A Study on the Experience of Poetry Therapy and Psychological Healing Process of Middle-aged Women

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Abstract: This paper presents a case study of the poetry treatment experience and psychological healing process of middle-aged women who experienced emotional healing and catharsis through poetry. This is a process study that experienced emotional healing and catharsis through poetry. A total of 3 middle-aged women, who are depression and anxiety patients, participated in the treatment program at A Lifelong Education Center in Y-gu, G City. Data collection was conducted for about three months from October to December, 2020 using a city treatment group program of 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes per session. Poetry therapy is an artistic act of saying poetry out loud. It is to interpret the literal poem unchanged from one piece as viewed by the eye, and to recreate the image in the poem with sound rather than stay in the eye and deliver it to the listener. As a result of the study, poetry therapy rediscovers the lives of middle-aged women and reorganizes them so that they can live more subjective lives than before. When the participants analyzed what they experienced through treatment during the process of subjecting, they found a new self as they explored their inner world and faced their wounds. The understanding of oneself and others deepened, and psychological discomforts such as anxiety, depression, and lethargy were alleviated. In other words, it can be said that the emotional stability through poetry therapy suggests that it is a significant experience in improving the relationship between yourself, your family and people around you.

Keywords: Middle-aged Women, Poetry Therapy, Poetry Recitation, Psychological Healing Process, Catharsis

1. Introduction

Literature is a writing that gives emotion and pleasure. Through literature, humans gain peace and comfort from psychological oppression and suffering. Aristotle found the origin of poetry in "poetry", which he said was satisfied with human instincts and naturally involved pleasure[1]. That is, the origin of poetry stems from the pursuit of pleasure. Aristotle also it after called the emotional uplift of tragedy, or catharsis. This causes extreme tension by intertwining two opposing feelings of fear and pity, and the dramatic ending causes a psychological explosion, returning to a stable state and bringing about the purification of emotions. Poetry can be a tool for expressing our minds and reading alone can be

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comforting.

Everything surrounding humans is forming a constant rhythm, and in that sense, they are born with a natural rhythm. Thus, excessively broken rhythms can lead to physical and mental illness, while well-structured rhythms can serve as a good treatment[2]. Reading poetry and feeling rhythm can help one catch the rhythm of the mind.

The domestic poetry therapy research has been actively studied in Korea since 1986, but it is not as popular as the other art therapy fields. There are papers on poetry therapy programs[3-9] but there are limited studies dealing with the youth and middle-aged people, mainly for elementary, middle- and high-school students or programs for old age.

Poetry therapy can be explained by dividing it into micro and macro meanings. Our interpretation of poetry is a task similar to the interpretation of dreams, and writing poetry is also a task of consciousness. If poetry is a royal road to unconsciousness in a primary language that uses inner eyes like a dream, metaphor becomes a bridge that guides us to deeper areas of emotion and thought. "The most important power of poetry lies in metaphors," Images from poems have the nature of memories reproduced in emotions and thoughts. Furthermore, imagination allows us to think of a free image, which enables emotional breathing[10].

We can face the present by vividly recalling our childhood or difficult past images through poetry. People become obsessed with through. In addition, it is natural for women to become exhausted and lethargic because they play excessive roles in marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and double income. Middle-aged women are subject to various changes physically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially. They experience aging rapidly and menopause physically.

In general, both men and women lose an average of 10% of physical strength and 10% of muscle adaptability compared in their 20s. Furthermore, at around 40s, age-related primordial or astigmatism becomes severe, hearing becomes progressively dull, and sensitivity to skin vibration or skin pressure decreases[11]. Middle-aged women want to expand their territory by pursuing new activities outside their homes to find their true selves, as this period becomes a turning point in their lives. In addition, the emergence of masculinity after middle age increases dominance, aggression, and self-centeredness, pursuing a more leading role and rejecting submissive roles in relationships with husbands. Above all, marriage should be newly established based on marital relationships in a child-centered life caused by childbirth and parenting. This psychological change can lead to conflict, but, it can be a process of finding a balance in the lives of middle-aged women in efforts to find what has been suppressed in them and live more independently. To find one's balance and meaningful in life, what is broken in the body and spirit should be identified and an emotional tranquility within one's own time and space should be found. Thus, this case study is intended to investigate on the poetry therapy experiences and psychological healing processes in middle-aged women.

