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A training model for feminist counselors.

Margaret Fuller Sablove
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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A TRAINING MODEL FOR FEMINIST COUNSELORS

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARGARET F. SABLOVE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1978

Education

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A TRAINING MODEL FOR FEMINIST COUNSELORS

A Dissertation Presented

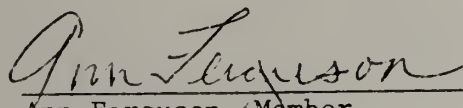
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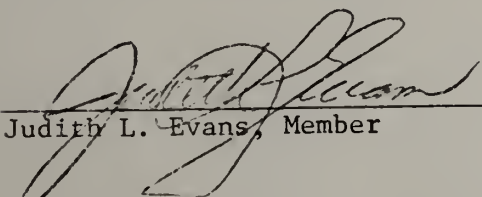
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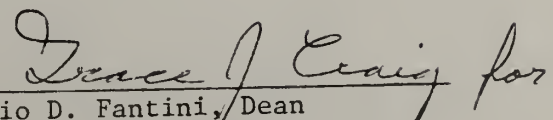
John W. Wideman, Chairperson of Committee



Ann Ferguson, Member



Judith L. Evans, Member



Mario D. Fantini, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Mildred W. Abramowitz

19th century and
August 1978

Dear Mildred,

As you well know, the writing of this dissertation has been an arduous and often discouraging ordeal. It occurs to me now that the distress has been related to the isolation of the experience. "Then a woman of tact and brilliancy, like me, has an undue advantage in conversation with men. They are a sonished at our instincts. They do not see where we got our knowledge; and, while they tramp on in their clumsy way, we wheel, and fly, and dart hither and thither, and seize with ready eye all the weak points, like Saladin in the desert. It is quite another thing when we come to write, and, without suggestion from another mind, to declare the positive amount of thought that is in us." (Memoirs I, 294-96)

Despite all the frustrations incurred along the way, the ideas presented here continue to be exciting for me. "I solicit a sincere and patient attention from those who open the following pages at all. I solicit of women that they will lay it to heart to ascertain what is for them the liberty of law. It is for this, and not for any, the largest, extension of partial privileges that I seek. I ask them if interested by these suggestions, to search their own experience and intuitions for better, and fill up with fit materials the trenches

that hedge them in." (Woman in the Nineteenth Century, 1845)

I expect to continue on in the directions that this project has encouraged me to explore. "Never feel any apprehensions for my safety from such causes. There are those who will protect me, if necessary, and, besides, I am on the conquering side. These events have, to me, the deepest interest ". . . I am sure you will always love your daughter, and will gladly that in all events she has tried to aid and striven never to injure her fellows." (To her mother, November 19, 1948)

With Profound Respect and Admiration,

Your Daughter,

Margaret Fuller Sablow

ABSTRACT

A TRAINING MODEL FOR FEMINIST COUNSELORS

(September 1978)

Margaret F. Sablove

B.A. - New York University
Ed.D. - University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Directed by: Dr. John W. Wideman

The term "feminist therapist" is heard frequently today and is used as if there is a common understanding of what that title means. In the broadest sense, it conveys that a psychotherapist identifies herself with feminist values. In January 1976, the first national conference of feminist therapists was held in Boulder, Colorado and it became apparent from the confusion which resulted that a more precise definition was needed.

This dissertation begins to approach that definition specifically by tracing the historical roots of feminist therapy, and by looking at the practical experience of women's lives. Feminist therapy is viewed as a phenomenon of the second wave of feminism and therefore, the historical framework is based on the socialist feminist faction of the modern women's movement. From reviewing this history, four basic political concepts are established. These concepts are then applied to a project group for feminist counselors which was designed for this thesis.

The political concepts which were formed through the historical review of socialist feminism were first originated by Barbara

Ehrenreich. (Ehrenreich, 1975) She defines feminism by first looking at the radical political movement of the New Left in the 1960's. Thematically, she isolates three tendencies which direct these movements; the totalistic understanding of revolutionary transformation, the importance of subjective factors in the revolutionary process, and the rejection of stagism. Socialist feminism is seen as an advance, incorporating these three tendencies and adding to them a fourth - the importance of women in the revolution. In terms of psychotherapy, the first three categories relate to the radical therapy movement of the 1960's, and the fourth creates the concept of feminist therapy.

With this theoretical foundation, the feminist counselor group is designed to study content areas and process issues which are relevant to the practice of feminist therapy. The group meets once a week over a sixteen week period for two hour sessions. The participants range in ages of 24-60 and represent diverse personal, professional and political backgrounds. The content is explored through an outline of structured discussion topics where personal life experiences are shared. The process issues are examined by studying the ways in which the group members work with each other. Each of the sixteen sessions are summarized, and the salient aspects of each member's participation are recorded in terms of content and process.

The evaluation is approached first by examining the transcripts for the presence of socialist feminists concepts. Secondly, it is demonstrated that feminist therapy relates to the larger concept of

socialist feminism. The documented experiences of socialist feminists in women's unions are compared with the experiences of the feminist counselors in the study group, and the similarities emerge from the comparison of the two groups. With the validity of the project thus established, new directions for the future of feminist therapy are posited.

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C H A P T E R 1

In January 1976, the first national conference of feminist therapists was convened in Boulder, Colorado. The purposes of the conference were, for the first time, to define, clarify and synthesize the concepts of feminist therapy. The four key-note speakers addressed broad philosophies which are currently recognized by feminist therapists. The first speech, delivered by a socialist feminist, discussed the issues in the practice of feminist psychotherapy under a capitalist system. The second talk posited a theory of feminist therapy which was entitled, "the female system." This theory, which was inspired from extensive work experience with white middle-class women from the Boulder area, emphasized sex differences and women's hidden potentials. A third presentation, from the Radical Psychiatry Collective in San Francisco, offered a model for an alternative therapy service. Because of unconventional methods of training and practice, those involved referred to themselves as "outlaws" and espoused the values of alternative lifestyles in conjunction with their practice of therapy. A final lecture, delivered by a bonafide psychiatrist, stressed the importance of working within established institutions to bring about change.

For the most part, the participants found the speaker most consonant to their particular practice of therapy, and sought support within their respective sub-groups. This pattern of diversity

within a particular subject area is similar to other feminist conferences, and in fact, is representative of the organizational structure of the women's movement itself. Although misunderstood by the media, this seeming lack of unity has been viewed positively by those within the movement. The tolerance of differences and the ability to function within them is a strength which sets the feminist movement apart from other contemporary political struggles. This pattern has thus far been true for feminist therapists as well.

The very definition of feminist therapy arises from the day-to-day practice of all women claiming to be engaging in feminist therapy. Great differences in the implications of the various strategies of psychotherapy, however, are preventing this common definition from developing. The aura of harmonious diversity, as maintained by conference planners, denies the social relationship among women where the convictions and treatment modality of each affect the movement as a whole.

The objective of this study is to work toward the establishment of a definition of feminist therapy. The experience of feminist therapists has defined informally the political tendencies within the community of feminist therapists, but little has been consensually agreed upon regarding the content and practice of feminist therapy. In this study, a small group of feminist therapists explicitly consider the issues that are relevant to women and to their treatment in psychotherapy. The group focuses largely upon the personal and professional experience of each participant, and the

sharing of these experiences within a structured group process. The goals of the group are: 1) to generate information which is relevant to the development of feminist therapy; and 2) to enhance the consciousness of the participants of themselves as feminist therapists.

Review of the Literature

In defining feminist therapy, it is important to know: 1) what the current research tells us about the ways in which society has shaped the role of women; 2) what the research tells us about the role of women in fields of psychology and psychotherapy; and 3) what work has thus far been done in the development of a definition for feminist therapy.

Research on the Psychology of Women

Research by Inge K. Broverman, Donald M. Broverman, Frank E. Clarkson, Paul S. Rosenkrantz and Susan R. Vogel (1970) clearly exposes the expectations that therapists, as representatives of the society, have of women. These expectations act as a "self-fulfilling prophesy," and in doing so, become considered as true indications of female psychology. This study essentially demonstrates that what is thought of as "male" corresponds with a concept of "adult" and that desirable female qualities are not expected to be at this level. The mere fact that the female "ideal" is thought of as childlike has severe implications for female development. In Figure I-1 are presented the characteristics

used to describe the Healthy Adults, Males and Females, taken from Broverman et al.

Figure I-1

Characteristics of Healthy "Male,"
"Female," and "Adult"

| <u>Healthy Male</u> | <u>Healthy Adult</u> | <u>Healthy Female</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| competent | competent | dependent |
| independent | independent | submissive |
| objective | objective | passive |
| active | active | placating |
| competitive | competitive | fearful |
| self-reliant | self-reliant | easily influenced |
| self-confident | self-confident | emotional |
| achieving | achieving | lack of aggression |
| aggressive | aggressive | |

The conflict for the female becomes clarified when one looks at the consequences of being either conforming, or "normal," which is unhealthy adult behavior, or being healthy and therefore "deviant." If a woman accepts the role as stated by the above characteristics, her needs and behaviors often lead to chronic depression. If a woman moves in the direction of a healthy adult, she enters into "male" territory and thus runs the risk of ostracism and is considered power-mad, oversexed, hard, tough, "bitchy," and "pushy."

If the woman accepts the traditional role, she is:

dependent
emotional
passive
placating
easily influenced
limited-fearful

This leads to:

need for approval
 success avoidance
 manipulative behavior
 self-limiting behavior
 conflict avoidance (body language, laughter,
 smiles, qualifying language)
 ambivalence

And frequently results in depression, characterized by:

ineffectiveness
 withdrawal
 melancholy
 introjected hostility
 loss of self esteem
 tired, "weighted-down" feelings

At this point in history, largely due to the influence of the feminist movement, we find it legitimate to question the basic assumption that the male personality is synonymous with a general concept of mental health. Psychotherapy is one of many powerful institutions conceived by men within the context of their experience and perpetuated in their interest. Naturally, women who receive therapy under this system are led into defining their lives in terms of the male-oriented world. It is difficult to see this relationship because the woman's position, as well as those of other minorities, has become institutionalized beyond recognition. The distinguishable features are the sex roles through which are transmitted the values of the society. Although the non-formal system of sex-role differentiation is implicitly understood by all participants in this culture, its purpose and meaning stem from an undisclosed ideology. It is a central issue of feminist therapy to begin challenging the derivation and existence of these roles.

Along with psychological factors, social and political roots of these problems are considered with equal importance (Stevens, 1971). Role unhappiness, previously considered psycho-pathological, is now being seen as symptomatic of a deficient society (Rice and Rice, 1973). The effect of sex roles upon psychodynamic processes (dependence, aggression, sexuality, and power) has been explored (Kaplan, 1973), and will continue to be explored in depth throughout the group process presented within this paper.

The Role of Women in Psychology and Psychotherapy

Until the year 1972, the categories female, woman, feminism, and women's liberation do not appear in the psychology abstracts. The titles pertaining to women specifically until this time are limited to "femininity and wife". This does not indicate that research about feminists was non-existent. However, this does illustrate that the field has only recently been included in the professional sphere. The literature now reflects an explosion of interest concerning women in general, psychotherapy in relation to women, and the impact of the feminist movement upon psychology and psychotherapy (Rice & Rice, 1973; Stevens, 1971).

For some time now therapy has been seen as a political tool of the society. It has been claimed that the only purpose of psychotherapy is to perpetuate the capitalist system in this country (Hurvitz, 1973). The therapist is in a position to perpetuate the society as it exists, or conversely is able to operate under a

different political system and thereby to induce a change in the present order. In fact, some have defined a very clear role for feminists in the therapeutic world. It has been suggested by many writers that therapists with feminist orientation take on the responsibility of changing the conditions which cause the problems of sexism (Gardner, 1971; Fabian, 1973).

Beyond the acknowledgment that the therapist can bring about change in people, therapists are encouraged to educate themselves so that they can become change agents. It has been suggested that therapists take courses taught by feminists, participate in consciousness-raising groups, and pursue internships supervised by feminists (Gardner, 1971). In addition, therapists have been urged to examine their own attitudes (Barry, 1972), to further personal knowledge through reading literature on sex differences and the psychology of women (Smith, 1972), and to become open proponents of alternative life styles and sex roles (Rice and Rice, 1973).

These additions to the basic training program have been seen as necessary since research on what happens in therapy indicates that traditional psychotherapy is sexist and therefore destructive to the client in that it does not help women to define themselves in other than traditional roles (Chesler, 1971). An illustration of some of the problems that accompany sexist counseling appears in the dissertation, A Survey of Counselors' and Other Selected Professionals' Attitudes Towards Women's Roles (Cline-Naffziger and Naffziger, 1971). The salient findings were that counselors and

counselor-educators have strong attitudes concerning women's roles: male professionals projected the female "ideal" as being intra-family oriented, whereas female professionals projected an extra-family image. The problem of sexist attitudes in counselors has thus been identified, and examples of alternatives have been tried (Loyd, 1974). There has been, however, no singular effort to formalize a philosophy of what needs to happen in the counseling field, or in what ways counselors can be prepared in new directions, to ultimately alleviate the problems. These are issues that are approached in this thesis.

Current Understandings in Feminist Therapy

Feminist therapy is a product of the larger feminist movement, and more specifically, the group that is generally thought of as the socialist feminist faction of the women's movement. It is this group which emerged from the New Left in the sixties and later chrystalized in the formation of women's unions. In her speech delivered at the first Socialist Feminist Conference in July 1975, Barbara Ehrenreich presented a conceptual approach to socialist feminism. She outlines three basic ideological concepts that describe the formations of the New Left, and the development of a fourth political principle which brought forth the emergence of socialist feminism. The first three political orientations are described as : 1) the Totalistic Understanding of Revolutionary Process; 2) the Importance of Subjective Factors in Revolutionary Change; and 3) the Rejection

of Stagism. The fourth, stated as the Critical Importance of Women in the coming revolution, differentiates and advances socialist feminism from other socialist programs of the New Left (Ehrenreich, 1975). These concepts are elaborated in Chapter II.

In terms of the field of psychotherapy, the Radical Therapy Movement is the paradigm of the first three tendencies that Ehrenreich posits. Radical therapy is explicitly totalistic in that it views the individual as a microcosm of the total society. Its subjective emphasis includes individual experience as well as the collective experience of people. Radical therapy thirdly rejects the notion of programmed stages in the processes of psychological development, psychotherapy, and training of therapists. These concepts will be developed in Chapter II.

The interest in feminist therapy began with the recognition of a fourth dimension to the three concepts of radical therapy: the necessity for an analysis of women within the political structure of radical therapy. Given this theoretical outline of feminist therapy, it is now incumbent upon feminist therapists to identify and define issues in therapy, and modes of therapy which can address and relate to women's experience. The group organized for this thesis studies these issues and evaluates the impact of the group experience upon the participants in terms of their own development as feminist therapists.

Procedure

The major objective of this study is to begin to define feminist therapy. Due to the fact that the concept of feminist therapy is currently unexplored in a formal way, this study takes the form of what Kurt Lewin (1974) refers to as action research, which allows for the development of a concept within a process. Thus, for this phase of development, women who define themselves as feminists and who are also practicing therapists are involved in a group which seeks to define feminist therapy. In this study, the process through which the concept develops is documented and the results are presented.

Feminist therapy is explored through action evaluation, which itself is consistent with feminist values, and substantially different from a traditional research model. A clear definition of action evaluation has been presented by Sommer in his concept of humanistic research (Sommer, 1973). In the following pages, Sommer's distinctions between action evaluation and traditional research are clarified, and the ways in which action evaluation are appropriate for this study are specified.

Action Evaluation

1. Deals with questions of value: addresses the social utility of action and research interventions.

Traditional Research

Deals with questions of fact: may be abstract or theoretical.

Throughout this study, I am interested in those socialist feminist concepts which are helpful to the participants: Which theoretical material represents us as women? Which process is most suitable for exploring these issues? Sex role distinctions have been presented to us as immutable fact. To insure their immutability, we undergo a socialization system which in itself connotes the values of our society. This study group challenges the very foundation of this culture in that we shall determine what our values are in terms of what we ourselves are.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Deals with a specific concrete situation and the people in it. | Deals with immutable laws and relationships about abstract categories of individuals - old people, schizophrenics, etc. |
|---|---|

Groups have been studied within the matrix of traditional small group theories and contemporary behavioral interactional analysis. Similarities within group structures have been viewed not only as empirical facts of group interaction, but as a function of tendencies within social nature. This has permitted one to look at groups without consideration of purposes and beliefs of the group participants. If the members do in fact have a counter ideology from that of society, the groups will have a different orientation to role relationships, and the group structure will reflect this different orientation (Joans, 1974).

Women are encouraged to understand their own feelings and thus to understand their own experience. It is not necessary that this

conform to an external standard, or that these feelings be shared identically by other people. The "facts" that have been recorded as to the nature of "woman" are being questioned. The movement from the generalized group concept, to the unique individual concept is the search for a realistic understanding of women, on the part of women themselves.

Feminism is an alternative culture, one in which women can define the importance or significance of being a woman, both as part of a culture and as an individual. Involvement in the process of determining what these things mean to a person can assist the movement of the self-actualization of the individual. Similarly, the self-discovery of what it means to become a feminist counselor is a vital part of becoming a therapist. This concept is more broadly stated in the idea of "reflexive coherence," explained in the following way.

For the major aim of such a program is to assist the student in deriving his own system for making sense of experience in ways that are not only professionally disciplined, but also authentic. That is to say, the counselor is expected to be the responsible author of his own system of counseling and ways of thinking and talking about it. Just as he learns to appreciate the ways in which he himself is the creator and authority in the development and discipline of his own system of counseling (Wideman, 1970, p. 264).

3. Usually requires less time. Often takes so long as to impede necessary action.

The process is intended to correspond to short term therapy as opposed to long term therapy. The goal is to create new information so that therapists can more effectively deal with the needs of women.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4. Can deal with social problems more easily because it can include and describe many variables. | Is effective only in dealing with isolable data on a small scale. Must limit variables. |
|--|---|

This factor has enabled me to design a process which allows for the incorporation of many issues. Initially (at this point), it is not possible for me to begin the group with a formal and complete scheme of the particular foci. These will be dealt with through readings, but, more importantly, through the experiences of the women involved.

Women have traditionally lacked the power to objectify their experience in the ways which are considered appropriate in this society. They have been subject to the definitions of men, who have for the most part presented women in ways which have suited male purposes. In addition, the reliance upon the "objective," to the exclusion of other dimensions is insufficient to represent the variance of human nature. As a humanist movement, feminism, and thus feminist therapy, seeks to broaden the concepts which have defined men and women.

The personal experiences of those in the group are considered legitimate material from which to formulate our own theories pertaining to counseling women. This idea has been suggested by proponents of the "naturalistic" approach to psychotherapy training. Essentially, this view contends that training in psychotherapy should employ an approach that begins with experiences evoked by

the subject matter, rather than with principles derived from formal schemes (Robertson, 1971).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>5. Provides a feedback loop from clients or users to practitioners. This demystifies the activities of psychologists and institutions and creates a questioning community.</p> | <p>Usually gives subjects in experiments very little feedback (except a possible debriefing at the end as to the "real purposes" of the experiment).</p> |
|---|--|

It is imperative that the women in the group participate in the group design - the development of this process is one of the major foci of the present study. This participation is one means by which women can assume responsibility over their own lives. Evaluation within this study will be an on-going process. Questions will be asked after every group session which explore the concepts which should be retained and those which should be eliminated. Essentially the evaluation will be a process of re-defining the concept of feminist therapy.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>6. Involves the evaluator with others for their benefit.</p> | <p>Can be exploitive towards other people. Experimentor should be detached and free from social concerns and values.</p> |
|---|--|

The Women's Liberation Movement moves in the direction of humanism by challenging the inevitability and function of hierarchical

role constructs. This movement eschews elitist leadership, organizational hierarchy, and the typical transactions of mass persuasion. Liberation is a different concept and/or a different process for each woman. This movement is not identified with a particular program (Campbell, 1973). The feminist therapy must reflect the idea of the equality of the individual in order to prepare the therapist to deal with a reciprocating, therapeutic relationship. It has been demonstrated that therapists who operate in the manner of "equalness" have been effective in establishing relationships with female clients, and have been able to de-mystify the counseling process (Loyd, 1974).

The leadership of a group is assumed to be a group responsibility. The following design serves as an introductory guideline which is in turn, open to partial or total revision. This design, a product of my own experience, must come to reflect the experience and needs of the group as a unit. As stated before, the emphasis in this project is on defining feminist therapy through the process and the personal growth of the group.

The Proposal

I am proposing to co-ordinate a group for feminist counselors, dealing with the issues related to feminist therapy. Using a group mode is in keeping with my therapeutic values, and I feel that this form also serves the needs of women. The understanding of oneself within the world combines two components of identity - the place of

the individual, and her place within a group. Similarly, in speaking of feminism, or woman's identity, I am referring to a woman's feelings about herself, and her feelings toward other women. The personal contact that any individual woman makes with feminism is an extension of this identity search.

Erikson's Life Cycle (Erikson, 1964) would place this identity search before the "Intimacy Crisis" and the "Generativity" period. However, as I have demonstrated (Sablove, 1974), the ingredients of self-development and thus "identity," are not accessible to women. Having gone through later stages, many women need to return to the earlier identity crisis because they find themselves ill-equipped to deal with a new society in which self-concept is both legitimate and essential for survival. A sense of identity is generally explored within the context of peers. Therefore, women must view themselves within their own society and thus define themselves as individuals, and, as a group.

In an overall sense, this group shall be an opportunity for personal growth, which in itself has been cited as an important element in counselor training (Hurst and Jensen, 1968). Within the group, we discuss readings, examine issues in terms of content and therapeutic style, present case studies, role play, and share personal and interpersonal experiences which pertain to these issues in and outside of the group. Each participant approaches the group with one central personal issue which she has chosen to deal with throughout the group (i.e., inability to express anger, difficulty in setting limits, etc.). The focus is twofold: 1) to document the

process by which the group works with each individual: and 2) to examine personal growth and professional development as a therapist within a socialist feminist framework.

Membership. The criteria for membership in this group is flexible in its construct. The group consists of five women (myself included) who represent a diversity of background and personal style. All members have prior experience or association in therapy with women, and they describe themselves as feminists. Given these two criteria, some of the participants refer to themselves as feminist therapists though they have not been in training for this purpose. Although each individual brings a unique point of view and experience to the group, I assume common denominators. Some of these shared characteristics include the belief, to some degree, in the issues previously stated, participation at least peripherally in a feminist organization, individual pursuit of subjects such as the "psychology of women," "women in literature," and often the "issues of sexual politics."

These are only some of the characteristics that I expect to find. The research reveals that other qualities most likely enter into the profile of the group. In one study, it was found that participation in the women's liberation movement appeared to have encouraged a personal change in outlook and lifestyle, resulting in higher levels of autonomy and self-control, more activity, and more assertive behavior (Cherniss, 1972). In another, a comparison of membership and non-membership in women's liberation groups,

members were found to have lower levels of authoritarianism, more control over the environment, and more tolerance of ambiguity (Almquist and Pawlicki, 1973).

One very significant finding reports that the values that appear to characterize women's liberation members are humanitarianism, and personal autonomy (Stolof, 1973). If the client has an experience whereby s/he is viewed as a societal change agent, the client is likely to emerge with increased concern about the society, and has greater potential to express this concern effectively (Bugental, 1971). This data supports my original position which states that feminism, and specifically feminist therapy, has the power to effect change in the society since it serves as a humanizing agent.

Format. The operation of the group is very short (sixteen weeks), and it is so by intention. I am trying to determine whether or not the concepts of socialist feminism in regard to psychotherapy can be understood and formed within a brief period of time. The concepts that emerge from the group can potentially be used to re-train therapists, rather than substitute for an entire training program. Those future participants will have experienced years of formal training prior to their acquaintance with feminist therapy. Given that people have been completely submerged in a sexist society, to break through this pattern as quickly as possible (to some extent that is) is a prerequisite to the goals of feminist therapy.

As previously mentioned, this group operates over a sixteen week period. The first twelve weeks are used to explore the three

questions stated below which are essential to the building of feminist therapy:

Question I - In what ways are women different from men?

Readings which are included relate to the psychology of women: psychoanalysis (Karen Horney, Clara Thompson, F. Fromm-Reichman), social learning theory (Eleanor Macoby and others), and biology (Judith Bardwick, Corrinne Hutt, Mary Jane Sherfey).

Question II - What constitutes a therapeutic situation for women?

Readings are explored which examine the therapy process as it has dealt with women; the assumptions made, the double standard of mental health, and issues of sexuality as they affect the counseling process. Included are papers which consider the implications of the feminist therapy style, papers describing feminist counseling collectives, and Women and Madness by Phyllis Chesler. Throughout, comparisons are made between these selections and our own experiences as clients and as therapists.

Question III - How can socialist feminist objectives be incorporated into a therapeutic design? This question entails a review of the literature of the radical therapy movement, including The Politics of Therapy by Seymour Halleck. We explore as well the ways in which particular modalities of psychotherapy are applied in feminist therapy (Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Life Planning and others).

Before entering the program, all participants had a two hour interview with me. During this time, the intent of the program was described, and the expectations clarified. Each participant was asked to come to the group with a personal issue which was both significant to them, and appropriate for a time limited experience. The group members unanimously supported the idea that the group would be an experimental learning model where personal information would be the primary resource in establishing concepts in feminist therapy. All group members were supportive of the boundaries of the group, desiring neither a T-group nor group therapy experience. Where needed, I assisted participants in selecting an issue which would be both meaningful, and manageable within the structure of the group.

During these first twelve weeks, the personal issue is meant to target a current conflict in the woman's life, with the understanding that the discussion can include historical information. Within each of the three questions, the issues of dependency, aggression and sexuality are addressed with the goals of elucidating and solving the original conflict. The final four sessions focus directly upon an analysis of the experience of the participants in the program, and provide information that is relevant to feminist therapy. This summarizing process is integral to the on-going functioning of the group.

The following is a listing of the content of the sixteen sessions, each of which lasts for two hours.

Session 1 - Introduction: Each participant shares expectations and individual issues. The general outline is presented and revisions in the initial design are made.

Sessions 2-10 - Specific Therapeutic Issues: General format for each issue (specified in the following section); there is abundant outside reading. In an appropriate manner, ideas are extracted from the reading, compared then to the personal philosophy and experience of individuals, and finally, a group position is formed on the subject and strategies for dealing with the issue are suggested. Again, the specific therapeutic material is generated from the participants.

Sessions 11-12 - Feminism and the Society: Having looked at the specific therapeutic issues, we turn to the nature of feminist therapy. Is this therapy merely a transitional culture? Is feminist therapy the fourth force in psychology, moving beyond humanistic psychology?

Sessions 13-14 - Group Processing: This is a more extensive evaluation period. Processing is part of the on-going sessions, usually occurring at the conclusion of an evening.

Sessions 15-16 - Future Planning for the Group

Questions to be asked for Specific Issue Focus (Sessions 2 - 10)

Sessions 2-4 Dependence: In what ways are women dependent? Is this a female need? If so, why is that? How does

being dependent work for and against women? What risk is involved in "giving-up" dependency upon men?, etc.

Sessions 5-7 Aggression: What does it mean for a woman to be aggressive? How does passivity interact with aggression in women? Is male aggression healthy? What risk is there involved in being an aggressive woman in this society?, etc.

Sessions 8-10 Sexuality: What is female sexuality? How are women supposed to regard their sexuality? What is the meaning of a sexually liberated woman?, etc.

Evaluation. The evaluation process is divided into two areas. The first concerns information regarding issues in feminist therapy, and is conducted along the guidelines of action research (mentioned earlier). The second area involves the development of the participants as feminist therapists.

There exist no formal instruments which measure feminism, i.e., the feelings that women have about themselves as women, or that women have regarding other women - two important variables within this process. Therefore, an evaluation system has been developed here which entails an analysis of the transcripts of the sixteen sessions through a socialist feminist perspective. The criteria for evaluation is derived from the theoretical concepts contained in Chapter II and the group experience presented in Chapter III. This criteria is utilized for evaluation of the project in Chapter IV.

There is one paper, though not concerned with psychotherapy, which does in fact support this approach. The thesis, entitled Psychological Growth For Women: A Cognitive-Developmental Curriculum Intervention (Erikson, 1973), describes a project where a women's studies curriculum was introduced into a high school program. This resulted in not only new cognitive learning, but also in the ego development of participating individuals. The design used in Erikson's study corresponds to the design here in that I am concerned with the learning of new concepts in therapy, and concurrently with the self-development and interpersonal development of the women involved in the study group. The instrument utilized by Erikson, the Loevinger Ego Development Scale (see Appendix A), is used in the present study in order to gain a sense of the ego development level at which each participant approaches the program. The procedure is then repeated at the conclusion of the sixteen sessions. In addition, each participant is asked to respond to a questionnaire designed specifically for the group, and to analyze a case study (Appendix B). This procedure occurs both prior to entering the group and upon its completion. The data thus generated and the content and process of each group session are examined through a content analysis. An example of the dictation of an entire session, which is reduced (Chapter III) and analyzed (Chapter IV) is included in Appendix C.

