CREATIVE DREAM ANALYSIS AS A
METHOD OF PERSONAL EXPLORATION

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by
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Abstract

This qualitative heuristic study was created to better understand the potential effect of personal dream analysis. Using art-making and creative writing, the goal of this study was to present a creative method of dream analysis that could be used by other art therapy and mental health professionals in their personal development and in their work with clients. Through this research study, the researcher-participant gained insight into her selected dreams, her creative process and witnessed the potential of personal dream analysis as a viable method of self-exploration. Incorporating creative writing and art-making as part of the dream analysis process enabled the researcher-participant to expand and amplify her dreams, creating opportunities to delve deeper into the characters, settings and relationships originally represented in the dream.
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Creative Dream Analysis as a Method of Personal Exploration

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Introduction

As part of mental health counseling training, students are constantly instructed to explore themselves, seeking further understanding of issues and biases that may affect future work with clients. In-class opportunities of discussion and self-reflection are given to help encourage this process. Art therapy graduate programs emphasize the need not only to understand the self as a practitioner but also as an artist (Wadeson, 2003), requiring students to take courses and complete assignments that explore personal issues and studio practice from an art therapy perspective.

Brown (2008) conducted artistic inquiries concerning creative art therapists’ engagement with artistic activities outside of the work setting and the relationship between personal creative pursuits and their work as therapists. From this study, it was found that art making was essential to professional effectiveness and personal health (Brown, 2008).

As a graduate art therapy student, one wonders how to develop and maintain a sustainable artistic practice that allows for personal development and self-knowledge amongst the rigor of coursework and the absorption into the professional world. Upon considering various methods of personal exploration, dream analysis presents itself as an engaging option.
Across cultures and generations, dreams have been the subject of fascination and study (Delaney, 1998; Ginger, 2007). In some cultures, dreams are thought to be messages from deities or used as a rite of passage in the transition from puberty to adulthood (Delaney, 1998). In other cultures, they exist as a time when the soul exits the body, traveling to places existing in reality and spiritual realms (Delaney, 1998).

Several studies involving the origins, content, and the biological and psychological functions of dreams have occurred over the years (Foulkes, 1966). From this empirical research, it has been established that the most vivid dreams usually occur during rapid eye movement sleep (Foulkes, 1966). The content of dreams usually represents memories, events and occurrences in our daily life, and although one may experience bizarre events in his or her dreams, this may be due to the individual’s associative channels being more open during the dream state (Foulkes, 1966). Ultimately, dreams reflect and express parts of the person’s own personality (Foulkes, 1966).

Another interesting aspect of dreams is their narrative qualities. Although dreams do not follow the rules of story structure, they often have similar elements such as a beginning, middle, and sometimes, an end (Montangero, 2012). This similarity is further emphasized in the narrative format people use to share their dreams. The details that we share from our
dreams usually have particular significance to our own life stories and present more of the dramatic and visual aspects of the dream (Foulkes, 1966).

In Western society, dreams transitioned from the idea of being divine messages, to later being seen as meaningless utterances of the mind (Delaney, 1998). When many discounted the validity of dream interpretation, Freud argued that dreams held significant meaning in understanding the human condition, seeing them as manifestations of repressed desires (West, 2011). Carl Jung, a colleague of Freud later parted ways with Freud on issues related to dream interpretation. Jung viewed dreams as representations of personal symbols and archetypes (West, 2011).

Amongst these two psychoanalytical ideas, which influenced and guided different methodologies among the psychological discipline, the personal importance of understanding dreams and the application of interpretations in the clients waking lives stand out. Although both men differed in their interpretation of dreams, both felt that dreams were valid sources in helping their clients gain understanding of their needs and desires (Davis, 1995; Androutsopoulou, 2011).

Other psychological theories have developed their own models of dream interpretation. Phenomenological therapy views dreams as part of the human experience (Schweitzer, 1996). From this perspective dreams are not seen as products of the
unconscious but rather as significant elements of the human existence (Schweitzer, 1996). They are a way to be present in the world while not awake (Kruger, 1992). Dream interpretation under the phenomenological perspective dissects the events of the dream to understand the meaning of that event in the context of the human existence (Kruger, 1992).

From a different theoretical perspective, Gestalt therapy takes a more internal approach to dream interpretation, viewing each element and object in the dream as a representation of the self (France & Allen, 1993). If the client, in experiencing the dream, is able to own the various objects of the dream as part of the self, Gestalt therapists believe that the person is able to be informed by the message of the dream (France & Allen, 1993).

Hill (2004) developed a three stage model that incorporated several different theoretical approaches including cognitive, psychoanalytical, gestalt, phenomenological, client-centered and behavioral theories. Within in the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model, the meaning of the dream is seen as intimate for each client and involves exploration of the dream, understanding of the dream’s connection to the waking life, and acting on the discovered revelations (Hill, 2004). Through the usage of dream interpretation, therapists are able to work with clients, and use dreams as a place to begin therapeutic work and a method to
gain personal understanding towards effective change (Hill, 2004).

Dream analysis is also used within the discipline of art therapy. Art therapy easily lends itself to dream interpretation as they both use the illustrative benefits of symbols and metaphors to delve within the self and express issues and concerns that are often difficult to communicate orally (Simon, 1989). By using art as a tool in dream interpretation, one may be better able to share and understand insights found in dreams. Clients are considered the experts in accurately interpreting the symbols in their dreams, with art therapists acting as guides (Simon, 1989, Davis, 1995, Moon, 2007, Horovitz & Eksten, 2009). With the inclusion of art to the dream interpretation process, the clients are able to gain a more objective perspective on the issues represented in the dream.

In addition to art therapy, creative writing therapy presents an engaging method of self-expression and analysis (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 2006; Gibbons, 2012). Through the use of metaphor and creativity, writing provides individuals with an intimate forum to gain further insight into their personal knowledge and feelings about themselves and the events of their lives (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 2006). It provides a safe space for individuals to express their emotions, and a method of communication for difficult emotions and memories.
(Gibbons, 2012). In considering the narrative quality of dreams, creative writing therapy seems to lend itself to working with dreams. By exploring dreams through creative writing, one may benefit from this different perspective on the dream and glean further personal meaning.

As an art therapy-mental health counseling student, dream analysis presented itself as an engaging method to increase self-knowledge and personal development. Through this qualitative art-based heuristic study, the researcher desired to find a method of personal exploration to better understand the potential of personal dream analysis. It was proposed that using art-making and creative writing in the interpretation of a specific set of dreams would allow the researcher-participant to understand the issues presented in the dreams from different perspectives, and develop a creative methodology for self-exploration and personal development. The implications of this study extend not only to the personal development of the researcher and other art therapy and mental health counseling students, but also in future work with clients.
Methods

This heuristic study was created as a means of personal exploration to better understand the potential impact of personal dream analysis. It was proposed that using various creative methodologies such as art-making and creative writing would allow the researcher-participant to understand dreams from different perspectives. This study explored and analyzed a specific set of dreams recorded by the researcher-participant prior to the study to develop a creative methodology for self-exploration and personal development that can be used by other art therapy and mental health counseling students in their personal development and in their work with clients.

Participants

This heuristic study was focused on the dreams of the researcher-participant. The researcher-participant was a 30 year-old African American female graduate art therapy student attending a small private liberal arts college in New England. The initial dreams used for this study were dreamt and collected by the researcher between the years 2009 and 2012.

Measuring Instruments

Data was collected using short story narratives based on the collected dreams, paintings, drawings, mixed media artworks, witness writing, poetic transcriptions and research memos. Data
was also collected using existential art therapy dream analysis and gestalt therapy dream analysis.

Procedures

The dreams of the researcher-participant were analyzed using three different methods including a combined use of creative writing and art making, existential art therapy dream analysis and Gestalt therapy dream analysis. All of the listed methods were completed individually without the assistance of an outside therapist.

Initially, the selected dreams were translated into narrative short stories. The short story format was chosen for its allowance of creative exploration of the dream without straining the time allotted for this study. Visual art works, including drawings, paintings and mixed media images were created based on the written short stories.

The artwork was analyzed through the witness writing process. Based on Jung’s theory of active imagination (McNiff, 1992), witness writing allowed the researcher-participant to establish a dialogue with the image which engaged in understanding from different perspectives as opposed to giving meaning which would have limited perspective and lead to conceptual vagueness (McNiff, 1992).

Witness writing documents were translated through poetic transcription. Poetic transcription is a method of processing
written documents through the creation of lyrical arrangements (Glesne, 1997). Using the poetic transcription method, the research participant attained additional artistic perspectives on the witness writing records and images. Additional images were created based on the poetic transcription. Insights and ideas observed during the creative analysis process were noted in research memo form.

Next, based on Moon’s (2007) existential art therapy dream analysis, the researcher-participant created one artistic representation for each dream. Following this, she wrote a paragraph describing the dream, creating a dream script. The researcher-participant sat in view of the artistic representation and read the dream script. She pinpointed significant aspects found in the artistic representation and the dream script and wrote them down in research memo format (Moon, 2007).

After the identification of the key elements or “horizons”, the researcher-participant made free associations to expand on the horizons (Moon, 2007). Next, she made connections between the horizons using free association and grouped them together under “clusters” (Moon, 2007). The researcher-participant created sentences encapsulating each cluster group, and noted connections between the sentences, consolidating the statements
into one compiled sentence, referred to as an existential statement, which represented the overall meaning of the dream.

Lastly, based on the gestalt therapy method of dream analysis (France & Allen, 1993) the researcher-participant identified significant objects and people in each of the dreams. She separated each of these elements and identified how each represented a part of herself. She recorded her thoughts and reflections in memo form. The researcher-participant identified any connections, conflicting emotions or ideas found in this analysis and worked with them to better understand how they represent aspects of self (France & Allen, 1993).

Data Analysis

All written data were analyzed through open coding methodology. The open coding method is a qualitative coding method that allowed the researcher to place data in multiple relevant categories with the goal of eliminating biases from a preset process (Hill, 1998). The text of all written documents including short stories, witness writing, poetic transcriptions and research memo were analyzed multiple times in a systematic line by line process.

The researcher sorted all relevant data into meaning units and codes (Hill, 1998). Meaning units and codes were grouped and categorized into significant clusters and themes (Hill, 1998). Themes gathered through the coding process were used in the
creative synthesis of final art pieces, representing the final conclusions of the study.

The dreams and creative writing pieces were discussed with experts and peers to establish validity through peer review. Validity was also confirmed through triangulation with the above mentioned techniques of Gestalt Therapy Dream Analysis and Moon’s (2007) Existential Art Therapy Dream Analysis.

Subjectivity Statement

In addition to being an artist, the researcher-participant was also a creative writer and had previous experience translating dreams into short-story format. Her first short-story collection was based on various dreams, and she found that she enjoyed the process of translating dreams into fuller narratives.

The researcher-participant was in the process of adopting a therapeutic philosophy for her future work as an art therapist. Therefore, she did not have a specific theoretical framework that she adhered to. She did believe that dreams have personal meaning for the dreamer and could relate to current issues occupying the dreamer’s mind.

