

## *Chapter V*

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### Women and Therapeutic Art

Art Therapy, a creative method of expression originated in the fields of art and psychotherapy and includes humanism, creativity, reconciling emotional conflicts, fostering self-awareness, and personal growth. Art therapy sometimes focuses on the creative art making process itself as therapy or an understanding of the expression gained through the patient and therapist interaction. Psychoanalytic approach, one of the earliest forms of art psychotherapy, employs the process of transference between the therapist and the client who makes art. Everything that is expressed by the client in this therapy is interpreted by the therapist. In recent times, art therapy includes a number of other approaches like, person-centered, cognitive, behavior, Gestalt, narrative and more.

One approach to art in therapy requires the silent presence of the therapist witnessing the client producing art during sessions, facilitating the natural process of healing to work. In such cases, the images produced in the course of the work of art is regarded as representations of the unconscious forces of the psyche. Every person uses a different medium like art, to articulate oneself. Some consider that the creative process which is the offspring of art in therapy serves as the medium for an individual to confront and further understand oneself. In his discussion on the power of creativity, Rogers (1993) emphasizes, “The creative process is healing. The expressive product supplies important messages to the individual. However, it is the process of creation that is profoundly transformative” (7).

Namburg (1973) reports that “A vital implication (of) studies...made on children’s art expression as an aid to diagnosis and therapy is that imaginative, creative expression

is, in itself, a source of growth and sustenance as well as a language of communication in the life of every individual.”(89).

In “The representational theory” art is seen as imitating, or displaying or setting forth aspects of reality in the widest sense. There are the particularities to the general or the specific that includes in it the various perspectives on the existence of the world. A representational artist attempts to present the reality of things as they are and thus the representational theories give the arts a distinctive cognitive role. Godwin is mindful of the possibilities of art that can widen the scope of understanding the perceptual qualities and patterns of the world. She has even used music which is commonly considered very inessentially representational as an effective medium representing the theme of *Evenings at Five*. Sculpture and painting can be abstract as well as figurative.

The love for language and music shared at five o’clock every evening by Christina, an author, and Rudy, a composer, during the ‘Happy Hours’ and Christina’s reflection over it after Rudy’s unexpected death rightfully makes the novel *Evenings at Five* ‘a grief sonata for solo instrument transposed into words.’ as its publicist rightly puts it. The novel is in resonance with the eternal quality of art and the people committed to the indivisible truth of art. *The Washington Post Book World*, in review of the book remarked, “Evenings at Five reads like a novel, but it’s a fictionalization of a real event. Gail Godwin uses all the weapons of art to deal with her own all-too-grief, and the result is a rigorous exercise in restraint, control, irony, memory.”( 30 March 2004 ).

*Evenings at Five* is an exceptional documentation of the moments shared by the novelist Godwin and the composer Robert Starer’s life together as working artists.

Gestalt therapy, developed by Frederick Pearls is based on the belief that the human attempt to regulate itself and that it has an inherent drive towards growth and need satisfaction. As with other therapeutic approaches, the disturbed behavior of a person is viewed in the context of the theory by the gestalt music therapist. The therapy aims at increasing awareness of the present experience thereby help resolve polarities or other problems that impedes the person's ability to experience self. Losing Rudy worsened the religious life of Christina as it could not provide explanation for the loss she suffered. However she started concentrating on what she heard of his music as he was always curious about her listening to the 'inner workings'. For the adjustments to be done at the time of loss to overcome agony, music is instrumental to her as it did not require conscious talking or thinking.

Christina and Rudy's art that brought them together left them with stronger memories which Christina later associated with their ritual like times that they spent in the company of the other. Now that Rudy is no more present to engage her with his conversation as he did when he was alive, she tried seeing what she had now and thought 'What was I listening to? The ups and downs of my own day's momentum.'( EF 6-7). Each ministered to the creative needs of the other and critiqued their works. When she was not able to decide on her book, he offered to read what she had written in that and then would comment like "It's magnificent, it's going to be your best yet. But you've got to give Margaret a boyfriend---this is the twentieth century and she's twenty one years old."( EF 11). But most of the times when she tried getting his attention while he was alive, he turned to her as if 'he'd been called back from a place she couldn't go.' He would have been lost to the world at those times 'hearing music' ( EF 11). He was

strongly associated with music and she re-lived her fulfilling life with Rudy by associating those stronger memories to their ritual like art. Music with its power demanded psychological and physical involvement of a person which uncovered the inner experience .

Even though Christina had told Rudy, who could not stand anyone overhearing while he composed, after his death she realized that she ‘must have heard all those years of Rudy's compositions forming themselves phrase by phrase, probably even note by note’ (EF 31) at the same time not hearing, for she ‘was scrunched into some dark soundproof chamber behind my eyeballs, straining for flashes of images that then had to have words matched to them.’(EF 31). The absence of Rudy and the vastness of the empty space left by him in her life, she compensated by bringing his image into being by filling in the empty place with recollections of their experience with art that they shared.