It is hypothesized that there would not be a significant change in the Loevinger Ego-Development instrument due to the fact that the

duration of the group is short. However, it is important to use this instrument given that it helps to define the group and presents implications for using this same process with other groups of similar ego development level. It is further hypothesized that individual responses to the questionnaire and to the case study will indicate differences in how particular women define themselves and their relationships to other women; delineating more clearly the issues related to the philosophy of feminist therapy.

Implications

The implications of this study are multi-faceted. Primarily, this project works toward a beginning definition of feminist therapy. This is unusual in that I am examining the implication of the presence of feminist values in psychotherapy; a characteristic for which there exists no formal criteria. To measure the feelings that women have regarding other women is in itself a quality which has not been previously identified as an important personality variable.

The specific contribution of this project is a definition of (socialist) feminist therapy that can be used in the re-training of therapists. Recently, mental health professionals have become concerned with their lack of understanding and exposure to the issues surrounding the psychology of oppressed peoples. This is in part a result of the pressure being exerted upon mental health professionals by the oppressed peoples themselves. This study, which focuses upon the problem of sexism, complements other programs which are similarly dedicated to the creation of a more viable society.

Chapters II-V

In Chapter II, a definition of feminist therapy is developed from historical and political perspectives. Feminism is examined with other social movements in order to establish the commonalities as well as the unique issues which concern an analysis of women. This survey is then summarized concretely in four theoretical statements by Barbara Ehrenreich (Ehrenreich, 1975). These statements are the framework from which evolves a beginning definition of feminist therapy.

In Chapter III, the data from the group project is presented. Each of the sixteen sessions is first summarized, mentioning the discussion topics of the evening and then salient aspects of the group process are described. Following this initial statement, the specific content and behavior of each participant is summarized. This procedure is repeated for every session. These summaries are reduced from the original text; an example of a complete dictation appears in Appendix C.

Chapter IV is reserved for evaluation of the project. The criteria used for evaluation originates from the four theoretical concepts of feminist therapy that are presented in Chapter II. The content presented by each participant with every session is viewed through this framework and charted in progression over the sixteen sessions. The results are summarized, and subjective statements are made regarding the development of each individual in the project in relation to feminist therapy.

In Chapter V, this project is evaluated as a political experience. The concept is that the group moves through various stages of development that in fact correspond to the evolution of similar political ventures, and specifically in this thesis, to the socialist feminist movement. In this chapter, the development of the Northampton Women's Union is compared with the development of the feminist therapy group.

C H A P T E R I I

Most women therapists who are feminists share with other people who have developed a political consciousness a belief that the work they do is of a political nature. Political, in this context, refers to the networks of power in the society and the positions of women and men within them. Every therapy situation involves decisions to alter the client's influence or position in the power nexus in that the client comes to the therapist with the expectation of change, i.e., wanting to feel better. The client may be engaged in any number of changes in her own life; from coming to terms with the realities of her political situation by means of acceptance and adjustment, to changing radically her position, e.g., a divorce. Whether the client's problems are viewed as the imposition of other people, or as originating from within, the therapist's work is to help shape the desired change. This work is therefore, in essence, political (Halleck, 1971).

A second political dimension in therapy is the politics of the relationship between the therapist and the client (Halleck, 1971). This often has been stated as the power of the professional over the lay person; in this case, it includes the power of the "healthy" over the "sick." The situation, as in most human relationships, is not stationary, in that as a client evolves in new directions, the relationship with the therapist changes as well, and involves varying degrees of power struggle. The therapist, in making

judgments and decisions, is continually facing a changing political relationship.

Recognizing these two political facets of their work is something most women therapists who are feminists would agree upon. However, the range of positions that were expounded and considered legitimate at the Boulder conference reveals the lack of interest in acknowledging a crucial third political dimension; the interrelationship among feminist therapists. In fact, directions that individuals or groups of feminist therapists take do affect strongly the political positions of other feminist therapists and their ability to continue their work. People who embrace the idea of political relationships within their therapy practice, but fail to admit that their practice influences in turn the practice of other people, are involved in a contradiction that must be resolved.

A good way to illustrate the need for coherence is the example of a professional society like the American Psychological Association. The purpose of the APA is undeniably political. Its task is to establish, regulate, and reproduce the power of professionals over the people they serve. Its form includes the setting of standards, the regulation of numbers of practitioners in their ranks, the setting of levels of appropriate remuneration, and the guarantee of protection to its members. The affiliation and loyalty of all members is required to maintain the political power it holds. This extends even to the formulation of a theoretical core, and legitimacy of certain forms of practice that are non-threatening ultimately to their political position.

In contrast to the established profession, consensus on a model for feminist therapy has not yet been reached. Its formation is impeded in fact by the popular notion that it is all right for women to define themselves and work in self-determined ways. The rejection of leadership and a common strategy in the women's movement arose from the experience of women in oppressive and rigid role positions in contemporary society. The desire to act and to relate in non-hierarchical ways (Freeman, 1973), while a salient political philosophy which is central to the development of feminist therapy, currently ignores the existence of unequal roles and ironically tolerates the continuing oppression of women, economically and psychologically.

The toleration, even celebration, of diversity and freedom of self-styled definition within the ranks of feminist therapists, as evident in the Boulder conference, ignores additionally the history of the emergence of concern with political issues of women in therapy and in the practice of therapy itself. Feminist-oriented therapy did not simply occur to women individually from private inspiration. It arose from a society-wide struggle of groups of people who forged explicit directions for organizing themselves. These groups related to each other and transformed the society (Mitchell, 1971). This history must be kept in mind. The lessons of a particular political event cannot be laid to rest in anticipation of another, but must be continued in the form of planning for a new society.

It is not enough to assume that liberation of consciousness will make people free, that the society will change and oppression will

disappear simply because it is perceived clearly by the oppressed. The possibility of revolution is real, though not inevitable, and therefore planning, as well as tenacious resistance to the system's efforts to co-opt the mobilization, are required. Historically, as revolutionary movements gain in strength and threaten existing structures, the dominant groups try desperately to accommodate the opposition by making marginal changes. Movements must continually be wary of efforts to dilute the fundamental requirements for change and to dissolve the leadership.

If ever a revolutionary movement is accepted by the legitimate institutions of the old society, it loses its momentum for change and ceases to be a revolutionary force. It becomes part of the problem and can be used against the goals of its own constituency. The barrage of recent literature and conferences on feminist therapy obscures the real political history of the movement for a feminist therapy, and thus its political potential. The above discussion of political theory asserts that feminist therapy has a politics, even if the implications of it are denied (consciously or unconsciously) by the participants. In what follows, a basis for a feminist therapy will be developed, beginning with the political origins of the demand for a therapy for women and following with a set of features that have emerged from that experience.

The Historical Roots

Today, definitions of feminism abound. Historically, there have

been feminists in every era. However, a brief look backward locates the origins of the contemporary concern with feminism in the New Left movements of the 1960's in the United States and in Europe (Mitchell, 1971). This reassertion of feminism in a widespread way reflects the political tendencies of the time. The nineteenth century suffrage movement was conceived within the fight for egalitarianism; its vision grew from the period movement and its dimensions paralleled abolitionism (Kraditor, 1965). The political source of the present feminist movement was the socialism of the New Left, both in this country and in Europe, with its conceptions of the cause of oppression (capitalism) and possibilities for bringing about its destruction (Albert, 1974). The Women's Movement formed as a product of the New Left, in opposition to the refusal of that Left to incorporate the concept of patriarchy in their analysis of oppression (Piercy in Morgan, 1970). The analysis of patriarchy did not replace the analysis of capitalism as a source of oppression, but rather assumed a position of equal importance. The dual demands, to fight both forms of oppression, continue to form a basic challenge for the women's movement.

The fundamental features of contemporary feminism which arose from the 60's experience are summarized by Barbara Ehrenreich (Ehrenreich, 1975). They are labelled by her as the (1) totalistic understanding of revolutionary transformation; (2) the importance of subjective factors in revolutionary change; and (3) the rejection of stagism. Briefly, the three features can be defined as follows:

Totalistic understanding of revolutionary transformation. In addition to a critique of the way in which production is organized, a totalistic approach emphasizes all aspects of human experience as being the subject of revolutionary change. In contrast to older socialist theories which relegate much of human social experience to a personal realm (and therefore, a secondary one), this approach asserts that the personal is political (Money, 1971). A prominent example is the issue of family life which has become a significant arena for revolutionary change. More emphatically, this view contends that revolutionary transformation is impossible without struggle and change within every aspect of human life.

Importance of subjective factors in revolutionary change. Traditional Marxist theory views the concentration on consciousness and personal development as a refuge from political change and as a deflection from political action. In this new view, gains in personal understanding are essential to the process of transformation rather than being diversions from political activity. The emphasis on the importance of subjectivity refers to the ways in which the development of consciousness inform the revolutionary process. In summation, rather than trust that societal change will automatically arise as an inevitable historical process resulting from the objective conditions of material oppression, this approach conveys the necessity for personal experience and learning as a tool of revolutionary struggle (Albert, 1974).

Rejection of stagism. Rather than espousing a monolithic prescription and arguing the correct sequence for transformation, this approach asserts the need for simultaneous change in all areas. Revolutionary change is complex and it proceeds on different fronts at various moments in its development. Explicitly, as an example, this view would submit that the struggle against racism and patriarchy need not await the advent of socialist economic organization.

These concepts, while not yet precise in theoretical content, can be explained and elaborated upon by examining the historical experience of social movements in the 1960's in their opposition to features of capitalistic patriarchal society. For elucidation of this concept, some of the ideological components of the Black Power Movement will follow.

The Black Power Movement emerged in rejection of a strictly economic interpretation of group experience in capitalist society. It was recognized that economic oppression is linked to cultural oppression (Fanon, 1967). The politics therefore encompassed economic as well as cultural strategies, and the commitment to an understanding of the interrelationship between culture and economic power. It was stressed that the phenomenon of racism cannot be seen strictly as a derivative of economic relationships, but rather of a history and of a potency of its own which must be addressed directly within the revolutionary process. Racism affects not only the economic status of a people, but self-conception and community identity as well and therefore, championing Black culture is as important as fighting

unemployment, poor schools, and sub-standard housing. Specifically, the ten-point program of the Black Panthers included the exemption of Black men from military service, the end to police brutality, and an education that teaches the true history of Black people (Albert, 1974).

The importance of subjective consciousness in the revolutionary process was key to the Black Power Movement's fight against racism. The investigation of the dynamics of racism attempted to uncover the forms that it took and its effect upon the ability of people to organize and resist the imposition of white culture. In addition to the racism of White over Black, the racism of Black against Black, the negative identity of an oppressed people, was an important subjective factor to target. The attempt to form a Black consciousness and self-determined movement provoked accusations of reverse racism by whites, basically because that process was incompatible with white racist society. The Black Power Movement was prepared to respond to this charge; while expressing anger against white society, the destructiveness and limitations of racism itself were recognized and energy directed at eliminating this destruction from their own process. Therefore, although chronically misunderstood by those who were threatened, the rage of Blacks was largely mobilized into energy which was in turn directed toward work in the Black community.

The rejection of stagism of the Black Power Movement springs from the long history of Black struggle in the United States. In the last two decades, Blacks moved from a strategy of integration and

securing the vote (permissible goals to a white society) to a broader strategy. They realized that the former, by itself, was neither a necessary prerequisite nor a guarantee of full participation in the society. Political change must take place on all fronts simultaneously, not in stages where Blacks achieve participation first in the voting booth and then as token consumers and occasional executives. Liberation for Black people did not mean aspiring to the Establishment, nor did it imply joining white revolutionary organizations.

The Women's Movement, in its re-emergence in the late 1960's, learned these lessons from New Left groups such as the Black Power Movement and embraced the features developed above. At the same time, they learned that the strategies within the New Left would not bring about their liberation because they did not include an analysis of women. In day-to-day political activity, women were not permitted to participate as equals, but rather were assigned to tasks that paralleled the subservient role of women in society as a whole. In looking critically at other groups within the New Left, the Black Power and at counter-cultural movements for example, political women observed that the roles of Black women and women in alternative communities were not being questioned and that patriarchy lived within these establishments.

Thus, I come to the fourth and final characteristic of the Socialist Feminist Movement as outlined by Barbara Ehrenreich. It is this last feature that distinguishes the Women's Movement from other New Left organizations (including the bourgeois Women's

Movement), and that advances to another degree, the potential of the Left today. Essentially, it is this aspect that is stated as the critical importance of women in the coming revolution.

The Socialist Feminist Movement asserts that the participation of women in the revolutionary process is critical, and that women's issues and the analysis of patriarchy must be central concerns of that movement (Dunbar in Morgan, 1970). Women coming together in groups, along the philosophical lines developed above, is necessary for the mobilization of an organized resistance to capitalism and patriarchy. Traditional women's roles support the institutions of oppression, and therefore, unless women can move out of those roles through an immediate and ongoing attack on patriarchy, a revolutionary movement will lack half of its constituency.

More centrally, without the breakdown of sexist consciousness, the structure of society, including the organization of men, will be hampered by the contradictions of male privilege as well as by the lack of class cohesion. Therefore both groups, men and women, unwittingly support the institutions of their oppressors. In the belief that the women's role is a prime factor as a critical force in the revolution, socialist feminism is distinguished from other socialist-oriented programs of the New Left. Socialist feminism presents not a separate theory, but one which subsumes previous movements by being more universal and progressive.

The radical therapy movement

The political development of the New Left expressed itself within the field of psychotherapy with the emergence of the Radical Therapy Movement. This trend was a reaction to the lack of possibility for real change through therapy, which reinforced traditional sex roles, and obscured cultural and class oppression. It rejected the claim of political neutrality, and psychological theories that supported this form of practice. Furthermore, it attacked the elitist structure of the profession for its codes and practices which lead therapy to support an existing system rather than a revolutionary movement.

Just as the New Left inevitably turned to Marxism for alternative methodology with which to view the prevailing economic order, the new radical therapist found the beginnings of a truly alternative practice from their political experience, conjoint experience in the humanistic and human potential movements, and from the work of people like Wilhelm Reich and R. D. Laing. I refer specifically to R. D. Laing's work on the family, in particular, the role and structure of the family within capitalist society, and to Reich's theoretical work around the oppression of sexuality. In the latter, Reich presented a combination of psychoanalytic theory and Marxist analysis which offered an alternative to Freudian dogma (Laing, 1970; Reich, 1972).

The Radical Therapy Movement incorporates the same principles into its practice that have been documented in the development of the New Left experience. Radical therapy is explicitly totalistic in approach to understanding change. It recognizes political relationships and thus views the intrapsychic system of the individual as a microcosm of the total society. Radical therapy, as it is concerned

with both external and internal processes, espouses work at various levels, including participation in political efforts to transform the society. Implicit in this model is the principle that the formula for therapy includes more than the interview, and that, just as the therapist is concerned with change in society at large, the work of the client must extend beyond the therapy hour to her involvement in political change. Thus, radical therapy is totalistic in that solutions are not forthcoming from the single relationship of the client to the therapist in consideration of the client's individual problems, but rather from issues that extend the work of therapy toward the re-organization of society.

Radical therapy, as with most psychotherapies, is naturally concerned with the subjective experience of the individual. However, the examination of consciousness is not limited to strategies for individual progress. In addition, there is the emphasis upon the collective consciousness which stresses the development of collective strategies to overcome the oppression which is experienced by individuals. An example would be that the collective experience of women, rather than the individual conflict with sex roles, is of most importance, and it is the collective attack on sexism which is counseled as part of the solution.

Radical therapy rejects three conventions of developmental stages that dominate psychotherapy. First there is the notion that a present psychological conflict originates in a disturbance of an

earlier stage, which in turn necessitates the return to that problem level and the progression through subsequent stages. Radical therapy philosophy underlines the importance of the "Here and Now," using the past to inform the present rather than encouraging the client to re-experience the past as a semblance of movement. The second belief refers to the relationship of the client to the external environment; the concept that the client progresses through involvement in organizing for social change. Radical therapy rejects a strategy that places individual improvement prior to, and separate from a societal change. In traditional therapy, the therapy is often seen as a refuge from society, a shelter in which to work on oneself. Radical therapy instead operates by simultaneously working with intrapsychic as well as external political processes that surround the client. Thirdly, radical therapy rejects the idea of formal stages of development of the therapist, which is the concept of professionalism. It challenges the notion that credentials, education, and apprenticeship, in themselves, create good therapists. It rejects the profession's attempt to classify people into two groups: those who know, and those who do not know, which in itself is the replication of class structure within the field of psychotherapy.

Related to the rejection of stagism, radical therapy protests the differentiation of treatment on the basis of class, and exposes the fact that conventional notions of differential levels of human development is a categorization based upon money and power rather than consciousness. Radical therapy, in committing itself to

revolutionary transformation, works with a therapy that is common to all people, and one which embraces a common goal for the future of its clients.

The feminist therapy movement

Just as women learned from participation in the New Left that the movement did not address itself to the issues of women, nor even take these issues seriously when raised, women also discovered that therapists who adhered to the goals of revolutionary therapy did not take seriously the need for particular feminist therapy. Although many forms of oppression were recognized, a central fact of women's existence was not distinguished. This central fact is the psychological oppression of the patriarchal system on women.

A movement for feminist therapy was pursued not only by radical therapists who were feminists, but by all the women in the feminist movement. The primary organizing principle of the women's movement, as well as of feminist therapy, became the consciousness-raising group. Without leadership or professional direction, such groups got together expressly in opposition to the request for "professional" help. This, in itself, is a defiance of the isolation that is normal to the system of patriarchy, particularly under capitalism, where women are sequestered in spiritual, physical, and family structures. The purpose of these groups was to bring women together; to define women's experience by women themselves, through an examination of their lives within a history of cultural and economic oppression. The process of the women's movement is indeed a therapeutic process.

The alienation of women from each other, along with subjugation at every level, has created a negative, artificially imposed consciousness in women. By transcending this isolation within and among women, the consciousness-raising group elaborates the subjective experience of women (the emphasis is on subjectivity as a revolutionary strategy), reveals that collective oppression of all women, and presents an organizing structure for continued insight and political action. Above all, it creates an alternative standard for women in which to place themselves within a social group. This frees them from having to work in groups where men define the critical issues and the organizational structure. As with the rest of the society, these directions inevitably reflect male priorities, which include the maintenance of a dominant position over women. Women are thus empowered by their own grouping to determine the objectives of their revolution (Kirsh in Franks and Burtles, 1974).

It is a most important credential for a feminist therapist to have participated in the women's movement because the consciousness-raising process forms the basis of feminist therapy. In reacting against the orthodoxy of the profession and, secondarily, against the male-dominated radical rejection of that orthodoxy, feminist therapists develop a method of working with women that replicates the learning of their own growth experience. The vision of women's oppression, and its links to the economic and political system, enables the feminist therapist to translate that experience to women who face similar circumstances. This process, which is essentially

organizing, presents the fourth feature of the socialist feminist movement as it appears in the feminist therapy movement--the critical role of women in leading revolutionary struggle.

This concept constitutes not simply an addition of feminist values and practice to radical therapy in a separatist way, but rather is an assertion that feminism offers the means of integrating and moving radical ideas. Feminist therapy incorporates the full range of institutions that oppress women into its struggle in an effort to be particularly sensitive to the wide variation in experience and consciousness among women. The essence of feminist therapy is to raise that consciousness which is fundamental to women's lives. All forms of struggle against women's oppression are legitimate. This is the very basis of feminist therapy.

The development of theory and method is an on-going process, to which this thesis is a contribution. At some future point, feminist therapy may evolve as a concrete form, based upon clear theoretical concepts, and explicit styles of practice. At this time, however, feminist therapy exists mainly as a value system. Through shared experiences, feminist therapists believe in four central ideas: the totalistic understanding of the revolutionary process, the emphasis on subjective experience, the rejection of stagism, and the critical importance of women.

At this point, four political principles have been identified as socialist feminist values. These values form the concept of feminist therapy as it exists at this time in history, and the practice

of any therapist can be evaluated on the basis of these concepts. While some modalities intuitively seem more appropriate for what may eventually become a specific feminist therapy methodology, it is far more significant at this time to consider the attitudes and behavior of the therapist involved.

To illustrate this point, as well as to introduce the extensive analysis that follows in Chapters Three and Four, the work of three recognized psychotherapists are now discussed. Their work is presented in article form, contained in Women in Therapy (1974), edited by Franks and Burtle. This volume is a collection of papers, written by prominent psychotherapists and theorists, for the purpose of investigating the ways in which various therapies are responding to the "new women of today." Two articles from behavior therapists will be discussed, "Women in Behavior Therapy" by Arnold Lazarus, and "The Phobic Syndrome in Women: Implications for Treatment" by Iris Fodor. It becomes evident that the availability of socialist feminist values in behavior therapy (an unlikely choice of feminist therapists) is largely dependent upon the practice of the individual therapist.

The third article discussed will be "Women in Therapy--A Gestalt Therapist's View" by Miriam Polster. Though a modality commonly employed by feminist therapists, it will be clear that the practice of this gestalt therapist only moderately fulfills the concepts of socialist feminism.

"The Phobic Syndrome in Women: Implications for Treatment"

Fodor's article is organized completely from a totalistic

perspective. She begins by reviewing several psychological theories, research on sex role socialization, and variations within her own discipline. Actually, the hypothesis of her paper is based in a totalistic model.

"This paper will explore the hypothesis that phobic symptoms, particularly that of agoraphobia in women, and their associated syndrome—super helplessness and dependency—appear to be related to sex role conflict...There appear to be similarities between aspects of the phobic syndrome—the extreme superhelplessness, avoidance of mastery experiences, competition, and lack of assertiveness—and descriptions of stereotypic feminine behavior." (133,140)

Totalistic understanding is present in more subtle ways as well. At one point, Fodor argues a more complex understanding of the woman's position:

"While marriage is the stereotypic trappedness situation for young women in our culture to be in, it may not be the marriage per se but the interpersonal trappedness, particularly the feelings of being dominated with no outlet for assertion, that is responsible for agoraphobia. Thus, while women in our society are most often put into this position and the stereotypic feminine role encourages submissive traits, one could become involved in similar interpersonal situations in a lesbian relationship or in a situation involving any two people, or two conflicting role expectations. It is the pressure from the environment (particularly from the significant reinforces there)." (150-1)

Fodor describes an extensive treatment program, the core of which is group therapy. She refers to the importance of subjective experience, specifically in the form of collective consciousness.

"Since agoraphobic women appear to have problems similar to many other contemporary women who are struggling with trapped feelings in a marriage relationship, group treatment with an emphasis on the discussion of women's role and on setting goal or life plans is also indicated." (163)

Here Fodor states a commonality among women; women with or without neurotic symptomatology.

As a behaviorist particularly, the therapeutic process is arranged in stages. Here Fodor would concur: one significant feature, however, is that she speaks of this procedure in an individual way. In other words, behavioral programs are arranged to meet the need of the client, and are altered where necessary to carry out the objectives of the therapy.

The importance of women underlines every statement in the article. She begins by asserting the significance of women working with women:

"A female therapist who is comfortable with her own identity is most helpful in enabling these women who have avoided being independent, assertive initiators to see how such a woman is able to be happy and still 'feminine'." (163)

Fodor continues by emphasizing the importance of women working within a peer group:

"In group, one should also bring in other women to take part in the group, particularly independent women from different social backgrounds; otherwise the therapist with her advanced degrees becomes like a movie star who is too far removed from the patient." (164)

Fodor concludes her article in the following way, which simultaneously serves to integrate the socialist feminist values present in her work.

"...behavior therapy helps women to facilitate sex role integration by
1) Providing appropriate techniques (such as desensitization, assertive training, etc.) for the extinction of old roles or the expansion and learning of new ones.

- 2) Challenging the "morality" of conforming to sex role stereotyping and altering the reinforcement contingencies so that prestige, competence or goodness can now be associated with new or expanded interests and role behavior.
- 3) Presenting non-stereotypic female therapists for the patient to model; enabling the patient to experience approval from both male and female therapists for expanded role repertoires.
- 4) Helping to develop new interests and behaviors that do not bear a label of "masculine" or "feminine" but are sought because an autonomous person now has goals. (166)

"Women in Behavior Therapy"

In this chapter, Arnold Lazarus mentions many areas which refer to the causality of psychological problems in women. The issues he raises tend to focus upon one aspect of women's lives, that of the sex role socialization process, and it would be inappropriate to think of his theory therefore as being "totalistic." He begins with this statement:

"Long before the advent of Women's liberation, behavior therapists were training women to be self-sufficient, socially assertive, and to stand up for their rights." (217)

Implicit in this remark is the emphasis upon the reversal of women's traditional roles, or character traits, and the substitution of valued aspects of male behavior. In terms of the complexities described in this thesis, his definition of the tasks of women in therapy is quite narrow.

Lazarus then compares the benefits of behavior therapy in comparison with traditional modalities. He says:

"Unlike psychoanalytic theory, significant sex differences are by no means an integral part of social learning theory or behavior theory...Thus, there is nothing whatsoever in behavior theory that can lead to any sexist attitudes - no concepts like penis envy or castration anxiety, no insistence upon so-called vaginal orgasms, and no credence is given to any other prejudicial sex-typed response patterns." (217)

Here is more evidence of the absence of a totalistic perspective. It is assumed that behavior theory can discriminate and exclude those aspects of our culture which are oppressive to women. Furthermore, there is the assumption that if behavior theory is non-sexist, it therefore follows that behavior therapy is practiced in a non-sexist way. He continues his analysis of the problem in stating:

"...Long before it was fashionable to do so, behavior therapists questioned why so many women believe that femininity necessarily implies a range of indirect, docile, subservient, emotionally labile, and deliberately inept behaviors! It is indeed unfortunate that we live in a culture that promotes various types of hypocrisy, that discourages personal openness, that favors numerous social inhibitions, and that upholds a tradition of personal dishonesty in the name of tact, or considerateness..." (219)

Behavior therapy is viewed as an antidote to this "unfortunate" conditioning. There is no explanation for the existence of contradictions in the society, nor the awareness of the response of that society to women who become rehabilitated, i.e., assertive, through behavior therapy.

Lazarus does agree that the therapist presents a variable to a therapeutic relationship, but he extensively demonstrates the behavior therapist's ability to control "undesirable" interference with the process. He then explains the value system universally upheld by behavior therapists.

"...The value judgments of behavior therapy are such that assertive behavior is generally preferred over unassertive or submissive behavior - for men and women. There are no double standards. Hypersensitivities are regarded as impediments to successful functioning. Inhibited patterns of social

or sexual interaction are considered unfortunate. Timidity and reticence are usually replaced by frank and forthright expressions of basic needs and feelings..." (218)

Although behavior therapists are claimed to have values that influence the process of therapy, it is contradictory to assert that all behavior therapists hold the same values. This is particularly important given that the above description includes words such as "hypersensitive," which is a very biased assessment. It is additionally presumptuous to posit that there are "no double standards." It is unimaginable to think of behavior therapy, a product of a double standard society, as free of this distinction. It must be recognized as well, that because women enter therapy from a position vastly different from men, the practice of the identical therapy for both sexes does not produce an equalizing effect.

There is little mention of subjective factors in the practice of behavior therapy. This fact is somewhat attributable to the nature of behaviorism, in that it is not an insight-oriented therapy. Similarly, the third issue, the rejection of stagism, cannot be evaluated in this article. Again, it is significant that behavior therapy itself functions as a re-learning process through behavioral stages.

"Behavior therapy is primarily a goal-oriented, problem solving enterprise in which the therapist's didactic role as a trainer or teacher-clinician deflects attention from transference or the patient-therapist relationship onto significant issues in the client's life outside of the treatment dyad." (221)

The issue of the importance of women is very central to Lazarus' article because of his repeated denial of that patient/therapist relationship. He begins by claiming that clients work better if their therapist conforms to their preferences. If women feel that they need male therapists (as the majority do), it is important therefore to arrange this without necessarily engaging in the re-evaluation of that thinking. Lazarus mentions that aside from particular prejudices or preferences of the client, the referral of a woman to a male or female therapist is based on several factors. These however are not delineated. It seems that in stating a broad position, he absolves himself of the prejudices which underline his own presentation.

Lazarus maintains that his approach to the choice of male or female therapist is circumspect to the issues of therapy and the needs of women. However, it is significant that he devotes most of his paper to emphasizing the positive effects of women working with male therapists. Furthermore, he is very rejecting of those who state a feminist point of view.