The research questions are as follows.

First, what is the meaning of middle-aged women's experience in poetry therapy?

Second, what can be gained from the psychological healing process of poetry therapy in middle-aged women?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Poetry Recitation and Healing Elements

The activities of poetry reading are inherent in interesting cultural arts and literary values. However, the meaning of education makes us ponder whether poetry reading is being done in a positive way. In other words, we want to find an educational solution to whether poetry reading can reach learners from meaningless to interesting challenges in city education. Studies showing that the reader's creative

imagination works in interpreting poetry while non-author intertextuality works[12] confirm that the reproduction of the reader's self-realization and the cultural impact formed by the writer can work simultaneously in interpreting poetry. Poetry reading goes beyond simple fun or amusement, and the value of emotional healing, or "purification", is more important. From that point of view, the meaning of active reading is more important than passive reading. Poetry reading makes one live by healing themselves. It refers to life itself as healing. If its healing power can be used in the treatment area by content, healthy people can help the sick to recover from their previous health[13]. This, however, needs in-depth research. Poetry reading is "memorizing and reciting in a resonant voice." It is not merely memorizing and reciting in a pretty voice. Poetry reading is a like a recital where one fully understands the poem, felt by the heart, through the emotions expressed with the voice. The message of the poem should be conveyed to the reader. Poetry reading carry the scent and poetic inspiration of poetry to the audiences' hearts. Since it is written in accordance with the form of rhythm, poetry reading is an act of finding the hidden pitch in the poem and making it one's own instead of the poet's.

By expressing events persuasively in a poem, it creates an image of what is felt deeply in the heart or what is experienced in real life. It has a comprehensive artistic personality because it conveys the emotions of poetry in a language of a sympathetic body. It is a high-quality expression and action art that maximizes poetic emotion.

2.2 Understanding Poetry Therapy

Poetry therapy has been academically recognized as a method of psychotherapy since 1980[13]. Based on the concept of poetry therapy in domestic research, [3] the meaning of poetry therapy can either be macroscopic and microscopic. The microscopic-sense poem therapy refers to the recovery of a damaged and immature self into a more organized and integrated 'healthy self' to maintain a more stable emotional, psychological state and change in a desirable direction by perceptual, emotional, cognitive, behavior, or physically unstable or pathological interaction with the therapist[14] In the macroscopic sense, poetry therapy is a concept that encompasses the interaction between the therapist and the caller in the therapeutic relationship, and all the ancillary areas of poetry as well as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and applying . Kwon Sung-hoon(2010)[15] said, "Poetry recognizes and reminds us of human and social problems. Poetry is a tool that expresses the human feeling and the inner world, a tool that turns away the self-aware world, and poetic language is a means of communication between the self and the world." The city talked about the effectiveness of poetry as a therapeutic tool, saying that it is possible to reorganize the psychological structure by inducing emotional and cognitive mental treatment. In Hyun Yoon-yi's(1992)[16] "Study on the Utilization of Poetry Therapy in Psychiatric Patients", he wrote poems to patients and published poems to study supportive treatment effects, improve responsiveness, and improve interpersonal relationships.

Yoon Jung-mi(2005)[17] said that "the effect of city therapy on improving the self-concept of elementary school students" has a significant effect on improving the self-concept as a result of collective counseling for sixth graders in elementary school. Ahn Kwang-min (2015)[18] said that the "study of healing elements inherent in forest and meditation-based poetry" showed that the common effects of measuring fatigue, depression, and social and psychological stress reduction are superior to the listening method. It was studied that reciting poems is more effective than just listening to them. Lee Sung-wook (2007)[19] studied subjects who attended the poetry therapy workshop as a phenomenological research method for psychological healing process analysis of poetry activities. As the experience of poetry activities revealed the psychological healing process, a meaningful study should utilize data that can be used properly according to the stage of counseling or depending on the situation.