Rudy and his music were inseparable and Christina who was mindful of it mitigated her agony with ‘plinking and plonking....cascade of melody’ which she realized had been with her all the time. She puts it ‘ I heard without knowing I was hearing all the outer sounds of a work being captured.’(EF 31). Her writer’s instinct searched for every trace of him in the environ around her to gratify herself of their devoted relationship that was respectful of the sense of themselves. There was musicality in his writings in definition. The psychoanalytic approach of Art therapy that led to a close interaction between patient and therapist was one of the earliest forms of art psychotherapy. This approach is marked by the transference process between the therapist and the client who makes art. The therapist interprets the client’s symbolic self-expression as communicated in the art and elicits interpretations from the client.

Writing leads to a keen perception of the inner thoughts, emotions and feelings of a person and contributes in the exploration of the self. This is beneficial in both the ways to the creative writers in that it allows the understanding of the characters in their works and also understanding the writers themselves serving as an effective therapeutic tool. This way of helping oneself and others through various forms of writing has existed for very long . Aristotle has identified the beneficial cathartic effects of good writing on both reader and writer (Aristotle,330 B.C.E/1955). The history of therapeutic writing can be traced back to the times of St. Augustine (395 A.D/1935) to Gertrude Stein (1933) and has in it autobiographical, biographical, confessional and journal writing. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the base for self-analysis is a form of writing therapy (1900/1938). These writings are genuine modes of expressing oneself and in *A Southern Family*, Clare engages in writing a lengthy letter pouring every thought in her mind that her dead brother would have loved to hear. Theo had wanted her to write to him what 'a sister's day is like'(SF 375), but which she had neglected and now that he was dead, she was filled with guilt and remorse of having not given him due attention . As her friend Julia suggested she sat down to write a letter telling him about one of her days. In the novel, this letter alone runs to nearly twenty five pages making a whole chapter, which in itself a sufficient evidence that the writer Godwin herself has used it as a cure for the troubled mind. Allport states, 'Though the possibility of auto analysis is disputed, and though total cures for neurotic conditions and apparently not achieved on the basis of cathartic writing, in virtually every instance some form of personal benefit results.'(176).

Creative expressive therapy in literature is primarily concerned with the practical activity in the therapy session itself, and its theoretical aspect is of secondary importance.

These expressive therapies are otherwise called “action therapies” in psychology as the clients here express their thoughts through methods that involves action. Some of the characters in the novels of Godwin act as therapists as well as the clients and this alleviates emotional stress and redirection of concentration .Writing also helps in reconciliation of emotional conflicts as can be observed in the long letter that Clare writes to Theo after his death.

The letters act as the medium developing understanding between people and resolving conflicts. As is their nature it allows space for recollecting thoughts and words that will best express the true feelings. Jane and Sonia’s notes to each other worked as teaching material setting up room for healthy discussions. It set the tone for further analysis of the abandonment of ‘ certain human qualities’(OW 53), by women making their lives ‘great soap opera’(OW 53). She sought those qualities that they had left with men realizing that it was this that marked “the sexual-ironic distance of many male writers when writing about female characters.”(OW 55).Her letters to “Von Vorst the villain”(OW 414), drew her out of her illusion over the possibility of romantic turns that life will offer, her irrationality over family myths, thus redeeming her from traumatic memories. She repaired and reshaped her beliefs allowing establishment of solid relationships with people which is of more productive pattern leading to the growth of the individual involved.

The art form that was available to Christina that sustained her by keeping the memories of Rudy alive was ‘At-a-Glance appointment diary’ which was the ‘only record of himself he kept’ ( EF 34 ). This diary writing by Rudy helped her to fix their story in time and place, and this particularity with time and place is a regular feature of Godwin’s work. Christina identified him in every entry in it and wondered whether the ‘adjectives refer to the mood of his quintet or to his state of mind that day?’(EF 37).It was a memoir of the intimate life of the two people united through art.

*Evenings at Five*, which reads more like a chronicle, captures the thirty plus years of Starer and Godwin's companionship and the memory of Starer that haunted her after his death, elucidates how their arts could be a counter melody to their constant love .

“EXCITING AND AFFIRMATIVE ...It is a privilege to watch the unfolding of her impressive talent.” wrote Minneapolis Tribune in appreciation of *The Odd Woman* by Godwin. While unfolding the writer's talent in painting her characters, this book also, unfolded its heroine Jane Clifford's talent at researching other people's lives, particularly that of the intelligent and the idealists. She developed a pattern in her life of analyzing herself against the ones who were her subjects in her study. This allowed her the luxury to identify qualities in her that she could relate to the others who appear in novels and also in the ones who are around . Her research, objective in nature, made her a careful observer of people's actions and their motives. She scrutinized the deportment of women with all their sensibilities and imperfections and it is an honest study of women, and she ardently carried it out with the consciousness that she was one among them. This character study employs artistic imagination and facts that not only serve as a diversion from the subject that is affecting the person but also a cure to the problem by analyzing oneself from the angle of an observer.

