that young girl
She once was,
Delicate, fine, and innocent,
And she would be off to the setting sun only
To be arrested at the water.
And there she would sit down in the quiet
And the beauty.
Becoming a part of the quiet and the beauty.
She would test what she did not know
When she had no time to learn the beautiful things
And no one would tell her.
In the morning, she would catch the sun
On its morning run.
But, for now, beside the pool,
A lesson was beginning.
That's why I stopped to look, Mama,
It was you,
Wondering.

There are many examples of poetry arising spontaneously during the process of poetry therapy, but also in the non-poetry groups. This aspect of spontaneous poem-making during the research could not be controlled without some very artificial constraints. In this sense, it is finding similar to that of Luber (1978) and Crootof (1969). The following are additional case examples of spontaneous poems arising in group therapy. Recurring themes in the poems written by participants were primarily those of pain and anger. Often these would be responses to the poem, "Song of Pain," and very often they would be related to physical states as well as psychological ones. The following poem was written by a woman with a chronic mood disorder not controllable by medication. She had also suffered from an eating disorder and rapid weight gain that she could not control. The poem suggests some of the inner dynamics of this phenomenon. Poems often represented issues not brought to group.
SELF-IMAGE

Memories...
Of a young dreamer engrossed in rainbow hazes with
lollipop-soldiers
on sugar white ponies...marching to song...
"That all the World is Good..."
Scolding Teachers...for all the R's...A Cheshire cat...
with pencil in hand...sketching clowns of frowns before me...
Spirited and free. Anticipation for growing up into the
"World where all is good."...
Mischievous Grins laced in fantasies of worlds
afar...
Loved mayonnaise sandwiches and cookie bars...
Munching..."all the world is good"...

Loved to skip to the beat of childhood rhymes...Music
encircled
Good and Bad times...believing that
"All the world is good."...
Teen-age growing pains...disappointments entwined
confusion
...a war to gain...Wanted to run...Where
"All the world is good."...
Time...slithering in came dark places...unkind
faces...

wonderful dreams...rainbows floating away...

Cold, gray shadows replaced the colors...where was
the
comfort of my Mother?...and snuggled naps, arms clasped
around teddie-bear...Where
came this pandora box of fear? What happened to
"All the world is good?"

Falling...crashing...almost shattered...Had life ever
really mattered?
QUICK...believe...a taste of water...to touch a leaf...
What is left...to be...A micro-fragment of heart...
ticking...exhausted...soon to part...

A small flame enhances deep inside...so far to
reach...
it wants to hide...
The heart-flame grows stronger...as time...snail-fast
heals
dread...Fragile pieces glued...a silkworm's thread...
Facing ourselves new world not as thought...should one
believe
in fairy tales or should one not?

To live is real...often times I know...though
Within my heart are dreams aglow...and this one knows
many
battles left to fight...
Thus...deep in my heart I feel we have the right
to believe that...SOMEDAY
"All the World Will be Good"........

This participant also wrote the following in similar style
relating to depression and obesity, and insomnia.

Alone
In Limbo
Whirlwinds churn...manipulation of emotion..
Timeless...
    Pitch-black gloom of destruction that surrenders
    the naked eye
Raped...
    Of images...only eternal darkness prevails...
Damp...
    Gelid flesh possesses the body to engulf and
devastate
    a weakened soul...
Mind...
    Unyielding, as one's own fear saturates with
fervancy and
    ears scream for an audible sound...
    A gentle Voice...A Kind Word...A Touch of
Reassurance
Mouth...
    Slowly pries open to a dry tunnel which leads into
swollen
    emptiness where no sound is heard...
    ...Nothing into Nothingness...
Fatal Depression...
    Hovers as black vultures, prepared to close the
ended grasp.
    Ready...to devour and cleanse leftover fragments of
sanity.

A poem about insomnia:

As other life forms rest
Weep unto myself
Sleep will not take hold
Such is pain of never-ending stories
Nightmares frighten to truth, peak out of every
corner.
Mind races, overflowing, seeping over the covers of
my bed.
Defeated heart, garish suspicions from hell oozing
cruel
Misfortune
Throbbing
Pounding
Daybreak
Nightfall
Loneliness claws at my soul and thrashes the heart
deeper
As other life-forms sleep
Soldiers reap wars within my body
Unfinished, sleepiness wanders in
The soldier needs to retreat, silence, peace

Until the following nightfall
As other life-forms rest.

Another participant writes about physical problems
centered around an eating disorder:

To eat ... Pain! Not to eat... Pain!
Unable to break the circle!
Although no courage to jump,
To slip would be okay.
To be able to crawl into a black hole,
unable to feel, unable to see,
able to hear, unable to think.
Safely tucked in a mother's womb
to be born again
to escape the tears ... the pain.