2.3 The Principles of Poetry Therapy

The book "American Handbook of Psychiatry"[20] discussed the therapeutic principles of poetry in six ways including ventilation and catharsis, exploration, support, active mastery, understanding, and safety[21]. Choi Min-young (2012)[3] also presented two principles of treatment: "pleasure" and "stay" in a poetic space.

In ventilation and catharsis, the poetry therapy allows participants to experience a cool treatment called ventilation, which allows them to express emotions or thoughts deep inside their minds and releases emotional poison to purify the emotional world (Choi So-young, 2012). Poetry also allows us to express unacceptable ideas in an acceptable and comfortable direction. Through the poem, the most personal problems, and the feelings that remain deep inside the mind become voices. Second, in self-exploration, poetry enters the unconscious world, the deep inner world, and gives insight into the light of day, making people aware of their appearance, or making them aware of conflicts clearly[3]. Lee Jung-won (2015)[22] said that participants can "explore themselves by reading, writing, or reenacting poems by knowing where they are located." Poetry is also a concrete activity based on the view that participants' creative writing is another pathway to self-discovery, and that participants' writing of inner feelings is "face-to-face" feelings and thoughts that were previously out of shape on white paper, and the writer sees them from a new perspective.

Third, in supportive treatment, poetry shows that you share your thoughts and feelings with others. You realize the universality that only you are strange and that you have the same problem as me, not someone else[22]. When collectively administering poetry therapy, people share their thoughts and feelings and are supported by other group members. In addition to communicating with others, the city also makes them know how to communicate with themselves. It is said that literary work in groups stimulates the deep inner world of group members, increases their desire to experience existence, and promotes serious exchanges and contact with each other.

Fourth, in active mastery, poetry reading and writing activities allow the use of language to transform, subside, and control emotions on their own[3]. When you change the language you use while writing poetry, you experience changes emotions and thoughts, which helps you realize that you have the initiative in your emotions. Poetry can effectively control emotions in emotionally chaotic or unbearable situations, and allow the poem to express and accommodate suppressed emotions and unacceptable emotions. As such, poetic activity can be an experience that promotes maturity and growth[3].

Fifth, in understanding, reading poetry helps you understand the world of poetry, and empathizing with the poet's feelings and the speaker of poetry can help you understand yourself. Something that cannot be clearly explained makes one understand oneself just by reading a poem with similar situation or similar emotion as the reader or listener. People develop self-esteem, which is an important component of treatment, when they feel connected and harmonized with the world[10].

Sixth, in terms of safety, the city said it would be a way to "safely release emotions that could one day explode dangerously if suppressed In an indirect way to use the shroud to help express thoughts and emotions that are difficult to accept in a safe atmosphere through poetic tools poetry reading satisfies both the urge to express and hide. The aesthetic way of literature can be said to be a safe way to gently express one's wild or dynamic inner world, and when using poetic tools, one can express one's wishes without being criticized, judged or shamed[3]. Poetry allows you to indirectly express thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that cannot be directly expressed, and confession of what has been in your mind while anonymously concealing your identity[22].

3. Research Method

3.1 An Object of Study

A total of three middle-aged women in their 40s and 50s participated in the study. The first subject

uses jar (alias A, 47 years old), which means a large bowl. In her image, she said she wanted to be like a jar that captures everything. She said, “I want to be the main body and lead a leading life, but I am very depressed and anxious because I have been hurt by my self-esteem due to conflicts with my husband and difficulties in communication.”

Meanwhile, the conflict in the family is very high with 30 points as concerns about her growing daughter are projected as a child. Currently, she is an active fighter for her independence, putting the issue of conflict with her husband on hold.

The second uses pine trees (alias B, 49 years old), which means large trees. According to her, “In the meantime, I want to be a big tree that gives shade for others to rest.” She has lived through family conflicts and economic problems, suppressing her feelings, and dealing with them rationally. Although she is proud of herself who lived rationally without being swayed by emotions, she suffers from lethargy that comes for no reason. She added, “We are trying in various ways to get out of this situation, and we have a very high desire for intellectual needs.” She said she found herself challenging to live with her ability by satisfying her high intellectual needs. The third subject uses freedom (alias C, 54 years old) wanting to fly like a bird freely anywhere in the world. She has been busy trying to solve difficult economic situations by suppressing even her petty desires to pay off debts for 12 years. She said, “However I thought that economic problems would be solved to some extent and children would grow up to be comfortable, but I am frustrated that I am becoming increasingly lethargic and overly obsessed with money. I want to be a subject who hopes to regain vitality and live proudly in search of what he can enjoy.”