Though talk is the traditional method of exchange in therapies it is however effective always. According to Freedman and Combs as they mention it in their *Narrative Therapy*,, “truth can be found in descriptions of events that never occurred.” (99). Articulating the facts and possibilities is necessary to give expression to the patterns and emotions hidden in the inner recesses of a person. When the person affected by traumatic experience and thoughts are allowed to converse, the fragmented information and details



are given a comprehensible form for the person as well as the others to arrive at an understanding of what is going on internally. Jane's conversations with her student Howard were a means for her to analyze her ideals for its validation. Instead of shunning away from unpleasant things and working on things of excellence alone, she tried to define herself in identification with "all the things in everybody"(OW 63).

The mode of expression however differs according to the individual's ability. While some use creative writing as a means of giving a form to their thoughts, some use visual arts as their medium. These expressive therapies use art, music, dance or movement, drama, poetry or creative writing and play to express themselves. American Art Therapy association, 2004 speaks of Art Therapy as one that uses art media, images and the creative process as a means of reconciling emotional conflicts, fostering self-awareness, effectively solving problems, reducing anxiety, helping reality orientation, and increasing self-esteem. Similarly, Music therapy uses music to bring in positive changes in the psycho-logical, physical, cognitive, or social functioning of individuals with health or educational problems.

Christina's musing 'What did I think, that we had forever?'(EF 6), probably had music as its answer as Rudy had left behind his music as a relic for the life that he shared with Christina. She related her to him through his music. This nature of the narration makes *Evenings at Five*, a book that speaks of music-after-death and that becomes the elixir to the survivor who had the opportunity to be united to the other by their arts. She recalled her conversations with him and gathered even minute details of Rudy to keep herself connected to him in thoughts and those recollections revolved around music and creative writing as in the monologue with him where she told him about his nurse Edward, who after Rudy's death told her about Rudy recounting what Christina and he had been doing

like, ‘our trip to Sweden for my book, the last time we travelled together, what you had been writing, the operas and musical plays we wrote together.’(EF 110). The adjustments that she made to face the loss were intertwined with the eternal nature of art forms. Art that is used as therapy is defined in *The Free Dictionary* as the one that “encourages people to express and understand emotions through artistic expression and through the creative process.’ In the novel Christina was a writer and Godwin has written the story in the way where Christina documented her experience with the loss of her longtime companion. While she wrote she had to find answers to many questions that arose and the answers she discovered in her writings.

Christina felt closer to Rudy’s presence through the sounds from the words he had been speaking and the ‘complicated sounds’ that were his music. While she communed with him after his death, she was amused by her dependence on his art, she told him “I can still hear the essential you”(EF 113), and she who was left of the two relied on “sounds” to bridge his image and presence.

The autobiographical nature of Godwin’s writings results in some of her characters being artists like her. She has taken events from her own life for her works and according to Anne Cheney, her protagonists may be “searching for happiness, academic or artistic achievement, love, respect, or, more generally, meaning in life.”(SLJ 40). Her characters are associated with one or the other of the art fields like writing, music, painting etc. They use their creative talents to self-actualize, thus unifying the real life and the fictional life to the extent that the line that differentiates both the lives fades leaving behind the realities. Many of her female characters like Jane, Clare, Julia, and Francesca ponder over marriage evaluating its role in their lives. They may be in relationship with men but they

are basically ones who cannot compromise their freedom for it. Her life with her mother and grandmother served as the setting for many of her novels that spoke about mother-daughter relationships. Alongside evading the traps that are laid for women like loneliness, work places, wrong marriages, expectations from the society, these women had to battle against the world to become artists. Godwin inherited her mother's skill in writing, and her fourth novel *Violet Clay* has a woman who aspires to be a successful painter. In *A Southern Family* Clare could be seen securing her place as a successful writer in New York. With this novel, Godwin too confirmed her place among the great writers of contemporary American Novel.

The writer has employed 'story telling' as a literary device to convey information to the readers and the major characters in the novels taken up for the study verbalize their thoughts and this feature of their speech is more appropriate in the circumstance, since these people, though it may not be a conscious act, introspect their own selves and converse with real and fictional characters who represent fragments of their psyche. This way the writer is able to make the readers realize the motive behind the actions of her characters which helps in understanding them better. In *The Odd Woman* there are various places where Jane involves in such soliloquies that provide answers to her queries and this is also the writer's tool to present the ongoing action in the novel with clarity. At particular times when the precarious state of her relationship with her married lover strangled her, she played an 'archaic' game of finding her position where she asked herself,

"If Jane Austen were putting me in a novel, how would she define me? In that first succinct sentence where I 'come on', how would she present me?" Or: "If George Eliot were making me a heroine in one of her books – though I doubt my character would meet her standards for a heroine-what would she say in that long, involved, philosophic passage where she justifies who and what I am and how I got that way?"(OW 22).