Another participant, recognizing the connection between
her current physical pain and past physical and emotional
abuse wrote:

Pain is not a stranger to me
Pain has been at my right hand since I have been.
Pain of rejection, it was at first, then later
Pain of abandonment,
Pain of physical abuse, and what's worse
Pain of emotional abuse
Pain from embarrassment, shyness, coldness,
detachment,
guilt and hate.
Pain administered at the hands of others, then
later
self-induced
Pain
Self-hate. It's natural that this
Pain should follow such a path. I pay a high price
for this
Pain
My stomach, no longer a stomach, but a bunch of jumbled muscle ready to seeth and burn at the thought of Pain.
My bowels exploding with the pain, doing the job my anger should be doing. Finally Pain of reality. The hardest pain to accept, at first.
To truly see things as they are, to see me. This Pain can be turned into a positive thing. I can accept the Pain of reality because through this pain I learn to cope,
I learn to heal. And I begin to see who I am and what I can still become. This Pain, though intense at times, can and will serve a purpose.
Through this Pain, I've learned empathy for others, reaching out to help others in their Pain. Without Pain, how would I know that others, all of us, face Pain.
Look! Its just beginning to peep through the fog.

Another one's "Song of Pain":

Its folds surround me,
So hard to find the end
From gossamer to canvas,'
This cloak of pain I've fashioned
Real--imagined--
Too many pockets.
I'm caught in the pockets.

The next was written by a woman who presented a very stoic, highly rational exterior which interfered with interpersonal relationships. She had no experience writing about her feelings prior to therapy. She wrote a poem about a mountain in Europe where many people had died. It could have been a metaphor for herself.
A massacre that time forgot
isolated beauty
a will to survive
cold rock fortress
against warm blue skies
beliefs so strong
dead, but still recalled
hope and pain
become the same
strength and desire
perished in the fire
principles and purity
were called insanity
blasphemy and prayer
and praise to god
tragic loyalty
bittersweet agony
became memories and ashes
and a silent defeat.

This participant, who found it difficult to express her feelings, yet felt deeply, believed that this inability cost her her relationship with her romantic, Byronic husband. She wrote this, the first of a long series of poems and letters that helped her get in touch with feelings and to express them in ways she was not able to do verbally. She was able to see that part of her attraction to her irresponsible husband was that he was her perfect counterpart, expressing that part of her that she could not express for herself, synthesizing intellect and emotion.

Dear Michael,
my dear friend, Michael
It is difficult...
for me to think that you are not still my friend,
I cannot understand the silence.
The coldness.
And how much I had to learn about you
After you left!
Why in the world couldn't you talk to me?
Now...
I read Baudelaire.
Feelings....sensations
Why didn't you think I could understand
What you felt inside?
Romanticism.
your love of beauty, questions of realism/your
violently colored mind that I loved so much
I loved every part of you ... good and bad...
Physically, mentally and emotionally.
You were my DUALITY
How could you ever think I couldn't understand
Feeling superceding reason.
You were art, life and science to me.
And I was just learning that life was an
emotional experiment.
I was just learning to FEEL.
I understood, Michael. Yes, I did.

Various group members expressed a return of religious
faith or increased sense of spiritual inner-directedness at
the end of their poetry group experience. In the following
poem, a middle-aged depressed woman who had little formal
education and was embarrassed about what she considered an
inability to express herself in writing, wrote the following
poem as she tended her garden and gathered strength to
change almost every aspect of her life:

It's not something I can see
But more the spiritual side of me
When I'm in need
And loved ones or friends
Cannot be found.
When life seems to be
A relentless maze
Of less up and more down,
There's a spot from deep within
Tells me, it's alright, begin again.
From my heart, it also flows
Just when I think
There's nothing left,
Something
Touched me and says it's
Alright, love always grows
For it's
A perennial,
Begin again.

... Queen of Eleusis
Giver of Earth's Good Gifts
Give me your grace
I offer song for your favor

Summary

This chapter presented the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Chapter V contains a summary, conclusion and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

While many comparative therapy outcome studies have been conducted and found effective, few have included creative arts or feminist therapies in their evaluations. The effectiveness of most outcome studies has been difficult to assess because of the analogue nature of most designs which limit their generalization. Of the qualitative studies of poetry therapy which have been conducted, some have been criticized as being soft theoretically and methodologically and as being non-empirical. Current studies of feminist therapy are beginning to show promise of a quantitative research and methodological base. The present study was an attempt to add to this base and at the same time reinforce the strengths of the previous qualitative research.

The purpose of this study was to examine the outcome of feminist group therapy and poetry as an adjunctive treatment on post-test outcome measures of self-actualization. The independent variable was the structured implementation of poetry. The dependent variables were the post-test outcome variables of self-actualization (Time Competence and Inner Directedness) of the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), a

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measure of attitudes and values. Subjects were forty-four women in community mental health treatment, randomly assigned to eight groups for twelve one and one-half hour sessions of group therapy, one treatment condition being feminist therapy, the other being feminist therapy with poetry as an adjunctive treatment. The Personal Orientation Inventory was given as a pre-post measure of self-actualization, and group process and progress notes were recorded after each group session as observational qualitative data.

The statistical hypotheses were (1) that feminist group therapy would cause significant increases in self-actualization and (2) that the addition of poetry therapy as an adjunct to feminist therapy would result in significantly higher levels of self-actualization. The research design was a mixed hierarchical experimental model with non-equivalent treated control groups of non-equal size and non-random selection. Feminist therapy and feminist poetry therapy served as a between subjects factor, and the effectiveness of therapy was examined through the use of a pre-post measures factor. Subject nested in the separate therapy group was considered as a hierarchical factor. Empirical study was supplemented by qualitative observational data.