Although the researcher-participant strived to be honest in her analysis, she recognized that difficult issues may have caused unintentional bias. She acknowledged that accurate self-disclosure was important to this study and strived to be open
and truthful with her findings. However, she planned to use caution and care with self-disclosure, aiming to not cause personal harm, extreme exposure, or distress.
Results

The purpose of this heuristic study was to find a creative method of personal exploration to better understand the potential impact of personal dream analysis. The researcher-participant collected data using short-story narratives based on a set of personal dreams and other dream analysis techniques. Data was also collected using drawing, paintings, mixed media artworks, witness writings, poetic transcriptions and research memos.

The researcher-participant analyzed a set of personal dreams that she had recorded prior to this study. Three different methodologies were used to examine the dream which included the combined use of creative writing and art making, Existential Art Therapy Dream Analysis (EATDA) and Gestalt Therapy Dream Analysis (GTDA). The use of three different techniques established validity through triangulation and allowed the researcher-participant to gain further perspective on the personal dreams. Validity for this study was also ascertained through the peer review of the dreams and creative writing pieces.

Through open coding analysis, the written data was organized into the following themes: the creative process of writing and art making which included the subthemes of source of inspiration and difficulties in the creative process; and the
process of analysis which included the subthemes of dream analysis, short story analysis, art making and poetic writing.

The Creative Process of Writing and Art-Making

Aspects of the researcher-participant’s creative process illuminated her way throughout this process. Although the major focus of the research was personal exploration, the researcher-participant found it important to also document the difficulties and rewards of her creative process.

Source of Inspiration

Due to time considerations of the study, one of the initial tasks undertaken for this study was writing the short story narratives. However, the researcher-participant met with difficulty in finding inspiration to begin the creative writing process.

In considering previous creative ventures, the researcher-participant utilized a technique that she often incorporated in her art making process. Using magazines and web portals such as Google and Pinterest, the researcher-participant collected visual images related to the thematic content of the recorded dreams. Through this process, the researcher-participant discovered that the presence of reference imagery provided her with the required initial spark to begin the writing process.
Difficulties in the Creative Process

Although the researcher-participant designed her research study to be fun and engaging, incorporating activities she enjoyed, one of the continuous challenges that she faced in writing and art making were issues related to creative block. These issues included personal resistance and difficulties with time management.

As part of the creative process, the researcher-participant experienced resistance within herself in response to the work that she was doing. This resistance took the form of hesitancy in beginning the creative work and struggles with discouragement and uncertainty. The researcher-participant acknowledged that self-doubt and fear of rejection played into these struggles of completing the work. As the researcher-participant continued to struggle with feelings of doubt and a high work load, she found the habit of procrastination to become an alternative to focusing on the task at hand. Although she was able to complete the work and find renewed creative energy, the researcher-participant acknowledged that this habit of delay was a significant issue in her creative process.

Another difficulty that the researcher-participant faced was in time management. In the face of a full work and school schedule, time management proved to be difficult in maintaining her creative energy. Often she desired to work on the creative
aspects of this study but had limited available time or succumbed to physical exhaustion. To address this issue, the researcher-participant permitted herself the space to work on the creative aspects of the study when time permitted and also used the time provided by holiday breaks to focus on the tasks at hand.

The Process of Analysis

Dream Analysis

The researcher-participant selected two dreams previously recorded prior to this research study. Both dreams held interest for the researcher-participant and were chosen due to a thematic connection. Existential art therapy dream analysis and Gestalt therapy dream analysis were two established analysis methods used by the researcher-participant to study her dreams.

Existential Art Therapy Dream Analysis (EATDA)

Through the existential art therapy dream analysis (EATDA), the researcher-participant created one drawing and dream script for each dream to identify the key elements or “horizons” of the dream. Next, she created clusters produced by free associations based on horizons, culminating in a final existential statement.

From the EATDA of the “A Moment Passed” dream (see Appendix C, p.70), the researcher-participant created Image 1 (see Appendix D, p.109). With this drawing, the following clusters were developed: 1) “In this moment, when I wasn’t looking for
something, I see something in him, something that I normally have a difficult time seeing,” 2) “I had to be separated from the safety of my comfort in order to trust and take the risk,” 3) “Feeling the success of one risk leads me to feel comfortable taking another risk,” 4) “Before fully jumping into a second risk, I find myself backing away and returning to old comforts leaving the opportunity behind.” From these horizons, the following existential statement was derived: “I have to separate myself from the comfortable to see the opportunities and to trust myself because returning to the comfortable leaves opportunities behind.”

In the utilizing the EATDA with the “Unrequited at the Reunion” dream (see Appendix C, p.71), the researcher-participant created the drawing seen in Image 2 (see Appendix D, p. 110). From this drawing, the following horizons were derived: 1) “I had to face past feeling, measuring my personal growth,” 2) “I had to confront a past relationship that did not give me what I wanted and the feelings of envy in seeing others get what I wanted,” 3) “My past behaviors in dealing with negative emotions with others were effective in getting the results I wanted,” and 4) “What I really wanted was to express those emotions openly without restraint.” Using these horizons, the subsequent concluding existential statement was developed: “In confronting negative feelings in relationships, I acknowledge
that my passive aggressive behavior was effective but what I really wanted was to express my feelings openly and without restraint.”

Gestalt Therapy Dream Analysis (GTDA)

The selected dreams were also analyzed using the Gestalt Therapy Dream Analysis (GTDA) methodology. Within this methodology, the researcher-participant identified various people, places and things, considering how that identified variable relates to a part of the self.

With the GTDA approach, the researcher-participant attributed various aspects of the dreams as representations of herself. In the “A Moment Passed” dream (see Appendix C, p.70), the researcher-participant ascribed the following. The representation of “J” embodied the researcher-participant’s desire to connect and engage. It is the part of her that wants to love and trust in that love. “J” also symbolized the strong part of the researcher-participant that she felt would protect and hold her together. “A” epitomized the part of the researcher-participant that is slow and hesitant to act but desires to take risks. The “Mother”/ “Best friend”/ “Best Friend’s Mom” exemplified the part of researcher-participant that urges her to stay with what she is comfortable with, often holding her back when she is ready to take a risk. The “steep hill” in the dream symbolized the personal challenges within the
researcher-participant that often seem too difficult to change or overcome.

In exploring the “Unrequited at the Reunion” dream (see Appendix C, p. 71), the researcher-participant attributed the “10-year reunion” to be the part of her that often ruminates on past victories and failures. “J” represented the part of the researcher-participant that often compares herself to others and sees her imperfections as not quite measuring up. “T” symbolized the part of the researcher-participant that pretends things are acceptable when they are not. This was also the part of the researcher-participant that holds onto denial to the point of shutting others out, disconnecting with them and even pushing them away. “A” represented the researcher-participant’s difficulties in giving voice to her feelings, particularly her frustrations, despite her desires to do otherwise. The “balcony” is the space within the researcher-participant that is open and willing to allow the researcher-participant to express her emotions openly.

Short Story Analysis

By using the natural quality of dreams, the researcher-participant expanded the dreams by translating them into a short-story narrative form. This format allowed the researcher-participant to explore characters, dialogues and setting to develop themes and conclusions regarding the dreams. She then
continued exploring significant moments of the stories and dreams by creating art works based on the short story (see Appendix D, p.109). A witness writing/poetic transcription technique was used to

The researcher-participant later chose to use a modified existential approach with the short stories narratives. From this exploration, the following horizons were discovered for the short story entitled “A Moment Passed” (see Appendix D, p.72):
1) “The traditions and mainstream expectations are present and upheld. 2) “There is an acknowledgement of not being ready to leave the status quo.” 3) “There is a strong desire to go against the status quo and a desire to separate to get perspective without influence,” 4) “The desire to take the risk and be vulnerable versus the desire to protect oneself creates a conflict that brings the focus even more inward,” 5) “Not being ready to fully face all the opportunities, leads to taking quick exists in the face of disrupting the status quo, 6) “The desire to connect and feel connected is present,” 7) Although there is hope of taking the advantage of the opportunity, there is no guarantee, leaving the moment bittersweet.” Consolidating these horizons led to the resulting existential statement: “Not being ready to take risks and go against the status quo, in spite of desires, leads me to abandon opportunities in untrustworthy hope.”
For the short story entitled “Unrequited at the Reunion” (see Appendix D, p.83) the following horizons were found: 1) “It is hard coming back to a situation to confront the pain of past failures and rejections,” 2) “Frustration and pain can lead to confrontation.” 3) “Rejection hurts,” 4) “In escape and separation, we can find the space to face the truth,” 5) Allow mistakes to become opportunities that lead to hopefulness.” In using these horizons the following existential statement was created: “Confronting and working through the pain of past rejections and failures is hard but I can find the space to face the truth and allow my mistakes to become opportunities for hopefulness.”

Also using a modified GTDA approach to her short story narratives, the researcher-participant combined the analyses of both stories as they featured the same characters. In considering various aspects of the story the researcher-participant examined prominent characters, settings, objects and relationships within both stories, considering how they symbolized her personal characteristics.

The character Annalise represented the part of the researcher-participant that held herself back despite her desires, worried in how changes she initiated could affect the status quo. Annalise’s readiness to take risks reflected the
researcher-participant’s aspirations and also her fear of rejection, failure, and unfairly disrupting others’ lives.

Liz reflected the part of the researcher-participant that longs to be dramatic, representing exactly who she is without caution to other people’s judgment. However, Liz also showed the researcher-participant the part of herself that clings to maintaining the comfort of what other’s expect of her.

Joe symbolized a mixture of the researcher-participant’s mixed feelings of not fitting into a prescribed mold and her yearnings to move beyond the present circumstances. Joe displayed aspects of the researcher-participant that wanted to rebel against what was expected of her but also push away what she wanted because she did not know how to have it in her life.

Other minor characters that characterized aspects of the researcher-participant are Liz’s mom shown in “A Moment Passed” (see Appendix D, p. 72) who represented the part of the researcher-participant that holds in place the desire to let loose, keeping her emotionally dramatic side in check. Lance, introduced in “Unrequited at the Reunion” (see Appendix D, p. 83), represented the constant peacemaker within the researcher-participant. He symbolized the part of the researcher-participant that tries to maintain control and smooth over awkward moments. JoBeth, who appeared in “Unrequited at the
Reunion,” symbolized the self-critical traits of the researcher-participant.

In considering significant settings and objects within both stories, the researcher-participant viewed the “abandoned arena” featured in “A Moment Passed” (see Appendix D, p. 72) as the part of herself that allowed her the space to think and consider opportunities. The “fairground” in “A Moment Passed” exemplified the researcher-participant’s need to hold on to the stability and comfort of the familiar.

In “Unrequited at the Reunion” (see Appendix D, p. 83), the “reunion” itself represented the part of the researcher-participant that ruminates on the life that she does not have and the expectations she feels she does not meet. The “Old Briar” where the reunion was held is the space within the researcher-participant that holds the past in a special place, to be returned and remembered when needed. The “barn” and the “patio” highlighted in “Unrequited at the Reunion” were the emotional spaces within the researcher-participant filled with the raw emotions of loss, confusion and unworthiness. “Annalise’s car” embodied the researcher-participant need to emotionally escape from difficult situations. However, “Annalise’s car keys” signify the part of the researcher-participant that often forces her to face those difficulties despite resistance.
Acknowledging the importance of the various relationships within the narratives, the researcher-participant viewed the relationship between Joe and Annalise as the part of herself that longs for connection and understanding and is willing to take risks. However, this strait struggles with her need for security. The relationship of Annalise and Liz displays the researcher-participant’s desires for familiarity and the comfort of security as well as her frustrations with its limitations.