"...Some individuals maintain that women should always be treated by women, that men cannot possibly empathize with women, and that help given by a man to a woman only subjugates her further. This blanket statement lacks any substantiating data. Fortunately, a lengthy rebuttal of such a position is not necessary for only a few extremists seem to embrace that point of view." (220)

He continues:

"Indeed, it is clear that for many women there may be distinct advantages in working with a male therapist who is capable of providing a very different male model than the one to which she is accustomed." (221)

It remains unclear as to what a woman can gain from an experience with a "different" man.

Lazarus concedes that there are issues between female clients and male therapists which may impede the process. Interestingly, the only issue he chooses to identify is the problem of sexual attraction. Sexuality is viewed in conventional terms, without the analysis of power, or political implications. He generalizes the problems in four categories.

"(1) women who found me sexually attractive but to whom I was not attracted; (2) women who I found sexually attractive but who were not attracted to me; (3) women who found me sexually attractive and vice versa; and (4) women who were not attracted to me and vice versa." (221)

He studies one hundred women who have been in treatment with him, and who all are applicable to one of the above categories. His conclusion was that the role of sexual attraction in treatment did not present any significant patterns. He made exception for the several instances where women were very attracted to him, and interference with therapy resulted.

Where women had negative feelings toward him (not only sexual), the problem did not endure because these clients terminated with him. Lazarus seems to see this action as a resolution of the problem. As for himself, his behavior is described as non-partial and consistent. In cases of conflict, he deals with the situation by offering "frank feedback." He offered the following transcript of himself with a client to illustrate his position:

- Her: I hate all men. I hated my father, I hated my brothers, I hate my husband and I even think I hate my son.
- Me: I guess you add me to that collection.
- Her: I don't think of you as a man.
- Me: (Laughing) Oh wow! I guess that was the ultimate put-down.
- Her: You can take it any way you please. I didn't realize you're so sensitive. I'm just saying that you are my doctor. Period.
- Me: Well, as I've mentioned many times, you do come across in a very angry and combative manner.
- Her: That's your opinion.
- Me: There's nothing to gain from arguing about it. I'm simply sharing a feeling with you. And I think this style of yours has a lot to do with your general problems.
- Her: Don't lecture me! Please don't give me lectures.
- Me: Okay. No lecture. Just a feeling. I feel under attack.
- Her: Poor defenseless little you!
- Me: You're not being at all constructive.
- Her: Okay, if I were a man I wonder if you would still hand me that crap about being hostile and combative, or perhaps your male chauvinism is showing.
- Me: I don't think there has to be war between the sexes. I think people can respond to one another as people, and I don't have one standard of assertiveness for men and another for women...You're being aggressive, you're not being assertive for a man or for a woman.
- Her: That's all baloney. You can't help taking sides with your own sex.
- Me: Does that mean you'd do better with a woman therapist?
- Her: I hate men but I don't trust women. You can't get rid of me that easy.
- Me: I'm not trying to get rid of you. I would like to find a way of cutting through your aggression so that you can express your feelings assertively. You cannot hide from yourself and from others the fact that you are basically a warm and caring person.
- Her: Stop being cute with me. I see through your motives. That sort of soft soaping will get us nowhere.
- Me: You remind me of the stereotyped man with a taboo on tenderness.
- Her: Tenderness! That's a good word. You bet I don't want to be tender and stomped into the ground or something.
- Me: You know something funny? I see your tough facade, your combative veneer, as the very thing that gets you stomped on by others. As the one time popular song puts it, you could "Try a Little Tenderness." (223-225)

It is important to re-emphasize the point that this example of work was submitted to a publication describing therapy for women in contemporary society. It is clear that he has come in contact with little more than the rhetoric of radical movements. Accompanying "frank feedback," is blatant rejection of a woman's anger, and apparent ignorance to the contradictions in women's lives. The tone of the interview suggests condescendence, which perhaps is a defense against the discomfort the therapist feels when working with women who are angry. He may feel more secure, i.e., in control, with women who are tender; but clearly, his guidance is of dubious value to her.

Toward the conclusion of his article, Lazarus reasserts the need women have for male therapists. He feels that many women need to learn that "all males are not insensitive, unemotional, unperceptive, tough-minded creatures preoccupied with things rather than with people." (I am unclear as to how a non-partial and consistent therapist can convey all of these things.) To strengthen this position, he adds an example of a feminist behavior therapist who has been destructive to women he has referred. He says:

"Those who make the error of assuming that a militant feminist is synonymous with a liberated woman seem to forget that warfare exists only where conflicts remain unresolved." (226)

This concept of conflict is simplistic, and in terms of oppressed people, it is dangerously naive.

Ironically, while Lazarus denies the need for women to see female therapists, he stresses the importance of men seeking help from other men.

"At this juncture in history, it usually requires a male to intercede meaningfully when combating the sexist attitudes and utterly chauvinistic reactions of the men who perpetuate the foregoing relationships." (227)

In this final statement, Lazarus comes full circle. It is evident that even behavior therapy can be sexist, and founded upon double standards.

"Women in Therapy - A Gestalt Therapist's View"

From Miriam Polster's description, it would appear that Gestalt therapy works from a "totalistic" framework.

"The difficulties any person experiences in life will reflect his or her own particular limitations and these, in turn, will relate to the prohibitions and limitations which society imposes on each of us." (248)

Polster consistently refers to the interaction between the individual, and the cultural background. In terms of change or growth, the focus becomes completely individual. She describes the elaborate system of integration, whereby women strive to reduce polarities and meet resolution of conflicts that reside within them.

"To the extent that a woman keeps herself out of touch with one of the polarities engaged in her personal conflicts, she is ensuring her own immobility and impotence. Rooted in her submerged and disowned underdog are the seeds of change and movement.

In gestalt therapy, a central focus of our work is the individual's responsibility for shaping his or her own existence. In spite of how her environment leans on her, a woman, nevertheless, has to know how to engage with it in ways which will be nourishing and zestful, not just successive acts of self-betrayal." (249-250)

While I am not in disagreement with these statements, the exclusive focus on the individual woman omits basic components to a totalistic perspective. Looking only at the client herself reinforces her isolation in that her problem becomes her province alone. In the absence of other discussions, the client assumes sole responsibility for her problem, and accepts the false notion that changing herself will alter her future, as well as the climate around her.

Gestalt therapy emphasizes the subjective experience, in the form of consciousness or awareness. The following is an example of its crucial importance in the therapeutic process:

"One way of not perceiving clearly is to play dumb or vague by remaining unaware of specifically what she may not like about her present situation. She can't identify what displeases her. Nothing is actually wrong. She has a lovely home, or a good job, or a fine husband, or great kids, or good people to work with, and she can't conceive of how to change anything when nothing is wrong. She blurs her own experience and keeps herself in the dark as a way of short-circuiting the excitement and the arousal to action that awareness brings. Awareness calls for responsive and expressive behavior; it tips the balance against inaction." (253)

Consciousness, as well as the resistance to awareness is again viewed as an individual process. There are however, descriptions of awareness that easily lend themselves to a collective interpretation. The statement that follows can be an imagined example of a primal consciousness shared by women - a consciousness not yet touched by socialization.

"But these denied or disowned parts of herself did not just meekly disappear. The imprint of firsthand living is not so easily erased. The taste of honey lingers somewhere in one's insides and sends up vague traces of something better

than the present watered-down experience which is only an inadequate substitute. Somewhere underground, her original knowledge of joy sits uneasy and only too ready to contradict or sabotage the surface confluence agreed upon by her shrewder and more politic socialized self which denies the primal zest and richness that she knows can underlie her actions." (249)

The issue of stagism is not addressed in this article. Suffice it to mention that gestalt therapy, as with most therapies, is conceived in various stages. Within Polster's statement, there is a definite prescription for the development of consciousness, and the chronological processes the form human behavior and emotion.

At the conclusion of the article, there are direct statements regarding the importance of women being involved in women's therapy.

"I have found that my own womanhood is a very important factor in my work as a therapist. With some women it adds an expectation of being understood in a way no man could understand them. This leads to a willingness to be open, to discuss things with me that they might confess to a man but that they can tell to me. It leads also, I believe, to their becoming more confronting, less docile, less cowed by their therapist." (261-262)

"My being a woman also enhances my value as a personification of other possibilities of being-a-woman...That way she and I can work towards inventing new answers, personally and uniquely applicable to her." (262)

She does not state the political implications of women working together, nor the feeling that this is necessary to successful therapy. There is however, significant indication that she appreciates the tools she brings to therapy, as a woman, and the ways in which her clients benefit from that experience.

The socialist feminist criteria is thus a viable measurement in the evaluation of psychotherapy. This criteria is applied to

the group project in Chapter IV; the content and process of the group sessions is summarized in Chapter III, and then examined by this framework in Chapter IV. The socialist feminist criteria is translated into terms that facilitate the discussion of psychotherapy, but nonetheless are identical in content to the political ideas in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

In the following pages, the group sessions (sixteen) are described by looking at the participation of each group member. The session is first summarized, and then the content and prominent style of each woman is generally portrayed in the order of their involvement in the discussion. In the beginning of the program, the descriptions are individually focused. As the group progresses however, the issues of dependency, aggression, and sexuality surface more frequently within the dynamics of the group. At this stage, the summaries become more involved with the interaction between participants; culminating in the three final sessions which are presented as process statements.

The participants

Peggy. A twenty-four year old graduate student in the counseling department at the School of Education. During this period, she was interning at a community mental health center and coordinating the Women's Caucus at the School of Education. She was living alone and relating socially to the feminist community.

Helene. A forty-three year old graduate student enrolled in a doctoral program in counseling. Helene had twenty years of prior experience as a psychologist and teacher. At the time of this program, she had been living in the Amherst area for one and one-half years with her husband, who was at that time unemployed. Her two children lived in her former home town, and she made frequent visits

to connect with them, and to maintain professional contacts. Her personal involvements in Amherst were limited.

Eva. A forty-five year old undergraduate student. Eva was a full time student, and working with a project in the process of establishing a counseling service for adolescent women. She had lived in the community all of her life, and had worked as a paraprofessional in many social service agencies. She had six children from her first marriage, and six adopted children of her second husband. Many of them lived in close proximity, several lived with her and she was actively involved in the family nexus.

Janet. A twenty-eight year old graduate student in a doctoral program in counseling. She was working as a psychotherapist in a community mental health clinic, and was supervising graduate students in the counseling program. Janet was recently married to a man she had known for five years (he was also a graduate student in the same program). They lived together in a house and were actively engaged socially with many people experiencing similar lifestyles.

Nancy. A sixty year old woman who was working as a volunteer counselor for "older students." She was living with her husband, a professor at the University, and in communication (long distance) with her one child, an adopted son. Nancy's life was focused around finding employment which was a compounded problem of age and job market. The practical issues in her life were causing stress, and she was dealing with this in therapy. Nancy was the only group member to be engaged in therapy during the training program.

Structure

Of the sixteen sessions, the first was designed as an introduction to the program. Sessions two through four were structured to address the issues of dependence in women, five through seven to address the issues of aggression in women, and eight through ten to address the issues of sexuality in women. The eleventh and twelfth sessions were intended to concretize personal experiences within a feminist model, and the thirteenth and fourteenth specifically to evaluate group process. The final two sessions were reserved to design a plan for the future of the group.

It became clear early in the history of this group that the above format would be adhered to only informally. The process of the group however did reflect the original guideline, and it is significant in the analysis of this experiment where this is apparent, and where this is not. This issue is part of the information contained in Chapter Four. The following is a summary of each session; the general themes, the issues raised by each participant, and where significant, prominent features of style and behavior.

Session I

This first session was an introduction meeting, at which time Peggy presented the structure of the group and participants were encouraged to amend that outline. This was the point at which group members became known to each other within the context of a feminist

counselor training program. Peggy identified herself as taking major responsibility for the group, while not assuming herself to have more influence in the process than any other participant. She shared the content of the individual interviews with the group as if to neutralize her position by giving everyone access to the same information.

The group seemed tentative about beginning the sharing of personal issues. Peggy began with herself which provided an example, and which placed her in a position equally vulnerable with that of others. Helene followed with a very articulate and lengthy description of her issue, which set the style for presentations that followed.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy essentially reviewed the structure of the group and her expectations of the participants. She described her interest in the group both as an academic exercise, as well as a personal learning experience. She suggested that the structure be altered to a single session, for the duration of two hours, given the difficulty of arranging two meetings within a week period. She reviewed the information that she had given to each member in their individual interview, underlining that each woman had been asked to approach the group with a personal issue to explore throughout the program.

Peggy began with herself: identifying herself as a strong person who has difficulty with the ramifications of that in this society. She explained the issue as needing to be herself and feeling distress

when her behavior was criticized or disliked by other people. She then invited other people to present their issues.

Style. Peggy basically tried to make known that there were expectations and requirements but that the nature of those were flexible. She did not label herself the "leader," but made it clear that certain things needed to happen.

Helene.

Content. Helene presented herself as a competent, professional person who is having difficulty in accepting her ability. She mentioned many areas in which she is proficient, principally identifying herself as a psychologist. In the many examples offered, Helene repeatedly saw herself as a woman fearing success. In her own words, Helene said that "she wants to fly," and looked to the group for support and direction.

Style. Helene took about half of the session to talk about herself, and did so in a confident and articulate manner. She was very assertive and occasionally disruptive in that she interrupted other people. In response to other people, Helene attempted to summarize their statements and to confront their presentation. Several times, in response to another person, she added an anecdote from her own experience.

Janet.

Content. Janet stated that her major issue at the moment was her inability to set limits. She expressed feeling overwhelmed -- that

she quickly engages with people in an intimate way, but lacks the resources (principally time) to follow through on those contacts. She identified two basic areas in her life that were suffering as a result of this problem; her relationship with her husband, and her academic work. She explained her need to be important to many people as a fundamental part of her insecurity; needing to be heavily invested with people to be secure about her own worth to them, as well as to herself. This was an integral part of the difficulty with setting limits. Janet mentioned that she was bringing this issue to the group, and additionally considering the possibility of psychotherapy.

Style. Janet presented herself with authority that sounded somewhat remote and critical. She seemed to have thought out her issues thoroughly, almost with precaution in response to a potentially dangerous situation. As Helene or Peggy attempted to add to what Janet said, there seemed to be some resistance from her. In reading the transcript, it is apparent that the group did not respond accurately to Janet's original words and that after indirect corrections on her part, she withdrew from participation.

Eva.

Content. Eva said very little in the beginning. As the group progressed, issues were discussed that encouraged her to share herself; the main discussion she involved herself in was around professionalism. She shared her own ambivalence about having been

exploited as a paraprofessional by male professionals, and her fear of them, as well as herself as a competent person.

Style. Eva seemed both frightened and excited by the group. She seemed to be very interested in the people, and intimidated as well. She prefaced many of her statements with, "of course I can't say it as well as you can, but..."

Nancy.

Nancy was absent due to the sudden death of a good friend.

Session II

Peggy began by reviewing the agenda for the evening, the issue of dependency, and again played a guiding role throughout. She asked people to review for Nancy the substance of the previous session, and encouraged her to talk about herself. As Nancy described herself, she seemed unclear about a focus, and allowed Peggy to assist her. During this process, Peggy used Nancy's personal issue to demonstrate a way of relating to the general concept of dependency. This seemed to help the group conceptualize the task.

At one point, Helene expressed criticism of Peggy's efforts to structure the group. Her concerns were not clear, but her resistance suggested that she felt controlled by the process. Eva and Nancy then expressed support of Peggy's behavior, underlining that the group was not intended to be a loosely structured experience, or a T-group situation. In response, Helene became very quiet, and later added that she wanted the group to be directed. Toward the end of

the evening, all group members reiterated more strongly their desire for a task orientation. The validity of this feeling was difficult to assess, but this movement toward immediate consensus seemed to reflect the dependency needs of the group at that time.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began the group by reviewing the agenda for the evening--the issue of dependence. She then encouraged people to review for Nancy the substance of the past session, and asked that she present herself to the group. As Nancy described herself, Peggy tried to help her conceptualize an issue that would then lead into the evening's topic. Peggy continued to be very directional throughout, commenting upon statements of others and placing them within the issue of dependency. She did not initiate extraneous or personal information.

Style. Peggy attempted to direct the group with re-statements of purpose and structure. Although Peggy was not responded to, she did not disrupt the flow of conversation. It seemed as if she was waiting for other members to support the idea that they had agreed to pursue.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy presented herself as a woman in transition-- as a person growing older. She said that she had been trying to deal with the implications of aging, both the internal experience and the social realities of that process. Basic to her life at that time

was the question of employment. She expressed self-confidence about her ability, and anger at the disregard of employers due to her age and absence of credentials. She did not offer an issue for consideration in the group; when pushed on this, she said that she basically needed a job and people like herself to work with.

Style. Nancy's style seemed to be characterized by ambivalence. She expressed intimidation and respect for professionalism, along with anger and resentment. She knew her own worth, and simultaneously criticized herself for perceived inadequacies.

Eva.

Content. Eva responded to Nancy's statement on aging from several perspectives. She talked about different stages of her life, indicating that in some ways, her life has "just begun" and that she used to be "older" than her present chronological age. She described her past in terms of two functions; one, as a non-professional in professional environments, and two, as a mother. She described those experiences as informing her present work and developing a political consciousness.

Style. Eva responded directly to Nancy's statements, offering support in the form of sharing similar life experiences, and calling on Nancy to re-evaluate some of the rigidity in her attitudes toward herself. She was the only group member to ask questions around the discussion of dependence--she followed Peggy's introduction with questions on procedure and definition, but she did not take structural responsibility for that discussion. The first extended conversation

Eva became involved with was the issue of motherhood. She seemed to gain security through this discussion as well as placement in the group.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by objecting to Peggy's efforts to impose structure on the group. After other group members indicated support of that structure, she said that she welcomed the group format, saying that she had had ample experience with T groups. Helene shared feelings about her children, adding to the themes that were presented by other people. In particular, she emphasized the sharing nature of that relationship, specifically the demands and expectations placed upon her by her children, and her own upon them in return.

Style. Helene was relatively quiet after her beginning critical remarks. She tended to follow the discussion topics that were initiated by others, adding personal statements that reinforced the points that other people offered.

Janet.

Janet said only three short things during the group. Two of these statements were minor corrections to Peggy's summary of her issues from the first session. Non-verbally however, she did maintain active participation.

Session III

This session was intended as a continuation of the discussion of dependency. Peggy exerted a more direct leadership role than

previously, resulting in more group members exploring their feelings in this area. The metaphor for the discussion was the fear people had talking in the group. Eva said that she felt inadequate about expressing herself verbally to people, and Nancy apologized for speaking redundantly. Janet did not speak at all during the entire session. It was clear that people were concerned about their acceptance by others, and extremely sensitive to the criticism that they had previously experienced, particularly from the men in their lives.

Helene clarified the issue by saying that women are trapped in the "male model." She elaborated this by saying that in the "real world," communication is dictated by masculine values, and this in itself is unnatural to women. The group discussed this idea, generally accepting Helene's theory, though intermittently expressing ambivalence about themselves given their cultural conditioning.

Dependency was then considered in more specific ways. Peggy talked about aspects of emotional instability in her home, and her reaction being a movement to independence. Nancy shared similar material, describing in detail the issues of having a schizophrenic mother, as well as a much preferred younger brother. Eva added an equally unstable background to the picture, through coming from economic deprivation, and significantly underlined the ways in which this experience created the desire for dependence.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began, after a brief period of unstructured conversation, to focus the issue of dependency, and offered a way

for people to frame their thoughts. After several others presented some of their experiences, she discussed her own ambivalence around being dependent, largely from the relationship of being a twin. The adjoining issue she mentioned was the lack of security in her home which necessitated the development of independence. She analyzed the situation by saying that her experience provided a sense of competence as well as a competing sense of deprivation.

Style. Peggy made several attempts to structure the discussion. After setting the ground work, she helped people to focus the issue around the anecdotes that they were sharing. She facilitated the group in making statements about process and group dynamics. Peggy began the process by sharing her own experience. In doing so, she made herself quite vulnerable in that the material offered were aspects of herself that she had not worked through previously. Her vulnerability was noticeable in her style which was characterized by short self-interrupted sentences.

Eva.

Content. Eva began by expressing fears about talking in the group. She mentioned feelings of inadequacy around expressing herself verbally. After broadening these feelings in the group, Eva labelled her anxieties as "trying to imitate a male model" and went on to describe her experiences of being in conflict with a male style and expectations. Eva structured herself by describing a childhood pattern of deprivation (financial) and ignorance that she tried to reverse with her own children. She described this positively,

as trying to create an interdependence among herself and her children in sharing--a departure from the experience of dependence as a burden or responsibility. Other aspects of dependency mentioned were the dependence of the poor on the rich, specifically talking about her struggles with the welfare system, and her experience with her son, who had an acute psychotic breakdown during adolescence. She linked the latter to her dependence upon the state mental health institutions.

Style. Eva spoke openly about herself in a way which was slightly redundant, but not nearly as distracting as she had feared. She occasionally checked to see if she was "on the topic" but did not seem anxious about her presentation. Eva clearly wanted to talk about herself and occasionally, this energy seemed in conflict with her awareness of other people. She noticeably repressed this, compromising by talking about her own experiences in direct response to another person's remarks. Her material was consistently relevant to the issues of other people.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy began by expressing fears about talking in circles. She said that she received much criticism for this, particularly from her husband. She later addressed the issue of dependency by talking about the recent death of her friend. She then talked about feeling as if her entire world were dependent upon her; mentioning conjointly that the issues of dependence/independence were obscure because of growing up with a schizophrenic mother. She mentioned that the only warmth available to her as a child was

the connection with her "country" relatives. She continued by evaluating the difference of an urban, versus rural, lifestyle.

Style. Nancy spoke easily despite the reservations that she mentioned. In talking about her life, she explicitly emphasized the parts of her experience that are unique. When responding to another person's statement, she tended to focus upon the part of her own history that was either different, or more difficult.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by resisting the topic. As others became involved, she took part. Her comments mostly substantiated the issues clarified by other people. She shared her reservations about talking in a group, and later agreed to the objections raised concerning a male model. In an indirect way, she insinuated that the group structure was a male model.

Style. Helene shared little personal information. She was active as a facilitator however, mainly helping people explore their issues, or occasionally making comments about group process.

Janet.

Janet made only two remarks during the group. Both statements were questions of clarification.

Session IV

Session four was a continuation of the discussion of dependency. A major issue during this meeting was the connection of sickness with

securing caring and dependent relationships. Helene began by announcing that she was in pain; having gained the attention of the group, she expressed ambivalence about her behavior by associating it with a long-standing pattern in her life. Nancy followed at the point where Helene connected her issues of dependency around her relationships with men. She added that her resistance, as well as attraction, concerned her feelings about men, professional (doctors, therapists) in particular. She and Helene described poor relationships with their mothers, which lead them to seek nurturance from men. The conflict is that their awareness of their oppression as women is growing, and it is equally difficult to feel trusting of women.

During the session, Peggy turned several times to Janet, offering to help her talk in the group. The offers basically received no response. Toward the end of the group, Janet began talking about herself; she described an elaborate socialization experience, founded in part upon the submissive/dependent role of women. Given that her struggle was in breaking away from this system, it was relevant that she resisted assistance from Peggy.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by indicating that she was in physical pain and that she knew that the group was aware of this. She said that she was therefore the focus of attention, and indicated that this behavior was part of a personal pattern. She then proceeded to describe an intricate relationship with her mother, and family,

which she conveyed as being highly pathological. She felt rejected from birth because she was female (her mother reinforced this literally) and found herself in a conflictual situation. She said that she was pushed to achieve but that she never received support or praise for her ability because she was a girl. Helene said that she therefore turned to men for emotional support which she did receive, but which was conditional upon being sick or helpless. Later this pattern was transferred to men in general, where dependence became an exchange for femininity and covert ability. Helene identified the issue as being her real focus in the group. Later in the session, she linked this need for dependency with her disappointment in her marriage.

Style. Helene spoke in articulate, well-formed sentences, almost as an uninterrupted narrative. When people interjected statements or questions, she seemed to pass over them, or to use the question to direct herself back to her story. Later in the meeting, Helene responded to other people's comments by saying something about herself, or by elaborating something which she had mentioned earlier.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy elaborated many of the things raised for her at the previous meeting. She reiterated her problem with dependency as being the result of the situation with her mother. She said that she has just begun to appreciate her search for mother dependency, which she discovered in therapy. She felt that she really wanted this from women particularly because men who have offered this to her have

not been willing to allow her to be herself. She cited specifically professional men who have tried to force her into a dependent role (therapists, physicians).

Style. Nancy contributed aspects of her experience which were appropriate to the topic. However, she did not indicate any awareness of the structure, nor had she alluded to it previously. She followed the questions as defined by other people. Several times, she drifted into extraneous conversations without apparent self-consciousness of her behavior.

Eva.

Content/style. Eva was active throughout the meeting in asking questions and in active listening. She offered no new significant information about herself. At one point, Eva became involved in an extraneous conversation which Nancy had initiated. She did not appear aware of the fact that Helene had been interrupted.

Peggy.

Content/style. Peggy was involved throughout the meeting in a facilitating capacity. She tried to focus the material presented along the agenda of the group. She also intercepted comments that were either tangents or interruptions from another person. Peggy particularly focused upon Janet, and on several occasions turned directly to her and asked her to talk about herself.

Janet.

Content. Toward the end of the group, Janet spoke about herself for the first time since the initial session. Similar to Helene's presentation, she spoke uninterrupted about the basic structure of her family. She described a huge family from the South, bound by traditions which meant both security and oppression. She recounted some of the ways that she had learned to "make it" in that system, and the ways in which she became dependent upon being successful. She described specifically the rules of southern womanhood, a role that she acquired as a child, and one which continues to play a strong part in her personality structure. Janet described breaking away somewhat from that role as an adolescent (and later adult), and her need to maintain the facade of her earlier life. She described this as dependency, or the need for approval, specifically from her family.

Style. Janet did not begin to talk until the last half hour of the meeting. She did not respond to the attempts Peggy made to direct the conversation toward her. When she spoke, she appeared to be coherent and self-assured. Unlike the first session, there was no remote quality in her voice, and she seemed relaxed and interested in becoming known to other people. There seemed to be a subtle statement to Peggy--"I need to become involved of my own initiative."

Session V

This session was formerly intended as the beginning of the discussion of aggression in women. However, in the larger scheme of

of the program, this session, as well as session six, became a period of transition between the two issues. During this group meeting, the questions of dependency and aggression became linked around the discussion of illness. This was looked at specifically through a woman's perspective in that the major issue was breast cancer, and the treatment of women within the medical profession.

Several ironic things happened which were quite opportune for the group. For one, Helene was absent due to a brief hospitalization. Secondly, both Eva and Peggy, unknown to each other, arrived with the same medical problem that had arisen during the week. Nancy as well, shared a long history with the same disease (mastoiditis). A very lively discussion ensued, filled with personal experiences, insights into the psychological and social issues involved with mastoiditis and breast cancer, and extraneous material. Peggy and Janet were interrupted frequently, and gradually reduced their participation. Eva and Nancy seemed to struggle with each other for space while expressing verbal interest in all the group members.

The issue discussed involved many issues of dependency; the idea of nurturance in a symbolic way, the relationship of women to male physicians, and the fear of not meeting male approval. The issue of aggression however was central to the process. For the first time in the program it became clear that a number of people wanted to get something from the group. The task of negotiating space became the first level of aggression to be addressed.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began talking (even before the group started) about the fact that she had discovered a lump in her breast. This became the focus the group followed; the sharing of personal histories with the medical profession. She expressed anger around the treatment that she had received from physicians, specifically the withholding of information and general insensitivity. She mentioned that she felt confused about accepting support from other people, and related this feeling to her family history where consistent support was not available.

Style. Peggy was interrupted many times during the session. She did not speak directly to being interrupted but rather, she tenaciously tried to resume her thoughts after each interruption. Peggy assumed a similar role with Janet in that she redirected the conversation to her when she saw her being interrupted.

At the conclusion of the session, Peggy re-established herself as the facilitator. She said that she had found the evening frustrating because people had not taken responsibility for the structure of the discussion. She suggested that it was not necessary to "tell all," but rather that the essence of one's life experience could be extracted to develop the issue. She added that the group should now be focused upon the issues of aggression. It was apparent that her comments were directly related to Eva and Nancy, although she did not state this explicitly.

Eva.

Content. Eva arrived at the group, ironically with the same issue as Peggy. She began talking about the lump in her breast, and her long history of gynecological problems and medical malpractice. She spoke of her needs to be taken care of, and her ambivalence about accepting that need in herself. She said that she has had a lot of reinforcement for being the "good, brave girl," both from doctors as well as from her family. She summarized her physical problems in this way: at the age of twenty-eight, it had been clear that she needed a hysterectomy. She was required however, by Massachusetts law, to wait until the age of thirty-five due to the state's philosophy of what women should be, and produce. This conflict caused enormous complications to her, all of which she placed within the context of being controlled by everyone except herself.