Results indicating that feminist therapy is effective in treating non-feminist traditional women in clinical out-patient treatment were consistent with those of other
investigations of feminist therapies. Analyses of variance results indicated a robust main effect for pre- to post-treatment, controlling for demographic variables of income, age, education, marital status, and diagnosis. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported.

However, results of the second hypothesis, that the adjunct of poetry therapy to a feminist-based group therapy would lead to significant increases in self-actualization, were mixed and did not support this hypothesis. Neither the main effect for pre-to post-treatment changes using poetry therapy, nor its interaction with therapy conditions, was significant for Time Competence, although there were trends toward significance in three out of four poetry groups and a third approached significance.

Of the most appropriate measures of self-actualization, the Inner-directedness variable, the main effect for treatment changes over time was significant in two out of four poetry groups and a third group approached significance. Interactional effects indicated that group membership exerted some influence on outcome. Qualitative data from group process notes and case examples of participant's spontaneous contributions to poetry support the assumption that poetry is a natural therapeutic technique often used as a self-help measure by persons in therapy and as a catalyst for group therapy.
Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn based on the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study. First, based on the finding that demographic variables seemed unrelated to outcome, it can be concluded that prior participant characteristics may not be closely related to outcome in poetry therapy. The results of this study do not support Orlinsky and Howard's (1978) assumption that the prior content of a participant's life such as diagnosis and the interactional effects of demographics are significant determinants of therapeutic outcome. Because the study was effective in treating a group of people rarely researched by mental health professionals, the traditional depressed and anxious women (Weisman, 1980), the findings of this study that feminist therapy seems to be effective for non-feminists or traditional women in prompting feminist goals of positive mental health and self-actualization in a clinical population, are consistent with those found by Maracek, Kravitz, and Finn (1979) and Becker (1984).

The low scores on the Time Competence Scale reflect that most participants came into therapy very time incompetent, either living primarily in the past with guilts, regrets, or resentments and/or in the future with idealized goals, plans, expectations, predictions, and fears (Shostrom, 1977). In contrast, the time competent person is more conscious of his/her present mode of emotions, cognitions,
perceptions, volitions, and time which, of course, includes memory of the past and anticipation of the future. The self-actualizing person would be more aware of the potential to feel new feelings, think new thoughts, gain new perceptions and values within the course of a day and to tie these to the realization of future goals which would be optimistic but realistic and possibly attainable. Lower levels of Time Competency are characterized by manipulative (normal) functioning, characterological (neurotic) levels, and psychotic levels such as being out of contact with present awareness. However, over the course of twelve weeks, it was found that these group members moved from a non-actualizing level generally to a more normal (adjustment) level and, in some cases, into the self-actualizing realm as the result of treatment.

Second, based on the finding that some group members did not improve significantly in their self-actualization within the twelve week period of group therapy examined as a part of this study, and on the fact that as it is not unusual for patients to regress in the early stages of any psychotherapy or to fail to show improvement, one might conclude that those groups which did not show significant gains might have done so had the treatments been conducted over a longer period of time.

Quantitative and qualitative data analyses of the groups show that, indeed, it was the case that one poetry therapy
group whose time interval was shortened to ten weeks showed more variability and more evidence of decompensation and regression on their pre-post scores and group participation than the other groups. It may be that the outcome measure of Tc did not adequately reflect the interrelationship process of the poems and participants over such a brief period of time, nor could it accurately discriminate the cognitive functions of value change during that short interval. In terms of becoming disentangled from the past, it is a difficult process in any therapy and such a process takes longer when people exhibit the high levels of denial and defensiveness as did members of this group.

Also, with regard to the temporal issue, the group treatment attempted to elicit immediacy of experiencing through the medium of poetry because temporal dimensions have been considered important treatment aspects in all major therapeutic movements. Existential therapists, including many feminists, focus primarily on the here-and-now, emphasizing specific life stages and the direction in time that the person's life is taking. Due to the process of immediacy and inadequate time, it is concluded that such participants may not have been fully able to process or explore and resolve such painful feelings as their poems reveal. This may have been due to resistance, disintegration, or decompensation, which are assumed to occur precisely because of poetry's disorganizing ability to
circumvent the rational/cognitive processes and to uncover the repressed.

Some members of this group which only met for ten weeks regressed so much that they tended to distrust their inner being perceptions to such an extent that reality testing was impaired. Such low levels of time competency and inner direction indicate they were living in an ego defensive position with increased rigidity and decreased freedom of expression. Self-actualizing is a temporal process of working through hostility, bitterness, betrayal, and rage to more satisfying interpersonal relationships and in greater rhythmic balance among the ups and downs of life. It would be rare for persons with such low pre-test scores to show a self-actualizing profile without considerable introspection, assessment, and therapy.