The relationship between Liz and Lance epitomized the researcher-participant’s struggle between a desire to express her emotions openly and her need for restraint to maintain peace and order. Joe and his father’s relationship denoted the researcher-participant’s inability to merge her traditional views with her desires not to limit herself to those ideals. Lastly, JoBeth and Liz’s relationship represented the part of the researcher-participant’s personality that ruthlessly compares her life to others’ lives instead of finding peace within her own.

*Art Making*

Art making was used in the process of analyzing the researcher-participant’s short stories. Using a gestural mixed media drawing technique method with acrylic paint and charcoal, the researcher-participant attempted to capture the essence of the emotional moments represented in the story. By investigating
the artworks using a witness writing/poetic transcriptions technique, the researcher-participant allowed the created images to define the events of the story further, expanding exploration of the narrative.

Image 3 (see Appendix D, p. 111) is a depiction of Annalise and Joe in “The Moment Passed” (see Appendix D, p. 72) as they sat together in the stands of the abandoned rodeo arena. The researcher-participant thought this moment encapsulated the narrative’s bittersweet hope of the two main character’s desire to connect with one another but being unable to overcome the things that separate them.

Image 4 (see Appendix D, p. 112) is a depiction of the “Barn” emotional scene between Annalise and Joe after the death of his father in “Unrequited at the Reunion” (see Appendix D, p. 83). The red background of this image signified the pain that both characters felt and the strength of their desire to connect with one another. Their desire to connect was further emphasized by the closeness of the two figures’, enclosed in a rectangular space within drawing, their arms forming a bond between them.

Image 5 (see Appendix D, p. 113) depicts the “Patio” scene in the story “Unrequited at the Reunion” (see Appendix D, p. 83). The blue background of the image represents the disheartening moment of Annalise trying to connect and Joe refusing her. In
the image, the two characters remain separate and aloof from each other, as Annalise watches Joe from a dark corner.

Poetic Writing

Poetic transcriptions were produced from the witness writing process of the art work created from the dream based narratives (see Appendix D, p. 106). Using this technique, the researcher-participant translated the aforementioned written data into expressive verbal arrangements that offered artistically illuminating messages. The poetic transcriptions created from the narrative based art works, led to further artistic creations that offered the researcher-participant additional knowledge.

Abstract imagery was used in the creations of these artworks. In Image 6 (see Appendix D, p. 114), the researcher-participant painted two circular images facing in opposite directions, emitting their essence and desires. They are present together but unable to connect to one another. These images related to Poetic Transcription (1) (see Appendix D, p. 106). In Image 7 (see Appendix D, p. 115), related to Poetic Transcription (2) (see Appendix D, p. 107), the researcher-participant drew two figures entwined around each other and encapsulated in that moment. She cut the oval-shape image out from the paper to further represent this enclosed image. In Image 8 (see Appendix D, p. 116), as it relates to Poetic
Transcription (3) (see Appendix D, p. 107), the researcher-participant painted a circular figure, alone in the corner of a room, seeping a sickly green substance from its core. The researcher-participant regarded this substance as the figure’s damaged emotional essence bleeding out its pain.

Also, for a varied perspective on the modified existential art therapy dream analysis of the short stories, the researcher-participant translated the established “horizons” into poetic transcriptions (see Appendix D, p. 108).
Discussion

Through this qualitative art-based heuristic study, the researcher-participant desired to better understand the potential of personal dream analysis as a method of self exploration. It was proposed that using art-making and creative writing in the interpretation of a specific set of dreams would allow the researcher-participant to understand the issues presented in the dreams from different perspectives, and develop a creative methodology for self exploration and personal development that could be used by therapists for themselves and with their clients.

In this research study, the researcher-participant gained insight into her selected dreams, her creative process and witnessed the potential of personal dream analysis as a viable method of self-exploration. Incorporating creative writing and art-making as part of the dream analysis process, enabled the researcher-participant to expand and amplify the dreams, creating opportunities to delve deeper into the characters, settings and relationships originally represented in the dream. Also with this creative analysis, the researcher-participant was able to observe her creativity in progress, providing her with insights and helpful techniques that will be considered in future creative endeavors.
In evaluating the three methodologies, the researcher-participant observed that creative writing and art making engaged her creativity towards deeper investigation of the selected dreams. However, gaining feedback from experts and peers proved critical for this process. Having a direct response from the reader allowed the researcher-participant to access a more profound understanding of her intentions as the writer and to see her work objectively, increasing the quality of the writing and the narrative. Including the additional dream analysis methodologies process proved beneficial in augmenting the researcher-participant’s viewpoint of the issues presented by the dreams, allowing her the opportunity to examine those themes from a psychological standpoint.

Gestalt therapy dream analysis (GTDA) was challenging for the researcher-participant. In particular, the researcher-participant met with difficulty in ascribing personal attributes particularly to non-human entities such as objects and places experienced in her dreams. The researcher-participant also encountered difficulty in acknowledging some aspects that represented her sense of self. Some of the projected attributions were not completely positive and the researcher-participant had to accept the truth of these statements to move forward in her self-exploration. However, she found the overall
personal associations of the significant elements of her dreams to be enlightening.

The incorporation of art and free association within the existential art therapy dream analysis (EATDA) allowed the researcher-participant to explore facets of the dream from a personal and open perspective. The researcher-participant had little difficulty in completing the tasks for this method including creating the art work, defining the key elements and clusters and generating the final existential statement. The researcher-participant considered the conclusions discovered from this process to be intriguing and insightful in application to her current life.

Initially, the researcher-participant planned to perform line by line coding on all written documents. Although she performed this coding process on the research memos, the researcher-participant determined through the study that this technique would not garner insightful information when performed on the short stories and poetic transcriptions. In both of these instances, to do so would only render literal information, already present. The researcher-participant deemed that the planned analysis for both the narratives and poetic transcriptions would be more enriching methodologies than the line by line coding technique. It was also determined that line by line coding would not be beneficial in gaining deeper meaning
from the witness writing texts as they were already being processed through the poetic transcription method.

The researcher-participant also planned to create artistic representations of the concluding themes that emerged during the study. In considering the information revealed in the various themes of the study, the researcher-participant recognized that in-depth personal artistic study of those themes was needed. In caution of self-disclosure, inclusion of artwork related to those themes was deemed inappropriate for this study.

Through a supplementary investigation to the established parameters of this study, the researcher-participant incorporated modified versions of the GTDA and EATDA techniques in analyzing the short story narratives. In using the GTDA methodology within the context of the short story narrative, the researcher-participant was able to expand her exploration beyond significant characters and places and to consider key relationships as part of the personal representation.

In comparing the process of using the EATDA on the selected dreams versus using a modified existential approach on the narratives, the researcher-participant found that both analyses offered enlightening information on her views of the world and how she might approach risks and confront negative emotions. Overall, the researcher-participant found the concepts presented by the analysis of the narratives to be richer in comparison.
However, she concluded that this may be due to the detailed nature of the narratives as opposed to the shorter sketches that the dreams presented.

Several limitations existed within this study. The recorded dreams used for this study could not be validated by a specific date or documentation to prove authenticity. The researcher-participant could only assume that she would be truthful during the process in her personal dream analysis. Caution with self-disclosure was taken, to minimize personal harm, extreme exposure, and distress. Also, no attempts were made to control for the effect of previous or outside relationships upon the study. Due to the small sample size, the results of the study could not be generalized to a larger population. Finally, the researcher-participant had limited experience and familiarity with gestalt therapy techniques and existential art therapy techniques and did not consult professional clinicians trained in these methodologies during the study.

Noting the study’s limitations, implications of its results extend past a possible methodology for the personal and professional development of mental health professionals, to include usefulness in therapeutic work with clients, particularly individuals who enjoy creative writing and art making. In moving forward with further research, a study utilizing the creative methods and the modified EATDA and GTDA
techniques with a sample size group of clients would be useful in testing the techniques validity and viability as a method of personal exploration. It is also suggested to focus on the creative writing aspects of this study, using art making, modified EATDA and GTDA techniques, and a group check-in to analyze a short story created without the influence of dreams.
References


Appendix A: Research Design

Introduction

As part of mental health counseling training, students are constantly instructed to explore themselves, seeking further understanding of issues and biases that may affect future work with clients. Dream analysis has presented itself as an option that allows individuals to explore hidden depths and problem solve issues in non-harmful ways.

At a time when many discounted the validity of dream interpretation, Freud argued that dreams held significant meaning in understanding the human condition seeing them as manifestations of repressed desires (West, 2011). Carl Jung, a colleague of Freud, later parted ways with Freud on issues related to dream interpretation, viewing dreams as representations of personal symbols and archetypes (West, 2011). Although both men differed in their interpretation of dreams, both felt dreams were valid sources in helping their clients gain understanding of their needs and desires (Davis, 1995; Androutsopoulou, 2011).

Throughout these various methodologies, the importance of understanding dreams and the possible application of interpretations in the clients waking lives stands out. Through the usage of dream interpretation, therapists are able to work with clients, and use dreams as not only a place to begin
therapeutic work but also as a method to gain personal understanding towards effective change.

Dream analysis is also used within the field of art therapy. Both dream interpretation and art therapy use the illustrative benefits of symbols and metaphors to delve within the self and express issues and concerns that are often difficult to communicate orally (Simon, 1989). By using art as a tool in dream interpretation, one may be better able to share and understand insights found in dreams.

Within the field of art therapy dream analysis, the client is considered the expert in accurately interpreting the symbols in his or her dreams, with art therapist acting as guide (Simon, 1989, Davis, 1995, Moon, 2007, Horovitz & Eksten, 2009). With the inclusion of art in the interpretation process, the clients are not only able to present ideas too difficult to put into words but are also able to gain a more objective perspective on the issues that the dreams presents. As mental health counseling students approach the task to better understand the self, it can be argued that dream analysis may be an engaging method to gain further self-understanding.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative heuristic study was created to better understand the potential effect of personal dream analysis. The purpose of this study was to explore and analyze a specific set
of dreams to develop a creative methodology for self-exploration and personal development. The study used various creative methodologies such as art-making and creative writing, which allowed the researcher-participant to understand her dreams from different perspectives. The goal of this study was to present a creative method of dream analysis that could be used by other art therapy and mental health counseling students in their personal development and in their work with clients.

Definition of Terms
The following terms were used within this study:

Art Therapy
“Art Therapy is a mental health profession in which clients, facilitated by the art therapist, use art media, the creative process, and the resulting artwork to explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behavior and addictions, develop social skills, improve reality orientation, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem” (AATA, 2013).

Creative Writing Therapy
Creative writing therapy is a method of expressive writing that allows clients to work through issues and concerns in written form. Clients are able to use metaphors and fictional characters to express difficult topics and work toward solutions
and personal change (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 2006; Gibbons, 2012).

**Short Story**

Short story is defined as a story form with a fully developed theme but significantly shorter and less elaborate than a novel (Oxford University Press, 2013).

**Heuristic Inquiry**

Heuristic inquiry is a method of study that uses self-discovery and self-searching as its source of investigation (Moustakas, 1990). “Heuristic inquiry is a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in search to understand one’s self and the world in which one lives” (Moustakas, 1990).