Though the ‘game remained a game’ she could in the process locate her place in the society. Godwin’s mother too was a writer and taking the clue from her life she made Jane’s mother Kitty a writer who discussed her ideas for her stories with her mother Edith. “I’m going to make my new heroine a...a Red Cross worker. Do you think that would be all right?”(OW 26). The talks served as consolation, conviction, reason, treason and in all the expression and expectation of the self. She spoke her own thoughts on her temporary employments in her imaginary conversation with ‘the Enema Bandit’ when she told him “ A real vocation is what we are all in search of. Something that is so close to us it fits our psyche like a snug sock...that meshes so thoroughly with our nature it keeps us from intruding our needs on other people”(OW 29). Her association with Gerda who had taken up job with the publishers of a magazine for women because, she wanted to be a voice that people will listen to, reflects their shared interest in themselves in her saying, “Yes, this existence felt its act as irrevocably necessary.”

Jane often planned her conversations with her lover in advance and edited it ‘of any demanding verbs or possessive adjectives or shrewish expletives’ (OW 126), for fear of uttering something that may strain their relationship. Even the letters she wrote to him had to carry only ‘suppressed emotions’ and she was compelled to mask her passion ‘in the style of Jane Austen’. This necessity for precaution, while pondered over, made her identify the shortcomings of her affair with Gabriel and this in turn served as a reminder of the consequence of losing her identification that she faced as a result of it. It is this realization that culminated in her ending up their affair allowing her the freedom to move forward. The immediate concern in Jane was to understand Gabriel and these dramatic dialogues she had with him opened up channels for evaluating the person in question and

furthered the exploration of her role in the relationship with him. Levine (1999) observes that “imagination is the central concept which informs the understanding of the use of arts and play in therapy”(259). Imagination which is one of the qualities central to art, music, dance, drama, creative writing, and play in therapy is helpful in assisting individuals to come out of self-deception and in moving beyond their preconceived beliefs . The therapeutic use of her art and productive use of imagination helps her discover the unreliability in her lover, thus prompting her to adopt corrective solutions leading to change. Following this she resolved to end her relation with him. Though her conversations with Gerda left her devastated, it still removed the veil that was hampering her from seeing the truth that ‘all those dirty, demanding little thoughts’ that she was avoiding in the conversations and letters to him was a part of her and she must be accepted as a whole with all those in her. It is in another imaginary dialogue with her student Howard where Jane said what her motto was quoting George Eliot’s words “Certumpete finem-Seek a sure end.”(OW 45) . She also wanted her life, if it were a book, to be sensible to her readers in a way that they will accept her and identify her for living her life without regrets for her actions. She saw her life as a story which she had to ‘write herself’ as she lived and one that can be completed only in her death . It can only teach and strengthen others but, can never be the documentation of the life of other person.

Jane, severely traumatized by her thoughts about her lover who was finicky when it came to serious discussion about their future, and her impermanent job, was emotionally beaten and in this weak state of mind, certain thoughts turned obsessive as was her fear for “the Enima Bandit” ( OW 28 ), the peculiar criminal who was reportedly prowling the city during night .She used her imagination planning a dialogue with the Bandit to whom

she generously poured out her confused state of mind . In the course of this monologue she saw her anxious consciousness dissolving .

Self-expression in an expressive therapy involves verbal reflection, in order to help individuals to understand the impact of their experiences, feelings and perceptions. While words are commonly used to tell personal stories, expressive therapies are used to activate the senses as a source of stories and memories. It is helpful in the way that the thoughts and feelings is not necessarily verbal and so cannot always be retained in a person by giving it a verbal language. It cannot be expressed through conversations whenever need arises. In such a case, the expressive modality of story-telling is expedient. The individuals experience their story again when they narrate and through this explore issues that are common and communicate their thoughts and feelings which would not have found its way for expression otherwise. There is a succession of stories and incidents narrated by Jane that kept her active and its symbols and implications were important to her in reasoning out her beliefs. She also used her story telling to impress her learned friend Sonia Marks and her description of her half-sister Emily Sparks' fascinating love story interested even "emancipated women" like Sonia. The age old story of 'how some woman went to work and got her man' was of importance to women for whom the term 'love' had not lost its significance and retelling of such a tale was of gratification to the women. This is a reiteration of Sonia's statement that "Most women can identify with heroines who learn to live without marriage, but not so many want to live without love of any kind."(OW 55). Though Jane felt Gerda would call it "mythmaking about your family", it provided more meaning to her existence as the thoughts that follow those myths were an indicator of the qualities that were present in her like her misgivings,

vulnerabilities, discretion, inner fears and in all her true self. Her fascination for romantic love is witnessed in her love tales on her grandmother Edith and her aunt Cleve Denvar and her curiosity for Emily was the result of a ‘female power’ in her that was ‘much older and stronger than any cultivated practices of the subtle and delicate art of Being a Woman’(OW 96), which was so different from what she could ever imagine possible in her. All these were matters of importance to a writer like Jane, since each of these characters and the family exploits were subjects to the creative mind in her and were her asylum when distraught by the incidents around.