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The data collection period took place from October 2020 to December 2020. The data were collected through recording and observing each program session. At the end of the program, the subjects were asked how they felt, and interviewed and recorded later for those who responded differently than usual or brought up meaningful stories. In addition, the situation was recorded when tears were shed or when there was a change in emotions, and the situation was embodied by asking what kind of change it was. The questions were mainly open and specific, and the answers were written in their language. They also included poems written during the treatment of poetry and answers to questions from researchers. The main points of the study are as follows.

- (1) Have you ever written a poem before experiencing a treatment program?
- (2) How do you feel when you write a poem during a program?
- (3) How do you feel when you talk about yourself?
- (4) How do you feel after writing a poem?
- (5) What is helpful about the city treatment program?
- (6) How do you feel about other activities (pictures, songs) including poetry?
- (7) What has changed through the city treatment program?
- (8) Would you like to recommend a city treatment program to others?

3.3 Periodic Treatment Process

The treatment process for each session is as follows.

The first session was conducted in advance by utilizing a measure of depression and anxiety among middle-aged women participants as a preparatory stage, and a written consent to participate in the program was prepared. Participants with depression should be carefully observed. In cases of severe depression, the outcome of the program should be checked first to encourage participation. The second session focused on self-exploration in the Lapo formation stage. The programs and preferred songs were

introduced, rules and promise were shared, and the intimacy was built. Feelings were shared naturally. The poetry materials led to the experience of the work of <Self-portrait of Yun Dong-ju>.

The third session was an exploration stage around daily life, with an opportunity to "explore" and listen to other people's daily lives. This stage naturally generalizes depressing emotions and forms a consensus. At this time, the topics were about the family that they love the most, daily life experiences, and thoughts. In addition, there was a daily poetry reading and writing based on <Early Night-Do Jong-hwan> and <Early Night-To Live-Brown Gomsooni>.

<Early evening/Do Jong-hwan>

An early evening star in the sky a / A long way to walk alone / Endless wind / Like to meet once in life / A person who cries and misses the distant past that comes to mind in the sunset.

The fourth session was a self-exploration and identification, where topics are mostly about childhood, games, making rules, and experiencing joy through the process of following rules and games. It includes recalling the joy of childhood that anyone wants to return to as a great source of vitality and pleasure. Shin Hye-won said that poetry only conveys her current mood through play activities but also helps her overcome mental problems and recover from it. It is believed that there is a therapeutic approach for depression and anxiety in the middle age.

The fifth session was a family search and a role playing. They remembered the most frequent words from the family, expressed their self-awareness of their family through fish familiarization, and conveyed their family wishes in poetry. The poetry materials explored the current and past family, such as Family-Cheon sang byeong and Father's Heart-Kim Hyun-seung.

"Father's Heart-Kim Hyun-

Busy people / strong people / wind people / become fathers when they get home.

For the young / to make a fire in the stove / to be a father / to drive a small nail into the swing.

The evening wind closes the door / and becomes a father who picks up fallen leaves.

When the world is noisy / with the mind of a sparrow in line / the father thinks of the future of young things.

Young people are father's country and father's compatriots.

There are no tears in his eyes, but there are always half invisible tears in his drink. My father is a lonely man. My father could be a hero, but. ----BASK----

The sixth session involved practicing expressing feelings in language, which is a stage of emotional exploration and purification. A person who sculpts and sculpts a family member acts to create a consensus by feeling and expressing emotions vicariously. It includes, through collaboration, expressing emotions to the persons one is grateful, hateful, and sorry for, tearing up a magazine and expressing it to the battery with collage, read poems about various emotions, and writing poems to the desired audience. The poetry materials sympathize with various emotions including "Unbearable Sadness-Park Nam-joon" and "Trees of Janus-Lee Kyung-im."