**Dream Analysis**

Dream analysis is defined as the process in which one uses imagery and symbolism found in dreams to discover personal meaning and gain insight into issues that occur in the waking life.

**Witness Writing**

Witness writing is a form of written response to artwork. Based on the ideas of Jung’s active imagination theory, witness writing creates a dialogue between artist and artwork that will allow the artist to gain deeper understanding of the artwork’s
meaning, which in turn keeps the creative process open for further output and analysis. (McNiff, 1992; Malchiodi, 2002)

Poetic Transcription

Poetic Transcription is a method of processing interview transcriptions through the creation of lyrical arrangements based on the actual interview transcriptions (Glesne, 1997). In this study, poetic transcription will be used to process and attain understanding of the witness writing documents.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were placed on this study:

1) Only one participant was used for the study. No co-researchers were selected for this study.
2) The researcher was also the participant of the study.
3) Only the researcher-participant’s dreams were studied and analyzed.
4) Two dreams were selected for analysis. No additional dreams were included.
5) Dreams utilized for this study were related solely to issues of intimacy and relationships.
6) Artwork consisted of only paintings, drawings, and mixed media images.
7) The short story narrative form was the only type creative writing method used for the study.
Limitations

The limitations to this research study are:

1. The dreams used for this study were unable to be validated by a specific date or documentation to prove authenticity.

2. The researcher-participant assumed that she would be truthful in her personal analysis. However, caution in self-disclosure was taken to minimize personal harm, extreme exposure and distress.

3. No attempts were made to control for the effect of previous or outside relationships upon the study.

4. Due to the small sample size, the results of the study were generalizable.

5. The researcher-participant had limited experience and familiarity with gestalt therapy techniques and existential art therapy techniques and did not consult clinicians trained in these methodologies.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be focused on during this study:

1. How can creative writing and art be used together to explore and analyze dreams?

2. What is the experience of using creative writing and art to explore dreams?
3. What do the dreams about romantic relationships reveal to researcher-participant about her views on relationships?

4. What can the researcher-participant learn about her creative process from this experience?
Appendix B: Review of Literature

Introduction

As therapists, self-knowledge, becoming aware of biases and issues that may interfere with the therapeutic relationship, is greatly encouraged throughout one’s career. For art therapists, this need is not only emphasized in understanding the self as a practitioner but also as an artist.

Brown (2008) conducted a study concerning creative art therapists’ engagement with artistic activities outside of the work setting and the relationship between personal creative pursuits and their work as therapists. In the article, Brown (2008) presents the results of the 45 creative arts therapists from three hospitals in New York who participated in this inquiry as co-researchers. Introduction of the research topic, lecturing, an artistic experiential activity and discussion were part of the sessions each subgroup attended (Brown, 2008). From this research, it was found that art making was essential to professional effectiveness and personal health (Brown, 2008).

Wadeson (2003) discusses the significance of art making as a method for “professional self-processing” (p.208). A sustainable art practice can be used to assist the art therapist in working through intense emotions, unsuitable feelings towards clients, or in the understanding of perplexing issues that may arise during client sessions. It can be used in the exploration
of dreams about clients to gain more understanding of the individual therapeutic relationships or as a form systematic media/technique exploration to gain further knowledge of the materials and methods that would best suit the clients’ needs and abilities (Wadeson, 2003).

In the development of a personal artistic practice that allows for exploration and personal and professional growth, one considers dream analysis an engaging option. This review of literature has been divided into the following sections: aspects of dreaming, narrative aspects of dreams, cultural perspectives on dream analysis, therapeutic perspectives on dreams, dream analysis and art therapy, dreams and creativity, and the implications of creative writing therapy.

Aspects of Dreaming

Dreams are a feature of the human condition that continues to hold to the fascination of many people (Delaney, 1998 Ginger, 2007). They are continually analyzed from different perspective through empirical studies, therapeutic programs and self-help books. In the quest for self-understanding, dreams still hold sway for people as they bring their dreams to therapists for interpretation and understanding.

In 1865, Seafield wrote a book on the history of dreams (Hill, 1998). In it he describes dreams as being understandable and meaningful, having substance that relates back to the
dreamer’s temperament and strength of emotions and thoughts from the previous day (Hill, 1998). He states that in the dreaming state the mind was capable of solving problems and could satisfy desires not present in one’s waking life (Hill, 1998).

Several empirical studies involving the origins, content, and biological and psychological functions of dreams have taken place (Foulkes, 1966). From this research, it has been established that the most vivid dreams usually occur during rapid eye movement sleep (Foulkes, 1966). The content of dreams usually represents memories, events and occurrences in our daily life, and although one may experience bizarre events in his or her dreams, this may be due to the individual’s associative channels being more open during the dream state. Ultimately, dreams reflect and express parts of the dreamer’s personality (Foulkes, 1966).

Narrative Aspects of Dreams

Another interesting aspect of dreams is their narrative qualities. The details of dreams, filled with visual imagery and dramatic action, usually has particular significance to the dreamer’s own life story (Androutsopolou, 2011; Foulkes, 1966). Androutsopolou (2011) states that dream stories can be viewed as a way for one to understand their personal experiences and express and assess concerns and anxieties that may take place in their waking life. As part of the process in understanding what
they dreamt, people shape and form their dreams into a narrative format which helps them to share their dreams with others and places the experience within a social frame of reference (Androutsopolou, 2011). These dreams stories then become metaphors, referencing how clients view themselves, others and the world around them (Androutsopolou, 2011).

Although people often share their dreams, in a narrative format, dream experiences do not strictly follow the rules of story structure (Montangero, 2012). Dreams have various story-like elements such as the grouping of actions and events, the inhabitance of communicative beings capable of action, as well as a beginning, middle and sometimes ending segments (Montangero, 2012).

However, dreams often lack transition in sequence, skipping logical movements from one event to another and sometimes, do not have endings, possibly due to a disruption in the overall narrative or simply from the dreamer awakening from sleep (Montangero, 2012). Despite difference, a powerful connection between dreams and narratives is acknowledged, and as Jenkins (2012), states that by viewing dreams, in particular nightmares, as an undeveloped narrative, the dreamer has the opportunity to work toward solutions and make changes to his or her story towards a positive outcome.
Cultural Perspectives on Dream Analysis

Various cultures view the significance of dreams differently (Delaney, 1998). In the American Plain Indian tribes, dreams are used as part of rites of passage in the transition of young male tribal member from puberty to adulthood. The aboriginal Yolngu community in Australia considers dreaming as a time when the soul exits the body, traveling to places existing in the reality and spiritual worlds (Delaney, 1998). In Egyptian tradition, it was thought that the god Bes sent enjoyable dreams and protected those that slept against evil demons. Hindu traditions held initial beliefs that dreams were caused by bodily illness or food eaten in the evening. They also believed that dreams were caused by wishes made in waking life and intuitive insights. In Western society, dreams transitioned from the idea of being divine messages, to later be seen as meaningless utterances of the mind.

Therapeutic Perspectives on Dreams and Dreaming

Current views of dreams have largely been influenced by the philosophy of psychoanalysis (Foulkes, 1966). Within this theoretical framework, dreams are thought to be communications from the unconscious to the conscious self (Davis, 1995; Wiseman, 1987). From a holistic perspective, dreams have been viewed as a dispatch system between the physical body, the mind and the spiritual and emotional self (Wiseman, 1987).
Freud, a major pioneer in psychoanalysis, argued that dreams held significant meaning in understanding the human condition (West, 2011). He theorized that dreams were manifestations of repressed desires. Carl Jung, a colleague of Freud later parted ways with Freud on issues related to dream interpretation, seeing dreams as representations of personal symbols and archetypes (West, 2011). Despite differences, both psychologists acknowledged that dreams were valid sources in helping their clients gain understanding of their needs and desires (Davis, 1995; Androutsopoulou, 2011).

Other psychological theories have developed their own models of dream interpretation. Phenomenological therapy views dreams as part of the human experience (Schweitzer, 1996). From this perspective dreams are not seen as products of the unconscious but rather as significant elements of the human experience (Schweitzer, 1996). They are a way to be present in the world while we are not awake (Kruger, 1992). Dream interpretation under the phenomenological perspective dissects the events of the dream to understand the meaning of that event in the context of the human existence (Kruger, 1992).

Gestalt therapy takes a more internal approach dream interpretation, viewing each element and object in the dream as a representation of the self (France et. al, 1993). If the client, in experiencing the dream, is able to own the various
objects of the dream as part of the self, Gestalt therapists believe that the person is able to be informed by the message of the dream.

Influenced by several different dream theories including Freudian, Jungian, Gestalt, phenomenological, client-centered and behavioral, Hill (2004) developed a model of dream interpretation from a cognitive-experiential perspective. The premise of this model assumes that dreaming allows the mind to continue processing issues that occupied the mind during waking life. Therefore, the interpretation of dreams is particular to the client, and when used in therapy should be a shared process between the client and therapist as opposed to a one-sided dissection by the therapist. Hill also states that dreams are helpful in assisting others in understanding themselves and involves several factors including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements (Hill, 2004).

Hill’s dream work model incorporates three stages of analysis. The first stage is exploration in which the therapist assists the client as they review images, emotions and thoughts that were experienced during the dream. The second stage is the insight. During this stages, the client and therapist work together to build a sense of comprehension and meaning about the dream. The final stage is action, in which the therapist works
in conjunction with the client to use the ideas learned from the
dream toward goals and changes in the client’s waking life.

Throughout these various methodologies, the interweaving
theme is the importance of understanding dreams and possible
application for the clients’ daily lives. Through the usage of
dream interpretation, therapists are able to begin work with
clients toward goals of personal understanding and ideas toward
personal change.

Dream Analysis and Art Therapy

Dream analysis is often used within the field of art
therapy. Both dream interpretation and art therapy use the
illustrative benefits of symbols and metaphors to delve within
the self and express issues and concerns that are often
difficult to communicate in words. By using art as a tool in
dream interpretation, one may be better able to share and
understand insights found in the sometimes abstract and bizarre
world of dreams.

Over the years, several art therapy models of dream
interpretation have been proposed. Simon (1989) proposed a six-
step technique in which the client creates a three-dimensional
image of the dream using clay and then creates a two-dimensional
art piece using pastels. It is not stated why the client must
create both types of art works. However, one can suppose that
the two different dimensions lend itself to varied perspectives and analysis of the dream.

After completing the artwork the client then gives an account of the dream to the therapist. Afterwards, the client is then instructed to work aesthetically with the visual images to gain a more accurate reflection of the dream. Finally, the client is directed to narrate the dream again to determine the message and its implications (Simon, 1989)

This focus on the artwork itself is similar to the approach established by Davis (1995). In her five-step process, the client establishes the dream and then creates a visual representation of it. The dream and corresponding artwork are discussed in session by the client and therapist. Afterwards, the dream and artwork are examined from different perspectives and possibly reworked to gain further insight. Lastly, the client and therapist continue to discuss the reworked art pieces until conclusions and applications are reached (Davis, 1995).

In 1999, Horovitz (Brooke, 2004; Horovitz & Eksten, 2009) proposed the usage of art therapy dream interpretation as tool for assessing clients. The Art Therapy Dream Assessment (ATDA) is the first assessment of its kind to bring together dream analysis and art therapy. However, due to its individualistic nature, the ATDA does not lend itself directly to the use of diagnosis, and is often paired with other assessments to gain
further information about the client. The ATDA can be used to identify significant issues for the clients and provides direction to the therapist in determining objectives and treatment goals as they move forward. Also, as clients discuss and interpret their dreams, therapists are able to see the client’s cognitive and psychological processes in action (Brooke, 2004).