Jane’s “myth making out of your family history” (OW 56 ) as Gerda put it was her way of rumination over what she considered to be her ‘unclear, undefined, unresolved self.’ (OW 21). Southern history is salient with its fact and fiction, of what had really happened and what is believed to have happened. Certain perceptions that had sprung out of the factual part of the history has acquired the form of myth. The real experience of the South in the days of its military defeat, reconstruction and humiliation has been counter balanced with the creation of some of the imaginary stories. ‘The South in its defeat and humiliation remembered the glamour of the past.’( *Novelists of the American South* 3). The remembrance of the things of the bygone days has achieved the status of the myth. Thus the past and the remarkable work of the ancestors are valued and Jane in her talks with her student Howard answered his question about worshipping the ‘old and established’ (OW 16). When he was skeptic about the entire past, she clarified it to him that understanding and learning from the experiences and words of others ‘who wanted answers just as badly’ (OW 18 ), was the superior form of education. An extension of this was her observation of the women around her, those in her family coming across dramatic incidents that gave a varied hue to

their otherwise ordinary lives. By recalling those stories, she searched for a model in the women - her mother Kitty, who eloped twice with “questionable” men, her grandmother who fainted dramatically in the hands of a person who then married her, her aunt Cleva who supposedly eloped with ‘the villain’ and Emily, who chose her husband while she was twelve years old. Edith’s elegance and Kitty’s ‘Awesome diplomacy’ (OW 122) that made relationships easier, and her half-sister’s approach to life were influential and had personal relevance to her. An analysis of the well-formed customs, traditions and institutions like family and marriage of the South established the superiority of the old society. On assessment she saw ‘All the old forms, at least the effortless practice of the old forms, going out the window.’(OW 168), and considered finding out the reasons for the necessity of valuing their forms like simple courtesy towards people around which her grandmother Edith had ‘skimmed through without a thought’(OW 166) and which her mother Kitty ‘suavely executed’ (OW 166). She also absorbed her grandmother’s faith in children who grew up with their parents of possessing better manners and promises for improved life. With these practices that she has imbibed, she cultivated the habit of regulating her life, broadening her terrain as she ‘progressed through time and space’(OW 21),forming healthy relationships making it meaningful in retrospect.

Gabriel was guarded when it came to his personal life and Jane out of fear of hearing something that will be difficult on her had not questioned him on that and this which was sarcastically the ‘decorum of their stately affair’ was too hard for her to accept. On the other side, the impermanent jobs that she had been holding in colleges were like ‘musical chairs’ and that left her with anxiety for her future. This was a reminder of her indecisiveness in matters concerning her personal and professional life. What she found to be her limitations



were forgotten in her recital of her family tales. To her art is a “great exempter. Like death, it excused you from the annoyances and limitations of time.”(OW 146).

Kitty, identified the ‘student’ in her daughter Jane who always looked up her life in books and expected ‘answers’, told her that the myths that she relied on were beautiful because they ‘leave out all the loose ends’(OW 171). She warned her that there was not much of practical details in it so that it required the individual to understand the synthesis of history and fiction. Kitty and Jane had been subject to this reconstruction of the family myths especially the one on Edith’s sister Cleva. Edith used the ‘tragic, colorful story’ (OW 173) of her sister eloping with ‘the villain’ to dissuade her daughter and granddaughter from some of their ‘desired adventures’(OW 173) like Kitty’s staying out too late with boys, her threats to leave home and Jane growing interest in the son of German refugees, things which did not align with her standards in life. Some family myths become outdated, worn out of their usefulness and some that are relevant to the present are carried forward with a hope that they will allow possibilities for strengthening relationships that will last longer. In her stories she provides opportunities to her characters to come out of their ‘shared net of sadness’(OW 74).

The myths that Clare and her family built were in a way ‘short changing reality’ (SF 35) according to Julia and had well served Clare who was a writer of fiction. She used that to create stories that enunciated the finest qualities of the culture that she grew up with. The characters that populate her novels found ways to improve their characters from around them and were saved from dangers: the bereaved widower is remarried, the historian comes out with her ‘ground breaking volume’(SF 49), woman is freed from the barren married life. This was a relief she offered to herself and to her readers, making them celebrate the

goodness that encircled them, and offered them the assurance of rewards that will definitely follow suffering. Clare told her friend that future would not be bleak for creative people like her friend because fame based on art like that of her writing would offer them a place in the society and “It’s not going to matter how old you get or what you look like, because people will be able to connect to it with being you, and with the work you’ve done.” (SF 54).