Third, based on the analysis of qualitative data as well as low scores on Tc and I, it can be concluded that the majority of participants came into therapy feeling a great degree of alienation with its aspects of powerlessness to determine personal or social outcomes, with meaninglessness and its concomitants of confusion and uncertainty about beliefs and values, and lack of motivation because of the uncertainty of the future and negative past perceptions. They had feelings of isolation from society and the world of work, and cultural prescriptions for how they should think, feel, and behave. From the pre-test scores for Inner-
directedness (I) it is clear that feelings of self-estrangement were often apparent due to overdependence and reliance on pleasing others. They were not motivated by internal preferences or needs but by parents, peers, or cultural expectations. They often had a sense of normlessness, that "the center does not hold," that they could no longer achieve their goals by old societally approved methods, gender prescriptions, or reliance on others for direction, and they had no new cultural schemata to help them.

Fourth, based on the dramatic upsurge post-test on (I), for most groups, it can be concluded that counter-cultural aspects of feminism and the alternative values feminist and poetry groups promoted by their pro-women philosophy, may be a promising existential alternative to combat alienation, isolation, and meaninglessness for non-feminists. Results suggest that feminist therapy supplies new values and, hence, motivations to improve the quality of their lives.

Fifth, based on the finding that all groups improved dramatically on measures of capacity for intimate contact as well as inner-directedness, and given the finding that treatment effects were to some extent dependent on membership in groups, it can be concluded that these factors arose together out of the dynamics of group process and its emphasis on the commonality and solidarity of female empathic identification.

Traditional women tend to value relationships highly. It
was evident from the quantitative and qualitative data such as that presented above that their primary conflicts had centered around perceived failure in interpersonal relationships and pleasing others. They were frustrated in acting out certain traditional feminine values such as caring behaviors, empathy, responsibility for the cohesiveness of relationships, and spiritual expression which were often interpreted as weaknesses. Based on pre-test scores on Self-Regard and Self-Perception, they were fearful to express contrary opinions on values, anger, or other behaviors assertively or spontaneously. Yet, from their post-test scores on Values, Existentiality, Feeling Reactivity, Spontaneity, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Acceptance of Aggression, and Capacity for Interpersonal Contact, it may be concluded that participants were better able to affirm their traditional values without feeling that such values would continue to contribute to their victimization.

At the same time, their post-test scores on Self-Acceptance, contrasted with Synergy, leads to the conclusion that they were reluctant to accept their weakness or had so far failed fully to integrate them into their value system. Although they showed greater acceptance on post-test scores of Self Perception, their scores on Synergy did not change pre- to post-test; therefore, one may conclude that they did not accept strength and weakness as meaningfully related. They would still tend to see gentleness and firmness, love
and anger, masculinity and femininity, for example, as dualities of their existence which are difficult to reconcile. Nevertheless, based on these findings, it may still be concluded that these participants were at least in the process of synthesizing various dichotomies of perception and values previously held.

Sixth, from the data analysis of the categories of Feeling Reactivity, Spontaneity, Acceptance of Aggression, and Capacity for Intimate Contact scores, it was concluded that the use of Yalom's (1975) curative factors for group psychotherapy and feminist therapist's values and goals seemed to encourage group dynamics toward greater trust and identification with women and traditional feminine values of compassion, empathy, support, altruism, emotional honesty, and cooperation toward group goals. As these were coupled with the values of greater inner-directedness and assertive action, fewer incidences of scapegoating or "blaming the victim" and less self blame seemed to occur which lessened guilt, self-punishment, and depression. It also seemed to mobilize participants to define their conflicts and engage in some kind of action to solve existential problems in a relatively short period of time. In this sense, it supports other studies of cost-effectiveness such as Johnson's.

From qualitative data and increased Inner-Direction and Acceptance of Aggression scores on post-tests, it is concluded that there was less emphasis on monopolizing the
therapist's time, less power-striving and fragmentation for the participants. On the contrary, the value of egalitarian relationships among therapists and other members, the delineation of responsibility for group functioning to group members, seemed to lead to early group cohesion. It should be stated that a small but persistent minority of group members found it difficult to understand the role of a therapist who was perceived by others to be non-authoritarian, non-paternalistic, who expected them early to assume responsibility for their own therapy and responsibility to other members. However, this problem was assertively handled by other group members who encouraged and empowered these participants to trust themselves to be responsible and who offered supportive assistance.

Finally, perhaps the mixed results of the poetry therapy groups were due to poetry selection factors, the particular mode of poetry therapy used (reading and responding). Or perhaps the structure was not flexible enough to accommodate spontaneous writing or the group's ideas about how they wanted to participate, so that they did not feel ownership of the ways and means to do the therapy. Perhaps a more free-flowing structure would have been more productive. Perhaps a more didactic approach may have shown gains.

Inasmuch as spontaneous poetry writing occurred frequently in non-poetry groups, perhaps more emphasis should have been given to writing rather than reading. The
reading of poems may be substantially different from writing, reading aloud may be different from reading silently, reading alone may be different from reading in a group. The processing of poems makes different demands on the reader than the reading for information only. It depends on the reader's skill and values, but also on the accessibility and difficulty of the poem.