The ATDA purports to measure the parts of the personality that are undisclosed, sometimes even to the client (Brooke, 2004). According to Horovitz, the significance of symbols represented in dreams is distinctive to each dreamer. Therefore, there is no standard measure of interpretation as presented in other assessments. Interpretation exists in the interchange between therapist and client and is driven by the clients own acknowledgement of meaning and significance (Brooke, 2004).

The application of the ATDA is a multistep process that renders a client’s dream down to a single meaningful sentence, later used by the client and therapist as they move forward in treatment. Clients are first asked to identify a significant dream that they found impactful in either a positive or negative way (Horovitz & Eksten, 2009). The client is then asked to create an artistic representation of this dream. This expression
can be rendered using either 2-D or 3-D media. Next the client is directed to write a paragraph describing the dream.

After the creation of the written dream script, the client is directed to read it to the therapist. In response, the therapist reads the dream script back to the client, providing the opportunity for the client to hear his or her words. This type of mirroring technique is essential to the assessment. “The magic comes from the effect, rhythm, and tenor of the therapist's voice. The clients can actually hear the written paragraph differently when enunciated and effectively read by his or her therapist” (Horovitz & Eksten, 2009). The mirroring technique allows the client to make their own discoveries and interpretations with little direct interference from the therapist.

The client then chooses and underlines words from the dream script that they find meaningful. The therapist, then reflectively reads the underlined words back to the client. This process of highlighting and mirroring continues until the dream is pared down to eight final words, which are read aloud by the client. The therapist, in turn, reads them back to the client (Brooke, 2004), and finally, the client is directed to arrange the final eight words into a single sentence that encapsulates the essence of the dream. If needed, the therapist can assist the client regarding grammar and syntax in the
construction of the sentence (Horovitz & Eksten, 2009). Upon completion, the client reads the sentence to the therapist who then reads it back to the client. This final stage is said to cause the “Ah-ha phenomenon” as the client is able to gain insight into the deeper issues that the dream represents (Horovitz & Eksten, 2009).

Moon (2007) known for his work in existential art therapy established a formula for working with clients and their dreams after attending a training seminar taught by Dr. Clarke Moustakas. The steps outlined by Moon are similar to those outlined in the ATDA. The client creates artwork and the therapist mirrors back the client’s interpretations. Differences between Moon’s method and the ATDA reside in the allowance of free association regarding the words and image, the clustering of phrases established during free association, and the usage of the image as a separate entity to be engaged with. The final step in Moon’s approach is to ritualistically read the final interpretative statement back to the painting as opposed to the therapist (Moon, 2007).

Within each example of dream interpretation within the field of art therapy, the client is considered the expert in accurately interpreting the symbols in his or her dreams with all analysis and interpretation being accomplished by the client with art therapist as guide (Davis, 1995; Horovitz & Eksten,
2009; Moon, 2007; Simon, 1989). With the inclusion of art as part of the process, the clients is not only able to present ideas that may be difficult to put into words but are also able to find the insights and ideas outside of themselves, gaining a more objective perspective on the issues that the dreams presents

Dreams and Creativity

One of the major tenets of art therapy is the belief that the creative process associated with making art is both “healing and life-enhancing” (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 63). Torrance derived a definition of creativity as a method of being alert to issues and gaps in information and understanding (Krippner, 1999). It is a process focused on problem solving in which problems are identified and solutions are formed and tested. It is thought that dreams work similarly to this process. Within dreams, issues and solutions can be identified and tested in a contained environment (Krippner, 1999). According to Montague Ullman, dreams naturally contribute to the creative process as they are all unique; combining various pieces that into new arrangements full of metaphors and symbols that can spark creative thought (Krippner, 1999).

In considering the uses and meaning of dreams and dream analysis, it should be noted many well-known creative individuals have attested to the influence that dreams have had
over their work (Hill, 1998). Robert Louis Stevenson, author of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, spoke of a dream he had about the transformation that took place between the Jekyll/Hyde characters (Schredl & Erlacher, 2007). Paul McCartney reminisced about hearing the tune for the song Yesterday in a dream, surprised to later find out that it had not been composed yet. In an intriguing account, poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, disclosed the inspiration of a particular dream that lead him to write Kubla Khan (Delaney, 1998, Andreasen, 2006). Visual artists, mathematicians, scientist, composers and even film directors have acknowledged the influence of dreams in their work and creative processes (Delaney, 1998).

Hill (1998) analyzed the interviews of 26 writers that were previously conducted by Naomi Epel, a writer and dream research from California. Some of the notable writers included in the study were Maya Angelou, Stephen King, Elmore Leonard, Anne Rice, Maurice Sendak, Amy Tan and others (Hill, 1998). Using a modified grounded theory and open coding method, Hill (1998) found that dreams influenced in these writer’s creative work in various ways.

Dreams provided them with a place to begin working, assisted in the progress of the creative work, and affected decisions made over the development of the project. It was also
acknowledged by the participants that dreams provided answers to obstacles in their creative work and helped in settling issues of uncertainty (Hill, 1998).

Dreams were considered one of many sources of creative material and allowed the writers to create and gain insight into characters, and access sensations and feelings (Hill, 1998). The dreams that the writers tended to work with were ones that they felt were useful and could be molded into the story format. When incorporating the dreams into their work, it was found that the interview participants would either reproduce the dream, placing it as a dream of the one of the characters or an action scene or plot, or the writer would reinterpret the dream changing or adding aspects to make them fit better into the narrative work (Hill 1998).

The overall results of this interview analysis indicated that dreams were considered a useful source of creative material for some writers and its affects over creative works were meaningful, inspiring ideas and development of characters, and actions in the inclusive narrative (Hill, 1998).

Empirical studies have shown some links between dreams creativity (Krippner, 1999). Scherdl and Erlacher (2007) studied the effects of dreams on creativity experienced in waking life as reported by the participants. Besides measuring personality factors, a creativity questionnaire was developed to assess the
frequency of creative dreams, dream recall and nightmares. The questionnaires were given to two sample groups of 444 college students and 636 online participants, respectively (Scherdl and Erlacher, 2007). Many of the participants did report having dreams that sparked their creativity in artwork, problem solving and as motivation for facing difficult challenges. However, the retrospective quality of the creativity questionnaire existed as a significant limitation to the accuracy of the data provided.

Morgan (2011) investigated the link between dreams and creativity in the work of three professional writers. Interviews with these individuals were analyzed using phenomenological methods, and it was found that a primary theme amongst the writers was in the usage of dreams within the process of loss and grief. Other themes that emerged in the study included the dreams’ assistance in identifying and working toward resolutions to unsettled issues related to grief and self-healing, acknowledgments of the value of creating art based on the dreams and the cathartic power of completion and display others to view and experience the work (Morgan, 2011). Another coming theme was the recognition of the process’ ability to lead to personal change and awareness that translating dreams to art for an audience mended earlier anguishes experienced in walking life (Morgan, 2011).
From these examples, one can see the creative potential and power that dreams can have for people. In harnessing, those creative aspects, one may be able to experience the cathartic and meaningful power that creating emotionally resonate artworks can have.

Implications for Creative Writing Therapy

In addition to art therapy, creative writing therapy presents an engaging method of self-expression and analysis (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 200; Gibbons, 2012). Metaphor and creativity in writing provides individuals with an intimate forum to gain further insight into their personal knowledge and feelings about the self and the events of their lives (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 2006). It provides a safe space for individuals to express their emotions as well as a method of communication for emotions and memories too difficult share verbally (Gibbons, 2012).

Evidence shows that writing therapy has been useful in the improvement of client’s mood, health and skill in emotional regulation and stress management (Pizarro, 2004). In a study, researching the effectiveness of art and writing therapies the promotion of the psychological and physical health of individuals who have experienced trauma, Pizarro (2004) found that although clients found art therapy more enjoyable experience, writing therapy showed more of reduction in
behaviors that lead to difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Future research in the combination of both art therapy and writing therapy is recommended.

In considering the narrative quality of dreams, one can see that creative writing therapy can lend itself to working with dreams. By exploring dreams through creative writing in addition to art therapy, one may gain a different perspective on the dream, gleaning further personal meaning while having an enjoyable experience in the process.

Summary

In conclusion, upon reviewing the literature, personal dream analysis offers itself as an engaging option for individuals to explore their own issues and biases, providing an opportunity for personal growth. For mental health counselors and art therapists who desire to develop an artistic practice that encourages this personal development, dreams exhibit significant creative potential. In turn, dream analysis can used in therapeutic work with clients.

In harnessing, these creative aspects, one may be able to experience the meaningful power that creating emotionally resonate artworks based on dreams can have. Also, in considering the narrative quality of dreams, one can see that creative writing therapy lends itself readily to working with dreams through the natural narrative aspects of dreams. By exploring
dreams through creative writing therapy in addition to art therapy, therapists and clients may gain different perspectives on his or her dreams, gleaning further personal meaning, while having an enjoyable experience in the process.
Appendix C:
Recorded Dreams Scripts

The researcher-participant notes that use of initials for these dreams is to protect the identities of real individuals who were represented in the researcher-participant’s dreams.

A Moment Passed

“Somehow “J” and “A” start hanging out and it’s obvious that they like each other but it wasn’t something that “A” was looking for but she gets the impression that “J” might have had feeling for her a lot longer. So they were at the stadium and “A’s” mom, “A’s” best friend, and “A’s” best friend’s mom are with her. They are all going up to the second level to get ice cream and “A” gets separated from the group and finds “J.” He suggests that they go up this crazy steep vertical hill. “A” looks at him and tells “J” that she can’t do it. He grabs her hand and looks at her asking her, “Do you trust me?” “A” says yes after really looking at him. “J” starts pulling out these bales of hay from the side of the hill, grabs “A” as quickly as possible and they start running up the side of the hill on these stair stacked bales of hay. They make it to the top to this sort of out of the way alcove corner with them both laughing. With the adrenaline and endorphins coursing, “A” fells a high of affection for “J” and feels as though he will protect her. “A”
walks and stands in front of “J”. Then she leans down to kiss him as he leans forward to kiss her back but before they kiss “A’s” Mom calls and “A” calls back, “Just a minute.” “A” smiles down at “J” with a look of “later.” “J” grabs her hand and squeezes it as she walks back to her mother."

Unrequited At the Reunion

“It’s the 10yr High School Reunion and it is taking place at a hotel. “A” is there and “J” comes later with her boyfriend on his motorcycle. She’s sort of let loose. “J” asks if “A” has seen “T” but he hasn’t arrived yet. Apparently, he’s not doing well but he comes in and it’s “Big Money” all around. Like “T” was a stockbroker but lost his job in the market crash. “A” tries to check in with “T” and she is able to a little but “T” is sort of not wanting to be real. “A” sees “T” later whispering in the ear of some random hotel woman and they walk off together. “A” imagines them together in compromising positions. “T” comes back and as soon as “T” comes around her, “A” gets up in a huff. “T” comes after “A” asking what her problem is and “A” tells “T” how he is her problem. How she is in love with him and has always been but he doesn’t care. How she can’t watch him do this to himself.”
Appendix D:
Creative Works

Short Story Narratives

A Moment Passed

The town fair was crowded that bright summer day. On the drive to the fairgrounds, Annalise thought about the upcoming school year. It would be her first year in high school, but, to her, it felt like the beginning of the end. After high school came college, then the real world, and she just wasn’t ready for all that lay ahead.