Jane had the practice of playing a game with herself during times when she was unclear of the events in her life. She would start placing herself in the novels of different authors to see whose standards of heroine she would meet and this according to Joseph Moreno (1923), the founder of psychodrama is putting positive creative imagery to use whereby the person involved exercises reversal of role and ultimately arrived at a solution to the existing problem and Jane could thus mark off her place. she who was in ‘union with a man who is already united to someone else’ will not possibly find a place in Jane Austen’s novel and if she was in George Eliot’s work, she will have to lead a life that will not have any ecstasy and Marie Evans will forbade characters like her in her novels. Though it remained a game it however helped her in restoring her mental health by unveiling things that had been clouding her vision from seeing the true state of matters and later when she severed her relationship from her married lover she was certain of her decision. Cathy A. Malchiodi notes in his *Expressive Therapies* Levine (1999) that “imagination is the central concept which informs the understanding of the use of arts and play in therapy” (259) and MnNiff (1981) relies on imagination as the supreme form of self-expression that operates as the healing agent. The term creativity in expressive therapies has its alternate in imagination that explains theory and practice. Creativity is possible only when the idea for expressing self is completely formed whereas imaginative thinking generates self-expression, experimenting it through verbal reflection.

Sonia Marks whom Jane looked upon as her mentor was an artist in her own right working upon her art of teaching to expand the mind of her students and her seminars were 'theatre: instructive theatre' to Jane. Literature was used by her as a means to move out of one's subjectivity to get into the minds of others to understand them and this gave her lectures a sublimity that extended beyond the ordinary minds. This quality in her allowed her the opportunities to revise herself whenever required as Jane observed it in the note that Sonia wrote as chastisement of the self which led to the strong bonding between the women.

Art, even if it does not achieve the ultimatum desired by the one involved, it still does aid the person in evolving into a higher being where there is gratification of the soul. There is the joy of life ultimately when Jane tried to organize her life into something of 'abiding shape and beauty' towards the end.

Nell, a nurse by profession, had concern for people who were weak and attempted to honor people for the innate goodness in them. Never a person to humiliate anybody, she was identified as one whom anybody could rely on. She was sympathetic towards Grace Hill who was a hypochondriac and spared her time to listen to all her fears over diseases which she believed she was suffering from. Understanding clients' psychology was her strategy to comfort people like Hill because the encouragement they received on their small diseases kept their 'minds off the big ones' (MTD 16). She looked beyond personal fancies at reality of things with concern for the mentally bereaved. Though she was the new widow, she still permitted Theodora to rant over her husband's loss at the hospital and had regard over her welfare.

Nell's experience in her former years of nursing made her lose hope in the world that had place in it only for those who were belittling life and were scornful and those

who wanted to live, had to die. But on retrospection she transformed this negative impulse into something of constructive energy and regained her buoyancy.

Expressive therapies by nature render action to psychotherapy and that “action within therapy and life is rarely limited to a specific mode of expression”(viii) and as a means of vocalizing their ideas the characters in Godwin’s novels could be seen taking up various modes pertaining to their nature and their atmosphere. Sometimes these expressive actions is through story within a story as in the case of Clare from *A Southern Family* giving a form to her analysis and expectations in life through writing stories. She wrote the story on a family from South taking her Southern friend Julia’s family as the base for her narration pruning it as how she wanted one such family to be and this way her beliefs and feelings were communicated relieving her of the guilt of her laxity in valuing the systems and habits of her origin. This was a humbling experience for the writer and the retrospection that proceeded it eventually led to the personal growth of the writer. Realizing this Julia told her friend Clare that she was a fiction writer because Clare’s “temperament is one that requires a lot of things to be the way they aren’t.” ( SF 51).

Godwin speaks of the joy of love that belief in God and people bring. She quotes her priest Tom Miller at St. Gregory in Woodstock, “We might as well learn to accept our inseparability from God.”(280) and believes in the relationship with the ‘Other’-this powerful centering spirit’ (280). The personal relationship with God becomes a religion by itself where the person connects oneself to the others in his/her prayers better. Death does not affect anything in the process here, as prayer gives an everlasting quality to everything involved .Prayers are inner resources that associate the living person to the dead and Julia made it a habit to pray for her mother who is dead and to have conversations

with her believing in a ‘distinct possibility’ of educating her mother in the ways she would like, leading to self-improvement in some faculties that she did not develop in her lifetime and cautioning Clare she enquired that, if writing a letter to dead Theo can be marked off as ‘self-indulgence’ then, “aren’t prayers for the dead self-indulgence for the living ?”(SF 372). These activities cannot be adjudicated as acts of personal gratification alone since it could be traced back to the Russian theatre practitioner Konstantin Sergeievich Stanislavski’s “art of experiencing” which was the outcome of his “system” of actor training, that pays greater attention to the “inner action” of the actors’ process and here in the novels to that of the characters’ process that stimulates their conscious thought and will, to further motivate the psychological processes such as emotional experience and subconscious behavior. This method of talking to the dead can be aligned with “talking to the painting”(McNiff 1992) suggested by some therapists to encourage client dialogues and the plausible expressive modalities allow an “active analysis” where there is reflection and exploration.