Style. As Eva walked into the group with her recent medical story, and discovered that Peggy was in a similar place, it seemed that a conflict was raised for her. Had Peggy wanted to talk primarily about herself, the situation would have been very competitive. She struggled with Nancy instead, who as well wanted to relate a series of experiences that were of a similar nature. Eva interrupted frequently throughout the meeting, and her comments did not necessarily reflect what was said by others.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy talked at length about a variety of medical experiences, expressing anger and weariness. She did not directly

connect her remarks to the theme of dependence or aggression, but her statements were suggestive of these ideas which were made by other people. She portrayed dependence in terms of resentment and desire; the first, her rage at being at the mercy of medical male professionals and the second, her desire to be taken care of during recuperation. She specifically identified the wish to be taken care of by her husband--and her disappointment around his inadequacy at playing that role. She commented that this disappointment was a general focus of her therapy; the wish and fear of dependence upon men, and her resulting feelings of disappointment and contempt.

Style. Nancy presented in an unfocused and energetic style. She found herself in competition for the floor with Eva, but she competed for this without undue sense of urgency. Nancy dealt with Peggy in an advice-giving way, suggesting that her younger age indicated that her condition was not serious. This statement, and others like it, separated the group into the younger members and their problems, and the older members and their concerns.

Janet:

Content. Janet interjected comments throughout the session. For the most part, these comments were focused upon the feelings being expressed, and clarifying the issues of dependency in a broader way. Janet addressed herself specifically to Peggy at times, trying to encourage her to elaborate. Janet shared substantial experience in her own life around illness and dependency, referring to the

decisions of when and how to include her family, and how much to accept from the man she lives with. Janet spoke of her need for nurturance and her need to provide that to her husband in particular. She associated the concept of providing as being an integral part of dependency.

Style. Janet focused on themes in the group, trying to take largely scattered material and organize it according to the issue of dependency. While not confronting people on their behavior, she did adhere to her focus, insisting on space for herself. Although interrupted frequently, she did not become distracted; rather waiting until the completion of the intrusion before continuing with her own story.

Helene. Absent due to a hospitalization.

Session VI

Session six was the second session in the transition between dependency and aggression. Half of the meeting was a birthday dinner for Janet which was not relevant to the agenda of the evening. Later on, the group returned to the issues of the previous week. People talked more specifically about their feelings around the material that they had presented, and around the group process during that discussion.

Peggy began by reporting that she had made contact with her mother during the week, and that the communication did not satisfy her needs at the time. At this point, Eva became overwhelmed

(crying) and began apologizing for failing to be sensitive to Peggy during the prior session. She then began to talk about her anger in regard to Peggy; essentially that Peggy made it impossible for her to be the center of attention. As Eva began to look at her conflicting feelings, Helene interrupted and strongly supported Eva's desire for attention and concern. She further encouraged Eva to "think of herself," and continued by sharing the experience of her recent hospitalization with the group.

The group seemed to be struggling with the integration of both needing, and offering nurturance. Toward the end of the session, Nancy stated that dependence, or independence, was for her an "all or nothing thing." This remark summarized the action in the group. A notable feature which began to develop in this session, was the grouping of the older women. Nancy and Helene empathized with Eva's need for dependency that had little to do with her physical condition. Peggy and Janet presented examples of their lives where illness and dependency interacted, but neither one expressed the need to be the focus of the discussion. The result was that they received little attention from the older women in the group. My assumption is that their process served to legitimate, beyond a traditional role, to a feminist role, women's desire for dependency.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began by expressing ambivalence about having a serious meeting--indicating her awareness of the work that needed to happen as well as the informal atmosphere in the room and the

limited time remaining. - She said that she was willing to go in either direction, although she alluded to reservations which were unclear. As the focus of the group moved into a further discussion of medical experiences, she got into more anger around the male doctors that she was consulting for her condition. Peggy mentioned that she felt that she was observing incompetence as well as devaluation of herself, and her body as a woman. She felt that this was not only a personal issue, but a pattern in this culture. Peggy had made contact with her mother during the week, concerning medical insurance, and indicated that the interaction provoked familiar anger; her mother made herself the object of distress and left little room for Peggy's needs at that time.

Style. Peggy was originally extremely ambivalent about asserting direction in the group. After the conversation began to flow, Janet assumed the role of the facilitator. This action seemed to free Peggy to participate more actively, and to make herself in the group.

Eva.

Content. Eva began by crying, which was in response to the statements that Peggy had made at the conclusion of session five. She said that she felt responsible for the fact that Peggy's needs had not been met, and that she felt she had talked excessively. From there, having received support from the group to consider her needs first, she expressed resentment about the fact that Peggy

shared the same situation with her, and that the attention was therefore deflected from herself. She talked, with the support of the group, about the ways in which women get attention (primarily in being sick). She said that when she is sick, her needs do not have to compete with others and therefore, Peggy presented an unfamiliar problem to her around getting attention.

Style. Even within the discussion, Eva seemed ambivalent about whether to ask for attention, or whether to nurture other people. She wavered from one position to another, depending upon which focus was supported by the group. She was not able to integrate both needs.

Helene.

Content. Helene supported Eva's need for attention, emphasizing the importance of thinking of one's own feelings. From there, she began talking about her own medical history, and her recent surgery. She interjected throughout the details of her own experience, often accompanying this with affirming statements about her legitimate needs to think of herself. This came into focus particularly around her relationship with her mother.

Style. The support that Helene offered was clearly focused upon Eva, although Peggy was in a similar situation. She did not involve herself in Eva's material, but rather applied her legitimization of Eva's needs to introduce her own.

Janet.

Content. Janet contributed personal experiences, and her own interpretations of other people's comments. She stated that where once she felt as if the group would have trouble resolving differences, she now felt that we were having trouble acknowledging similarities. After Peggy and Helene made statements about their mothers, Janet mentioned that following her wedding several months before, she had decided to isolate herself from her own mother because of the intensity of pain associated with that time. In that process, she said that she was able to establish boundaries, and to find common ground for a relationship that was not threatening to either one. She said that previously, she had tried to include her mother in issues that she could not possibly understand and this had added to the conflict.

Style. Janet played a very active facilitating role. She concretized the statements of the group, and placed this within the framework of dependency and aggression. She particularly focused upon Peggy, encouraging her to clarify her feelings. She offered structure by making statements about her own experience, and the learning that had resulted.

Nancy.

Content/style. Nancy made only two statements during the evening. At one point, she mentioned that dependency to her was an "all-or-nothing" thing; she was either dependent or independent within a given situation. Later she expressed some anger toward

Peggy for what she regarded as a blasé attitude toward her medical problem. She indicated that this behavior from Peggy invalidated the concern that she had felt about herself.

Session VII

This session formally began the discussion of aggression in women. The issue was explored largely from within individual families; what patterns existed and what behaviors were available for women. The connotation of aggression became more the qualities of self-assertion and self-confidence. Janet structured these themes in the beginning by presenting her own family; she developed patterns of socialization, particularly in the training of her brother to be aggressive and self sufficient, and herself to be dependent and pleasing. She added this process gave women the message that their aggression diminished the power of the men around them. Overt aggression on her part continues to feel awkward and dangerous as a result of this training. Other group members shared similar experiences in their own families.

Later on in the group, Helene talked about reversing her pattern of dependency to a more independent style within recent years. She expressed resentment about feeling a loss of recognition from others as a result of her new behavior. While recognizing the dilemma of the assertive woman in this culture, Peggy suggested that some of Helene's behavior created a deterrent to closeness. The interaction that ensued between the two women was the first

incident of overt aggression in the history of the group. Helene responded with anger to Peggy, which was at times sarcastic and indirect. In return, Peggy became increasingly tentative about her original remarks, and her language grew evasive. Eva and Nancy remained silent which indicated that the presence of conflict intimidated them. Janet entered the conflict at the point where the interaction became confusing, as well as chaotic. She offered an interpretation of Peggy's original statement which was similar, but more palatable and supportive to Helene. This action had a calming effect, which concluded in Helene thanking Peggy for initiating the issue.

Peggy seemed to be very frustrated, despite the general reconciliation in the group. She indicated discomfort with the fact that Janet's interventions were more acceptable to the group than her own. Janet then stated that she felt a conflict between herself and Peggy that should be explored in the following session. Janet's suggestion appeared to be another step in her development in the group; beginning with silence, following with sharing of her experiences, initiating herself as a facilitator and helper in a conflict between two group members, and finally, placing herself directly within a conflictual situation.

Janet.

Content. In the beginning of the group, Nancy asked Janet what was happening with her brother (he was in VietNam at the time of the American evacuation). This opened up for her an extended

discussion of her past family life, particularly in relationship with her brother. She basically described the conflict that she experienced with him in growing up, and the ways in which that conflict was manifest in adulthood. She presented her brother within the context of aggression; documenting the ways in which he was socialized to become independent and powerful through hard work, the accumulation of money, and developed intelligence. Much of this system, in addition to regional culture, was premised upon male supremacy which left Janet in the position of fulfilling the female role while finding outlets for her anger and aggression in covert ways. She spoke about being the model child and young woman, carefully concealing all aspects of herself that would violate that impression. Janet said that this conflict is aroused in her every time she communicates with her brother. She said that she has changed, and is in the process of becoming more assertive but that presenting this part of herself to her brother is very frustrating. She added that one very strong message that she received as a woman growing up was that if a woman is assertive, she takes away the power of the men around her.

Janet attributed much of her growth as occurring within her marriage; both the excitement of being able to expand her boundaries, and the opportunities to work through the conflicts which occur as a result. She mentioned that the work on this issue began four years before when she first entered therapy.

Later on in the group, Janet became involved with the interaction between Peggy and Helene. She qualified Helene's issue by saying that she saw Helene stifling herself in order to connect with people. This statement became the working definition of the problem. At the conclusion, she said that she perceived a conflict between herself and Peggy, and that she would like to examine that during the following session.

Style. When Janet talked about her brother, she was very open about her feelings (crying occasionally) and verbally articulate. She was interrupted frequently by extraneous matters, and by people trying to facilitate her presentation. These conditions however, did not discourage her from completing her work.

During the conflict between Peggy and Helene, Janet remained silent. At the point that Peggy appeared to be exceedingly overwhelmed and confused, she entered the conversation. She then clarified the issue that Peggy was struggling with (in regard to Helene's invisibility) in a way that cleared the air and soothed the rising discomfort in the room.

Peggy.

Content. In the first part of the meeting, Peggy directed most of her comments to Janet, trying to clear space for her in the group. Later on, in part of a larger discussion, Peggy made the statement that "psychoanalysis and feminism were incompatible." She tried to expand this remark but was unable to do so because of the

criticism that was stimulated as a result. Following this, she became involved with Helene's statement about her feelings of loneliness and her feelings of being unappreciated. Peggy labeled her issue as being "invisible" and she suggested that the problem was the ways in which Helene tried to become "visible;" indicating that she seemed to recreate her position within her immediate family in other outside groups, and that this behavior was inappropriate. In response to Helene's anger, her statements became incoherent, resuming meaning only following Janet's clarification of the issue.

At the end of the meeting, Peggy expressed ambivalence at being the target of anger, saying that she placed herself in that position frequently and that it made her feel badly about herself. The group supported her in turn, and it was suggested that the issue rested at that point with herself and Janet. (Peggy had expressed admiration and resentment of Janet's ability to resolve conflict and not get hurt.)

Style. At the beginning of the group, Peggy played the role of facilitator. Later on, she became an object of aggression and responded with two distinct styles. At first, she simply repeated her words, which she felt were inadequately understood, trying to resolve conflict through intellectual clarification. Further in the session, Peggy expressed criticism of Helene, which was the first statement of direct criticism to appear in the program. She quickly seemed to become ambivalent, largely influenced by Helene's

returned anger, and this ambivalence took the form of incoherence. Shortly after, Peggy allowed Janet to enter the interaction, and as a result, the discussion became manageable.

Helene.

Content. Helene offered comments and analysis during the time that Janet initially presented her material. Often this led her into talking about parts of herself which were extraneous to Janet. When the conversation moved into the issue of psychoanalysis, and a conflict ensued between Peggy and Nancy, Helene became more involved. She said that she felt anger toward Peggy, but this seemed to subside as Peggy clarified her feelings with Nancy. Helene moved the focus of that discussion away from the conflict onto herself--framing the discussion around the fact that while the group was "anti-professional," she herself was once very professional and received a lot of support socially for that, as well as in work settings. She began to talk about her feelings of loneliness, contrasting this with very good feelings about family relationships.

The issue changed at the point that Peggy suggested that Helene was not going about being "visible" in an appropriate way. The exchange became very confusing until Janet clarified the issue by saying that she felt the loneliness was attributed to the ways in which Helene hid her ability and experience, connecting particularly her conflicts within her marriage regarding her husband's unemployment. Helene became fully involved with the issue, and concluded by telling Peggy that she had been very helpful to her.

Style. Helene offered comments and analysis while Janet presented her material. She tended to offer things from her own experience which were not closely enough related to what others were saying. On several occasions, she seemed to go into a personal tangent, and the focus had to be pulled back by another group member. A characteristic style at this point is for Helene to paraphrase other people's words in a way that presents an analysis (her own) of what is being said. This style has confused group members because at first it appears as if she is talking about herself. This also seems to force an analysis upon someone in a way which is controlling and difficult to refute.

Another noticeable part of Helene's style is a very defensive stance (while Peggy was confronting her). This was apparent in interruptions and remarks such as "when?", "what are you talking about?", and "give me an example." At the conclusion, she thanked Peggy for being helpful, when it was actually Janet who had moved the conversation from confrontation to support; in doing so, she refused to recognize the critical feelings that Peggy had for her.

Eva.

Content/style. Eva participated actively throughout the session without any significant features.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy participated actively throughout the session without significant features.

Style. Most noticeable during this session was Nancy's difficulty in hearing other people. She began talking on several tangents during the session, and did not seem conscious of her interruptions. At one point, Nancy reacted very negatively to something that Peggy said, which was a misinterpretation on her part. Regardless of what clarification was offered to her, from Peggy as well as others, she seemed intent upon continuing a rebuttal. Once Nancy began talking about her own issue she was not able to grasp what others were saying to her.

Session VIII

Session eight was part of the discussion of aggression. At the beginning, Peggy tried to focus the issue by asking a group member to share a personal experience. Eva then volunteered to start by relating her feelings of inadequacy around being a therapist, specifically in contrast with other therapists in the group. Janet interrupted by saying that "she had no idea what was going on." She seemed annoyed as she reminded the group that an issue of aggression between herself and Peggy was still pending from the previous session. Helene verbalized objection by indicating that she was more concerned about Eva. Eva however, removed herself from the focus, and the group turned their attention to Peggy and Janet.

The issue of aggression became polarized, placing Peggy as aggressive, and Janet as submissive. Each expressed admiration of the other, which led Janet to summarize that when together in groups, they do each other's work, which in effect produces tension. This interpersonal dynamic was not elaborated because of competing issues that arose in the group during this discussion.

The group tended to support what they perceived to be Janet's style, while not actually being supportive to her. Eva said that she identified with Janet, and several times criticized Peggy for being too intellectual. Nancy followed in the same suit, remarking that Peggy's words struck her as being over intellectualized and adding that she had had painful experiences with aggressive women. Her operational definition of "aggressive woman" deviated from the image of an angry, or directly critical person; Nancy talked about aggression in terms of sly, manipulative, and jealous behavior. Helene continued to resent the focus upon Peggy and Janet, and interject comments that indicated that the conflict did not appear to be serious.

As the session evolved, the focus on the conflict between Peggy and Janet seemed to drift to other areas. In individual ways, the participants projected their own experiences onto them, thus leaving Peggy and Janet in an isolated, and unfinished place. The mass support of Janet's position, symbolized as the "victim," indicated the intense anxiety the group felt in regard to anger and aggression.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began by trying to focus the issue of aggression; asking someone to share a personally relevant issue, and to take the time to explore that in the group. This plan was intersected by Janet, who stated that the evening's agenda was the tension between the two of them. Peggy then talked about her negative feelings in regard to her anger; as a result of expressing anger, she often found herself isolated, and feeling guilty about not being adequately sensitive to another person. These feelings surfaced the previous week when she saw Janet being very supportive to Helene, while she was feeling anger.

Style. Half of the time, Peggy actively tried to re-focus the issue around Janet and herself; reminding group members what the issue was, relating extraneous statements to the issue, and asking Janet directly what she was thinking and feeling. Directing the process, and participating as the focus was very difficult for her. When Peggy spoke candidly and directly about her feelings in relation to Janet, her words were unclear and the ideas not fully developed. What came through mostly was frustration, as well as fear that Janet would dissociate herself from her.

Eva.

Content. Eva first agreed to present a personal issue around the topic of aggression or assertion. Her issue seemed to be the feeling of being inadequate as a therapist, in relation to other group members. She quickly relinquished this idea, however, when the issue between

Peggy and Janet became primary. She expressed feelings of closeness and identification with Janet, while criticizing Peggy for her "intellectual" approach.

Style. Eva was relatively quiet during the session, reserving most of her comments to the last half hour. She seemed to be emotionally connected with Janet, and very confused by Peggy. She later presented a theory that Peggy's issues around aggression originated from her relationship with her mother. She did not acknowledge the real issue of aggression in the room.

Janet.

Content. Janet brought up the issue between herself and Peggy, saying that she was confused by Peggy's suggestion to focus on Eva. Janet attributed much of the issues with aggression around her Southern history. She expressed feeling envious of women who were assertive, and yet, in terms of herself, aggression felt serious, inappropriate or "gauche." This attitude was extended interpersonally; Janet said that she admired but does not tend to support "women with ideas" because she saw self-sufficiency as security. Rather, she tended to focus on the person who is feeling overtly vulnerable. In terms of Peggy, she stated that they do each other's work and in so doing, hurt each other.

Style. Janet asserted the evening's agenda after Peggy initiated another focus. When asked by Peggy why she waited, no response was offered. This style characterized Janet's participation. She initiated nothing until specifically addressed by Peggy. At those

points, Janet expressed her feelings directly and more strongly than previously evidenced in the group.

The group was very disruptive, and Janet was interrupted frequently. She did not struggle to regain the floor, but did continue if Peggy made space for her. Her behavior seemed to be representative of her anxiety about asserting her own needs. Furthermore, the pattern that she described between herself and Peggy was indeed operating during that session.

Helene.

Content. Helene immediately became involved with Eva's statement of feeling inadequate as a therapist. She clearly wanted to continue this discussion, and objected when Janet raised the issue between herself and Peggy. Throughout the session, Helene became consumed with tangents, and she talked anecdotally about herself. Toward the end, she offered process comments concerning the relationship between Peggy and Janet.

Style. Helene demonstrated a style which, at that point, had become characteristically self-involved and manipulative. In this session, she discouraged the discussion between Peggy and Janet by belittling the issue. She suggested that they did not want to change themeselves, and that they were fine as they were. She referred to Janet as a Southern Belle, and to Peggy as "a little girl stamping her foot." Toward the end, she assumed a professional position. Eva and Nancy were by then in a counselor role with Peggy and Janet. Helene entered with far more concrete analysis, including the naming

of specific psychological theories and known clinicians. She seemed to be competing at the point with Eva and Nancy.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy was silent during the first half of the group, and then expressed feeling confused by the interaction between Peggy and Janet. Later on, she offered an example of her experience of aggression with another woman. She described this woman as being aggressive, sly, and unresponsive to warmth and caring. She cited this woman's particular style of making other women feel unfeminine, especially in front of men. Nancy talked about the ways in which this person made her feel inadequate and awkward.

Later on, she became involved in clarifying issues between Peggy and Janet. She was empathetic for women "with ideas" because she regards herself in this way. She mentioned that she has been criticized by many women for being active intellectually.

Style. Nancy initiated a personal example which served to broaden the discussion of aggression. Her statement was very relevant, and it made space for everyone to become involved. She was very supportive of both Peggy and Janet, but moved away from being the "helper" when Helene became involved in this way.

Session IX

Session nine was a continuation of the issues of aggression raised in Session eight. Janet began by saying that the previous session had been a painful, yet profound experience. She said that she had been misunderstood by the group to be a manipulative, and

indirectly aggressive woman. She felt that her passivity had allowed others to project qualities onto her, and thus misrepresent her real self. She mentioned that she had been quite upset during the week, crying and feeling depressed, but that she had derived new learning from the experience, and was feeling energetic about asserting herself in various settings.

The group immediately responded to Janet's pain, offering apologies and sympathetic statements. Janet then demanded that the group focus upon the issue, emphasizing that she was not asking for apology, nor was she feeling badly. She encouraged people to expand the discussion of aggression, and indeed facilitated the conversation. Helene, Eva, and Nancy temporarily resisted moving the focus from Janet's pain; it seemed as if they wanted to continue their projections and to be in a helper position, rather than a situation involving confrontation. Peggy followed Janet's lead, but appeared to be somewhat threatened by her different behavior. This reservation seemed in keeping with her prior discomfort with Helene's anger in Session seven.

The discussion later turned to a role play between Nancy and Eva; Nancy as the counselor and Eva as the client. This, though not intended, seemed to bring resolution to the previous week where Nancy seemed ambivalent about being a therapist, and Eva wanted to explore some of her own issues.

Janet.

Content. Janet began by saying that the previous session had left her feeling angry and hurt. She said, however, that much learning had come out of that experience. In talking with her husband, she clarified the issue as being her passivity with other people. She said that she allowed people to project all sorts of ideas onto her, and often felt hurt and angry by those projections. She connected this with the content of Session eight, saying that she had allowed herself to be perceived as a woman who is manipulative, and who expresses anger indirectly.

Janet added that following the meeting, she had felt very hurt and was crying on her way home. She said though that the issue had become very productive in that she felt a push to become more assertive with people; to let others know who she is and where her boundaries are.

Style. Janet approached her opening statement with an uncharacteristic "businesslike" style. There seemed to be a sharpness, particularly in response to Peggy's remarks. When the group members apologized at points for hurting her, she decisively answered that she did not want people to take responsibility for her. Later on in the session, Janet seemed to relax somewhat from her initial position, and became very instrumental in structuring the group. While Peggy was setting up a role play, Janet entered with comments that altered the arrangement, and with that, improved the process. This was noticeably different from her opening behavior in Session eight.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy began by becoming involved with Janet's statement, trying to clarify her remarks. One example was her underlining of the syndrome where a person fails to make oneself known and thus perpetuates being misunderstood. Peggy spoke of herself in relation to Janet, saying that she felt critical of herself and wondered if the support she seeks from her is really an insatiable need.

Peggy later talked about the broader issues of anger in women, specifically around the concept of the fear which precedes anger. She suggested that the fear is more accessible to women than men, and therefore, women become consumed with fear while men express anger. She alluded to the discussion of this issue at a recent feminist therapy conference in Boston.

Style. Peggy was very tentative around Janet; although not receding, she was clearly blocked by Janet's aggressive behavior. Peggy structured issues throughout the session, trying to encourage others to place their feelings within the concept of an idea. She ended by asking two group members to engage in a role play.

Helene.

Content. Helene immediately responded to Janet with apology, despite Janet's request that this not happen. She added that she felt concerned about the polarization of women that had occurred in Session eight. She clarified this by saying that it was erroneous to think of women as being either passive or aggressive exclusively.

In commenting upon her own anger, she mentioned that under the pain and fear that Peggy had made reference to, there is love which in itself stops her from becoming angry. She said that this is frequently the case with her husband, but she provided no elaboration of their interaction.

Style. The notable aspect of Helene's style was her open aggression toward Peggy. When Peggy talked about her fear of being angry with Janet, she addressed her with condescension. She placed Peggy's problem within an analytic framework, saying that her issue was not Janet, but rather her "all-powerful mother." When Peggy mentioned the feminist therapy conference, Helene insisted that feminist therapy did not exist, and that that term was simply humanistic therapy.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy said that she felt a bit like an outsider in the conversation, saying that she did not know Janet very well, and that she had not remembered what had been discussed in Session eight. She eventually, however, became very involved, relating to Janet in a very genuine manner, and focusing directly upon her. She expressed the feeling that Janet was honest and not manipulative. Nancy said that she had only recently begun to express anger and that her therapy had been helpful in this. Previously, her anger was expressed exclusively in hurt and pain. She felt that her experience was similar to Janet in this way.

Later, when the issues between Janet and Peggy were being delineated, Nancy identified herself as an older woman who was more accepting of differences in regard to people. She attributed this to her less serious attitude toward the issues between Peggy and Janet. She later talked tangentially about an older person, like herself, who was depressed because he was unaccepting of himself. She then agreed to play the counselor to a depressed person.

Style. Nancy was involved appropriately and directly with Janet. She was additionally helpful to Janet through genuine empathy and appreciation for her. In the role play however, this competence did not continue. She played that role very gingerly, and soon let other group members enter into the counselor position. It seemed as if the definition of "counselor" was intimidating to her.

Eva.

Content. Eva said nothing during the session. At one point, as Janet clarified her position, she seemed interested in Peggy's reticence. She seemed focused, as in other sessions, in perpetuating the conflict between Peggy and Janet.

Toward the end, the group remarked upon Eva's silence. At this point, she said that she was depressed and asked that she play the depressed client. She began talking about feeling tired and overwhelmed. These feelings then became associated with a recent visit to the state hospital, where her son had been ten years before.

She was encouraged to ventilate, and received a great deal of support from the group.

Style. In this session, Eva drew attention to herself through silence and passivity. She indirectly asked for attention, but was not able to follow through until there was a task to make her needs legitimate. She was very receptive to the group at the end, and seemed to be less depressed and more secure.

Session X

Session ten was the final meeting for the discussion of aggression. Unlike the other sessions, the group did not begin with Peggy reiterating the task for the evening. Helene began by talking about her age, and her ambivalence around the entire subject. All group members were actively involved in this discussion, which evolved in several stages. At the beginning, the older women expressed the fear of aging, and the illusion of being younger than their chronological age. Helene described her fears in relation to her mother; the fear of becoming the "older woman" like her mother. Eva spoke about the devaluation of older people in the society. Nancy followed with abundant examples of discrimination against older people, principally herself and her husband, and added the dimension of her fear of death and dying. Peggy contributed her mother's experience to this discussion, relating her struggle with being well qualified professionally, and yet unemployable because of her age and sex.

Helene, Eva and Nancy then talked about their inability to identify with women their own age. In various ways, they alluded to themselves as being different from others in their generation. Helene and Nancy insisted that other women, particularly those in traditional role settings, were threatened by them as well as jealous. Eva said that she was becoming more able to connect with women, even of her own age, if they were feminists. She added, in a very emotional statement, that during the past few years she had discovered that she really felt love for other women.

Janet contributed to the issue by expanding the concept of age difference, to include differences in lifestyle. She provided examples of high school friends whose lives seemed to create a twenty year difference between them. Peggy and Eva were both able to connect with Janet's remarks, while Helene and Nancy continued to emphasize the separations of chronological life stages. It was relevant that Peggy, Janet, and Eva sought commonalities in the group, as they alluded to feminism in their lives.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by talking about age, describing her ambivalence about being forty-four and feeling much younger. She attributed this to her many attempts to conceal her age, giving the example of coloring her hair. She said that she felt resistance to "becoming her mother"; "the white haired woman who ruled the family." She described her middle age as being closer to death than the way in which she actually perceives herself. Helene explained her

distress by saying that only recently has she felt that her life belonged to her, that she was really developing her potential.

During this recent growth, taking place over a five year period, she identified more with the "kids" that she taught/supervised in community colleges. At the present, Helene said that she had become interested in women her own age, but cited several examples of the jealousy and the resentment that she has felt from other women. She added that it was difficult for her to not stereotype women because she herself was very much a part of the male model. She later contradicted this statement by agreeing with the other group members that men were indeed limited, and that she needed to destroy the "fucking male model."

Style. Helene's style seemed to be characterized by ambivalence, particularly around her feelings about women. Her remarks followed the sentiments of the group, which in itself indicated her need to be accepted by women. Helene interrupted others constantly, which seemed to be coming partially out of excitement, as well as consistent with her general controlling behavior.

Janet.

Content. Janet began by trying to relate herself to Helene's issue around age. She talked about approaching age "thirty," and the feelings that this inspired in her. Janet made several attempts to separate the issue of age from a chronological concept to the difference in people's lifestyles. She cited several examples from

her own experience where the separation reflected a difference in values rather than age.