Perhaps if poetry selection were based, as has been suggested by a minority of feminists, on specific prescriptive or ideological contents, the effects might have been more potent. Some distinctive themes might have emerged. If anything, the poems used probably centered as much on the inhibiting effects of sex-role socialization as on the liberating qualities of feminist writings. The poems were not prescriptive except in a very general sense. They did not provide new role-models so much as they helped participants define themselves at a particular point in time and validate their perceptions. This illustrates, perhaps, the literary disadvantages or unequal literary opportunities that have accrued to female writers and readers—the "lost canon" of which feminist critics speak.

Perhaps some therapists would not agree with the poetry selected for this study. The poetry selection was not based on the tenets of radical feminism in the sense that it did not devalue male psycho-social perceptions; however, some did emphasize certain "female" values such as nurturance,
sensuality, intuition, and spirituality as being empowering and therapeutic. Poetry selection did not include Black, Hispanic, or specifically lesbian poetry, primarily because the women in the group were white and heterosexual with one exception.

Subjectively speaking, the non-poetry groups were not more inclined to engage in social action as a consequence of value change, although this outcome might have been changed had prescriptive poetry been used. It did seem to be the case that gender oppression was recognized less easily than class or educational disadvantages, with most participants feeling that they were more institutionally and economically than psychically determined. Consistently, however, participants wanted to gain more individual skills to manage the stress produced by institutional (economic and educational) abuse. Surprise and pleasure were often expressed that other women in the group were sources of support and "networking." Bonding with other women was a new experience for many of them, and in this sense, current feminist writings emphasizing the bonding of women in mutual support could increase behavioral effects.

Much of the poetry selection was based on an assumed feminist "right to choose" (Kolodny, 1980). That is, the poetry was selected with the idea of presenting choices or different ways to respond in thought, feeling, or action—sort of an act of faith that if the participants' conscious-
nesses of conflict and choice were raised, they would select the therapeutic response for themselves without direct prescriptions for action. Perhaps that was a mistake, inasmuch as more change might have taken place in a shorter period of time had specific pro-feminist attitudes been expressed in the writings, because such attitudes have been found in association with greater self-actualization. (Doyle, 1975; Crystall and Dean, 1976; H. Jelle and Butterfield, 1979).

Keeping in mind that solid therapeutic change may reflect a process of cognitive/affective synthesis over time, a process rather than a product (such as a specific behavior or a specific poem), it is possible that consciousness-raising had more of a disordering effect in many cases, and that the organization of cognition and affect that would perhaps result in value change was delayed past the twelve week period, and therefore, not measured.

None of the group members were feminists, none of the poems were self-titled "feminist" poems, and at no time was the therapy described as feminist therapy. Poems were selected on the basis of their implications for the subjects under consideration in terms of their probability of producing identification, insight, catharsis, choices, and problem-solving. They were for the most part written by women and for women, and edited by feminist poet, Margaret Honton.
Although poetry therapy is adaptable to many models of therapy, for self-actualizing therapists the "greatest poetry" would be that which causes one to feel all parts of the self most profoundly, and to integrate them into the self-system. As Lesser says, all great art is pervaded by a sense of opposites to be synthesized. Great poetry and good self-actualizing therapy should integrate the disowned and repressed parts of the self. It takes a high degree of sensitivity and ability to interpret and evaluate literature in order to select the best poem for the reader. In the final analysis, poetry selection and therapeutic procedures need to be a collaborative effort between the therapist and participant.

The aesthetic response of the reader and therapist in poetry therapy is the integration of emotion and cognition and bodily awareness that constitutes an integrated personality. However, the effects of reading call for a more sophisticated understanding and managing of emotional life that often goes beyond the training of most readers, reading teachers, psychotherapists, or poetry therapists. What happens when people read is probably, as Bleich said, more important than why they read. It is recommended that literary people and psychotherapists pool their knowledge in this regard toward the goal of producing an internal motive for reading and thinking about literature. Because various studies have shown that reading often leads to writing,
participants' writing also should be studied for what they contribute to the understanding of what happens when a person reads; for example, how they turn feelings into judgment of value or intention. This cannot be accomplished by content analysis of written work alone. Therefore, more complex research methods should be developed for the study of this aspect of poetry therapy.

Poetry therapy deserves full recognition as a creative arts therapy so that it can be fully developed and its potential actualized. Poetry-as-adjunct, although the preferred method used by many poetry therapists, does not seem so potentially fruitful as studying poetry-as-therapy. Perhaps one reason that it has not reached the full status of a recognized therapy, such as Music and Art Therapies have, is that it would require re-certification and re-credentializing of many persons who now use it so widely with no supervision or continuing education, and would cause other professional and theoretical problems. Robbins and Silby (1976) have also suggested that one reason creative arts therapies are slow to gain recognition is that they are made up largely of women. This fact should be explored and treated by feminist researchers as well as creative arts therapists. Perhaps bolder claims for the effectiveness of poetry therapy can then be made.

The most comprehensive presentation of theory depends upon greater emphasis on the users of poetry, the various
processes used to arrive at meaning, and outcome measures. Practitioners in verbal arts therapies have been slow in developing outcome measures, methods, and theories. The value of theory for methods and measures is less important than the characteristics that participants, poems, and therapists bring to the reading or writing experience. However, poetry therapists need to publish guidelines and techniques for various theoretical approaches that illustrate how well the treatment succeeds in doing what they say it does. Unless theoretical formulations are actually tested in practice under controlled conditions, it is difficult to demonstrate what works. Poetry therapy may remain on the fringe of the psychological arts when it could be substantiated perhaps in the same sense that Art and Music are.