"Unbearable Sadness-Park Nam-joon."

There are flowers hanging like tears. They twist and tighten their bodies throughout their lives. If they don't curl up, they will bear the weight of sorrow they cannot bear without struggling. That's despair.

The seventh session was a stage of insight and change, tearing up magazines on the theme of hope and happiness, putting the work together and completing it with a happy life, making a list of resources, asking people about resources, reading poems about happiness, and writing poems about strengths. Poetry materials used were "Beautiful Than Tears: Nam Nak-hyun" and "Again-Park No-hae."

"Beautiful Than Tears-Nam Nak-hyun."

I don't like people without tears. People without tears / have no chest.

A man who's fallen to the ground loves tears. Even if the ground is spiny, there are times when it's as cozy as a room with rugs. Now he can stand back up and climb because of a failed love/ because of a failed test.

The eighth session reconstructed values as a stage of insight and change. The situation is while on an empty chair, they should tell what they want to say to themselves or the person they want to meet once. They will write down the emotions that come to mind and express them on the paper and put them in the decomposition box. There is a reconstruction of values by saying a line about love, happiness, dream, and money. The poetry materials presented include Little Happiness-Park Sung-chul and Happiness-Cheon sang byeong. These poetries discover trivial and everyday happiness and provide a changed perspective.

The ninth session looked for dreams and wished for changes in insight. They also talked about their childhood dreams and their current lives. They wrote down or expressed words of praise from other people who participated together. The materials used are picture books that unfold with pictures, five words that are associated with the dream. Together, they wrote a dream list on a colored paper, and wrote a poem about the dream.

The tenth session focused on selecting one work from among the poems prepared in the course. They wrote poems on Kent paper, drew pictures, pasted paper, sprayed paint, and worked on the Sihwa panel. They introduced their work and talked about their feelings, making their own collection of poems, and colored it to complete one piece. After completing the work, a poetry recital will be held.

3.4 Phenomenological Research

Compared with quantitative research based on empirical epistemology, qualitative research is divided into and based on phenomenological epistemology. It aims to reveal the truth through the establishment and verification of hypotheses from a macro perspective because it believes that the reality of the world and its laws exist objectively outside human perception. However, interpretivism is a micro-view that values actors and explores the everyday world, a social construct, by applying inductive methods [19].

The common methodological premise of these qualitative research methods is that, first, human behavior is true in uncontrolled states, such as the natural state of everyday life, which can reveal the vivid meaning of experience when properly described. Second, based on the cultural relativistic view that each culture has its own value, researchers describe socially meaningful behavioral systems based on what cultural members behave, say, and think.

Third, researchers should analyze techniques in light of the overall context and interpret them as holistic in light of the context, rather than just a fraction of the fragmented experience. Interpretive Phenomenology, based on the philosophical principles of phenomenology in qualitative research, is a study that reveals the meaning of phenomena experienced by seeing and understands the phenomena experienced individually[23]. The most fundamental position of phenomenological research is "go to the things themselves"[23], which identifies the nature of the experience and analyzes and studies the nature of each of them for participants who experienced a common phenomenon, describing its common meaning in multiple individuals' experiences of a phenomenon[24].

A phenomenon requires an epoch of the participant's experience to accurately face the perceived phenomenon that originally means "to come out into the light" in a Greek sense[25] to describe exactly what the experience means by bracketing all the experiences and foreknowledge. Phenomenological research can explore, describe, and interpret the meaning and nature of what he or she experienced through repeated questions about the world of subjective experiences of the participants. Phenomenological research puts down all prejudices and proceeds with the study based on topics and questions. It then uses imagination to find and organize possible meanings, elicit structural topics, and to state the nature of experience in phenomena. with intuitive integration into organizational and structural techniques[26].

Phenomenological research can be considered an appropriate research method for studies aimed at a deeper and integrated understanding of the experience of poetry therapy in middle-aged people. The

reason for this is that through phenomenological research methods, middle-aged women's experiences and emotional meanings that they have experienced are healthy movements for their post-middle-aged lives. Also, based on their individual experiences, they can identify the structure and nature of common and practical experiences such as anxiety, depression, and lethargy in middle-aged people.