Julia observed that “A power base of fame...based on art or wit” ( SF 54 ), like Jane’s art of writing, will make people feel connected to the artist and the art, and this art when it becomes a tool for introspection and expression takes different forms deriving its power from reflecting the ideas and emotions in the human mind. Barb Kobe, the Healing Doll Artist and Transpersonal Therapist from Minnesota, while speaking of the healing force of art notes that art, prayer, and healing all come from same source in the body and the fundamental principle of art therapies is they provide opportunities to make concrete objects that represent feelings and thoughts that are elusive, hidden and mysterious. They take people into the inner world of emotions and feelings making the inward journey regain their wholeness. To Lily, art was ‘her resource and her respite, her trusted magic

and her trump card.'(SF 392). The pattern of words, the colors, and musical chords were all different media that could make all difference with regard to its usage influencing a person's feeling ordinary or privileged about self. Poetical lines like To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield and tough-minded heroines with names similar to Dagny Taggard and Eustacia Vye intrigued her, for it stood to represent her defiance and triumph. The music pieces that she played on her keyboard at times reflected her protest against fate; what Clare called as "Lily's piece" had the shape of the life of Lily containing in it a confluence of a statement, a restatement and an ambiguous single chord for its finish. How people understand the meaning of life and how they overcome the adversities in life depends on their mental and behavioral approaches towards life that springs from their religious faith. Prayer which is an expression of the behavioral dimension is used by adults while undergoing stressful situations and negative life issues. Lily's belief in art is compared to her belief in God later in her life which renders finesse to the individuals' relation to art forms. It is sacramental in preserving the distinctive inner voice of the artist that attempts at accomplishing an assessment of the self .

Psychotherapy that relies on personal interaction, suiting its psychological method, and that which has been followed for ages, also known as talk therapy, is considered an important part of treatment for depression or bipolar disorder. An effective therapist helps the client to cope with feelings and symptoms, and change behavior patterns that may contribute to the person's illness. Talk therapy is significant for it does not merely concentrate on the client talking about the problems but it moves towards solutions. Some of them include homework where the person has to track his moods, write down his thoughts and be part of the social activities that have caused anxiety in the past. Psychotherapy of the new times is brief and focuses on the current thoughts, feelings

and events in the life. Focusing on the past can explain things in the person's life, but focusing on the present can help move through the present and prepare for the future. Psychotherapy can help a person to make sense of past traumatic experience and to understand things that are bothering to the person and what could be done about them. It also helps in ending destructive habits such as drinking or addiction to drug.

The episode of Clare's half-brother Rafe's consultation with the psychiatrist Dr. Blake is a discursive exploration into the psyches of the family of Quicks, their struggle to overcome their guilt of having failed Theo and is also an exploration into Rafe's relationship with his brother. The talk therapy is effective here in bringing confessions out of Rafe which gives clarity to his character by allowing him to be vocal about his inner fears and thoughts. This intensified the possibility of Theo remaining alive if he had been allowed an audience he had been seeking, at least the day before the calamity when Theo was pursuing Julia Richardson, a family friend of the Quicks "pulsing ... with his need to talk, to confide." (SF 39).

Reflection and observation work powerfully in characters like Rafe who confide in the doctor rendering a richness to the narration in the novel. The author had also used these visits to Dr. Blake by Rafe to analyze the family of Quicks. Rafe told the doctor that had it been his mother instead of him who had to tell the story to the doctor, the doctor would have got a different picture since his mother "tends to romanticize things." (SF 276). His mother had romanticized her son Theo's death also by her belief in his personality. The scene also unravels the nuances of the events in the story, allowing the readers a glimpse at the reality. With a novelist character at its center, this story displays the brilliance of the writer's craft of 'story telling'.

All these art therapies contribute towards understanding the story or the history of the narrative and these methods are of importance in these novels of the South which has the protagonists who undertake a search into the past to understand it and relate it to the present. ‘The relationship between history and literature is complementary’ (*Novelists of the American South* 4), and it is from history that literature derives its material. The raw data is thus given a form and pattern which has human meaning. The characters created by the novelist through their creative faculties render richness to the relationship between the two subjects . The art forms used by them reveals the elements of the inner workings of the minds of people rich in emotional and philosophical values. The characters involved in writing, narrative, music and painting all reconstruct the history of the south. Phillips noted in his book *Shelby Foote: Novelist and Historian* that “ the past has deeper meaning for the Southerners. Their past is more closely connected to who and what they are.”(78). So attention is given to the interpretation of the past as a means to understand the present through reflections over incidents of the past and these expressive therapies with verbal therapies alongside, necessitate a discussion of the individual’s, family’s, or group’s anxieties, fears and concerns. The grandmothers, aunties and similar old characters who are related to the central characters in the novels form the major portion of their pasts and they continue to influence the narrative of the characters’ present times. These old characters remain as a base on which the main characters develop and their art forms are the expressions of their abilities, conflicts, and interests. When Christina in *Evenings at Five* started narrating her story she was conscious not to adopt the style of any other writer like Dickens, Henry James or Edith Wharton because it was ‘Christina’s story’ ( SF 277 ). There is the conflict in her about Rudy materializing after his death that is expressed in her utterance where she reproached Rudy and God that neither of them understand her desperation for union with the dead .