Style. Janet was interrupted repeatedly when expressing her ideas around age. She did insist upon speaking, although she did not demand the space necessary to develop the extent of her ideas. Janet made a number of remarks that demonstrated therapeutic ability as well as leadership. At one point, Helene indicated that she had shared things with another group member in the car, but that she was reluctant to do that in the group. Janet expressed the desire for her to "take the risk of sharing that in the meeting." In this way, she labelled the issue as one of anxiety, while providing encouragement. Another example occurred at the conclusion of the group; Peggy introduced the next segment of the group as being the issue of sexuality. Janet then summarized her experience in the group by saying, "moving through the issues of assertion, I now feel ready to consider sexuality."

Nancy.

Content. Nancy became very involved in the issues of age, saying that she needed to face the fact that she is older. She said that she is "beyond the point of feeling any particular age." She described her current situation as being a state where people became older "all at once, and friends die." She said that she had recently emerged from a lengthy depression regarding this issue, which had precipitated her going into therapy. Nancy said that people no longer recognized her as a person with values, and that

she therefore began to relate to herself in that way. Another central concern was fear not only of dying, but of being sick or having a sick husband and not being able to find work. In response to a later incident, she emphasized the need for people to evaluate themselves in terms of their personal power, rather than their professional power. This related to her own process of relating to herself in a society where she is unemployable.

Style. Nancy described her feelings in a very profound and thoughtful manner. Salient in her presentation were the ways in which she isolated her experience of aging from the other women in the group. She was able to reconnect with others only toward the end, when she related her inability to find work with the need for women to develop their internal power (defining oneself away from the "male model").

Eva.

Content. Eva became involved in the discussion of age by saying that men had a harder time, even more than women. She later talked about herself and her denial of her age, citing examples as referring to herself as "twenty-nine" for eight years, the willingness to work for less pay, and having friends all younger than herself. She added that the issue was not only denial of age, but the implications of different value systems--in this way, supporting Janet's statement. She said that she could not identify with most women her age, and that she felt rejected by them. She

described them as being very traditional and therefore, disapproving of what Eva represents.

The group emphasized that it was not only Eva's lifestyle, but her personal style of competence and intelligence. Eva became overwhelmed, cried heavily, and expressed her ambivalence about being a "strong woman." With encouragement from the group, Eva related with less anxiety around her power, and ended by saying that the most recent discovery in her life was that she felt love for women.

Style. Eva expressed familiar patterns. She structured much of her own thinking around Janet's remarks, demonstrating her ambivalence about her own ability, and the visibility of her talent. This became obvious during the final stage of the session when the positive feedback frightened her. She did seem to resolve this, though the acceptance of her own power was clearly dependent upon the acceptance the group offered her.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy added to the age issue by discussing her mother, who was in a similar position to Nancy. She posited that the discussion of age served to clarify differences among group members. She mentioned this idea several times, but the group did not elect to explore the idea. Later, it was Peggy who distinguished personal power from professional power; coming from the idea of restructuring oneself away from the "male model." She added at the conclusion that "if you love women, you come to recognize other women who do as

well." This remark was directed to Helene, who questioned the safety of Eva's caring for women.

Style. Peggy facilitated most of the session. She attempted to connect the ideas of others to a concrete theoretical concept, and encouraged people to see similarities among themselves. Peggy concluded by remarking upon the process; she felt that the discussion of age differentiated people from one another, and in this way was relevant to the issue of aggression. She mentioned that the following session was the beginning of the discussion of sexuality.

Session XI

Session eleven was the beginning of the discussion of sexuality. Helene began the evening by sharing a satirical article from the Journal of Humanistic Psychology. This article humorized the phenomena of clinicians independently defining alternative therapies, and creating institutes. She then suggested that the group held the same potential, and expressed the interest in "going into business." This began a short discussion of that possibility.

Sexuality was discussed through the metaphor of hair. The group talked about their history regarding hair, how hair affects feelings of sexuality and sensuality, and the responses that men have to women's hair. A prevalent theme throughout was the strong commitment the mothers felt to provide a positive sexual environment for their children, one very different from their own experience as children.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by reading the article from the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, which led her into talking about the potential of the group. She stated that everyone in the group had skills which were complementary, and suggested that the "group go into business."

Helene entered the conversation on hair by describing destructive episodes with her mother. She mentioned specifically the ways in which her mother prevented her from being attractive--forcing her to wear her hair in styles that actually embarrassed Helene, particularly as an adolescent. Helene conveyed that the most distressing aspect of this was that she earlier caught herself repeating this controlling behavior with her daughter. She referred to an incident where she had her daughter's hair cut (age 5) without discussing it with her.

Helene displayed other examples of her involvement with her children's sexuality. She described an interaction with her daughter at age 17, where she initiated the discussion of the Pill, and actually accompanied her daughter to her gynecologist. She portrayed this example as an extension of her close relationship with her daughter. At another point, she talked at length about the beauty of her son's hair; she added that he has "her hair" but that her curls disappeared after her babies were born. In both instances, she placed herself in direct connection with her children's experiences.

Style. Helene was very active throughout the session in sharing personal experiences which she felt served to demonstrate a positive relationship between herself and her children. She made statements about herself indirectly through this process, expecting the group to infer certain qualities about her. Interestingly, Helene was very confronting with others when she detected evasiveness, or defensive behavior. Several examples include: 1) asking Peggy directly how she feels about her body; and 2) asking Nancy directly if she had ever been pregnant.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy responded quite actively to Helene's opening remarks about working as a group to establish a counseling project. She mentioned that she was aware that another group of women were working toward the same idea, and that she had tried to become involved with them. She added that they had been discouraging to her, and exclusive in that they did not want others to join them. Nancy's analysis was that they were competitive and wanted to "keep the money for themselves." She reiterated several times that "our" group could work well together, and that the personal differences were complementary to each other.

Nancy stated that she cannot "cope" with her hair. She described it as being unattractive, thin, and generally "bad." For these reasons, she had kept her hair short, concentrating on keeping it clean. It was Nancy who talked about long hair as being sensuous, a symbol of sexuality. She summarized by saying that it was always

a choice; short hair equating freedom, and long hair connoting sexual attraction to men.

Nancy reviewed some family history which she felt was relevant to her sexual development. There was no sexual relationship between her parents, or any demonstration of affection. She became identified with her father as a result of a very destructive relationship with her mother, who was schizophrenic. At a very young age, Nancy was warned about pregnancy, given the impression that this was an awful experience that should be avoided at all costs. Nancy related this teaching with the fact that she had never become pregnant, and talked at length about the significance of being an adopting parent.

Style. As Nancy discussed her anger toward the other women's counseling group, she was adamant that her analysis of the situation was correct. She resisted other interpretations, finally saying, "well, this is how I feel." There was urgency in her voice as she talked about the potential of the group--suggesting her need for inclusion as well as for involvement in productive work.

In talking about her feelings about herself and her family, there was a deep expression of sadness and defeat. She permitted herself to get into these feelings, and allowed others to assist her in looking more deeply. In the course of the evening, Nancy moved from feeling insecure, followed by a statement of security and well-being (her feelings about the group), and then allowed herself to be quite vulnerable. It was notable that as she refused

to challenge her perceptions of the "other" women's group, she did not check out her feelings of optimism about the group with other members.

Janet.

Content. Janet began by responding to Nancy's anger around the rejection from the "other" women's group. She stressed the ways in which women and minorities are forced to compete for a small amount of the resources available; thus, maintaining the power structure while limiting the strength of political groups.

Janet talked about the ways in which her hair symbolizes her sexuality, while addressing the meaning of discussing sexuality in the group context. She said that it was easier to talk about the other issues in that her sexual history recalls a very painful and ambivalent experience. She shared the value system of her family regarding sexuality, and explained the pattern she evolved for dealing with sexual feelings; basically, acting out sexuality in a covert way as a rebellion while keeping her image of the "perfect child." Sexual behavior also became a means of expressing aggression and power.

Style. Janet was very direct and assertive throughout the session. She was less emotional than others, offering less information: it was significant that she was the only group member to speak directly to her attitudes, and experience with sexual issues. She seemed to be very much in touch with her own feelings, as well as the dynamics of the group in regard to the discussion of sexuality.

Peggy.

Content/style. Throughout the meeting, Peggy remained on the outskirts of the conversation. She seemed uncomfortable in projecting herself into the conversation, and equally uncomfortable in accepting encouragement from Helene. The following example characterized her behavior during the session.

As group members agreed that their hair was important to them, Peggy denied its significance to her. When Helene focused the issue upon her, "How can you say that? You have beautiful hair!"--Peggy retreated even further. After the issue had been completely worked through, the discussion in a different place, Peggy made several allusions to the importance of hair as it affects her sexuality.

Session XII

In this session, the discussion of sexuality was continued in greater depth. From the beginning, Helene directed Eva in sharing her experiences; which she did with considerable energy. It became apparent that much of the information had been partially shared privately with Helene, most likely in their carpool to the group sessions. Eva talked for most of the session, during which other participants interjected comments that were relevant to her material.

Eva began by saying that her sense of sexuality at the present was very positive and fulfilling, but that her development had evolved from a long history of unhappiness and abuse. She referred

to her first marriage as an extremely destructive experience, and labeled her sexual relationship as "rape." She added examples of medical malpractice which caused five pregnancies in six years, despite conscientious practice of birth control. She spoke in depth about the gratification around sexuality with her second husband, but stressed the ways in which her personal liberation, and affiliation with the women's movement caused that relationship to become problematic. The important sexual issues for her at the time were self discovery, e.g., masturbation, and the discussion of sexuality with her children.

As Eva mentioned fantasizing through her children, Helene added examples of her own involvement with her children's sexuality, e.g., giving her son the book, Joy of Sex. Both women agreed that child development, as well as pregnancy, were very sexual issues. During this latter interaction, Nancy became obviously quiet. With encouragement from Peggy, she expressed her feelings about never having been pregnant, repeating explanations of family history. She did not relate this to overall attitudes toward her sexuality; only mentioning intermittently that she was "too old" to care about sex.

Janet mentioned few things about her sexual life, but basically indicated that her marriage was in a good place, and notably far more communicative than the other relationships described. Peggy said little about herself, rather, she was very active in facilitating and clarifying issues. At the conclusion of the meeting,

she stated that she would like to engage in a broader discussion of sexuality, indicating that the focus on marriage was limiting. The group did not ask for elaboration; perhaps because the session was over, or possibly because the remark was not adequately comprehended.

Eva.

Content. Eva was very explicit about her sexual history. She began by saying that in her own family, sex was never discussed, and silently regarded as sordid activity. Until recently (relatively), she said that she was quite ignorant of her body, as well as positive sexual experience with another person. She described sexual/emotional exploitation from her first husband, and her loneliness and depression following the divorce. Eva reported many incidences of medical malpractice; improper contraceptive devices, maintenance on valium for eight years as treatment for depression, and an unquestioned diagnosis of "housewife's dilemma."

With her second marriage, Eva discovered pleasure in sex, and greater appreciation and understanding of her own body. The relationship (emotionally/physically) went very well until the point at which Eva became involved with the women's movement. As she became more conscious of herself, and less dependent upon her husband, the basis of their relationship began to deteriorate. This struggle was current at the time of the group; Eva talked over her feelings of sadness, while stressing that she could not allow herself to "go backward," to turn off consciousness.

Style. Eva spoke very easily about herself sexually, and her feelings about other people. She seemed to be very comfortable with herself, and unlike other times, was not at all hesitant or censoring. Eva was the focus of the discussion, and to some extent, very much dominated the session. Other group members allowed her to do this, and she did not question her role during the meeting.

Helene.

Content. Helene made few remarks, all in reaction to a longer statement by Eva. She referred to the lack of communication in her marriage, which in effect was largely a silent power struggle. She described the ways in which this struggle was manifest sexually; basically explaining her desire to be assertive, and her husband's resentment and fear of this behavior in her. Despite difficulties, Helene stressed her desire for that marriage to continue. She mentioned that as this question has emerged during her marriage, she has always thought, "I want to stay so that my children can have a father." She indicated that she was willing to accept her husband at this point, and that the struggle was not that valuable to her.

Style. It was clear that Helene felt reservation about talking around sexual issues. She was very supportive of Eva, especially in encouraging her to talk. It became obvious that she knew of some of the sexual issues in Eva's life, which she actually mentioned and then asked Eva to elaborate. As Eva talked, Helene would

occasionally support a statement, or add a similar experience or feeling.

Nancy.

Content. In the beginning of the session, as Peggy asked group members to focus on sexual issues, Nancy stated that the topic had little relevance to herself. She remarked that "she was too old to care about sex." As the session progressed, Peggy occasionally directed the issues to Nancy; although not self-initiated, Nancy was quite candid about feelings and experiences. She discussed extramarital affairs, fears around orgasm and frigidity, and her feelings around her son's sexuality. She conveyed a sense of regret (e.g., my expectation of marriage were too high) all very much within the past tense.

Style. Nancy assumed a very retiring posture throughout the discussion, which was reversed only when addressed directly by another group member. Her expression was wistful and reminiscent. She listened intently to Eva, although she did not verbally admit to sharing similar feelings.

Janet.

Content. Janet's contributions were largely clarifying comments which distinguished her issues from others. She talked briefly about the quality of her relationship with her husband; mentioning some of the struggles and the commitment to fulfilling each other. Janet recognized the fact that this commitment was primarily for

herself, apart from family expectations and other external pressures.

Janet focused upon the dynamics involved with discussing her sexuality in group. She stated that unlike the other issues, there was much pain involved in re-experiencing her sexual history. She added that much of this material had met some resolution, and that she was resistant to re-opening that part of her life.

Style. Janet was not very active during the session, but she nevertheless was insistent upon identifying her own position around the issues discussed by Eva and Helene. She tended to focus on her own feelings, rather than describe emotions within the context of her marriage.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy made very few comments about herself. She asked many questions of people, essentially trying to connect common themes and ideas. She indicated, basically in response to Eva and Helene, that she felt uncomfortable with their involvement in their children's sexual lives. She added that in some ways, there are certain "rites of passage" that parents cannot control. At the very end of the meeting, Peggy requested that the discussion of sexuality be broadened beyond the focus of marriage. She did not elaborate her feelings around this statement.

Style. It was clear that Peggy felt alienated from the discussion. She said almost nothing about herself, and subtly indicated this to the group. Her reservation in asserting her feelings was

expressive of her ambivalence around discussing her own sexuality in the group.

Session XIII

In many respects, Session thirteen was the most significant of all group meetings. Prior to the session, Peggy had invited a local representative from NIMH to discuss funding possibilities with the group. Although the meeting was rather uneventful, it was quite significant in that for the first time, an "outsider" was present. This element, in addition to the fact that we were fantasizing a group project, created a sense of "group" which was more dramatic than ever before.

This session was intended to be the final discussion of sexuality specifically. As Peggy asked the group to get into that discussion, Helene remarked that she wanted to hear from Peggy and Janet. She continued by saying that she felt that she, Eva and Nancy had shared themselves the prior week, and that she felt that Peggy and Janet should do likewise. At this point, Peggy revived the statement that she had made at the conclusion of Session twelve; essentially saying that she had felt very distant basically because people were not talking directly about themselves. She did not devalue what was said, but explained that as the discussion focused around marriage relationships, people were able to talk within a context of another person. Given that her lifestyle was different, she felt too vulnerable in relation to others.

Before Peggy finished, Helene became quite defensive, and demanded to know what was "wrong" with what she and Eva had offered. Peggy said that she was trying to present her feelings rather than a punitive attitude, which Helene then discounted. At this point, Eva became quite upset, saying that she had taken a lot of risks and was feeling betrayed. Both Peggy and Janet offered support to Eva, reiterating their appreciation of her contribution, and acknowledging the risks involved with what she had offered. They added however, that they somehow felt on the outside of the conversation and that this feeling warranted further exploration. Eva then began to apologize profusely for failing to be sensitive to Peggy and Janet.

Peggy, Janet, and Nancy, each in turn, attempted to restate the issue to Eva. Nancy, in particular, actively encouraged Eva to feel legitimate in taking time for herself. All three drew a firm boundary between support for Eva, and recognition of the issues that needed to be addressed. At three different rounds of this discussion, Eva would begin to feel settled with the ideas and Helene would then enter with remarks indicating that she was angry with the "pain" Eva was feeling. She indirectly alluded to the ways Peggy and Janet had "deceived" Eva over the last week.

Nancy finally upset this frustrating pattern by labeling the issue an issue of trust, one which was experienced by everyone in the group. From there, Janet talked around her feelings of discussing personal matters, specifically sexual issues, with women who resembled her mother's age. This opened a much larger discussion

of the dynamics between people, various projections on the part of individuals, and underlying concerns which were present in the discussion of previous issues. The session ended with a spirit of openness and mutual appreciation, and in my thinking, a sense of genuine understanding of how people really felt about each other.

Helene.

Content. Helene began by asking Peggy and Janet to talk about their sexual issues, indicating that she had shared a lot of information during the previous session. When Peggy confronted this assertion by saying that those who had talked described relationships with men, and little concerning themselves and how they felt in relation to each other, Helene stated that perhaps Peggy was a lesbian but other women in the group did not care to share that lifestyle. She did not check this out with Peggy, nor express direct interest in the feelings that she had begun to address.

As the group progressed, Helene continued to concentrate upon the "abusive" way that Eva had been treated. She indicated that Peggy was brutal in her approach to other people; taking away their security and failing to provide alternate caring and sensitivity. As the group became less tense, and more open, Helene too joined in with supportive comments.

Style. At best, Helene's behavior could be described as obstructionist. On another level, it is conceivable that the breaking of barriers regarding age (e.g., mother and daughters) upset her sense of position and power. Her actions seemed aimed

at drawing Eva back to her in opposition to the "younger" women.

Eva.

Content. Eva voiced the same opening comments as Helene-- focusing the issues upon Peggy and Janet. As the discussion progressed, Eva vacillated from expressing anger to crying and offering apologies and self-criticism for not being adequately sensitive to the needs of Peggy and Janet. Throughout most of the session, it was difficult to dissuade her from playing either extreme. At the end however, she seemed to synthesize the issues, appeared calmer, and supported the process that the group had experienced that evening.

Style. Eva appeared quite distraught, especially during the beginning of the group. In trying to make sense of the situation, she either joined Helene in criticizing the group, or demeaned herself through exaggerated (as well as inappropriate) self-criticism. It is possible that Eva's anxiety came from being the center of attention at a time which was not expected or calculated by her. At the end of the meeting, she seemed to be aware of the issues, understanding that she was not responsible for the feelings of other people.

Peggy.

Content. Peggy presneted some of her feelings regarding the discussion of sexuality. She explained that her own reticence to discuss sexual issues came from intense feelings of vulnerability.

She attempted to describe this perception in relation to others; basically saying that she saw others talking about sex through issues of marriage, and relationships with children. Being apart from these things, Peggy felt quite exposed and wanted to work through this in group.

As the session became confused, Peggy clarified several times her issues, apart from the issues of other people. In addition to supporting Eva, Peggy remarked upon the strength in Nancy's approach to Eva, as well as to the group.

Style. It was significant Peggy refrained from responding to Helene's hostility. Unlike other times, Peggy did not enter into a battle with her which was launched in an indirect manner. Avoiding this, Peggy remained active as a facilitator, and did not become incoherent as in past confrontations. It was possible that Peggy controlled herself by not letting her own "craziness" be touched by a person whose intentions appeared to be destructive.

Nancy.

Content. Nancy was very active throughout the session, clarifying issues and helping Eva to work through her confusion. She was supportive to all members of the group, and unearthed major concerns that were largely unmentioned throughout the training program. The most significant of these was the issue of trust.

Style. Nancy demonstrated her ability as a facilitator and as a counselor. There was little of the tentative and reserved qualities that had dominated her style when acting in these roles.

She seemed to be sure of herself, and her energy conveyed a sense of deep caring for people, and toward the future of the group.

Janet.

Content/style. Janet worked along similar lines as Nancy. She was very direct about unspoken issues; in particular, the issue of mother-daughter relationships in the group. She was remarkably assertive, particularly when people expressed fears of their statements being hurtful to others. She emphasized the importance of giving feedback, saying that it was this that everyone was needing, and that people were strong enough to deal with the issues.

Session XIV

In a real sense, the fourteenth session was the final chapter in this training program. The group began in an atmosphere of depression and anxiety. Nancy started by talking over various possibilities for the future of the group. As she talked, the room was noticeably silent. Peggy then responded to some of Nancy's ideas, adding that it was difficult to make specific plans because the issues in her life were uncertain. She said that she would be interested in working through the summer, to participate in more intense discussion and planning for the project. Janet then offered a similar commitment, and directly asked Eva and Helene to make statements about their feelings. In addition, Janet admitted the struggles in the group but emphasized the ways in which this had produced growth in herself.

Neither Eva nor Helene responded to Janet directly; from time to time they added criticisms of the group structure (e.g., not enough meeting time) and mentioned the numerous commitments in their lives. At one point Janet left the room for a minute; Helene then directed the group toward statements of unfinished business, which became the focus of the remainder of the evening.

Peggy began by labeling the group issues as "collective ambivalence," referring basically to the struggles present in the group, and the conflict as to confronting these things with each other. Janet supported this idea, adding that she was committed to dealing with the issues over the summer months. Nancy refused to recognize any conflict--she described the tension as "differences," and stressed that those dynamics made the group meaningful.

Helene and Eva did not volunteer issues until directly asked by Janet. Helene voiced indirect criticism of Peggy's leadership (Peggy's group, Peggy's issues, Peggy's doctorate) without concretizing issues. Eva expressed similar indirect criticisms but later stated two clear issues. One was the unresolved issue from Session thirteen: at the conclusion of that session, it seemed as if the issues between Eva, Peggy and Janet had been worked through. The other problem she identified was the conflict "between Peggy and Helene."

Peggy's response to this was to add the issue to the list, and ask for other statements of conflict between specific people. Eva was quite irritated that Peggy failed to address herself immediately to her issue; Peggy felt that the group was in the process of

identifying unfinished business, and that the task should continue. Toward the end of the group however, as personal statements were being discussed, Peggy asked Eva to elaborate what she saw as the conflict.

Eva withdrew at that point, and directed the focus to Helene. By this time, Helene had moved literally into a corner, and was staring at the floor. She was not responsive to the situation Eva had set up, and refused to be moved from her position. She simply stated that she was "feeling very quiet" and that she was dealing with things that the group could not handle. At first, people were sensitive to her, trying to encourage her to become involved. Finally, Peggy became annoyed, and Janet summarized by saying that she did not like Helene's posture. The issue was then tabled for the following week.

Nancy made some concluding remarks that were pertinent mainly to herself. Without addressing group issues specifically, she expressed disappointment with the meeting. She mentioned that after last week, she felt renewed enthusiasm, and for the first time, felt like a member of the group. She added that it had taken her a long time to trust, to admit the importance of the other group members to herself. As people left, Helene said that she felt badly about Nancy, saying that the group structure was responsible for her disappointment.

Session XV

Following the difficulties that emerged in Session fourteen, Peggy suggested that people take a stretch of time to talk over issues that were unfinished for them. Helene immediately offered to get into her material, and her issues consumed the attention of the group for the entire evening.

Essentially, she talked about terminating all relationships in Amherst, and returning to her home. She said that she was incorrect in thinking that her issue involved her insecurity as a professional (her identified personal issue at the beginning of the program). Helene underlined the fact that she had falsely regarded herself as being in the same position as other group members. Without directing herself explicitly, she emphasized that she was a professional (unlike Eva), that she was writing her dissertation with ease (unlike Peggy and Janet), and that any number of jobs were accessible to her upon demand (unlike Nancy). She summarized by thanking the group for the experience, and reiterating her need to think of her own needs as opposed to the needs of the group.

During Helene's discussion, the group remained largely inactive. Eva and Nancy expressed envy of Helene at certain points, and both supported her in acting upon what was in her interest. Both Janet and Peggy refrained from comment during Helene's talk, and became involved only in clarifying ways toward the end. Peggy had started the session by asking questions etc., but she was stopped by Helene

who criticized her for "probing"--the same criticism voiced toward the conclusion of Session fourteen.

It appeared as if Helene had come full circle--in her life as well as in the group. She entered by referring to herself as a professional, followed by denouncing the importance of credentials, then encouraged the group to think of themselves as able to establish a counseling service, gathered the enthusiasm of others, and ended by completely reversing her commitment--and thus the project.

The only other significant material was presented by Nancy tangentially, in response to Helene. She shared her disappointment about the group ending, but underlined her positive feelings about the experience. Unlike Helene, she was specific; Nancy said that for the first time, she had actually begun to voice her feelings around pregnancy, and being an adoptive parent. She said that this had been a real "hang up" for years, and that she was just beginning to feel as if the issue could actually be resolved at some point.

Session XVI

The first hour of Session sixteen was used in completing the Loevinger Inventory. This exercise caused objection by the group--most loudly stated by Nancy and Helene.

The second hour followed the pattern in Session fifteen--this time, Peggy volunteered to talk about her feelings regarding the group experience. She began by responding to the criticism concerning the exercise; talking about the group as material for her dissertation,

and speaking separately of the group as a meaningful personal experience. Peggy countered Helene's remarks concerning her "manipulation" of the group by pointing out that the group had followed very little of the original design. She then spoke of her leadership position; essentially saying that it was her stated preference that the leadership be shared, and that most group members had taken little responsibility for this. The issue of leadership was then cited as the immediate agenda for the group, given that the formal sessions were ending.

Following these statements, Peggy talked more about positive feelings, as well as frustrations, concerning her position in the group. In a somewhat disorganized fashion, she attempted to express her feelings of "not being seen." It was difficult for her to work into those feelings, but the picture became clearer after a while, especially with Eva's help. As Peggy worked through the issue, she structured what she saw as personal difficulties, and what she considered to be group problems.

As the closeness developed between Peggy and Eva, Helene interjected comments that threatened to "undo" what was coming together. One example was her mention of the way that Eva was "misled" in Session twelve. At another point, she suggested that Peggy should be confronting her--that Peggy was avoiding the "real issue." As Peggy was talking over her personal style in the group process, Helene began a statement by saying, "If you were my student..." At this point, Peggy became overtly angry and the group

in turn lost control (i.e., interruptions, two simultaneous conversations). The evening ended with consensus upon meeting for three more informal sessions, to bring closure to the group experience. This had been impossible, given the activity during this final sixteenth session.

All of the sessions have been summarized from the original dictation (an example of a complete session appears in Appendix C). The content is now subject to critical review, according to the political concepts that were developed in Chapter II. The following chapter evaluates the content, and posits subjective comments from the author concerning the participation of each group member.

C H A P T E R I V

In this chapter, the content of the group sessions which was reported in the previous chapter will be examined for the presence of socialist feminist concepts. This group model is based upon two general assumptions: 1) The content which developed in this group is not intended to form the basis for a re-writing of psychological theory. Instead, the content can be used to find new subject areas that are significant to women in therapy, to re-evaluate the accuracy of theories that describe women, or to increase or decrease the emphasis upon issues which have been viewed as integral to female development. And 2) The group process reflects "feminist process," with the intuition that this method opens new content areas that have been unexplored by existing models.

This project is explicitly an experiment; a beginning in the development of the concept "feminist therapy." Participants in the program were testing the viability of using the training model on a larger scale, as well as creating the model itself. This experience is considered successful if group members increased their awareness of themselves as feminist therapists in the direction of socialist feminism, and if new areas for the study of women's lives were identified.

Several measurements were employed, and all proved to be limited in their use to this project. Selected for this experiment were the Loevinger Maturity Scale, a questionnaire developed by myself, and an exercise involving a case presentation. All three

were designed for pre- and post-administration, although only the Loevinger Scale was completed in this manner. There were several complications in using these instruments; some conflicts generating from the group and other from myself.

A major conflict was my own lack of confidence in the reliability of testing and general unfamiliarity with its operation. Ambivalence was reflected in my acceptance of group members choosing not to complete the case study exercise, and not seriously filling out the post Loevinger test. More significantly though, the participants sensed the disparity of the testing procedure with the notion of feminist process, and expressed resentment. This resentment was stronger during the post test, to a degree which probably would have confounded the results had they been scored.

Given this history, the formal testing instruments have been eliminated from consideration. In its place, there is an evaluation which while experimental and subjective, is quite possibly more accurate. The evaluation which follows is based upon the four socialist feminist values which have been identified in Chapter II. It is important to note that the principles formulated by Barbara Ehrenreich were not discussed by her within the realm of psychotherapy. The interpretation of these concepts as presented below reflects a necessary flexibility so that they can be useful to this project. Flexibility in terms of evaluation emerges as a clearly identified pattern as the content is examined for the presence of socialist feminist values, or where significant, marked opposition to socialist feminist values.

Totalistic understanding is evaluated by the depth and breadth in the presentation of personal issues and ideas. The emphasis upon subjective factors is viewed by the importance the participants place upon their development of individual and collective consciousness, both as women and as therapists. The rejection of stagism is considered in several ways; the ability of people to see themselves as therapists apart from credentials and other stages of professional development, the perception of psychological change as a process unique to the individual rather than dictated by standard progressive stages, and the belief that involvement in societal change is integral to the on-going process of psychotherapy. The centrality of women is essentially the concept of feminism; looking at the ways in which the participants define themselves as feminists, the consciousness of the program as a group of women with a commonly shared experience, and the awareness of the dynamics involved in women therapists working with women clients.