Annalise and her mother pulled into the parking lot and joined the crowd as they communed together for the biggest event in town. It wasn’t long after they arrived at the fair that Annalise spotted Liz, her best friend, and Liz’s mother looking at a craft vendor booth. The booth was draped in pink fabric with various rhinestone-encrusted accessories strewn about. Annalise walked over and tapped Liz on the shoulder.

“Hey Leesi!” said Liz, giving Annalise a side hug as her eyes remained glued to the merchandies. “Aren’t these gorgeous?”

“They do sparkle,” said Annalise.

Sparkles were not Annalise’s thing, but she knew her best friend loved anything covered in rhinestones and glitter.

“I just don’t know what I should get!” exclaimed Liz.
“Elizabeth Marie, don’t you dare, chided Liz’s mom. “You just bought something from this booth yesterday and you are not getting another thing, do you hear me.”

“But mooommmm,” said Liz.

“No ma’am. You have enough “bling”,’ she said with finger quotes. “Far too much if you ask me. I’m telling you, Sharon. I don’t know where this girl got that from. Everything has to bling and sparkle- her phone, her wallet, her watch, her pens. I bet she’d have blingy sheets if they made them.”

“Well actually-” said the sales lady manning the booth.

“No thank you!” said Liz’s mom, pushing her daughter to the next booth. “Let’s go.”

Liz pouted for a few moments as they strolled down the row of booths. However, she quickly recovered as her focus changed to recounting the details of her favorite teen drama television show. Annalise loved hearing Liz’s play by play. Her dramatic flair always made their discussions more entertaining.

“Hey, where’s your brother?” asked Annalise.

“Who knows,” said Liz. “He came with dad but I doubt they are still together. Dad wanted to check out the livestock before the auction. But you know Joe; he’s never had much interest in that.”

“Oh,” said Annalise.
Annalise knew too well how little interest Joe, Liz’s twin brother, had in their father’s interests. She had witnessed several impromptu blow outs between Joe and his dad about the family livestock business and its future. Joe’s dad had inherited the business from his father and longed to carry on the family tradition. Joe, on the other hand, wanted no part of it. It seemed the older Joe got the more his father pushed the issue which only hardened Joe’s resolve.

“Why do you want to know where my brother is?” asked Liz.

“No reason,” said Annalise, feeling heat rise in her face. “I was just wondering.”

“Hmmph” said Liz, twisting her lips in suspicion. Annalise knew her friend wasn’t buying it.

“Really, I was just making small talk. Oh look there’s JoBeth. You wanna go over or are you two still not speaking?”

“No way! You know she stole Michael from me last year and you expect me to—”

“Ok, ok. I see that wound is still raw. But for the record, you need to bury that hatchet. JoBeth didn’t exactly steal him. Michael was the one that asked her out.”

“If you weren’t my best friend, I’d throw you to the wolves, Leesi. JoBeth knew I liked Michael. It was her duty to say no. I had first dibs.”
“So you’re saying that just because you liked him, she’s not allowed to go with him even though A) he asked her out and B) you’ve never said two words to him.”

“Yes. Girl code.”

“Girl code?”

“Girl code.”

“Sounds like crazy code to me.”

“Would you have gone out with him if he asked?” inquired Liz.

“Well no, but—” said Annalise.

“Exactly. Real friends don’t disrespect the code.”

“Liz, seriously, they only went out that once and neither one enjoyed it. I think JoBeth likes Darrell Lee now.”

“It doesn’t matter. She broke the code and must suffer the consequences.”

“You’re being ridiculous.”

“No, I’m being integritious.”

“Integri-what?”

“Integritous.”

“That’s not a word.”

“No, but it sounds good, doesn’t it?” giggled Liz.

“You are so silly,” laughed Annalise.

“But you know I’m right. How would you feel if I started dating a guy you liked?”
Heat flushed Annalise’s cheek again as she thought of another code among friends, and the guy she definitely could not mention to Liz. Joe was Liz’s brother, her twin brother. They had all basically grown up together. If someone had asked her, two years ago, if she would have ever thought of Joe as anything other than Liz’s stupid brother, she would have said absolutely not. Annalise was not sure when things had changed but she knew that something was different and she feared breaking the code with him would be something Liz would never forgive.

“Leesi, are you ok? You don’t look so good.”

“What? Nah I’m fine. It’s just hot out here, you know. Let’s—let’s go inside to the concession.”

Leaving their mothers in the midst of a haggling session at a homemade lotions and soaps booth, the two girls walked across to the concession building, a huge renovated barn with air-conditioning, tables and food vendors. Heading straight for the ice cream booth, they sat at a picnic table near the back of the room and enjoyed their desserts in respite from the summer sun.

As the crowd slowed and the sun dimmed, Annalise and Liz ventured out in the bustle again, jumping from booth to booth, eventually catching up with their mothers at a scrapbooking craft vendor. Much to Annalise’s boredom, Liz became fascinated with a glitter paper and sticker set.
Moving around the corner of the booth, Annalise mindlessly watched the crowd. From her peripheral vision, she saw a familiar form approach. Her cheeks burned and her stomach flipped around, but she knew she had to stay calm. It was just Joe, after all—Liz’s stupid brother; the one who held her underwater when they would go swimming every summer; the one who always tried to ruin their slumber parties with some stupid prank. It was just Joe.

When he finally reached Annalise, Joe didn’t say word. Instead he leaned against the wall next to her, looking out at the crowd as she was.

“Hey Joe,” Annalise said quietly, her heart fluttering with his nearness.

“What’s up, Leesi?”

“Nothing much.”

“Enjoying the festivities?”

“It’s alright. You?”

“Nah. Same old stuff. Dad still doesn’t get it.”

“Oh. Well perhaps he—”

“You want to go somewhere?” interrupted Joe.

Annalise stood, stunned by the question. She nervously looked around the corner to where Liz and their moms were still meandering around the scrapbooking booth.

“It’ll be fine,” he said, lightly tugging her hand.
Annalise followed his gentle pull, and walking close together, hands clasped, they maneuvered through the crowd. As they glided amongst the mass of familiar faces, Annalise’s heart galloped.

As the left behind the noise and bustle, Annalise saw that they were in a part of the fairgrounds she had never been to before. Dust and shadows clung to the air around them and peeked out from every corner. She was so mesmerized by this new part of her familiar fairground that she did not notice when they came to a steep grassy hill leading to the back of an old arena.

Silently, they both stood at the bottom looking up at the incline. Annalise glanced over at Joe.

“You think we can make it?” he asked, giving her a side glance.

“I guess.”

“Let’s go,” he said, pulling her hand as he ran up the hill. Annalise matched his stride and their momentum flew them over the top. From its apex, she saw that they were standing in front of the announcer’s box, next to a row of rusty benches.

Still holding her hand, Joe led Annalise to the center of the top row. As he sat down, he let go of her hand, and stretched his long legs in front of him. Annalise, hand chilled
from the departure of his, sat near Joe, her knees close to her chest.

The two sat in silence for several minutes looking out over the dusty arena. Annalise imagined the rodeos, cowboys and spectators that once breathed life into the place. Now it sat alone, quietly decaying, its former life energy vibrating a few feet away.

“This is the only part of the fair I like.”

“Really?”

“Yep.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s away. Away from my dad. Away from the eyes of the entire town waiting from me to grow up and be like him. I mean, is it so wrong to want something different for my life? Is it so wrong Leesi?”

“No it’s not wrong,” she replied, wrapping her arms around herself tighter.

“Why don’t they understand? Why doesn’t he understand?”

“I don’t know. I guess this is all they know, and they’ve been happy here. They just want you to be safe and happy.”

Joe stood throwing his arms in the air, pacing like a bull in front of a cowboy.

“What if I don’t want to be safe? What if this won’t make me happy?”
“Joe, I-”

“I know, Leesi. I’m...frustrated is all. I can’t get him to understand. I wish I could just run away.”

“Run away?”

“Yeah like to Chicago or New York. Some big city.”

“I guess that would be exciting.”

“You want to come?”

“Come? With you?”

“Yeah,” he said sitting down so close that she could no longer take in the whole of his face.

“You and me. We can leave this place right now.”

“But--” her voice trailed off as she saw his eyes, gazing down at her lips. Slowly, Joe’s head moved closer to Annalise. Annalise felt as though her heart and the entire world stopped waiting for the impact of their lips.

“Leesi---” started Joe.

“LEEESIII!!!!” echoed another familiar voice below.

The two quickly pulled away as though struck by lightning.

“LEEESSSII!” called the voice again.

“Liz,” whispered Annalise, looking in the direction of the voice. She stood up, but Joe grabbed her hand. Annalise looked down at their hands, moving slowly up to his mouth and then to his eyes.

“ANNALISE!!!” called Liz again, sounding closer.
“Umm coming,” called Annalise, locked to the spot by Joe’s eyes. They stay locked in this position for a few more moments before Joe released her, turning away.

Annalise moved to speak, to say or do something that would—she was not sure what. She was not even sure what exactly had transpired. Before she could find out, Liz turned the corner and was coming up the bleacher steps.

“OOOOOO Leesi, you are in so much trouble. Your mom is freaking out back there. Hey Joe,” said Liz, realizing that he was there, “what are you doing here?”

“Just talking. Right Joe?” said Annalise.

Liz’s eyebrows knit together, creating creases of suspicion and unsureness in her forehead. Joe did not respond but instead looked off into the dusty emptiness of the arena.

“Well come on then,” said Liz, grabbing Annalise’s hand.

“Seriously, your mom is so gonna kill you.”

As she allowed her friend lead her down the steps, Annalise looked back at Joe and saw him gazing off into the distance. With the clang of her shoes against the bleachers, she wondered what she was leaving behind, and if she had made the right choice in leaving with Liz. She reached the bottom and looked up at Joe one last time. Her heart fluttered as she saw Joe looking down her, a small smile on his face, a hint of sadness in his
eyes. Annalise smiled back, turning to walk after her friend and feeling the hope of something to come.
Unrequited at the Reunion

Sitting in her car, Annalise wonders if she should be there. She knows there is nothing to be afraid of. These people have no hold on her. She has not seen most of them in the past ten years, but here she is, on the verge of an anxiety attack, in the darkened parking lot of the town’s oldest hotel, The Old Briar.

Taking a deep breath, Annalise decides to be brave. It will only be a few minutes until her best friend, Liz, arrives. She had talked to Liz the night before, making sure that she was coming. However, Liz could be flighty and Annalise knew Liz would probably arrive late, making some sort of ridiculous entrance.

Exiting her car, Annalise takes her time, walking as slow as possible without drawing attention. She enters The Old Briar, looking up at the old wooden wagon wheel, a dusty relic that has hung over the entrance since its founding in the late 1800s.

Annalise enters the main ballroom and is met by black and gold balloons and streamers strewn around the room. Stuffed lions of various sizes are scattered and placed on tables and in every nook and cranny around the room. To Annalise, it looks as though the remnants of her adolescence has found a place to die.
She looks around the room spotting the familiar faces from a past she feels far removed from. As she signs in at the registration table, a shrill voice from behind her causes a deep cringe from within.