The scientific or experimental method has been the accepted way of substantiating claims for effectiveness which can be rejected or accepted. As previously stated, using such a model for research is inadequate for most feminist poetry or other phenomenological researchers. It is doubtful that the highly complex variables can or should be managed in the true sense of controlling variables. The basis of this method is statistical correlation or significance that a relationship does or does not exist based on some hypothetical constructs. It is not adequate to the task of feminist or poetry therapists. Although experiments must
be done, there is no reason to dismiss all the valuable work performed in the field of poetry therapy because it is "anecdotal." More in-depth case studies of process would be most effective in illustrating how the factors of poetic properties, therapist values and personality, and theory converge with the reader or writer to produce therapeutic gains.

Rosenblatt has said that someone can paraphrase a text for you, but nobody can evoke a poem for you, and Bleich has said that language remains one of the most excruciating riddles of human behavior. Measuring attitudinal changes, using standardized or projective tests or behavioral assessments, cannot do the work of process-recording of the reader's experience as it occurs in situ. Tables of numbers, figures, or charts of "empirical" data cannot genuinely convey the world of information-processing taking place in the dynamic self in its capacity to create new perceptions, reshape old ones, synthesize them into new conflicts, choices, and values as a reader struggles with a poem. Nor can they convey the poetry therapist's sense of conviction that it works when they are involved in the complex and intense interaction of "the poem, the text, and the person," as Rosenblatt frames it. It has a certainty, as authentic as here-and-now manifest knowledge that profoundly surpasses mere statistical probability. This conviction by the poetry therapist may be the greatest determinant of outcome.
Recommendations for Further Research

A number of recommendations for further research into the effectiveness of poetry therapy can be made based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study. First, it is recommended that similar field studies be repeated with other groups. One of the strengths of this study lies in its external validity which is enhanced because results may be generalizable or applicable to similar mental health outpatient groups, environments, and levels of dysfunction. Preliminary analysis of demographic variables were unrelated to outcome; however, had diagnoses been coded in all their various nuances, it is possible that some significant effects would have been found. It is recommended that these future studies might be designed to study the inter-relationships between diagnoses, treatments, and outcome. Or, because many feminist therapists are at odds with medical diagnoses, they might wish to experiment with other diagnostic schema, for example, to take a more behavioral approach such as Hynes (1986). Her behavioral charting sheets had not been researched nor published at the time this study was underway. In most mental health centers where short-term therapy is most frequently used, diagnoses are usually assigned after one to two sessions of evaluation, after interview data, history, presenting problems, and so on are compiled. As is often the case with women, the presenting problems may be very different from diagnostic
criteria that would emerge later on in therapy and which would perhaps be more definitive.

Feminists often argue that professional clinical judgments of diagnoses as well as treatment are contaminated by conventional sex-role assumptions and other sex and gender issues, and that these are reflected in the choice of outcome measures. Therefore, diagnostic criteria might be redefined by feminist researchers in out-patient settings such as Rawlings and Carter (1978) have done, or re-defined in terms of Self-Actualizing theory. As it is now, most out-patient therapy proceeds on the basis of diagnoses from the DSM III. Future studies might consider and control for these factors. As the research indicates, the majority of subjects represented major psychiatric categories, chronic or acute, whereas a small minority (20.5%) were diagnosed as having adjustment disorders. Therefore, on the basis of the outcome measures of the POI and analysis of qualitative data, it appears that short-term feminist therapy would be effective for groups similarly constructed, at least with respect to acute or chronic dysfunction, especially so, inasmuch as demographic variables were not significant factors in group composition, nor were they related to participant's performances on the dependent variables.

Second, it is recommended that future studies consider poetry as the single independent variable in research on consciousness-raising. The use of poetry as an adjunct to
therapy can be questioned on the grounds that outcome in this study was not robust enough to demonstrate clearly that the addition of poetry therapy contributed significantly to treatment gains pre- to post-test. However, it should not be concluded that poetry therapy could not significantly improve outcome. For example, there are many ways to use poetry in therapy. Perhaps this particular research design to use poetry as an adjunct only, rather than a treatment in and of itself, was an unfair test of its therapeutic potential. Therefore, future studies might consider poetry as the single independent variable in research on consciousness-raising or other approaches to feminist therapy. Different poetry or different tests of outcome might produce very different results, as well, and these differential effects should be researched. Larger samples might have produced results of more statistical and theoretical significance; however, the relationships observed indicate that the use of poetry with feminist therapy has at least practical significance in terms of cost-effectiveness and positive effects on group dynamics.