The content and process of the participants within each session has been summarized in Chapter III. In this section, the content presented by each participant is evaluated and coded in this manner:

- (T) Totalistic Understanding
- (S) Emphasis upon Subjective Factors
- (R) Rejection of Stagism
- (W) The Importance of Women

or, marked opposition to

- (t) totalistic understanding
- (s) emphasis upon subjective factors

(r) rejection of stagism

(w) the importance of women

Following this evaluation, the patterns of each group member will be discussed, showing the progression throughout the fourteen sessions. The final meetings (Sessions fifteen and sixteen) were abbreviated and focused largely upon group process issues. Therefore, the content of those sessions is not evaluated and recorded in this design. Beyond the discussion of individual patterns, a hypothetical interpretation of the ways in which this experience influenced the lives of the participants is offered in conclusion.

Sessions I-XIV

Session I.

Peggy. (T) Peggy presented her issue as a conflict between herself and cultural expectations of female behavior.

(S) In presenting a personal issue to the group process, Peggy expressed the belief that increased consciousness would be important in working toward resolution of that problem.

Helene. (T) Helene talked about her issue as a "fear of success," and acknowledged the ways in which the female role produced ambivalence around competency.

(S) In presenting a personal issue to the group process, Helene expressed the belief that increased consciousness would be important in working toward resolution of that problem.

Janet. (S) In talking about her issue, the difficulty in establishing personal boundaries, Janet expressed the belief that increased consciousness would be important in working toward the resolution of that problem.

Eva. (T) Eva presented an issue of being intimidated by professionalism. She linked this with her experience of being exploited as a paraprofessional, by male professionals.

(S) In presenting a personal issue to the group process, Eva expressed the belief that increased consciousness would be important in working toward resolution of that problem.

Session II.

Peggy. (T) Peggy's comments were directed toward other group members: working toward the association of personal issues with larger societal and cultural constraints.

Nancy. (T) Nancy described her issue as being in transition and growing older as an internal experience, and as a struggle with a society which is youth oriented.

(S) Nancy alluded several times to her experience in psychotherapy (which was ongoing at the time of the group), stressing the ways in which this had encouraged the development of her own consciousness, and of the contradictions in the society.

(R) In discussing the multitude of issues that arose from her presentation, it became clear that Nancy was rejecting two basic stage concepts; stagism and professionalism.

Eva. (T) Eva talked about a variety of life experiences which were fundamental to the development of her political consciousness. Two areas emphasized were her experience of being a mother, and job situations where she was a paraprofessional among professional staff.

(S) In talking about her concept of age, Eva stated that the way in which she relates to herself is far more significant than chronological years. She mentioned that she used to be "older" than she is now.

(R) Eva thoroughly rejected the notion that age in itself should determine the behavior or feelings of a person.

Helene. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Janet. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Session III.

Peggy. (S) Peggy related to the issue of dependency in terms of her consciousness of being a twin, as well as the psychological experience of her family.

Eva. (T) In describing emotional dependency, Eva alluded to many institutions (in her own experience) which have reinforced this position. She mentioned the welfare system, mental health institutions, and the male model as a standard of normalcy.

(S) Eva stressed that the above experiences indeed shaped her sense of herself as being dependent and inadequate.

Nancy. (S) Nancy described the paradoxical situation of needing very much to be dependent, and yet feeling as if everyone was dependent upon her. She attributed the extremity of these needs with the experience of growing up with a schizophrenic mother.

Helene. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Janet. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Session IV.

Helene. (T) Helene talked broadly about her dependency issues as originating from her family experience, but underlined that being female largely determined those patterns.

(S) Helene described the ways in which her consciousness of her femininity shaped the perception, and need for dependency.

Nancy. (S) Nancy repeated the material presented in Session III regarding family history, and reiterated the importance of psychotherapy.

(W) Nancy stated that she was trying to learn to depend upon women for basic trust and emotional needs. She felt that it was important for women to do this with each other; to bring women closer together, and to depart from the notion that as with relationships with men, dependency necessitates oppression.

Eva. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Peggy. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Janet. (T) Janet talked about her issue of dependency in relation to family expectations and events, and in terms of the dominant role distinctions between men and women.

(S) Janet discussed the ways in which childhood and adolescent experiences formed her "dependent self" as well as her general sense of identity.

Session V.

Peggy. (T) As Peggy talked through anger in regard to her dependent relationships (essentially the failure of "providers" to be supportive), she mentioned family members, the medical profession, and hierarchical institutions.

(S) Peggy discussed the ways in which dependency was for her, double-binded. She related this to her general ambivalence about being dependent upon others.

Eva. (T) During her discussion, Eva related her dependency to numerous controls that have been imposed upon her. She mentioned her relationships with men, the medical profession, and legal constraints coming from the state.

(S) Eva related the ways in which enforced dependency encouraged her to think of herself as a weak, and needy person.

Nancy. (T) Nancy supported many of the remarks made by Eva and Peggy, placing the issue of dependency within a wide range of institutions.

(S) Nancy again mentioned the influence of her therapy in recognizing the forces of these experiences upon her self-concept.

(r) Nancy directly separated the younger women from the older. She insinuated that the problems she expressed could not be felt by younger people because the issues were very different.

Janet. (T) Janet interjected comments throughout the meeting that encouraged people to view dependency in broad ways; apart from personal life experiences.

(S) Janet discussed the conflict of wanting dependency, and being expected to take care of people and to anticipate their needs.

Session VI.

Peggy. (T) Peggy elaborated on the material presented in Session V, again talking from a broad perspective.

(S) Peggy made connections between the personal experiences described, and their influence upon the psychological development of women.

Eva. (S) Eva talked about feelings of resentment and later was able to place this reaction within relevant personal experiences.

Helene. (S) Helene presented personal experiences which she traced to emotional needs around dependency.

Janet. (T) Janet demonstrated totalistic perspective in offering statements of group process, which in turn made individual struggles more meaningful.

(S) Janet mentioned personal experiences which heightened her awareness of the complexity of dependency issues.

Nancy. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Session VII.

Janet. (S) Janet presented a lengthy report of family experiences which reinforced the taboo of overt aggression in women. She emphasized the sex differentiation by comparing the expectations of her brother with herself.

Peggy. (W) Peggy discussed the ways in which traditional therapy, psychoanalysis in particular, was incompatible with feminism. She attempted to present her ideas concerning the need for a feminist therapy.

(S) Peggy stated that she experienced anger toward her from other group members, and that this feeling dissuaded her from being assertive. She added other experiences where she reacted similarly.

Helene. (S) Helene said that she felt angry with Peggy, and proceeded to present sensitive issues that had been touched. Later, these feelings were pursued which resulted in clear understanding of Helene's situation.

Eva. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Nancy. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Session VIII.

Peggy. (S) Peggy discussed the ways in which she had come to feel ambivalent about expressing anger. Largely, this conflict was based upon the expectations of women in this culture.

Eva. (r) Eva mentioned feeling inadequate to the group because of her lack of professional credentials.

Janet. (T) Janet discussed aggression within a wide range of experiences and institutions, presenting the ways in which women are discouraged from displaying overt aggression.

(S) Janet specifically examined the influence of the above issues in terms of the development of her consciousness of herself.

Helene. (r) Helene took a superior position in response to Peggy and Janet; indicating that her professional experience gave greater validity to the issues between them than those which they themselves identified.

Nancy. (T) Nancy presented her ambivalence regarding aggression in women; citing examples of her own resentment of aggressive women, and criticism of herself for being intellectually active. She included the issue of aggression between women.

(S) Nancy talked about the fears and anger (i.e., ambivalence) in herself that resulted from the above experiences.

Session IX

Janet. (S) Janet discussed the experience of the prior session, saying that she had felt much aggression directed toward her and that she had been unable to respond. From this session, she was

able to clarify the meaning of aggression in herself, and to move toward greater self-assertion.

Peggy. (T) Peggy talked about the broader issues of anger in women, specifically around the concept of the fear which precedes anger.

(S) Peggy mentioned that she connected with the above comment emotionally during her interaction with Janet in Sessions seven and eight.

(W) Peggy stated that her discussion on anger was inspired by a recent conference on feminist therapy. She stressed the importance of women re-evaluating concepts such as "anger" or "aggression" in terms of their own experience.

Helene. (S) Helene discussed her various feelings regarding anger, and then used these feelings to inform her of issues concerning aggression in women.

(w) Helene stated that feminist therapy did not exist; that the term was simply humanistic therapy.

Nancy. (S) Nancy expressed feelings regarding the interaction between Peggy and Janet, and then identified issues of aggression on the basis of her intuitions.

(r) Nancy remarked that as an older woman, she felt that issues of anger were less important to her.

Eva. The content did not show presence of socialist feminist values.

Session X.

Helene. (T) Helene talked about women as restrained (even unconsciously) and defined by the "male model."

(S) Helene talked about aging as a psychological experience of becoming her own mother. Her reflections upon that insight presented various thoughts concerning the issue of aging in women.

(R) Helene rejected the concept of chronological age, saying that she related more to the involvements in her life rather than to actual years.

Janet. (R) Janet emphasized that age was not merely a matter of chronological years, but rather an indication of lifestyle. She added that people her age felt "older" if their lives were more established.

Nancy. (T) Nancy discussed her feelings on aging from a deeply personal and cultural perspective. She emphasized the fact that older people are not viewed as productive, as individuals with values.

(S) Nancy discussed the ways in which her fear of aging and essentially death, contributed to the rejection of older people in the society.

(R) Nancy spoke angrily of discrimination toward older people, and suggested that it was this rejection that forced older people to be unproductive and to lose their self-respect.

Eva. (S) Eva described the ways in which the devaluation of older people caused her to be ashamed of her age, and in turn, encouraged her to conceal that part of herself.

(W) Through a complex group process, Eva discovered that her acceptance of herself (including her age), was integral to her feminist consciousness.

Peggy. (T) Peggy discussed the devaluation of age largely from an economic perspective. She stated that women need to evaluate themselves on the basis of personal power, as opposed to professional power.

(W) Peggy supported Eva's feminism; emphasizing the need for women to create a feminist model as an alternative to the male structure of the society.

Session XI.

Helene. (S) Helene referred to many personal experiences, as a child and as a parent which caused her to reflect upon their influence in her thinking about herself. She mentioned specifically the destructive behavior of her mother, which essentially denied her contact with her sexuality, and the various ways in which she attempted to "undo" this experience with her children.

Nancy. (S) Nancy repeated relevant aspects of her family history which greatly affected her sense of herself as a sexual person. The major issue in this early conditioning was the very negative and fearful view of pregnancy.

Janet. (T) Janet discussed the ways in which women and other minorities are forced to compete for a small amount of resources while the power structure accumulates the wealth.

(S) Janet reported various family experiences which influenced her perception of her sexuality.

Peggy. (S) Peggy alluded to the ways in which family relationships influenced her ideas of herself, as well as sexual behavior generally.

Session XII.

Eva. (T) Eva talked about the evolution of her sexuality in terms of her feelings, as well as many external factors. She emphasized the ways in which the socialization of women denies the presence of sexuality in women. She added examples of institutions which reinforced this position; several being the Church, and the treatment of women by physicians. In terms of discovering her sexuality, Eva stressed the importance of the women's movement.

(S) Eva consistently referred to her own feelings when framing issues around female sexuality.

Helene. (S) Helene discussed issues exclusively from the basis of personal experience.

Nancy. (S) Nancy presented a variety of personal experiences.

(r) Nancy began the evening by withdrawing in saying, "I am too old to care about sex."

Janet. (S) Janet contributed several personal experiences to the discussion. In addition to her own history, she made statements regarding her experience of discussing sexuality within the group context.

Peggy. (T) Peggy stated that the concept of sexuality includes more than a marriage relationship. She asked that the group expand the discussion to include other aspects of themselves.

Session XIII.

Helene. (S) Helene concentrated upon her feelings within the process of the group.

Eva. (S) Eva concentrated upon her feelings within the process of the group.

Peggy. (T) Peggy again commented upon the need to expand the concept of female sexuality.

(S) Peggy shared her feelings regarding the process of the group.

(W) Peggy presented her ideas concerning the importance of women creating a sense of their sexuality within a context of other women.

Nancy. (S) Nancy referred mainly to her feelings in regard to other women in the group.

Janet. (S) Janet commented throughout the meeting on the dynamics within the group, and her own feelings as a part of that process.

Session XIV.

Nancy. (S)

Peggy. (S) All group members participated in a process session.

Helene. (S) People explored their feelings in regard to the

Janet. (S) group experience, and the interaction of that

Eva. (S) experience with the significant issues in their lives.

Table 4-1

| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII |
|--------|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Peggy | T S T | | S | | T S | T S | S W |
| Helene | T S | | | T S | Absent | S | S |
| Eva | T S | T S R | T S | | T S | S | |
| Janet | S | | | T S | T S | T S | S |
| Nancy | Absent | T S R | S | S W | T r | S | |

Table 4-2

| | VIII | IX | X | XI | XII | XIII | XIV |
|--------|------|----------|--------|--------|-----|------|-----|
| Peggy | S | T S W | T W | S | T | T S | S |
| Helene | r | S w | T R | S | S | S | S |
| Eva | r | | S W | Absent | T | S | S |
| Janet | T | S | R | T | S | S | S |
| Nancy | T | S r | T R | S | S | S | S |

Commentary

The result most immediately apparent is that socialist feminist values were consistently present in the group discussions. This can be explained by looking at the basic structure of the group sessions. On every level, the structure reflects the established criteria.

Totalistic Understanding. Although the participants were asked to approach the group with a personal issue, the focus was not an individual one. The experience was a multilevel structure, with the emphasis on interpersonal learning. Accompanying extensive discussions of personal experiences and feelings was a conscious consideration of political analysis and involvement in social change. This was evident in that the overall ambition of the group was to establish some kind of counseling service, i.e., a practical application of the learning experience.

Importance of Subjective Factors. The emphasis upon subjective factors, i.e., consciousness, was implicit in this program. The intention of this project was to explore areas of feelings and awareness that have not been formally documented - to give legitimacy to this information.

Rejection of Stagism. The program was arranged by topics, with the understanding that this structure was indeed flexible, and intended for preliminary organization of the group. It was understood that

awareness need not progress according to the stages of dependency, aggression, and sexuality. In fact, in examining the actual process of the group, it is clear that the discussion flowed in directions substantially different from what was originally conceived.

The Importance of Women. Suffice it to say that this was a feminist counselor program, working toward the development of greater consciousness among feminist therapists.

The presence of socialist feminist values in the discussion of individual group members needs to be examined on several levels. In the following summaries of individual participation, I am interested in where the participant began in the group, the quality (and changes in quality) that presented in her reference to socialist feminist values, and hypothetical influences of the program upon other areas of her life.

Eva

Eva began the program with a fundamental ambivalence about herself. She presented the issue in connection with professionalism; her fear and resentment of professional people. As the group progressed, it became evident that the locus of the problem at the time was very much within Eva. She was at a point of being able to become a professional, i.e., eligible for graduate school, and intentionally missed the deadline for application.

The issue of being a professional involved Eva's identification with herself. Being a professional for her connoted competence, personal power and accountability. Although Eva was very drawn to that challenge, her life-long styles of behavior came into conflict. She had well learned, through exploitive jobs and personal relationships, that her value rested in being "other" oriented. Whatever ability she permitted to be visible, was initially carefully tempered with demeaning remarks about herself.

It was impossible for Eva to maintain this behavior in the group given the feminist membership, and furthermore, her desire to change emerged in the process as a powerful competitor to passivity. Eva was in the middle of this conflict, and seemed to affiliate with two group factions that supported either side. Peggy and Janet pushed Eva to assert herself, whereas Helene tended to nurture the feelings of inadequacy. Peggy and Janet, being younger and feminist, were similar to Eva's peer group at that time. Helene represented the established professional; to Eva both therapeutic as well as intimidating.

Sitting in the middle of ambivalence, Eva became the pivotal member of the group. She either offered herself enormously to other people, or drew all the attention onto herself. She began the group by talking frequently, then moved into a stage of (T,S) being interspersed with (O), reflecting her ambivalence about being seen, and finished the group by sharing consistently. Her grouping with Helene, or Peggy and Janet, very much set the tone and issues of the group discussions.

Following the program, Eva made several concrete decisions. Most significant was her decision to enroll in a social work program. She continued to work with feminist projects, but curtailed her involvement to a level of parity with that of other participants (i.e., not accepting inordinate responsibility). It would appear that the group experience moved Eva beyond her ambivalence, in that it intensified her conflict to a point which made it no longer viable to maintain.

Nancy

Nancy expressed issues very similar to Eva's superficially, but indeed variant given that she was at a different stage of life. Nancy talked around her ambivalence regarding her worth, specifically in terms of professionalism and credentialing. These feelings were integrally related to the pervasive issue of aging, both within herself and as a crisis of American culture. She was working in therapy during the sixteen weeks of the program, and it was often unclear (particularly in the beginning) what purpose she sought from the group experience.

Nancy's pattern of participation in the group demonstrated her concerns at that time. The subject of aging was of major importance. Nancy vacillated from anger in regard to discrimination and devaluation to actual exploitation of her age to place her in a superior position to other group members. Correlated with this tendency was a notable presence of both (R) and (r). Nancy was relatively quiet throughout the first half of the program, and when she did

speak, it was often in monologues rather than in sustained interaction with other people. As the group focused attention on grant possibilities, Nancy became centrally involved. She was direct in her interest, stressing all along that her group issue was the need for employment in a collaborative atmosphere. Her involvement however, opened many other previously unseen aspects of herself.

Nancy became much more vulnerable, both in her approach to herself as well as others. She progressively shared more of her feelings around motherhood, and her inability to become pregnant. This was quite significant, as the issue of children occupied a large space in the group. She demonstrated remarkable sensitivity to others, which would force the question as to the credibility of her former "sleeping" posture. Nancy was additionally instrumental as a facilitator, offering support as well as clarity and bringing about the awareness of commonality in the group. Her problem area was in the recognition of conflict - she clearly invested herself in the fantasy of a group project, and seemed to disregard all signs of dissonance from others in the group. This blocking probably connected with her initial distant behavior in the group.

Toward the end of the program, as the conflicts pushed through all obscurity, Nancy expressed great disappointment, and drifted into former behavior. Before tuning out completely, she did share the positive aspects of the group experience. She mentioned that she had never been able to discuss the issue of motherhood, and

that having done so, felt a sense of breakthrough (she discussed the influence of her therapy as well). After the group ended, Nancy developed her own project, and began to work independently.

Although Nancy could have benefited greatly from a group project, her movement after the group seems very substantial. During the process of the program, Nancy gradually allowed herself to trust and find value in other people. It seems possible that she included herself in this process; moving beyond the devaluation of herself as an older woman, working through the issue of pregnancy, and finding new "life" in herself.

Janet

Unlike any other group member, Janet's group issue met some resolution during the program. Her presenting conflict, difficulty in defining personal boundaries and setting limits, was a subset of the larger issue of assertion and aggression. Janet demonstrated this conflict in the beginning of the program; she was virtually silent during the first three sessions, speaking for the first time at the end of Session four. One interpretation is that the initial silence was a period of boundary clarification - to interpolate herself into the group in a manner which expressed her own needs.

As she projected herself into the group more extensively, she became very valuable to all participants. She exhibited superior skill as a therapist and facilitator; displaying sensitivity, labeling group issues, and generally using balance in her interactions

with others. The latter refers primarily to her ability to distinguish her issues from those of others, and to use judgement in the intensity (closeness) of her response to individuals. It was a good opportunity for Janet to use these skills, given that her "boundaries" as a therapist seemed fairly well established.

Mid-point in the program, Janet became very involved with the issue of aggression. She referred to the prominence of this issue in her life, and later became involved in the resolution of a conflict between two group members. Her next step was to place herself directly in a conflictual situation as a participant (with Peggy). After several weeks of struggle, Janet emerged with a stronger image of herself and with a commitment to continue to define herself within the context of other people.

This commitment was clearly apparent in the group. Janet became active both in structuring and participating, and she became increasingly willing to state issues of conflict in the group. The (S) in the beginning of the group bears little relevance to the (S) later on in the program. In some ways, the socialist feminist content could have been more plentiful given a different group. For the most part, except in times of overt conflict, the "older" women in the group tended to dominate the conversation. Very practically, there was not enough time for Janet to talk, nor was there an audience consistently attentive to her.

Janet's development in socialist feminism continued to spiral after the group. She became involved in a gestalt group, which could be seen as an increased sense of boundaries; a self-confidence

(sense of boundaries) to place herself in a vulnerable group situation, and to allow herself to move in and out of boundary distinctions as gestalt requires. Particularly exciting in relation to this project is that Janet became more interested in herself as a woman, and in other women around her. She incorporated the issues of women into her graduate work, and began to work with other feminist therapists in a collective.

Peggy

When the group began, I had been active in the women's movement for five years. I felt the commitment to feminism, and had experienced the meaning of sisterhood within my personal relationships, and between myself and women's groups. I was unclear about incorporating feminist activity into my work, largely because the professional sense of myself was undeveloped. I had been known as a "helper" for most of my life, but formally, I had only one year in counseling practice experience. Almost equally informal was my sense of my own development. Though aware and sensitive to issues in my life, I seemed to be engaged in struggles that were identifiable to me as patterns but was not in a position to alter those in a meaningful way.

The group experience made all of these issues compelling. I found myself surrendering many of my goals in the group (all of the academic content) and wondering if flowing with the process in the

dissertation project was truly an expression of leadership ability. Feeling very much in tune with the emotion in the room, I found it confusing when astute perceptions were greeted with hostility. In times where Helene manipulated me into a mother-daughter struggle, I discovered that my ability to perceive situations clearly did little to extricate myself. When I tried to approach her therapeutically, Helene displayed more experienced skill (as a therapist) to push me into an inferior position, i.e., the daughter.

All of these situations generated much thinking about myself and my ability. My despairing feelings were matched by a genuine sense of caring and value for each group member, and for myself as well. It became clear to me that my operation called for increased coherence, and better representation of myself to other people. My intuitions regarding feminism and therapy needed concrete development, which in itself had been a primary motivation for initiating the project. The group experience augmented rather than satisfied this need for growth. The pattern of all the socialist feminist values in my participation reflected the presence of socialist feminist understanding but a lack of a complete analysis. All four criteria were present in my discussion, but it is significant that their appearance did not take a consistent form.

Following the group experience, I began to search for new ways to clarify what had begun. The first direction began with the Socialist Feminist Conference in July 1975. At this time, I became actively involved in understanding political concepts and

the ways in which psychotherapy could relate to this analysis. Several months later, as a socialist feminist therapist, I became employed in a psychiatric clinic located in a working class city. Working in this position continues to enhance my awareness of socialist feminism and my sense of myself as a therapist. At this point, I am aware that my work consistently reflects all four socialist feminist criteria.

Helene

In the beginning of the program, Helene presented herself as a competent professional who was having difficulty in accepting her ability. Although she called attention to this issue, she never seemed to deal with this subject meaningfully in the group. She referred to her professional status at times when she was feeling threatened, but never once referred to her professional understanding to elucidate issues of the group process. At the conclusion of sixteen sessions, Helene announced that her struggle in Amherst was meaningless, and that a professional career was waiting for her at her home. Given that she had professional status and career prospects at her home, and it was this that she sought, it is unclear why she moved to Amherst. It would appear that Helene's professional status was not as secure as she insisted.

The only consistent pattern in her discussion was (S) and yet for the most part, her emphasis upon subjective experience was not expressed as a socialist feminist value. When talking about

herself, the words appeared as rehearsed speeches complete with self analysis that seemed influenced by psychoanalytic theory. Her response to other people most frequently came in the form of an interpretation of their behavior or feeling rather than a direct response from within herself. One interpretation that she referred to frequently was the "mother." This "mother" analysis seemed to surface when she was feeling highly threatened. This served to deflect the conflict from herself on to another (most often Peggy), and to place her in a position of power that most likely simulated her mother position within her own family.

The overriding mood which generated from Helene was loneliness. Her ways of negotiating the world around her seemed largely based on manipulative and controlling behavior. Her interaction in the group suggested that this behavior was present not only in her professional work, but extensive in her personal relationships. This tended to leave her in an isolated position, which was one of her frequent complaints. Her insecurity was apparent when issues became so threatening to her that she was unwilling to confront them. Though Helene continually rejected the "male" professional model, she seemed reluctant to engage in this effort to create an alternative feminist program. While Helene did seem to be looking for acceptance and closeness with women in agreeing to participate in the program, the demands for participation in the group were even more difficult for her than the values of the "male" professional system. The group demanded a vulnerability, a sharing of oneself, and a commitment to

a struggle where rewards were unclear. Every time one of these demands were made of her either directly or indirectly in the group process, she defended herself with "professional" behavior, thus denying herself the opportunity to appreciate herself more as a woman and to experience sisterhood. Following the group, Helene returned to her home and resumed her former professional position. I happened to meet her accidentally several months later. She indicated that her personal and professional life were quite fulfilling, and indeed, seemed to be quite successful. She said that leaving Amherst and academia had moved her in positive directions. Perhaps she was right.

This chapter brings closure to the group project. The project has significance both in its impact upon the lives of the participants, and as a structure which can relate to other structures of a similar nature. From the evaluation and commenting in this chapter, it is evident that each participant advanced important personal and professional issues through the process of the group. In the following and final chapter, the stages and events of the group experience will be evaluated from a broad political perspective.

C H A P T E R V

This thesis has presented the idea that feminist therapy is part of the historical development of socialist feminism. This development is traced here by looking at the experience of those involved in the socialist feminist movement, which in turn explain its own phenomena. Analogous in this manner of thinking is that the events and material which generated from the study group reflect the stages of the experience of socialist feminists. Chapter Five identifies these stages and the experiences of the study group are compared. This comparison, in summary of the dissertation, adds to the Chapter Four evaluation of the extent to which the study group is structured on a socialist feminist model.

The Red Apple Paper

The Red Apple, a community organizing work group of the Northampton Valley Women's Union, has recently summarized its experiences in an article appearing in Quest, summer 1977. Their intent is to analyze the present state of the socialist feminist movement by looking over its four year history from the perspective of four categories; theory, practice, organizational form, and internal practice. They, as a microcosm of the movement, generalize their experience to those of other socialist feminist groups.

Foremost in their analysis is that they view the growth of socialist feminism having moved in dialectical patterns. Each phase of development generates new problems, and simultaneously, new ideas and greater understanding of the complexity of the problem form. At points of unresolvable conflict splits develop which seemingly deflect unity, while in turn broaden the concepts of the movement. Their paper is written in the spirit of explicating; searching for the meaning of their experience and using this information to posit directions for future work.

In the pages that follow the four central areas, theory, practice, organizational form, and internal process are presented on two levels. First, the experiences and ideas from the Red Apple work group are discussed. Following the summaries, the developments of the feminist therapy project are compared and contrasted. As the discussion progresses, it becomes evident that the similar political structure of both groups has produced a commonality of the experiences.

Theory

Red Apple

From its very beginnings, women involved in feminism were challenged to define justification for their interest in such activity. Feminists soon learned the futility of responding to this external pressure, and concentrated instead upon building groups and understanding the feelings that these experiences exposed. Basically, they realized that "women together" created a new kind of energy, in fact

a new cultural identity. The focus was generally an internal one without serious interest in placing their development within a theoretical context.

The socialist feminist movement vastly increased the emphasis upon theory, thus confronting the anti-intellectual tendency within the women's movement as well as the external pressure to define feminism. The concept of socialist feminism itself initiated a new category, one which demanded definition. Implicit in this title was that feminism and socialism would be merged, and somehow the analysis needed to include issues of sex, class, race, lesbianism, and imperialism. While a positive move, various problems emerged. Basically, theory building became both difficult and tedious, requiring a patience that came in conflict with the ambitious and energetic nature of socialist feminists at that time.

Discussions concerning basic definition eg. "are women a class?", "what is patriarchy?" consumed much attention of the Red Apple group. The various points of view on these issues very much reflected the prior political experience of individual members. One clear distinction in perspective was evidenced by those women formerly engaged in socialist groups, and those women who primarily identified with lesbian feminism (the importance of capitalism versus patriarchy in their analyses). Others felt the need to connect all issues without priority. All however, were looking for one basic philosophy - a unified position.

The struggle for this unified position resulted in frustration, both in a personal and political sense. Furthermore, the slow pace

of the theory building conflicted with notions of what activity should be happening. Many women became discouraged with a movement that began with much vitality only several years before with more focused action groups. The complexity of the issues, along with the pressure to become theoretically legitimate, obscured the very ideas which were beginning to develop. Those who remain contemplating the future of socialist feminism now appreciate their achievements, and realize that building theory is a slow process, one which requires years to coalesce.