In *Violet Clay*, painting has been used as an expressive form of communication that furthers the examination of the self. The art of painting that serves as a therapeutic tool, by its nature and purpose encourages the individual to engage in self-exploration and this skill which is practiced in the story prompts the process of understanding self and others who influence the narrative. Violet's illustrations are the representations of her emotions where with the Gothic ones depicting her deferred dreams, her tragic past and her shadow life, the portrait of Sam, a neighbor, done by her stands to assert her liberation from the externals and appearances in her art.

Remembering is central to members of the Southern community and these memories are awakened in the principal characters' minds by the artistic devices like music compositions, novels and paintings. Christina's story follows an innovative way of writing where the narrator, after her husband's death collects all the sounds that she hears during her ritualistic five o' clock cocktail hour with him which "was a tempo" (SF 278), where the narrator who describes it cannot go wrong. While speaking about this autobiographical work by her Godwin has compared it to a sonata which has a theme that is expository and a parallel theme. The primary subject here is Christina's attempt at reconciliation with Rudy's demise through recollections of their life together and alongside runs the tale of his personality that fills their house. The use of memory is obligatory as carrier to the past and for the characters to be visited by past memories, the art forms they practice is a useful device. Clare broods over her family history through her skill at writing novels. The art in itself turns into an opportunity for discussion and exploration of the unconscious mind providing answers to questions that come out large.

The recent past is used as a back drop for the stories on South by the writers as it is of importance to the people of the region as their life is entwined with the sense of history

and so is the sense of place. Clare and Julia in *A Southern Family* returned to their homes to realize the contribution of vital relationships. Apart from working it out in her novels Clare also preserved some of her acquaintances, revised her past and present to retain connection with reality. At her sister-in-law Snow's place she confronted the 'demoralizing impression' of the other side of the Southern region, the 'undemonstrative' (SF 365) habits of the 'mountain people' (SF 365), which put off balance her usual understated expression of anything bad. The scene recalled to her mind her brother Theo, who pointed out to her shortcomings in the nature of her writings that always camouflaged the darker side of life. Gladding (1992) notes that, using arts in counseling furthers the process of self-exploration and the expressive modalities used facilitated people to understand themselves differently. He adds that these various modes of demonstration of oneself enables the individuals to "exhibit and practice novel and adaptive behaviors"(6). She then went up to modify her writing to include the truths of human existence however ugly they may be to make a truthful portrait of the society freeing herself of the obligation to go on satisfying that side of the public taste merely for commercial success of her books. Writing as an expressive therapy encourages self-exploration and self-expression that is central to therapeutic process. In this process, Clare and Kitty recapitulate past experiences using it for their transformation through analysis of conflicts in their belief systems.

Clare's lover Felix despite growing up in partnership with his uncles who were producing musical skits in German for the émigrés who were homesick for their culture and their language constructing scenery at The Old World Theater or collecting programs from the printer and doing some acting and singing, had no aspiration to be an artist like his mother, or Clare, or his uncle. He had been intrigued by how Clare's 'mental health corresponded to how well she was succeeding in transforming the raw material of experience into unifying

shapes' (SF 297). Clare, while writing, turned oblivion to the real world outside and continued to live in an imaginative world. Felix could also see that if she had not given herself to writing, her frustration would have definitely killed her, and her words "If I hadn't been able to be a writer, I would probably be in jail –or worse" (SF 297) would have come true according to him. He could also see her unhappiness when she was not successful. The death of Clare's half-brother who had been looking for an audience to vent his feelings affected Felix. He wondered if art could have saved her brother who had created for himself a 'failure identity' (Reality Therapy), if he had been given 'the power of expression in some imaginative form' (SF 297). He also thought of the possibility of him imposing unity and consistency on his life by using a creative enterprise, which would have kept him alive. If he had attempted at putting his thoughts to writing in a story then it would have led to a psychoanalytic case study of himself. Theo would not have decided to end his life then.

The therapies in general concentrate in bringing unconscious material to the conscious to make the person realize the reason for that particular behavior in him, so that he may choose to retain or avert that behavior, As Jane remarks 'Art the great exempter. Like death, it excused you from the annoyances and limitations of time.' (OW 146). The artists lived in the social and moral universe of their selves and those of others around. In their oneness with art, they find where and how they should identify with their works.

In the next chapter 'Mechanics of Writing', the author's individualistic traits in writing shown in her works that have direct relation to the shaping and growth of the women characters are studied.