4. Conclusions

This study is a phenomenological study to explore the meaning and nature of poetry therapy and psychological experiences in middle-aged women. It was designed and conducted in accordance to the research procedures of A. Giorgi's Technical Phenomenology Study to explore and describe the phenomenon of middle-aged people's treatment experience. Participants in this study underwent a total of 10 sessions of treatment programs once a week at the A Lifelong Education Center in Y-district, G-city. A total of three participants in their mid-40s to mid-50s, with high levels of depression and anxiety, agreed to participate in voluntary research. The data collection of this study was conducted for about three months from October to December 2020, with one hour to one and half hours per session, focusing on the meaningful contents stated through personal interviews.

Semi-structured open-ended questions were used to collect data, and a memorandum was prepared when the program and interviews were conducted. Further interviews were also conducted to reaffirm the post-program psychological experience. Research participants thought they were living on their own desires, but they realized that they mistook the desire of the batter as their own. However, they also found that they were pressuring their children to realize their own desires, not their children's desires. However, as a subject of desire during the treatment process, they were unable to take a step away from the desire of others and were unfamiliar to themselves with their new discovery.

Even if it is a positive change, it is not easy to get used to it. However, while reading, writing, listening to, and talking about the poems, they found several participants who were struggling and clumsy but were walking out of the world on their own. In the meantime, participants tried to maintain an objective distance from the batter by integrating various selves they have turned away, suppressed, or not found, and by putting the batter in the batter's seat, they positively looked at themselves and designed a hopeful design for the future.

The jar (alias A, 47 years old) found the root of anxiety and faced it, and the anxiety decreased significantly by separating it from the current anxiety and accepting it. She expressed her feelings of anger that had been suppressed, and they were empathized, supported, and organized and resolved. As a result, she acknowledged her basic anxiety and accepted the current family situation, actively promoted her career, and focused more on what she wanted to do.

Pine trees (named B, 49 years old) suppressed and turned away from their feelings because of fear of breaking relationships with people, and avoided the situation. However, she realized that she would return to the suffering of lethargy, which gave her the power to face the current situation as it is. Also, as she expressed her feelings at times and her relationships with others became much smoother. This made interpersonal relationships and tasks more enjoyable and easier. It has changed due to the attitude of exploring the nature of the problem and communicating directly to solve the problem.

Freedom (Alias C, 54 years old) was not easy to separate in the early stages of poetry therapy because she knows so little about herself and only her family occupied her. However, when she realized that she did not know herself, she became determined. She recognized it as a starting point and a few open possibilities, knowing that she did not recognize it in the final session. She thought she would gain a lot of positivity after learning herself. She was on medication for a long time due to lethargy and depression. This learning marks the starting point of exploring and realizing her new self through city therapy. Therefore, poetry therapy can rediscover and reconstruct the lives of middle-aged women so that they can live a more self-reliant life than before. The most important activity in poetry therapy is the process

of subjectivity. Through the subject process, we were able to experience analysis of the work.

The best points of the program are: 1) Explore within yourself, 2) face past wounds, 3) express feelings honestly, 4) embrace 'me' and 'you' as it is, 5) separate the batter's desire from others, 7) find the good desire of the subject, 8) freely communicate with the batter, and 10 realize the desire of the subject and take responsibility. Participants tried to recognize and change what they had resigned to, Remove.through poetry therapy. By recognizing his problems and implementing things for himself, he gained new life from his lethargic appearance, and looked at the dark things about the future with a positive view and hope.

The understanding of oneself and others deepened, and psychological discomforts such as anxiety, depression, and lethargy were alleviated. In other words, it can be said that the emotional stability through poetry therapy suggests that it is a significant experience in improving the relationship between yourself, your family and people around you.

Participants analyzed their experiences through treatment during the subject process, and they found a new self as they explored their inner self and faced wounds. Understanding of oneself and others deepened and psychological anxiety such as anxiety, depression, and lethargy, which were major appeals, was eased. In other words, it can be said that it is a life changing experience in improving relationships with yourself, your family, and people around you by being emotionally stable through poetry therapy.

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