“Annalise? Is that you?” squeals the voice.

Annalise turns around, and is pounced by a blonde woman in a sparkly blue dress that clings to her body.

“Hi JoBeth,” says Annalise. Her voice muffles against the woman’s enormous blonde hair.

“Oh my goodness Leesi! It is so good to see you. Let me look at you.” JoBeth pauses, holding Annalise at arm’s length.

“Wow you look exactly same.”

“Thanks,” replies Annalise, unsurely. “You – you look great as always.”

“I know, right? I’m doing this whole blonde bombshell thing. I mean after little Joe Darrell was born, I had to do something to keep things spicy between me and Big Darrell.”

“It’s definitely stunning.”

“Oh, you are too sweet. You always were. Anyway what about you? What are you up to these days?”

“Well, I work with inner city kids at this nonprofit art program.”
“Oh wow,” says JoBeth, in patronizing awe, “that sounds so wonderful. I always knew you would end up doing something for the greater good.”

“Mmmm,” says Annalise, “and what about you?”

“Oh nothing much. I just started working at the bank again. After JoAnn started Kindergarten, I thought it was time for me to go back to work. But Darrell and the kids still keep me pretty busy too.”

“I’m sure they do.”

“So, are you married yet?” asks JoBeth, glancing down at Annalise’s left hand.

“Not yet,” she replies, placing her right hand over her left, self-consciously.

“Oh. Well, that’s alright, honey. I’m sure it’ll happen real soon. Where’s Liz?”

“She will be here.”

“Oh great! I look forward to seeing her.”

“Yeah, well I better finish signing in. Good to see you.”

“Oh I’m so glad I got to see you too!” exclaims JoBeth, wrapping Annalise in another suffocating embrace.

Annalise sighs deeply and walks away from the check-in table with an adhesive name-tag, feeling that she has somehow failed in life. Despite the fact that she has a job she loves
and a life she is content with, it seems that if she is not married and/or pregnant, she has achieved nothing.

Wandering around the room, Annalise is jarred by the ghosts of ten years past. Smiling and waving awkwardly at her fellow alums, she finds a table tucked neatly away in the corner and sits, wishing Liz would hurry.

Several minutes pass, with Annalise growing more uncomfortable and anxious with each ticking second. Annalise wants to give up and retreat to her car. Then, finally Liz arrives, making her grand entrance. Clad in rhinestone-crusted black leather pants, boots, a rich magenta cotton tunic, and several silver bracelets stacked on each wrist, Liz embodies the perfect mix of hippie and a biker’s old lady. Following close behind is Liz’s longtime fiancé Lance. As Liz walks to Annalise’s table, all eyes follow her, as per her design.

“I thought you’d never get here,” exclaims Annalise as she stands to hug her oldest friend.

“You know I wouldn’t miss this,” says Liz, waving her hand around like a fairy godmother. “I had to give all these old friends and enemies something to be jealous about for the next ten years.”
Annalise rolls her eyes. At some point in life, she thought her dear friend would grow out of her vanity, but it seems that day might never come.

“Joe here yet?” asks Liz, sitting in the chair next to Annalise.

Lance slides into the open seat next to Liz.

“Joe’s coming?” asks Annalise, a slight quiver in her voice.

“He said he was,” replies Liz, seemingly oblivious, “but who knows with him these days.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well ever since his start-up company started taking a nosedive, he hasn’t exactly been Mr. Reliable. Not that he ever really was.”

“Oh, I hadn’t heard,” says Annalise.

“And then there was that horrible break-up with that crazy model. Oh Lance, what was her name? Ca-Ca-Catrina, Katya—”

“Cassandra,” supplies Lance.

“Yes, Cassandra,” says Liz, in a deep dramatic tone. “Now she was loose one indeed. As crazy as a bag full of cats. I was so glad when that ended so I didn’t have to pretend to like her anymore.”

“Wow,” says Annalise weakly.

“I was sure my mom would have told your mom,” says Liz.
“I haven’t talked to my mom in a couple of weeks.”

“Oh. This was actually a few months ago.”

“Hmm,” says, Annalise, knowing why her mom had not shared this particular news the last time she called her.

“So Leesi Weesi,” said Liz, throwing her arm around her oldest friend, “what’d I miss?”

“Nothing much. Just JoBeth making me feel like a loser and the usual suspects chinning and grinning. Oh and there was me about to leave because you took forever and a day to get here.”

“Girl, you know this takes time,” says Liz gesturing over her whole body.

Annalise rolls her eyes and then realizes she hasn’t acknowledged Liz’s fiancé.

“Hi Lance.”

“Hey Annalise,” replies Lance, in a deep easy voice.

“Anyway,” continues Liz, dismissing the exchange, “JoBeth’s still looking like a Country Barbie version of Martha Stewart.”

“Don’t start,” warns Annalise.

“What?” says Liz, looking at Annalise, with pretend innocence.

“I’m just saying ever since her and Darrell Lee popped out those booger nosed munchkin-fa—”

“Babe,” says Lance, placing an arm around Liz shoulder.
Liz stops, breathing in deeply, then turns to her fiancé. They silently stare at each other, and Annalise wonders what words are being communicated through ocular exchange. Finally Liz sighs and looks away.

“Fine,” says Liz, “but, sweetie, do you mind getting me a drink?”

Lance looks at his fiancé warily, but stands and walks towards the refreshments.

“You know I’m right,” whispers Liz, when Lance is out of earshot.

“Seriously,” says Annalise, exasperated.

“I am just speaking the truth.”

“Whatever,” replies Annalise. “What is the big deal anyway? Darrell Lee took JoBeth to the senior prom instead of asking you, which, for some odd reason, you thought he would. It was 10 years ago.”

“If that bleached blonde dum-”

“I’m going to stop you right there Elizabeth Marie,” says Annalise, tired of Liz’s attitude. “You had every opportunity to ask him if you wanted to. And, to set the record straight, Darrell Lee would have asked you. In fact, he was hinting around at it to see if you were interested but you were being so...so-”

“So what?” asks Liz, dangerously.
“So snotty about the whole thing that he asked JoBeth at the last minute and the rest is done. So leave it alone.”

“Who put burr in your butt, Miss Grumpy Britches.”

“You did, Miss Unnecessary Drama Queen.”

“Well!”

Annalise and Liz stew in silent tension as Lance returns with the drinks. He looks at the two women as he places the drinks on the table.

“Really, Liz?”

“What?”

“You know what,” says Lance.

“But—”

“No. We talked about this on the way here.”

“Fine,” says Liz in a huff. After a few seconds, she turns to Annalise.

“Leesi?” Liz asks, “are you really mad at me?”

“No. Just a little annoyed.”

“I’m sorry, Leesi.”

“I know.”

“And I’m sorry JoBeth made you feel so bad.”

“Me too.”

Liz scoots her chair next to Annalise until their shoulders are touching.

“And I’m sorry I didn’t tell you about Joe.”
Annalise sighs, remembering her last conversation with Joe.

Five years ago- Annalise, having just graduated from college, was on vacation for a few weeks before starting graduate school when Liz called in tears. Liz’s dad was in the hospital and the doctors were not sure if he was going to make it. They were not even sure what happened. Annalise went over to the hospital immediately to be with Liz and her mom. Joe was on his way but he was still several hours from arriving. By the time, he made it to the hospital that evening, it was too late.

The following week rushed by as funeral preparations were made, casseroles were given and mourning dresses were bought. Out of everyone in the family, Joe worried Annalise the most. She tried to reach out to him but was met with constant excuses and brush offs.

After the funeral service, Annalise said goodbye to Liz and walked toward her car when she saw a light coming from the old barn. Cautiously, she poked her head in the doorway and saw Joe, sitting quietly at his dad’s workbench, his eyes glued to a spot on the table. His black suit, a mass of creases and wrinkles, reflected the efforts from the day’s events.

“Hey,” said Annalise, tentatively entering the barn.

“Hey,” said Joe, not looking up.
"I was just leaving when I saw the light in here. We haven’t really had a chance to talk. I just wanted to see how you were holding up."

"How is Lizzie doing?"

"You know, she’s—she’s hanging in there."

"Yeah. Well, I’d better go check on her," he said, walking towards the door.

"Joe, wait," called Annalise.

Joe paused, his body still pointed towards the door.

"Why—why won’t you—"

"What?" interrupted Joe, testily.

"Why won’t you talk to me?" pleaded Annalise.

"I’m talking to you now."

"I know you’re hurting but I’m just—"

"Do you know?"

"No, but I just wanted you to know that—"

"Leesi. Don’t."

"But Joe, I—"

"I said DON’T!"

The two stood staring at one another in silence, frozen to their places in the tense stillness of the dusty barn. Joe looked away first, walking back towards the old worktable.

"We fought the last time we talked," said Joe, softly, running his hand across its craggy surface.
“Who?”

“Dad and I,” said Joe. “But for the life of me, I can’t even remember what it was about. I hadn’t spoken to him since, and then-- he was gone.”

Joe looked at Annalise, his cheeks shined with teary streaks in the dim light of the barn. In two strides, Annalise went to Joe, wrapping him in a fierce hug. After several moments, Joe lifted his head, looking down at Annalise. She reached up and wiped away the wetness from his cheeks.

“He loved you Joe,” she said, looking into his eyes, making sure he heard her.

Joe closed his eyes, leaning his cheek against her hand. Covering her hand with his, he pulled it to his lips and kissed it gently. His eyes were locked on Annalise, a look of longing pulling Annalise closer to him. Joe lowered his head towards hers, his lips parting as they came closer and closer. Her breath shallow, Annalise felt the blood in her head throb as she saw his lips hover only inches from her own, waiting to connect.

“Leesi! Did you hear me?” asks Liz, jerking her friend back to the present.

Annalise turns to her friend and sees that she is pointing towards the door of the dance hall. Joe walks into the room in a
black suit jacket, t-shirt and dark denim pants. Dark black shades cover his eyes as a tall slender beauty in a shimmery silver cocktail dress hangs from his arm like an ornament.

“Who is that?” blurts Annalise.

“Some new missy I have to pretend to like,” replies Liz.

Joe walks around the room, like a celebrity in a nightclub. He waves and shakes hands with his former classmates as though they are his adoring fans, while his lady friend smiles brightly, enjoying the small-town attention. Eventually, the couple makes their way to Annalise and Liz.

“Joseph,” says Liz, curtly.

“Elizabeth,” replies Joe, in the same tone, and then switching to overt joviality, “Hey Leesi! Hey Lance!”

“Hey Joe.” says Annalise.

“Hey—” starts Lance.

“Who’s this?” asks Liz, cutting off her fiancé.

“This is Fiona. Fiona, this is my little sister, Liz.”

“Little?” says Liz, in dramatic outrage, “you had me by only like five seconds.”

“More like 30 minutes,” says Joe, turning to Annalise, “and this is Annalise. We all grew up together.”

Annalise waves, smiling politely. Fiona sticks out her hand and Annalise takes it, receiving a prissy limp fish handshake.
“It is so nice to meet you all,” says Fiona, in an attractive British accent.

“So,” says Joe, rubbing his hands together and looking about the room, “What have I missed?”


“Well I guess I’ll keep making the rounds then,” says Joe, grabbing Fiona’s hand. “We’ll catch y’all later.”