Study group.

In many ways, these dynamics can be translated in relationship to the experiences of the group. The project was conceived from the growing ambiguity regarding theory and values in the movement for a feminist therapy. The express purpose of the project was to define more closely what entailed feminist therapy, in a theoretical and practical sense. Again, the problem areas were repeated: The particular background of each therapist/participant strongly influenced their attitude toward feminist therapy, and it was the general expectation that significant theoretical concepts would develop within a sixteen week period.

At the beginning of the project, all group members consensually agreed to work toward the goals of the group, indicating support of the theoretical pursuit as well as a commitment to a group process. The personal history of each participant varied along lines of psychotherapy experience and training, political history, and lifestyle.

Although all participants were self-described as feminist therapists, the working definition of that concept was strikingly diverse, and tended to reflect the needs of the individual woman. Peggy, for example, felt the need to define a social and professional position given that the existing tendencies in therapy were isolating and non-affirming of herself. In contrast, Helene and Janet had found recognition within a traditional system but were looking for a wider range in which to express themselves.

In general, all members needed some security in the group not in terms of theoretical development, but rather in finding a theory which was supportive of the choices that they had made in their lives. Helene and Nancy for example literally cited "men" repeatedly as the focus of their oppression, and yet chose to work and live with men. In the group, they sought to formulate ideas which necessitated women's involvement with men in order to bring about societal change. Four months proved to be an absurd schedule in which to complete a theory of feminist therapy, and too often the tension produced personal feelings of failure. This despair obscured the fascinating ideas which were discovered through reviewing the narrative of the group meetings.

Practice

Red Apple

Materializing theory into practice proved to raise many similar difficulties for the Red Apple Collective. Again, it was agreed that projects needed to relate to issues of class, sex, race, lesbianism,

and imperialism, but it was not clear in what way an organizing project could incorporate all of these foci. Pressure mounted in the group to move from theory to organizing activity, in the stated belief that socialist feminism was not an elite, academic group, but rather one dedicated to changing the society. Though this drive to action indeed reflected political values, it is likely that union members entertained the hope that the frustrations incurred in theory building would be worked through with concrete activity.

An unanticipated problem arose with the beginning of organizing projects. Quite simply, those involved discovered that they lacked experience in community organizing. All of the women had had prior experience in the feminist movement as well as other political groups, but they discovered that at that point, more extensive skills were needed. There was a need for immediate results, and intense self-criticism for what was perceived as their failures. The expectations were inappropriate, and a product of inexperience. The same feeling of frustration re-emerged. The work members wanted to clarify their position through well-defined activity, and to find validation through evidence of community change.

Study group

The notion of practice played a central role in the feminist therapy group. It became the symbol of commitment among group members, and for some participants, a tangible life goal. The program was designed to include planning a project for future work with the intention of framing the discussion of a project, specifically in the form of a counseling service, became very significant. In general,

the idea was supported by different participants at various times in the program, and usually coincided with the individual's sense of involvement.

Concrete interest in developing a project began to form about midpoint (seven sessions) into the program. On first look, it would appear that interest in the project emerged as group cohesion developed. In fact, it is at that point that positive statements concerning the group appear in the transcripts. Several participants referred to the group meetings as a central support system in their lives. It is this growing feeling ostensibly that is acknowledged to be the primary motivation for practice. On closer examination however, it becomes clear that tension was developing in the group and that the participants attempted to mitigate the situation by moving in the direction of practice.

After several meetings of the group, differences in values and lifestyle became obvious. Early in the project, certain women expressed interest and appreciation of these differences while others stressed the commonality of experience. At certain points, anger surfaced between individuals, but these ruptures tended to be viewed as personality conflicts rather than basic ideological differences. Following a significant struggle between Helene and Peggy, and later Janet and Peggy, Helene initiated the idea of the group becoming a counseling service. The focus of the group quickly changed to a more external direction, and the group seemed temporarily relieved and gained energy.

Some of the group members began meeting on their own to discuss the project design and funding sources. As the discussion progressed, however, so reappeared the troublesome dynamics. The tensions around differences became particularly extreme because all of the group members had difficulty accepting and expressing anger. This issue was explored in terms of personal history as well as women's history, but the working through of internal problems required a commitment which had not yet been defined. Commitment to practice temporarily filled this need, but it could not withstand unresolved personal/ideological issues.

Organizational Form

Red Apple

From the beginning, a constant criticism directed toward the women's movement attacked the composition of its membership. Feminists were told that they did not represent the "real" women in this country, generally with those women who professed satisfaction with the roles of wife and mother. Others disqualified the women's struggle as "white and middle-class", stating that their concerns bore little relation to the needs of third world and poor women. Feminists respond to this criticism in various ways, some feeling self-critical and committed to reaching non-middle class and non-white women, and others feeling justified in their position, and most ambivalent about the issue and frustrated by prior attempts to include all women. Socialist feminists however, by definition were concerned about incor-

porating working class and non-white women into their struggle.

Some members advocated working within a small group, believing that it would be feasible to maintain a sharply defined, commonly shared political perspective. Others were inclined to form a mass organization, aimed at the broadest issues which concern women. In the end, the union developed a form which in fact compromised all of these ideas.

The structure was comprised of small work groups which were intended to coordinate their various projects in keeping with a commonly defined political philosophy. The structure which resulted however proved incapable of handling this coordination given that the autonomous nature of each group directly defined its specific operation.

Each group created its own focus which eventually made it impossible for the entire organization to develop a unified theory or practice. Further complicating the picture, in the avoidance of hierarchical leadership, decision making occurred within each work group - again limiting the possibility for unified action. Clearly the uncohesive form which evolved tried to accommodate the struggles that had emerged from unresolved discussions of theory and practice. Unfortunately, the organizational form only replicated these struggles in its structure.

Study group

Referring to the structure of the women's union, the feminist therapy project took the form of a work group. Interestingly, all of the participants had been involved in larger groups of which this

project could be considered a subset. All of the group members were, or had previously been involved in a psychotherapy organization (clinic, graduate school, counseling collective). All of us, in diverse ways, perceived the small group as a clearly defined situation which would meet specific needs of individuals - needs which had not been fulfilled by larger groups.

The three "older" women in the group expressed the theme of isolation recurrently in defining their interest in being part of the project. This issue surfaced in discussions of family situation, professional experiences, as well in their attitude toward other feminist organizations. To the extent that they had been involved in the women's movement, they felt that they had been excluded, or "mascoted" as older women because of the preponderance of younger women in those groups. They looked to the project for a place which would validate their experience and attitudes, and provide professional opportunities. While all three emphasized the significance of their families, they talked about personal insecurity, and the need for supplements to their emotional lives. Though there was wide variance to their degree of professional development, each one expressed the familiar issues of women's oppression in employment; sex discrimination in hiring, economic and social discrimination on the job, and psychological conflict around issues of professional development and competency.

The "younger women" did not present with the same level of isolation, but nonetheless looked toward the group for fulfillment of

needs which were not being met in other places. One woman was searching for a feminist group which was both radical in its philosophy, and professional in its orientation. Her prior experience had been that the radical groups were anti-professional in nature, and the professional institutions were either moderate or most often rejecting of feminist values. The other woman had been interested in feminist ideas for a long time but had never formally participated in an organization. She had recently married, was becoming more actively involved in her training as a psychotherapist, and was feeling a growing need to incorporate feminism more explicitly into her life.

Thus, needs of the individuals for the feminist therapist project became analogous to the need for work groups in the women's union. Very early in the group it became clear that the participants disagreed vastly regarding issues of theory and practice and that the needs of members were divergent and in fact often in contrast with each other. The focus of this major conflict appeared indirectly in the subversion of the leadership role of the group. The guidelines established by the initiator of the project came to be perceived as the individual needs of that participant. Therefore the leadership became competition for other needs rather than the intended structure by which the interests of all participants could be shared.

The subversion of the group leadership became evidence from the onset as basic structural aspects - e.g. designated discussion topics - were unacknowledged and disregarded. The most critical development was that group members attempted to transform the collaborative

structure into a hierarchical one. The collaborative model was viewed as the preference of one individual, the "leader", and thus other participants refused to take responsibility for the structure of the group. This reaction coincided with a difficulty in self-assertion, a problem which tended to be shared in some degree by all the participants. In other words it was "easier" to create a hierarchical leader who then could be criticized or ignored indirectly than to assert needs and take responsibility for self-actualization and actualization of the group itself. At the end of the group, each individual member went off separately and created projects and changes that were a direct product of their own needs. Though the potential force of the group was no longer possible, the basic struggle quieted and individuals became more securely and concretely involved in vital issues. Each participant thus became her own "work group".

Process

Red Apple

Through the experience of the complex stages of development in the women's union, feminists are left with a clearer sense of what they do not want and what feels unproductive. Feminists no longer have the energy to address issues that seem unresolvable, and serve to separate and debilitate. Basically, women no longer feel willing to invest enormous amounts of energy into a process which is not personally validating. At the same time, from prior experience in the early women's movement, feminists in the union realize the limi-

tations of "structurelessness" and of the sole emphasis on personal growth.

The task at this time is to evolve a process which is viable for accomplishing political objectives, and where the lives of its members are a priority. In looking over its history it is clear that the women's unions have tended to obscure its accomplishments by constant internal criticism. With hindsight, women can now recognize how long it takes to bring about meaningful social and personal changes. Furthermore, feminists realize that their unions cannot make provisions for everyone's specific needs if they are to be operationally effective. The lessons of the past are being accrued as socialist feminists look to the future of their organizations.

Study group

Throughout the project, the tenor of the group was the underlying tension between the personal and professional needs of the participants. Although the guidelines of the group established a task orientation, the subject matter derived from personal experience. Many group members, despite their commitment to the project, were more focused on the support and sharing aspects of the group. On the other extreme, the organizer of the project found herself consistently reviewing the tasks and structure because other participants abdicated responsibility in that area.

The struggle here mirrors the experience of the women's union. The personal and professional concerns became dichotomized - representing perhaps, the false polarity of "work or family" as a single

choice for women. When personal issues did take over the group at times, we were without a process to consider them. It was at these points that unresolved conflicts appeared that dissipated the energy and the enthusiasm that people had for meeting together. Aside from personality difficulties (mainly around issues of self-assertion) this sixteen week project was not designed to accomodate all of these needs. Again, we learned that it takes time to bring about change, and that a women's group cannot act as a panacea for fulfillment of everyone's requirements: such a notion is merely part of the oppressive role of women in society. Although intended as a sensitivity to women, this notion too easily becomes a crippling force - the need to "please everyone", as well as the avoidance of confrontation.

In this chapter, it has been established that the development of the feminist therapist project corresponds to the experience of socialist feminists in women's unions. This correlation is important to the foundation of this dissertation for two reasons. One is that it further supports the basic assertion of this thesis - that feminist therapy is part of a larger political evolution. Secondly, the similarity of the two processes enables one to understand more clearly the implications of the study. The difficulties which emerged can be seen as inevitable then examined from a broader perspective. Encouragingly, just as women's unions are now in the process of redefining their organizations, feminist therapists continue to search for structures by which they may grow personally and professionally. Feminists,

therapists and others, continue to look for new forms because projects such as the one presented here sharpen our vision of the world around us. As we grow more important to ourselves personally, and to the society, we learn that we need each other.

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APPENDIX A

Sentence Completion for Women (Form 9-62)

Appendix A

SENTENCE COMPLETION FOR WOMEN (Form 9-62)

Name _____ Age _____

Marital Status _____ Education _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the following sentences.

1. Raising a family
2. Most men think that women
3. When they avoided me
4. If my mother
5. Being with other people
6. The thing I like about myself is
7. My mother and I
8. What gets me into trouble is
9. Education

Name _____

10. When people are helpless

11. Women are lucky because

12. My father

13. A pregnant woman

14. When my mother spanked me, I

15. A wife should

16. I feel sorry

17. When I am nervous, I

18. A woman's body

19. When a child won't join in group activities

20. Men are lucky because

21. When they talked about sex, I

22. At times she worried about

Name _____

23. I am

24. A woman feels good when

25. My main problem is

26. Whenever she was with her mother, she

27. The worst thing about being a woman

28. A good mother

29. Sometimes she wished that

30. When I am with a man

31. When she thought of her mother, she

32. If I can't get what I want

33. Usually she felt that sex

34. For a woman a career is

Name _____

35. My conscience bothers me if

36. A woman should always

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW

Appendix B

INTERVIEW

1. Name _____
2. Age _____ Institution Date Major
3. Professional Training B.A.
 M.A.
 Ed.D.
4. Living Situation (married, living alone, family, group of people, etc.)
Present Job _____
5. Have you ever been in therapy? Explain the nature of the experience.

6. In what ways have you participated in the feminist movement?
(Include length of involvement)

7. Describe your best friend, or a person with whom you are very close.

8. As a therapist who works with women, what are the best books that you have read to help you in that role?
9. As a feminist, what is the most important book you have read to help you to understand yourself as a woman?
10. What do you see as critical issues when counseling women?
11. What are some major differences that you see in you now, in looking over the past five years?
12. What kind of position would you like to have five years from now?
13. Are you satisfied with your present lifestyle? What, if any, are some changes that you would like to see happen?
14. In what ways do you get support from other people? Are there ways you would like this to change? If so, how?

15. How do you identify yourself sexually?

16. What do you like best about yourself?

17. What do you like least about yourself?

18. Imagine yourself in a group of women ... then shift to an image of a group which is predominantly male ... Identify your feelings, thoughts, and actions in these two groups.

How do you feel about responding to this questionnaire -
the content and process of this interview?

APPENDIX B

Case Study

Appendix B

CASE STUDY

Janice lived comfortably in a suburban home with her husband and three children. She was an attractive woman, a competent housewife, and a good mother. Although she was somewhat distrustful of strangers and generally did not socialize with neighbors, she did have friends and participated in some community activities. She was also very close to her mother, who had a serious depression during menopause. After several years of marriage, Janice and her husband began to have problems in their relationship. Janice disliked her husband's long hours at the office, and he complained about her sexual coldness and her reluctance to socialize.

When Janice was twenty-eight, she learned that her husband was having an affair. She showed no hostility toward him but gradually withdrew into herself. She became preoccupied with her thoughts, spoke less, and cried frequently. She became overtly suspicious that neighbors were going to hurt her and the children, and she claimed that she heard strangers say bad things about her. Although most of her time was spent at home, she began to ignore the housework, cooking, and children, and spent many hours in bed. For long periods of time, she simply stared into space and then cried uncontrollably. Her speech was sometimes rambling, and she answered questions irrelevantly. She often said one thing but then almost immediately contradicted herself. There was a flatness to her

emotional expressiveness, and she seemed to be in a world of her own. Janice eventually went to the mental health center.

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pg. 445-446.

APPENDIX C

Transcript of Session 13

APPENDIX C

Transcript of Session 13

(Dr. A for dinner, Janet begins remarking on Helene's statement of going National as akin to the flying analogy - sessions last 70 minutes)

Peggy - Ok, I would just like to briefly outline what our schedule is.

Helene - Schedule?!

Peggy - Yes there is a schedule, and this is our last meeting to talk about sexuality. Coming up are two meetings, one and a half and one and a half, part A is, talking about the ways in which the women's movement has exerted pressure on the psychology of women and the psychology of us, which is really the issues that we were talking about here, and then the last group and one half, or one meeting anyway is to come somewhere on some of the ideas that we have put together, and somehow that comes together in the grant idea, I would really like a verbal discussion on that, if we could just, we only have an hour tonight.

Helene - Over and above that, I think that we have to work on the grant thing separately. I am very excited about it and I think that we should schedule regular meetings in the Lord Jeff Tavern.

Peggy - Ok, but, I feel responsible for the fact that after these three more meetings and that is it and things have to get done, and I don't want to be the one to worry about that.

Helene - That is why I say that we should do the housekeeping stuff separate from the group, so we can focus on that.

Eva - Three more meetings for the original commitment.

Peggy - The last week we can negotiate how we are going to meet--if we are going to meet over the summer.

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Peggy - At the end of the last meeting, I mean there is a whole lot of stuff to go jumping off of tonight even the reaction, I cannot remember her name (group discussion of Mapuli).

Peggy - Seeing that we are in various stages of attire, it is a good time to talk about sex right? I feel like I am a little loose right now (group laughter and agreement). Anyway, this is your last

chance! (group laughter) Well, would you like to start--I guess the last meeting I felt it was really hard to get a word in.

Helene - I would really like to hear from you because I think that we have heard from most ...

Janet - From the two of us?

Helene - Yeah.

Peggy - I guess that brings up a real question because I don't know what I have heard from you, I mean that is the thing. I feel that people have been talking a lot but I don't have a sense about how people feel about their sexuality.

Helene - I was very explicit.

Peggy - I guess the thing is that it is sort of hard to argue. You feel that you were and I don't have a sense of that--so it is maybe me or maybe you or both or just me--I had trouble like getting a sense of how someone feels about that, and let me preface all of this by saying that it is a private issue and I don't think ... I think that people have to take responsibility for what they want to say and what they don't want to say and I am not demanding more than what people want to offer. But when the conversation around sexuality or any issue becomes particularly focused around a relationship with a husband or with men or with anybody or about your children's sexuality, it is very hard for me to get a sense of where you come out in that, you know and who you are, even though you might not. And that is something that has come in and out of the group, a lot of issues, not just sexuality. I was looking at you but it is not just you that I am talking about. It is very hard for me to get a sense of things when the situation is populated with a whole lot of significant others--and it becomes very suspect to me, why does that happen?

Helene - My feeling after last week's group was that I wanted to kick all of the other people out. You know, it is as if we had been operating as five people around the issue of aggression which we are and then when sexuality came up we started operating as ten people or fifteen people. I am bringing my troupe of people of lovers, friends, mother, people who have really helped me or hindered me in my sexual development. And somehow that is significant because it is me, it is my history, and it is significant for all of you because it is everybody's history. But I felt a need to really clear those extras out and or...

Peggy - Can I add on to that? Because one thing that is very clear is that for example, in terms of myself, I am not married and I don't have children, and I don't have that structure around me--so if I talk about my sexuality, I am here and it is very vulnerable. I

can talk about it, and I don't feel comfortable to come in right now because I don't feel that that is something that has been shared. I feel that if I start to talk about my sexuality, I don't know where to begin, and I feel that I would end up in a much more vulnerable position. The issue itself is very vulnerable for me, and I think that I could use other ways to defend myself but not the ways that have been used here, that haven't been recognized as defense. Do you want to say something?

Eva - I am feeling something, and I don't think it is from the one glass of wine that I had. What I am feeling is because we are meeting as a group--I feel like I didn't know a soul when I came to this group. We have met on a time schedule, and that frustrates me. Last week, I talked about sexuality and my feelings about it and I only touched the tip of the iceberg. I wasn't here the week before so I didn't hear--I was coming from a completely gutsy kind of thing, that I started talking and people let me talk, and then kept going and going. I think that we need more time for that and I am also hearing that both of you say that because you are single and you don't have children, that you are in a different place than we are, than I am perhaps, and that is true from a physical, that is, true from every place that is real. You haven't had a baby, or you haven't been married, lived with a man for a long, long time but it is what Dr. Addy said. I was once like you, and that I feel really good about hearing you and listening to you, and I identify with you all the time (to Janet). So when I hear you saying that, I wonder what you are really saying.

Peggy - I will tell you what I am really saying and that is, I understand the point that you just made. We can't always have the same experience but we can relate to each other's experience. My feeling is that I am going to start talking about my sexuality and I feel that these structures have sort of made it easier for you to approach the tip of the iceberg.

Eva - No, that was really hard.

Peggy - And I don't think that we have talked about sexuality in here, how you relate to it personally.

Helene - I think that that is just the impression that I'd gave last week cause I know in the car going home, I said to her how really happy I was about some of the things that she said, and how glad I was that someone could say some of those things for me. She said you know Helene, I have never said that out loud in my whole life.

Eva - There is so much to be said Peggy, we could have gone on for five hours or met three nights.

Peggy - Ok here is my frustration. I can see where this discussion is going and we are going to be both right and really say the same thing. The problem that I have is when we talked about, let's say aggression, we talked about how we were responding with each other. There was an issue between Eva and me, there was an issue between Helene and myself. You talked about your aggressive style and how that interacted. We talk about sexuality and all of a sudden, we are talking about all the other people out there, and not dealing with this group.

Helene - Well, maybe that is because, what you are trying to say is that you can relate sexually to some of the people in this group, and maybe that is true for some people and not true for others.

Peggy - That is not what I am saying Helene.

Helene - That is literally what I am hearing. We brought this aggression issue into this in terms of the interaction here. And we didn't bring the other people in.

Peggy - I don't like that, I mean because you are putting definition onto that which is really not. I mean when I say relate to people sexually in this room, I can feel in any group that I am a sexual person and how I relate to that. I am not talking about having a sexual relationship with anybody in this group, and what those issues are...

Helene - I talk about my sexuality as it has been derived from my experience which has been outside of this room. Therefore, it involved persons with whom I have had that experience.

Eva - I feel like having...

Peggy - Should we just give people time? I guess the one thing that is coming out in my voice is a punitive, this is not right--and that is not what I mean to convey. I am just trying to say why I have a hard time here and part of it is when I am talking from the here and now--now it is true that I have never had a sexual experience with a woman, here in this room, in this group of women, whatever that means here and the rest of it. From those experiences, I am a certain kind of person in this group and my sexuality is here along with my aggression, my dependency and my everything, and my power and I would like to talk about how I feel here and now sitting here about myself and how that relates to me. And that is very vulnerable for me to talk about. And that is what I mean, relating sexuality on a here and now level with the other people in the room. Do you see what I mean?

Eva - Yeah, so do it. I mean, I...

Nancy - I hear you saying that, this is pretty heavy, but I sort of hear you feeling a lack of trust.

Janet - I feel it too. I mean I kept thinking last week of all different kinds of experiences that I could share in this group to get membership into talking about sexuality and I did not feel comfortable in sharing the experiences that I have had. Now, I kind of did an inventory and one of the things that I came up with was that a number of those experiences, I think that I said this last week, I am ready to leave, you know I don't define myself that way anymore. I have gone through a very rapid transition in the last five years and the early sexual identity formation I suppose is some kind of bedrock for who I am now, but I am ready to just leave that stuff, I am much more willing to talk about who I am now and what issues are up for me now. Somehow, that gets very complicated and I am not entirely sure what all the complications are, but I don't feel comfortable going into what my past sexual activity and relationships with men and women have been that has given me this sexual identity. But I do feel ready to talk about the fact that I am hungry for a child, and I don't have one, and I am caught between the incredible struggle of developing myself professionally and having kids. How I relate to women, the fact that I am very attracted to some women and I have not chosen to act on that, what that means in terms of my relationship with Paul. The fact that I am attracted to other men all the time, there are all kinds of things that are really current and very ripe for me. I guess putting in out says that I have some trust to relate some of the experiences.

Peggy - I am surprised.

Janet - I am surprised that I am saying it too.

Nancy - But I feel very comfortable with that because that is where you are coming from. Just as I felt with Eva was doing because for her, that is where she was coming from, and so it seems to me that that is o.k. The same problem of trust is involved in both cases, because you are approaching...

Janet - O.k., and I guess what I am saying is that somehow I would like to talk about that, as how that relates to how people perceive me in this group, o.k., and how I perceive myself in this group and how I perceive the four of you in this group.

Nancy - Don't you think that that would come out of the talking?

Janet - I am not sure.

Eva - I can't possibly come out of the talking with the two restrictions that we have. I think that it took me time to get going, and then it was time to stop and I felt...I wanted to say how I felt that day when you lay down and your dress went up, and I saw your underwear. The

change in my whole life, to react to that as something beautiful from something ugly and that didn't do a number on me, and how, oh oh, I am sorry. That is how I see we relate to one and other. I guess I had my little outburst but I also want to hear from you-- how you react to me, how I affect you, how each one of us do. I really want to hear it.

Nancy - I guess I am really troubled that there is such a strong feeling on both of your parts that this is something that you don't feel comfortable sharing, cause the kinds of things that are concerning you right now may not be the same kinds of things that are concerning Janet, Helene or me.

Peggy - It is a hard thing to say like Janet. Janet and I haven't talked about it. All I know is that is what I was feeling and (unclear) part of what I was feeling, the ways again that people were talking about sexuality might be exactly where they are at, where they are coming from, what is germane to them in their lives. Because it seemed to be a lot of the same thing and a very particular focus and structure. It felt oppressive to me, I didn't know where to fit into that. And it is very, very hard to take someone who doesn't fit into what is being talked about and expect that person to come in and say, hey folks, let's (unclear) this doesn't include me, that is really putting a whole lot...

Helene - You are not seeing that. The need for security that that fills, the fear of acting that that conceals. You know like if you are in a lot of these roles, nobody will touch you sexually, so you don't have to contend with the impulses that Janet is contending with--you know I am attracted to other women, men, etc.

Peggy - What are you saying to me Helene?

Helene - I am saying that you have to look at what that role and the choice of the use of that role in this area has done--for the person and therefore why they choose to be in it.

Peggy - That is the whole thing of what I am saying--because my resentment is that I can't feel secure, I understand security in that, I think what happened here last week--at the very end somebody said, "Isn't it awful that everyone feels that they have to get married." My feeling was, goddamnit, that is all we have talked about for two weeks--there is a value here that people hold, and I am not challenging that value and your right to have that value if you want that for yourself. But the very fact that that was the focus is a suggestion of what it is like for people who don't fit into that. Do you see what I mean? This is a microcosm of what is available and what is there, and does that make any sense to you?

Eva - I am totally lost with what you just said.

Nancy - I am too.

Eva - Somehow or other, I am not on the level that you are talking about, because

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Peggy - No, I don't want to talk any more right now. I guess the thing is that the assumption that Helene, that you make with me on a number of different issues, that I don't understand you, and that I don't understand what your life represents. I don't think that that is being very fair to me. You know it is like I am not giving you credit--and I don't understand what your values are and what these people mean to you. What these people have meant to me and what these structures are--I do and that is as much a part of me--whether I choose to do it or not, that is the way that I have been brought up. I understand those things, it is not a foreign language. I also value those things. I want some of those things for myself.

Eva - But even if it were a foreign language, you could understand it if you learned about it.

Peggy - Yeah, I guess that I resent the alienation. That separates me out and I don't want to be separate, whether or not I choose to live differently. It is the same thing about not understanding older people, that is not true, and you said that to me at the Jeff last week. I don't know where that was coming from, you know, goddammit, I feel cut out when I don't want to.

Nancy - I said that to you?

Peggy - Yah.

Nancy - I did?

Peggy - But anyway...

Eva - You must be feeling really...

Peggy - Well, one thing can be caused by something else--what you are getting now is emotional loneliness which is reality.

Eva - Yeah right, I think that you are letting out a whole lot of stuff that you have been feeling for a long time.

Peggy - Right.

Nancy - We're all hearing different things, cause mostly I didn't hear any of the...I had no carry-over at all last week from the things that you were hearing. What I was hearing was mostly some of the things that Eva was saying. I felt it took a tremendous amount of courage, it was very personal and that implied a tremendous amount of trust which I was incapable of. I would like to say that you said a lot of things for me that I couldn't say for myself, and to me, brought it very much into the group. Whatever else was involved, it was completely irrelevant between you and me and I was hearing that. I went away with quite a different kind of feeling, so it is somehow or other, we are not getting out into the open and telling each other as Peggy is doing now, enough.

Peggy - My feeling about expressing that does not invalidate or does not negate that I felt that what you said really took a risk and I appreciated it. It spoke to me. I don't challenge the authenticity of what was said, and the feelings behind it were significant because of having similar ones.

Eva - un huh

Helene - I think that we need to build in a wrap-up session for ten minutes at the end of each session, so we can check out exactly what we heard, so that we don't go home and stew all week on that is what was happening to me, and you heard that.

Eva - I would like to have some feedback right away. Last week, from what you tell me now, cause I am really doing a number on myself trying to re-focus, I thought...

Peggy - The feedback, Eva, is as simple as this. It is not taking apart what people said.

Eva - Right, right.

Peggy - What I felt was that for some reason I don't even understand yet, which I hope that you can clarify a bit maybe, is that I couldn't fit in. I don't know what the reason was, I felt that I could not fit into what was going on. Now whatever reason that is ...

Eva - Yeah.

Janet - I have...

Eva - I feel bad that I couldn't be sensitive to stop and plug you in or something, I guess that it has to do when you get going on something like that.

Peggy - Don't take it on yourself.