Third, it is recommended that in future studies the variable of the therapist be controlled more closely. Perhaps greater statistical significance might have been shown if the therapist researcher were a certified poetry therapist in the sense that her training and experience conformed to the qualifications set forth by The National
Poetry Therapy Association. The training and experience of the therapist in this study represents those of the typical out-patient clinicians whose expertise lies primarily in the mental health profession. Therefore they may be encouraged to utilize this modality as the upsurge in poetry therapy publications suggest they may. Future studies might also include treatment provided by a certified poetry therapist, who was also a feminist therapist, to conduct the group. This was not possible within the setting and time structures of this research study. Further, it is rare to find poetry therapists and feminist therapists who are specialists in both of these modalities. Group dynamics within poetry groups do suggest it is important for the facilitator to be well-trained in psychotherapy and group dynamics, as well as poetry. Based on the experience and findings of this research, training in these modes should be more structured and available as part of traditional training programs at the graduate level in psychology.

Fourth, it is recommended that future studies consider the relative value of quantitative versus qualitative approaches to outcome measures. This follows the recommendations of other researchers for methodological diversity in psychological research. These call for alternative systems of inquiry. Phenomenological approaches such as those advocated by Polkinghome (1984), inter-disciplinerity and theory construction (Forsythe and Stron, 1986), the integration of
feeling, intentionality, language use and verbal therapies (Appelbaum, 1985; Ford, 1984; and Howard, 1984), represent studies whose research design and method to some extent fit the nature of the phenomenon to be studied, women. (Ford, 1984; Howard, 1984; Henley, 1985; and Harding, 1986).

Issues which exist with regard to different approaches in outcome analysis could be addressed in future studies. For example, this study, because of its reliance on statistical tests of significance to establish cause and effect, perhaps over-emphasized linearity and objectivity and minimized the qualitative, experiential, and process-oriented data accumulated. So the usefulness of the qualitative analysis may in this way be limited. In a sense, it replicates traditional analytical studies and reflects the political realities in which feminist researchers must conduct their studies. But such analysis may not be valid for studying a network of causes.

Also, global constructs of self-actualization or any other standardized tests do not very well explain the ordering of emotions, values, and intentionality of specific women in treatment. Such a process-orientation simply could not be done within the limitations of the research training, setting, time, and money where field research often must be conducted. Because the findings of meta-analyses of comparative treatments and research articles suggest that much research is irrelevant for the purpose of studying
human subjects, different measurement or mathematical models should be used or developed for the phenomenological or humanistic study of persons in terms of feelings and thought processes, unconscious influences, cultural relativity, gender, intentionality, and subjectivity.

Fifth, it is recommended that research methodologies more appropriate to the study of dynamic human systems should be elaborated, so that artificial limits will not be placed on the field of inquiry by the limitations of design and methodology. This is particularly important in the content and process areas of this study. The tension between objectivity and subjectivity was not resolved in this study. The inclusion of subjective, process-oriented data which is necessary to understand the effects of poetry therapy may be thought objectionable by many feminists because of an ethical belief that such "policing of thought" is opposed to feminist theoretical and methodological paradigms because it requires public disclosure of knowledge to Power (Harding).

Women are "embodied creatures," as Harding states, but no effort in this study was made to examine the bodily experiences of stress and mental disease that only women experience, so in this sense, it appears to ignore the important factor of biological differences between men and women in therapy. Therefore, it perhaps implies that these psychological problems such as those arising from abortion, childbirth, empty-nest syndrome, or rape, for example, were
ignored. In the course of therapy, these relationships were often made explicit by participants, especially in the high correspondence of incest and present physical and psychological manifestations. Analysis of qualitative data, case studies, and process notes, suggests a close relationship between childhood incest and diseases or dysfunctions of the reproductive organs such as cancer, radical hysterectomies, and childlessness. Based on these observations, it is recommended that future studies examine this phenomenon.

Similarly, future studies should represent Black, Hispanic, or other minority women, so generalizations to those who have their unique literary traditions and psychosocial experience can be made. Future researchers should attempt to target these populations as persons often needing but not presenting for treatment.

Sixth, it is recommended that future studies analyze more carefully the complex acts and linguistic data associated with reader response. These methods should be available in research training and readers responses and their interpretations should be treated as empirical data. The readers' responses are not so mysterious or complex as to be incapable of study by phenomenological methods.

Overall, it seems the efforts of this study stand in a context of "fruitful ambivalence," (Harding, 1986), which may interest other solitary researchers in developing some methods and concepts for the study of feminist issues in
Literature and Psychology. As Rosenblatt said, the prestige accorded the scientific mode of thought militates against recognizing the important phenomenological role of the reader or writer's contribution to knowledge, which persists even in this study. This quality of mystery evidenced in this sample is partly due to the method of using poetry as an adjunctive therapy rather than as a therapy-in-itself. Responses, like perceptions, can only be studied in the situations in which they are occurring. Therefore, this is a methodological problem, having to collect data under conditions more or less remote from those in which the responses operate and which also are connected to their total life situation.

A seventh recommendation rests within the belief in poetry therapy as an effective modality in and of itself. It is often difficult to convince timid field researchers as well as funding sources and mental health practitioners that significant therapeutic outcomes can accrue from poetry alone. In fact, poetry alone, if studied in the full context of Rosenblatt's phenomenological method, might very well have shown significant outcome. As Fish (1973) said, language and literature, taken as objects of study, are symbolic, and so their status depends on semantics, values, intentions, and purposes. Therefore, the principles of subjectivity and motivation, rather than objective explanation should be used in future studies in poetry
therapy. Poetry therapists should experiment with alternative systems of research and demand that such research training be included in the graduate curriculum, as Polkinghome suggests.