“Yeah, y’all do that,” says Liz, rolling her eyes as the couple walks away.

“No ma’am.” says Liz, staring after Fiona and Joe who are a few tables away. “That is a hot mess. Really. I don’t know where he finds them.”

Annalise peers at the couple as they move through the crowd, a twinge of discomfort writhing in her stomach. Liz, seeing her friend’s unspoken distress, wraps an arm around her.

“He’s not worth it,” says Liz. “And you know it, better than most.”

“It’s not— it’s— hey let’s talk about something else.”

“Well let’s see,” says Liz, “Lance and I finally set a date.”

“Oh that’s so wonderful! When’s the big day?”

“June, a lovely summer wedding on the coast in cream and diamonds. What do you think?”

“Sounds beautiful” smiles Annalise.
“So you got to get to work.”

“Work?”

“Yes. As my maid of honor, you’ve got to get started planning all the showers and parties and what not. Plus you’ve got to coordinate all the fittings, oversee the decorations and the catering. Oh, and then there’s the guest list, and the rehearsals—”

Her friend’s voice fades into the far background as Annalise once again catches sight of Joe and Fiona laughing with some of Joe’s old football team buddies. Fiona’s arm wraps possessively around Joe’s waist as the slender bombshell leans in and whispers something to Joe. She smiles seductively, lingering around his ear a few seconds too long.

Annalise stands, pushing her chair back in a fluster.

“I- I need to- step out for a couple of minutes.”

“Ok sweetie. You alright?”

“Y-yeah. I just need a little fresh air.”

“Ok. I’ll come out with you.”

“No- No. That’s ok- I mean, I’ll be ok. I’ll be back in a little bit.”

“Ok. Well hurry back.”

Annalise propels herself through the throngs of reuniting acquaintances to the veranda onto the back of the building. Once
outside, she breathes heavily, thankful to find no one else there. A single light shines in the center of the porch, causing Annalise to retreat to one of the darkened corner posts. A couple of minutes later, Joe walks out on the portico. He does not see Annalise, his gaze focused on the unending darkness of the back woods. Silently, he lights a cigarette and takes a long drag, blowing the gray plume out into the darkness.

“I didn’t know you smoked,” says Annalise from her covert corner.

“Ahhhhh!” shrieked Joe.

“Oh, sorry,” said Annalise apologetically, inching a little from her corner.

“Geez Lees! You almost made me pee my pants.”

“I guess Fiona wouldn’t appreciate that.”

“Right,” Joe chuckles. “Not exactly a deal maker is it?”

“Where is she?” asked Annalise.

“Sitting with Liz and Loverboy Lance,” said Joe, squinting in her direction and taking a long drag of his cigarette.

“You sure that’s a good idea, leaving her with Liz?”

“Fi can handle herself.”

“So how long have you two been together?”

“For a little while, off and on. What about you? Did you bring someone to this little shindig?”

“No. Just me.”
Annalise feels a surge of queasy embarrassment wash through her.

“So how have you been, Leesi?” asks Joe, moving a little closer towards her.

“Ok. You?”

“Bout the same.”

“It’s been awhile,” says Annalise, her emotions stirring.

“Yeah.”

“I haven’t talked to you in like 5 years, not since—”

“Yeah?” replies Joe, confused.

“And—what happened? You never called me. You did not even tell me you left and now—”

Annalise looks away as the tears sting her eyes.

“I left,” Joe continues, “because I knew I couldn’t be what you wanted me to be.”

“And what was that?” asks Annalise. Her voice barely holds her emotions at bay.

“I don’t know. That whole settled down, suburban, ‘Father Knows Best’ kind of thing.”

“What are you talking about? When did I ever say that,” she says, taking a couple of steps closer to him. “All I wanted was you. Since I was fifteen. And that night for the briefest of moments, I thought you felt the same.”

“Leesi, I—"
“Do you remember that day at the fair— when you took me to that old abandoned arena?”

“Yeah.”

“That day I actually thought you felt— that you didn’t see me as Liz’s best friend, or that girl you used to make mud pies with in the backyard. I thought something was changing between us. But then Liz came and—and the next day it was as if nothing had happened. And I thought maybe I had imagined it or was just being stupid. Then that night in the barn, you kissed me and I felt like— finally. You know? But then you left. You didn’t even say goodbye and I waited for you. I waited. For you.”

“Leesi- I-I never meant to hurt you. You are the best person I know.”

“Then why?”

“It’s not— That day in the arena I realized that I couldn’t— I mean we couldn’t be—”

“Oh,” says Annalise, turning away from Joe.

“No--it’s not-- it’s not like that Lees,” stumbles Joe, moving around to face her.

“I get it, Joe.”

“No, you don’t,” says Joe, sighing deeply. “Annalise, you are one of the most amazing people I know. You are one of my oldest friends and the only person—”
Joe pauses to lift her chin to look her in the eye.

“The only woman that has meant so much to me,” he continues.

Dropping his hand, Joe turns away.

“After my dad died, I was so messed up. I mean you know how me and him were and then he died and I never got a chance to make things right. I was messed up about it for so long and I just couldn’t bring you into that. I couldn’t be with you feeling so-destructive.”

Annalise looks at Joe as though she were seeing him for the first time. She cautiously moves closer to him as if examining a wounded animal.

“I can wait, Joe,” says Annalise softly.

“Don’t. Not for me. I want you to be happy. I want you to find someone who can love you the way you should be loved.”

“And who will love you?” asks Annalise as she moves closer to Joe. Joe turns away from Annalise.

Gingerly, she places her hand on his shoulder, the warmth of her touch penetrating deep within him. Joe turns around and embraces her, wrapping her in a hold tight enough to fuse them together.

“You are what I want,” she says softly into his ear. “Just you. As you are.”

“Leesi-,” says Joe, loosening his hold.
Annalise lets go of Joe and steps away, accepting her defeat.

“It’s ok Joe,” she says. “I-I-I’ll—"

Quickly Annalise turns and walks back into the hall, heading straight for the table and her purse sitting underneath her chair.

“I-I’ve got to go.” Annalise cannot hide the tears in her voice as she stays them in her eyes.

“Leesi what’s wrong?” asks Liz, placing a comforting hand on Annalise’s arm.

“I’m-- I’m just not feeling very well.”

“Do you want me to come with you?”

“No- please stay. I’ll call you tomorrow. I just need to go home and rest.”

“Ok.” says Liz, uneasily.

“Bye Lance.”

“Bye, Leesi,” replies Lance.

Annalise sees the fear and concern creasing both of their faces but she has to get out of there. Quickly, she pushes through the crowd towards the exit, praying that no one notices or tries to stop her. As she heads for her car, she berates herself for being so stupid. Why did she even think that he could- and that they could? As she tries to get her keys out of her purse, her eyes blur with tears. She throws her purse down
in frustration and cries against the roof of her car, allowing 15 years of heartache to wash over her.

Massaging her hands over her wet eyes and tear-stained face Annalise breathes in deeply, remembering her pep talk from earlier that night. There was nothing to fear, nothing to run away from anymore. Taking one more deep breath, Annalise picks up her purse and heads back toward the Old Briar. In the distance a familiar figure is approaching her. Quickly wiping at her eyes, she continues her march forward.

Annalise and Joe stop as they meet each other once again. Both stand silently, looking at each other, looking away. Neither sure who should go first.

“I’m sorry,” says Joe quietly.

“I’ll be fine,” says Annalise.

“It’s just that—,” begins Joe.

“Stop,” says Annalise. “I heard you very clearly back there and I want you to know—”

“I love you Leesi.” interrupts Joe.

Annalise stops, stunned by the response.

“You can’t change your mind— your heart in five minutes,” says Annalise, finding her voice again.

“My heart never changed.”

“Joe—” started Annalise
“Hear me out,” says Joe, “You have always been the one I wanted. Always.”

“But-”

“No But. I have always loved you and wanted to be with you and I realized back there that I want that to start now.”

“How do you expect me to-”

“I don’t expect anything. I just wanted you know.”

“What do you want me to do?” asks Annalise.

“What do you want to do?”

“I want to believe you. But I can’t.”

“I understand,” says Joe, looking down at his feet.

“But-”

“I’m liking this but-“

“But maybe we can take it slow, and see.”

“Absolutely.”

Joe takes Annalise’s hand and together they walk back towards the dance hall.”

“Wait,” says Annalise, stopping mid-track, “what about Fiona?”

“Oh she’ll be fine.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well...the thing is...you see...she’s actually my roommate’s girlfriend. She was...doing me a favor tonight after I helped her move into a new apartment.”
“Are you serious?”

Joe nods, looking down at his feet.

“I definitely—you—yeah, we’re definitely going to be taking this very slowly,” says Annalise, dropping Joe’s hand and walking toward the hall.

“Wait. Lees!” he says walking after her. “I’m sorry. I told you I had issues. Wait. Lees! Come on! It’s kind of funny if you think about it.”

Arms folded, Annalise waits for Joe to catch up with her at the door and together they walk back into the reunion hand in hand.
Poetic Transcriptions from Art Work based on stories

Poetic Transcription (1)
Sunset coming through
Sitting together
Looking away
Looking at the other
Together
But not together
Nothing around us
Just us
Are waiting
What for
So close yet apart
Separate (in) different directions

Poetic Transcription (2)
In the center
Embraced
Entwined
Wrapped together
So close
Where we want to be
Encapsulated
(In) this moment between us
No one else
Just us
Lines separate
But no space between

Arms like bonds
Binding us together
A bond easily broken

We are in between
Unmoving and still
In this moment
Captured and bound
Not worried which way to go
Poetic Transcription (3)
He doesn’t see her
But she sees him
She could be there
but she (stays) hidden
blending in the shadow.
He is focused outside
to the end
(But) everything is inside
Not sure where he’s going

Where he stands
Nowhere else to go
But to be in this moment
With what is in the room
Who is in the room
(Both) standing waiting
Stuck
Separate but in the same
space
Poetic Transcriptions from the Horizons of the Modified EATDA Story Analysis

(A Moment Passed)  (Unrequited at the Reunion)
Not ready for the world   Sitting scared,
Not ready for love       Bravely enter
A need to separate       From unconfrontation
To find the space        To confrontation
Vulnerability            Reminders of the Past
Self-Protections         Failure, Rejection
Escape                   Hurt very much
Interrupted moment       Mistakes so small
Return to status quo     Become opportunities so big
In hope of something more Don’t reject
Hopefulness

Sitting scared, Bravely enter
From unconfrontation To confrontation
Reminders of the Past Failure, Rejection
Hurt very much Mistakes so small
Become opportunities so big Don’t reject
Hopefulness
Images of Art Work

Image(1) Drawing from EATDA of “A Moment Passed”
Image(2) Drawing from EATDA of “Unrequited at the Reunion”
Image (3) Mixed Media Drawing from the story “A Moment Passed”
Image (4) Mixed Media Drawing from the story “Unrequited at the Reunion”
Image(5) Mixed Media Drawing from the story “Unrequited at the Reunion”
Image(6) Painting of Poetic Transcription (1) of the story “A Moment Passed”
Image(7) Drawing with Colored Pencils and Charcoal of Poetic Transcription(2) from the story “Unrequited at the Reunion”
Image(8) Painting of Poetic Transcription(3) from the story

“Unrequited at the Reunion”
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