Janet - Yeah, please don't, one of the things that I have been playing with is the fantasy of how I felt as a kid, of about eight or nine years old, listening to my aunts talk about how their sexual relationships, and I wasn't supposed to be hearing. Ok, but that is kind of aside--the important thing is the age relationship, me at eight listening to my 24 and 26 year old aunts talking about their sexual relationships. There was a quality of that last week for me, which was listening to women who have lived a lot longer than I have with men, describing relationships, frustrations, primarily frustrations, and the context of that was some kind of given understanding that I didn't buy into or share. It is not buy into so much as share, that I haven't lived that long and I don't have that experience and, I have have my own frustrations but they seem to be much more--much less common.

Helene - There are two things that I have to say.

Eva - When I was your age, I always had the same kind of thing.

Janet - I am not saying that, there is a ritual, somehow the fact that your talking was more legitimate than checking out with other people, hey is this true, what is going on, is some kind of assumption that we all bought into--I am taking as much responsibility for it as I am blaming someone else. You know, that I didn't stop and like I can relate to this but I can't relate to this ...

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Peggy - The way to talk about these things so that everybody is part of it, that is the thing. I think that we could have really talked about twenty year marriages, masturbation, all of these things, that I can fit into some way, somehow the structure didn't allow that.

Eva - I feel very bad that no one stopped the process and did something about it.

Helene - Well, I feel terrible that you are feeling bad right now about what happened last week, you gave me something very valuable last week and I don't want you to lose that.

Janet - Me too.

Helene - Part of what you are saying now, I heard from you last week Janet when you said rather sarcastically that we have only a five year history, but we have a history, and I picked that up, you were being sarcastic, fine. The fact is that you may talk about the older woman's mystique but you have probably had more sexual experience and a wider variety of environmental kinds of people than I have

had, and I think that I am kind of resenting the fact that all of this has been loaded on us cause we are doing this assumption, when in fact, like I haven't, I don't know anything. I only have this from the top of my head--talk about trust, you know.

Peggy - The larger issue is something that has happened in the group before. I think that there is a level of trust if we can talk like this. This couldn't have happened in the second session, or the third or fourth, and so we have to recognize that, but it just seems that the fact of the matter is not so much the material but that people feel ok about carrying on something when other people are not involed without checking that out, and that dynamic is two-part. The people who are left out, who don't assert themselves, and the people cause they have so much that they want to get out and talk about continue to do it. And I have been guilty of both. But the point is that that has become a norm a little bit, and we have to find some way without compromising the things we need to talk about, the way we want to talk about them, or you particularly want to get to, so that everybody has at least the opportunity to be involved, and not to resent the fact that somebody says that I am not involved, and I don't like it. I feel that you are resenting...

Helene - I am resenting not your present tone, but the tone you started with, which as you described yourself, was punitive.

Eva - I don't resent what you were saying, and what you started out to say, it was just that I had to check me out to see how I could be so fucking off base. The only defense that I have for being off base was that, to be able to talk about that just completely took me away which is like, it was a first experience, and I have learned it now, and I can shut it if I get into another situation like this wherever it is, that I can really become sensitive to it, because you give me feedback on it.

Helene - The part of that for me is a parallel with a lot of the stuff we talked about in terms of developing sexuality, which is-- I tried it and how somebody said that it was the wrong way.

Eva - Yeah, I agree with that one. I feel like, ok, I said it before.

Peggy - I guess I really appreciate people who put themselves out and take that risk. When I begin to not like that, or not appreciate it, as much is when that is somehow not being aware of other people's feelings, and I have done that too.

Eva - I feel like if we keep talking about it, we are going to--but if you have a need to continue talking about it, I want to hear you.

Peggy - No, I don't.

Janet - Well, I have a need to talk. I am not too sure how much of this is operating but there is enough so that I want to mention it. All three of you are roughly in the age of my mother, and there is something very taboo with me about talking about sex with my mother in any way at all. I think that you share that to some extent although the issues are different for you because you are used to it. That is possibly operating for me, that some of my difficulties in asserting myself last week were internal prohibitions and not those in the group. It is a lot easier for me to look at and respond to limits set by the group or by the conversation in the group, and not to look at the limits that I am imposing myself.

Helene - I am wondering if we could only, it would be neat to abolish a stereotype.

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Nancy - I was hoping that one or the other of you would say this, and I didn't want to be the one to say it, but I have been feeling that very, very strongly, and it ...

Eva - Feeling what?

Nancy - That both Peggy and Janet in their own way were responding to us as if they were responding to their mothers, and that it has...

Peggy - Let Janet talk for herself.

Nancy - But I also feel it about you, and I have been inhibited in talking myself and that is why I was so turned on by Eva because I couldn't do that, because I was feeling that I would be--I was having something put on me that kept me from being able to do that. I thought that it took an awful lot of courage in this particular situation, and I think that this is something that is probably one of the hardest things we may have to work through as a group. I think that it is a very heavy thing, and I think we have to be very careful not to hurt one another because it is a very sensitive area.

Janet - I disagree, I think that we are all strong enough to take it.

Nancy - Well, I think that we are strong enough, but I also think that it is the area in which we could come closest to hurting one another. It is a very, very difficult thing, it is a very difficult thing from the other side, for an older person. I don't find that difficulty with a younger person who doesn't respond to me that way. I feel quite free to talk to a younger person if I don't feel that that person is looking at me as an older person.

Janet - That is saying a lot, because it is exactly what I was feeling at the dinner table tonight when I said look, just because I am this age, and I have these experiences, doesn't mean that I fit within a certain youth culture. I have developed out of that in very specific kinds of ways, in the same way that I feel that about you just because you are a certain age with certain kinds of characteristics doesn't mean I can't identify.

Nancy - Well, at some levels you can, but I don't feel that way about you. I sense that you feel that way about me, therefore, it makes it difficult for me to say a lot of things that I could like to feel free to say.

Janet - Well, I think that we feel similarly, because I have felt that you have felt that way about me.

Nancy - I don't feel, I am here to tell you that it makes no difference at all that I have a great deal to learn from you. I feel that I haven't had that opportunity, and it has also inhibited me from revealing a lot of things about myself.

Peggy - It is like what happened last week at the Jeff. The statement that I was hearing that the women's movement doesn't accept middle-aged women, it doesn't validate me. I am committed to the movement but they don't like me, or they don't need me or they don't consider me very important. My response to that was that I started thinking of incidences where that was true and where that isn't true, and thought well, what would I do with someone who came to me and said, "I like people but people don't like me." It is sort of the same thing that is operating here, where the assumption is made that Janet doesn't give you the leeway to be whoever you are but you give her that. That seems to me very stacked and very difficult to deal with, I can't believe it.

Nancy - Well, that is the way I feel.

Peggy - It is hard to believe.

Nancy - But that is the way I feel, and I don't like that particularly because I don't feel comfortable with that. I think that is when I said that I think that there is a problem of trust involved here. I feel very strongly about that.

Janet - I do too, Nancy, and I feel that one of the difficulties for me has been talking about sons and daughters who are my age with the same experiences. There is, I don't know, I think that I have a tendency to personalize things, that is part of my narcissism. I think I tend to take it all in and personalize it, but I also think that some of it has been directed, you know, to what do younger people think. Younger people have a different sort of experience,

younger people are educated in a different kind of way. You know that level. You take your daughter to a gynecologist; there is something implicit, not explicitly stated and not explicitly acknowledged but implicit. You talk about children that are roughly my age. I feel good about how we are talking right now because I feel for the first time that, regardless of personal value systems, we are talking as peers. That is what I am feeling right now.

Nancy - I guess I felt that, I feel that the value systems are not all that different. The experiences may be a little different; there are certain levels, there are certain patterns that you develop, that you hold on to. I like to shave my legs. I don't really think that it has anything to do with the women's movement. I just like the way my legs look (general laughter) so I shave them and I could care less; it doesn't make me less of a feminist.

Janet - I agree with you.

Nancy - It does bother me because I think that people who have legs that are hairy to me is unaesthetic, it has nothing to do with ...

Eva - That is what my husband tried to tell me last night when I went to the supermarket with my legs and shorts, he said that it wasn't aesthetic.

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Helene - (unclear) whether there happens to be a group norm, and this is something I think that Eva said. We called each other and said listen, what are you wearing because I am wearing shorts and I said, "Well, maybe I'll wear shorts." Then I thought of myself in shorts and how I feel about myself in shorts, and what I have to wear with my shorts. I said I have this to wear because I feel comfortable in this. The main thing is that I am doing what is comfortable for me and you are comfortable and we will be comfortable together, not like we have to wear the same uniform.

Peggy - I have an example of the concept. I think that I am coming down a little bit, beginning to understand. Here is how it goes and this is just one example, but in here I think that there has been a lot of discussion of children. You three have talked about kids, especially Eva and Helene. I have heard that a lot. Now there are times at which I think that that is relevant and there are times that I don't want to listen to it because I feel that you are talking through somebody and you are not talking about yourself. In other words, there are times when I appreciate it and there are times that I would like to say talk about yourself, let's hear about you. I feel that I can't do that; maybe this is the same kind of conflict

that you are pointing up, because I am afraid that I can't say something like that to you. I am afraid of the reaction.

Eva - (unclear) I will speak for myself, I would appreciate that.

Nancy - I certainly would.

Helene - I don't know if I would make a blanket statement like that, as a therapist if someone comes to me and presents me with their defense mechanism and makes it obvious to me that that is their defense mechanism, I would have to be very sensitive to this when I could take that mechanism away and when ...

Peggy - Are you saying to me ...

Helene - In replacement for that, that there are times when you have something to give me in exchange for that that would support me, and give me the necessary support that I need to eliminate that, that would be fine, thank you. But if you are asking me to give up something and not know ... You talked about being out on a limb. I am not going out on any limbs unless I am sure; I guess that is the trust thing that you were talking about before.

Peggy - And the ambivalence in that is not knowing whether or not my style would be to support, to give you something in replace of, that is my style.

Helene - Not tonight.

Peggy - But the problem is that I am never sure if that is something that you will define as supportive.

Helene - Well, that is one of the things that we have to begin to understand about each other.

Nancy - That is an important point, in any kind of therapy, I think.

Peggy - Yeah, and I brought up that issue but there are others. That is just one, and that is a very clear thing, but I guess that is the trouble. I feel very unsure about how I can be supportive, especially in a situation like that. Because I am so easily ... I feel that I could so easily become an object of attack.

Eva - Peggy, if I called you up in August and said I want to be your client and I came, what would you do with that? If I started to talk about my kids instead of about me, how would you bring me around? It just depends what the discussion is about, and what precipitated it. If you come saying that you are really upset and you don't know what to do with your life, and you start talking about how all your kids don't know what to do with their lives, I

would bring it back to you. It just depends if we are talking about the experience that you had at Northampton State the other week. It is very legitimate to talk about that and yourself involved with that. In other words, it is very focused on you. I don't have a formula like that. I guess what I am saying ... I thought I just heard you say you didn't know how to stop me.

Feggy - No, I guess what the problem is is that I feel that there are some things that I need to say, and I have needed to say at certain times. I feel that the only thing that is going to result from that is people feeling that I am being offensive.

Eva - No, no, I feel ...

Peggy - Ok, but that is the fear. Tonight we are talking as peers as Janet said in a way, but I have been afraid that, and this does relate right back to the thing about mother even though I don't identify anyone here as mother, but the thing is talking with older people is ok. The idea that something is right or wrong, it is rude, it is impolite; these things that are so nondescript. Terms: being offensive; we never had any discussion about what that means, to be offensive, but you have been offensive and therefore you are. There is no more discussion on the subject--do you see? That is exactly some of the things that I felt going on last week. People were talking about terms, and somehow these were the world's terms, whether I fit into them or not. I have to fit into it or not, and if I couldn't I would have to talk to somebody else. Now whether or not you feel that you were putting that on me or not, that is how I was experiencing it.

Helene - What you are saying is that I was essentially experiencing myself as a child.

Peggy - No, I am not.

(Tape over)

Peggy - No, not in what I just said. I have a child part of me, but not this. I mean, I am a different kind of adult than what I felt was being put out here as a norm of an adult. I don't even think what was here was big enough to encompass all the people in this room, including everybody who was talking.

Nancy - I don't think that there should be a norm. If there is a norm, it is by default. I think that to establish the kind of diversity that we need and hope to get, we should be doing just what we are doing now. This norm was allowed to become established because it went on. I think that we are needing what you both are saying tonight, to bring the group out of that.

Peggy - An example of this in terms of a language thing. Let's say there is a room full of men and they are talking about people and they say he or she. Meanwhile, there is no she in the room, but that makes the conversation very, very different.

Nancy - It is only going to change if someone in that room who wants it to change makes some contribution to change.

Peggy - Right, right.

Janet - On a real important level, I feel that is what is happening right now. That what I asked for, and what you asked for happened, and that is talk about our sexuality as we relate to each other. That includes both aggression and dependence.

Peggy - Could you explain in some more detail about that - do you want to talk? I am just interested in that.

Janet - It is just for me, I mean, I have come out stronger tonight than I feel I have in this group, or at least than I have in a long time in a lot of other situations, and that is aggressive for me. It is very assertive in saying that I have a certain territory that I want to articulate the boundaries of to other people. So the issues that come up in that, the whole dependence thing, is really a much more projective kind of sense, of how people see me and how I see other people. You know, really wanting to belong here and wanting to feel connected to other people. So the problem for me is not so much, "Hey you all aren't including me, I don't feel connected." When that is operating for me, then I feel really shitty because I care about you and I care about me, and it is important that that connection be there.

Peggy - That last bit was feeling last week. It wasn't anger or punitive about people here. I just felt like I wanted to be here and I couldn't be here, and I couldn't figure out what was wrong.

Janet - There are a lot of issues in that.

Peggy - Right.

Nancy - This is really very heavy and it has been running all the way through. I guess that I can only speak for myself when I can say that I have been waiting for this to happen for quite a while.

Janet - I have too.

Nancy - But I couldn't initiate it, because then I am in the mother role, and this is where I don't want to be.

Janet - And my initiating it, my fear is that I am in the kid role, you know. I don't want to rebel against a norm any more, I am fucking tired of rebelling. I have gone through all of that.

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Helene - I am getting the reverse kind of message. I am getting that well, I am very much in touch with a very strong feeling of anger right now. Much of it comes from here but some of it comes from a few other experiences, so I don't necessarily feel that all of it lies here. But one of the things that really stimulates my anger reaction at this point in my life is the superimposition of any kind of authority on me. So I am feeling right now, I damn well better be careful of what I say, how I say it, because I may not be playing the rules of the game.

Eva - And I didn't know what the rules of the game were until now, and I feel violated.

Helene - Yeah, it is kind of violating.

Peggy - What are the rules? ... I don't know.

Eva - That I should have stopped, that I should have been more sensitive when I was talking about something.

Peggy - It is not such a bad rule.

Eva - I am not saying it is a bad rule, I am saying that ...

Helene - We were playing the game by revealing and ...

Eva - then, then ...

Peggy - But isn't it interesting that my perceptions were that there were rules that I couldn't buy. I didn't know how to play the game, I didn't know what the rules were, I didn't know how to talk in here and other people could and I felt ...

Eva - (crying) know, I didn't know how to talk, I felt very awkward talking, that is what I feel violated about is that I did. Now I find out that doing it was a bad thing, that I did a number on you.

Helene - And I found that out.

Eva - It's bullshit.

Janet - Except that was the bullshit part of it, it is, ok?

Eva - (sobbing) I can't help it.

Janet - I mean the fact of the matter, Eva, is that you took a risk, ok, and that what you are experiencing now is reactions to the risk that you took, and I absolutely support the risk that you took, but I also support the feelings that Peggy and I have.

Eva - Of course I do (sobbing) but I didn't know last week and the whole fucking week went by, that ... that ...

Janet - Why do you have to take care of everyone else, what we are saying right now is taking some of that off of you.

Helene - She is not taking care of anybody, she feels like she made a damn fool of herself.

Peggy - You are causing that, nobody is saying that, you have decided to personalize it.

Eva - I wouldn't personalize it if I hadn't been the spokeswoman for it, what we are talking about. I can only personalize what I have experienced, and I am personalizing it because I did experience, that experience was that I could be so fucking insensitive that... and I thought that I was tuning in to you, but I didn't tune into you, that is no way to be.

Nancy - But Eva look, can you accept the fact that there are times that when your own needs can be so great that it can override other people's need.

Eva - Not when you wipe out a couple of people.

Nancy - Who is wiped out, there is nothing, nobody who has been wiped out. It is ok to do that sometimes, it is ok to ... that your own needs should be great enough.

Helene - I am not getting the feeling, I am very much into that feeling, and realizing that it wasn't as easy as it looked here.

Peggy - Who said that it was?

Helene - I am not feeling the feeling of wipeout, I am feeling the feeling of rejection of me, of you, because of other people's feeling of exclusion, a membership thing.

Eva - And I really feel bad that ... I don't want to do that.

Peggy - All that I've got to say to you is that the feelings of rejection that you have don't have to happen, the fact that you want to go that route is your choice. Because I didn't feel that I am rejecting you, I have been trying very hard to tell you that I am not, I think that the pattern of the way that you deal with

things like this is to take it on yourself and decide that you weren't sensitive enough.

Eva - But that is what I heard.

Nancy - But that is ok.

Janet - Eva, let me rephrase it, what we were doing was challenging a norm in the group, ok ...

Eva - Ok, I understand that.

Peggy - I can't get into my feeling of rejection for you for what you did cause I have tried to say in so many ways how much I appreciated that.

Eva - You don't have to get into it Peggy.

Peggy - Ok.

Eva - That is not the message that I am trying to give to you, I...
I - it is over.

Janet - I see distress in you right now, and it bothers me, and every response that I have right now is to the distress that I see in you.

Eva - (inaudible)

Nancy - Eva, I think the thing that I want to say very strongly is that I think that it is ok at times to be insensitive to other people's feelings, when your own needs are very great and that ...

Eva - Ok, ok, I didn't feel but (shouting something)

Janet - Good, good (shouting) that is what is so good.

Eva - I don't understand what you are saying good (unclear word) focal point. I don't want to be the fucking (unclear) around her.

Nancy - Oh, come on, you are not ...

Peggy - Do you feel like you can listen to Janet talk for a while?

Janet - First of all, you are the focal point whether you like it or not, ok, and you know what I am feeling is that in trying to address a process issue, which is how do we relate to each other, you know, and the fact that we are two people approximately 20 years younger, that is very approximate, 15, 20 years younger is an issue, you know.

And it is not the first time that it has been labelled, but labelling it around the issue of sexuality is a lot more difficult I think, hah, that goes back to the very first thing that we said when we were talking about sexuality which is, I don't know where to begin, you know. And my comment was gee, this is awkward, it is not an easy thing and you took a really significant and important risk and I value that so much. It makes possible all of my comments tonight anyway, if you can hear it in that framework, then, I feel really happy.

Eva - I do hear it in that framework, I came here viewing it in that framework.

Janet - Good, the fact that I am asserting myself more tonight than I have says something about the risk that you have taken, the risk that we have all taken. Yeah, I feel like I have gotten a whole lot from this group, and it is not just cause I come here every week and everybody else has. It is because something is going on, you know, and we have really trusted each other enough to put a little out here, and a little bit more, and a little bit more. Last week, you put a whole lot, you know, you put some that I could relate to and some that I couldn't relate to, and I am telling you tonight about the stuff that I can't relate to.

Eva - Ok.

Janet - And I think that it is a fault of my own that I am not telling you first about what I can relate to, you know I feel really shitty about that. Maybe before we leave, I will take a few minutes and tell you what I related to last week, for me it is important to have a place to talk about who I am, and how I relate to the four of you, and that is what starting off the night was, was saying I feel dissonant, I feel disconnected, it is not your fault. I think that that is the mother in all of you (laughter) just like it is the mother in me (laughter) that says uff, Eva is in distress, I gotta do something about it. You know, it is the same thing, I say, I don't feel connected and I got three people, four people, saying how can we connect you ... um, that is a side issue, but it is not.

Nancy - That is the biggest issue that we have to deal with, if we can work that one through, we have really got something.

Peggy - Do you feel more settled with that?

Eva - Yeah.

Janet - I really like it when you put yourself out, I really do. I like what I see, I like what I hear, I like what I experience in all kinds of ways, you know, I don't like it when you discount yourself, and when you are unwilling to fight about what you have put out.

Eva - Thank you.

Janet - I also think that you are very sexy.

(Group laughter)

Helene - We had been talking on the way down about...

Eva - Sexuality (said in a whispered voice).

(Group laughter)

Helene - I wanted to tell you with Dr. Addy I couldn't tell you, lady, you are very sexy.

Eva - Ah - (sighing)

(Group laughter)

Eva - You know, coming in and doing fifteen numbers about should have I have on shorts, or etc., etc.

(Group laughter)

Peggy - In the process, I looked at every inch of your body...

(Group laughter)

Eva - I will take back my application to weight watchers, feeling like I look so ugly and so bad that I don't need to.

Janet - I am doing that too, I made the decision to do that this afternoon.

Eva - It happned yesterday at Wilson's when I couldn't find a damn thing to wear, that I had to go to weight watchers.

Helene - That is just a norm, I do not support complying to that fucking norm.

Janet - When I stopped smoking, I gained fifteen pounds.

Eva - I feel uncomfortable.

Janet - I feel very uncomfortable and I am very oral.

(Intermingled with inaudible comments from Helene)

Eva - Helene, if I looked like you I wouldn't go to weight watchers either.

Helene - Well, only to get rid of my ass.

Peggy - Helene, I am wondering cause it is 9:30, like, what has gone on in the past ten minutes. Has how that assuaged some of your feelings, influenced you, or made you more tenacious about what you are feeling, I am wondering where you are.

Helene - Um, a lot of Eva's catharsis was cathartic to me, I felt though that with you very very much. And I think to a large degree that is the process value, I find it very hard to deal with a group of people when I am by myself, what I can do is let it out and... (unclear) I am not feeling hand slapped which I was before.

Peggy - Does it have to do with you or with other people here?

Helene - Well, I think a lot of what Janet did in terms of restating, it was helpful, I can't, I suppose I could process precisely...

(Paul honks)

Peggy - Well, you would rather not then, that is ok too.

Helene - Yeah, well, I think that nothing I could say at the moment would be authentic because there are external things that I don't, etc. (unclear)

Peggy - Ok, I just wanted to make one comment Nancy in terms - I just saw you coming in with Eva just a little bit today. It is such a difference from the other time that you were counseling Eva - you know, when we set up that little - I was really liking what was going on, I just wished that if we had time to set up the situation ...

Nancy - Set it up and then it will fall flat on its face.

Janet - Nancy, about three times tonight I wanted to say, you know, I really like you. I felt very self conscious (laughter). I will say it now, tonight I just really like you.

Eva - It is her underwear.

(Group laughter)

Eva - ... the whole position that you are sitting in. (group laughter)

Helene - I sort of sense that, I don't know if it is totally resolved, but it certainly feels closer now.

Peggy - It means that I can bring it up again, and they won't go, "huh - what are you talking about?"

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Peggy - But I am just wondering because we do have to end, just knowing that we're getting off the issue of sexuality supposedly, you know, although it is very hard to tell because though we are not talking "sexuality," does that mean we are not doing "sexuality" or being it, and obviously that is not true at all. But I guess what I am making a plea for is that we come in next week and refocus on some issues that we need to talk about, that were going on tonight and that were going on the past hour. It is not that this has taken us off track at all.

Janet - What are the issues?

Peggy - Well, I would like to try to focus on what is a continuation of your dinner conversation, the kinds of pressures, or what is the influence of the women's movement then in terms of us psychologically, what we feel that we have to be, what we have to do for other people, and be for ourselves and the issue of sexuality is implicit in that full strong, it is just that the basic issue is what I just threw out. So at least if we could come focused to that, I would appreciate it.

Janet - Right now I am working on the issue of aggression in lots of parts of my life. And any conversation about sexuality is going to involve, for me, setting limits, and how close in and how far out and how much of my territory is somebody else's and where does it overlap, so that I am working through that as I am talking about other stuff.

Eva - (to Janet) I like when you talk, you are my image, my mirror or something, everytime you say something--God, how did you know that.

Peggy - But you manage to say it too, you come around.

Janet - Thank you (to Eva).

Peggy - You manage to say the same thing.

Janet - You have your own experience, which is so inspirational to me. And I don't know whether you know that or not, you know, it is important for all of us to have models of some sort--even if it is the idealized image of ourselves.

Eva - I guess I want to say both you and Peggy, you are models for me, I don't know if you can hear me, if that makes any sense.

Janet - I hear you.

Peggy - (inaudible) different parts of me.

Eva - But your sexuality is the ...

Peggy - That has to be by osmosis.

Janet - Blush! blush!

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Peggy - I guess that I would like to throw out another thing that now you have started about the issue that you are working on--the issue that I came in with was do people care about me, somehow the inclusion thing, that is what really blew up for me last week. And today, that somehow whether it is my sexuality or my aggression style is not acceptable to this group--and, but (to ward off interruptions) that is what I am continuing to work on, and I will acknowledge that (Helene tries to interrupt throughout)

Helene - And I think that the issue that Dr. Addy brought up about membership is something which I got very excited about because that is a whole new area that people are just beginning to look at in terms of organization and everything else and we are going to be working with people on that, so I am really hot for looking at that right now.

Janet - (Something about Helene speaking professionally, the flying theme)

Peggy - (to Nancy) Did you want to say something?

Nancy - I guess that I need to say that I guess I have felt less involved than anybody in this group, that I felt as though I have withdrawn quite a lot, and that I only move in in certain moments, and then I pull back. And I think that this too has to do with my age--cause I am a lot older than any of you, I am not just a little bit older, and this is something that I am having to deal with.

Peggy - It is your trip.

Helene - (unclear, to Nancy) ... what I was trying to say here is that at the beginning of the group, you said I am in therapy, I have worked through a lot of these issues, I don't know if I want to go through.

Nancy - That is part of it.

Helene - So I have sort of been into myself trying to not, to be sensitive to not pushing you.

Nancy - Don't let that ...

Helene - (comments, unclear, fragmented)

Nancy - Because I won't be pushed into anything, that is why I am in therapy (laughter).

Janet - I pick up that message a whole lot from you.

Nancy - That I won't be pushed into anything?

Janet - I think that it is really fine.

Nancy - It isn't that I am not hearing, it is just that I, it is a matter of energy and when I get sufficiently involved in something ...

Peggy - You did that today, you said we are talking about sexuality and you said, ok, I will go to sleep.

(group laughter)

Janet - You maintain your integrity--you really do, and I really respect that.

Nancy - With a great deal of effort, and a lot of that involves having to tune out a whole lot, because I need an awful lot of support, and I get hurt very easily. It is very difficult to maintain my integrity and that is why I tune out, I can't be saying I want to be the center of attention all of the time, cause I need a whole lot more support to do what I am trying to do than I have any right to expect, so it is at a very high price.

Peggy - I'd like to hear more about that.

Janet - Yeah, I really want to.

Nancy - I am not even sure that it is integrity that I am maintaining, I am not sure if it is pride or rebellion or ...

Janet - I think that it is integrity (laughter).

Nancy - I like to think that it is but ...

Helene - And what is wrong with pride and rebellion as part of integrity?

Nancy - Well, I should have outgrown that.

Eva - Oh, come on Nancy.

Nancy - I just don't think that pride is a valid, for me it isn't ... (in response to some comment Peggy made) I want it to be what I think it is and not something else, but this is a constant battle. It takes a great deal of energy, and it is really the cause of my feeling of inadequacy a good bit of the time. I know that I can do a lot of things, I became very conscious tonight when I was driving the Landrover which is a very difficult car to drive, which I have developed a sense of inadequacy about (group laughter) and I was tearing along Route 9, tonight, just completely on my own. No problem. Yesterday, I was driving in the car with someone else who I feel does not share my values and you know, I just did everything wrong. I drove out in front of cars, I couldn't shift, everything fell apart (group laughter) and I thought, when I am by myself and I am doing my own thing, and people get off my back, I can do anything that I want to do.

Helene - The same thing that you did here.

Janet - You use yourself to make statements, and the danger in that is that you are self-destructive with those statements.

Nancy - I do, I do that all of the time and this is where I really need a lot of help. It is very interesting because here is where the group therapy and the personal stuff gets all mixed up together, and this doesn't bother me at all. I talked to my therapist about this and she said that this can be a reinforcing experience. So there is no conflict of any sort, but I have a recurring dream and it is the same goddamn dream all of the time. Of trying to do something, and there are a whole lot of people depending on me doing it, like last night I was making a cake and the kitchen was full of people, and the ingredients were all over the place. I couldn't get the goddamn cake together, and this--it is the same dream over and over again.

Helene - Som day I would like to explore with you who are all those significant others cause there are some incredible people, beyond stage fright, it is a performance kind of thing, and...

Nancy - They are all male ... I am not even sure of that.

Janet - No I am not ..

Nancy - I am not even sure of that, it is beginning to come together a little bit.

-The End-