From this, it is recommended that future research be directed toward poetry-as-therapy, using perhaps Rosenblatt's in-depth methods, and not circumscribing the range and potential of poetry to do its work by using it only as an adjunctive technique or by limiting what can be investigated through the superimposition of research design and methodology.

As Rosenblatt said, readers create the poem out of their transaction with the text, by drawing on past experience with its verbal symbols, selecting from various alternative references, paying attention to introspection, memory, unconscious, and subliminal process, as well as images, feelings, associations, and ideas that the text has evoked, and fusing these into beliefs and values which must be re-examined and tested, perhaps to be rejected. This is done, more or less, in the group exchange, but not in the depth Rosenblatt's method allows. It was not possible to see, in every case, or to record how the reader makes explicit this complex synthesis of ideas, emotions, and events, or what value or organizing principle was formed as a result.

This study attempted only to measure self-actualizing value change as organizing principle. It was concluded that
this may be too narrow a focus dictated by the research method and design which may have artificially limited the outcome as well as the process of inquiry. The explicit process that Rosenblatt calls "the main transaction" was not fully investigated or emphasized fully enough. The process was only inferred from the attitudes and values of the POI and some qualitative data, but this is hardly an intensive study of reader's responses to poetry. Such limitations were a function of accommodating the design to the realities of the academic and research setting in which it was conducted.

The study of reader-response or subjective literary criticism has contributed as much to methodology as to theory, perhaps, but these theories are, for the most part, neither constructed for, nor tested, on "real" readers. Subjective literary criticism is valuable in its emphasis on the activity of the reader, on the institutional basis of reader-response, and on the contribution of the literary text. The models of Rosenblatt, Holland, Bleich, Fish and Davis are, however, qualitatively different. Subjective critics agree about the complex variables of the reading process, its rich effects on mental and emotional states and physiological responses, as well as on imagery, valuing and intentionality. Their basic disagreements are over how much freedom should be allowed the reader from the text.

An eighth recommendation stems from the fact that almost all subjective critics agree that literature calls for a
more sophisticated understanding of emotional life and human valuing systems. The meaning of a text depends on the process of symbolization in the mind of the reader and resymbolization of that response in understanding. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies might better focus on process-recording or in-depth investigation of the process of reading and the written response (resymbolization). One goal would be to resymbolize more adaptively and on a higher level. The reader or writer must be included as empirical data in choices, responsibility, intentions, evaluation, and new learning, as Gibson said, and readers must become more aware of their own participation in shaping literary knowledge.

Response study involves engagement, perception, interpretation, and evaluation, not only of the reader's self-system, but also of the literary work. Therefore, the poetry therapist, the psychotherapist and the reader are equally important variables for investigation. The text effects and is effected by the reader. Completely subjective theories of the texts do not emphasize the necessity for skills in explication, interpretation, and evaluation of texts. The choice of suitable texts that fit poem to person are most necessary to fully utilize poetry as therapy. Therefore, a poetry therapist must have training in psychotherapy techniques and psychotherapists must have a thorough knowledge of poetry if they are to fully utilize poetry as therapy, as
Rice (1986) and Jaskowski (1982) say. Subjective critics have made it apparent that content and form are important, and transactive critics have emphasized that formal properties are significant, although not determinant, to guide the reader in his or her search for meaning. The text is a stimulus of signs and linguistic symbols that guide the reader to new gestalts or perceptions. The poem, in contrast to the text, as Rosenblatt says, is the involvement of the reader with the text to create a response from the particular set of verbal symbols.

This co-creative effort of text and person raises the concept of a "self" in this transaction. Is a woman's "self," as some French critics say, merely a linguistic construct, her forms of consciousness and unconsciousness socially constructed, her "selves" a variety of personae with which to blend into society, merely "situational selves"? Or is woman making her own knowledge in her response to the text? Is she being empowered to speak the experience of her self-as-emerging, perhaps for the first time in literary or psychological history identifying a language of the self, naming what has not been named before, a woman's own aesthetics and poetics?

Most feminist literary critics believe that women are not totally determined by biology, sociology, or psychology, based solely on male constructs. By validating women's experiences, therapists can uncover ways that women read and
interpret literature and their own experiences in a woman-grounded epistemology. Theories and methods in literary and psychological inquiry may be based on a theory of women's poetics. Women may speak and write themselves into the domain of psychology that they hardly inhabit at this time. A concept of female creativity may emerge in female symbols, imagery and metaphors. It may be that women evaluate art differently from men, changing concepts of aesthetics and woman's standing in art.

Since poetry therapy is a form of creative writing which can be practiced and interpreted using current feminist literary theories, it is recommended that feminist literary criticism be incorporated into poetry therapy, feminist or non-feminist. Women's explorations of themselves in therapeutic reading and writing will serve as a point of departure for incorporating women's wisdom into both literary criticism and psychology. Only women themselves can do this work of exploration.

We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who finds our way
back to this scene

. carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.

--Adrienne Rich, from
Diving into the Wreck
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