Chapter 5

Releasing the Realization: The Self Actualization Poets

Humanistic Psychology focuses on two ideas: the fundamental uniqueness of human beings, and the belief in the potential of individual creativity. The opening chapter of this study probed on the theories of psychologists starting with Abraham Maslow, who identified the self actualization need – the need for realizing one’s potentials to the fullest, whereby a person can accomplish what he is capable of, in terms of creativity. Realization of the self actualization need through literature, and further elaboration of the idea through the specifics of American literature, poetry and its two women writers were the thrust areas in the later chapters.

Studying American women poets in the light of Humanistic Psychology is a challenge. In the task to discover realization of self actualization in Adrienne Rich and Nikki Giovanni, three aspects highlighted in humanistic psychology stand out: interpersonal relationships, impact of history and presence of a personal goal of the highest order.

Women, in general, are relationship oriented. They highly value relationships and believe in friendships. The women poets have similar opinions and they rely strongly on other women for their own growth. Rich
relies on other women and embraces the bond of sisterhood. She has a lifelong, satisfying partnership with Michelle Cliff while she found her life with her husband unbearable and restricted. She believes in other women and their intimate relationships too. The interpersonal relationship between African American folks, especially among the women, is the source from where Giovanni constantly grabs her strength. She openly acknowledges her reliance on her grandmothers and her mother. She passes them on to her son single-handedly. She challenges all African American people to look into their own community for their courage, determination and strength. Both poets openly share what distorts their life, their anger at terrorists and those who distort peace and they highly value their own decisions and choices in life. They believe that they are better people all the more as they act according to their own dictates in their life. They urge other people to follow their own choices too. These women poets emerge as leaders in their own field as they try to transform the world they live in. Rich’s declaration of her homosexuality gave other women like her the courage to speak out. Her celebration of motherhood as a privilege takes away the burden from it and her life as a mother, a political activist and a poet becomes a model for others to follow. Her popularity remains even in her eighties. Giovanni’s bold decision of going against the African American revolutionaries and living their own life irritated them but it also made her a very popular poet among the young and the old alike. She is
always known for her truthfulness and her outspoken ways. She is heard by the people as she lives according to what her heart dictates. Her daring decision to be a single mother and her refusal to name the father of her son throw light on her individuality. Her rage against white oppression and African American male cruelties is evident through her poems. Her readers identify with her as she talks about ordinary events which she encounters and which her readers can empathize with. Thus both poets strive to make the world they live in a better place by their honest endeavors.

Humanistic psychology is rooted in history, grounded in concrete experience and continually attempts to guide one towards the integration of the whole person. Both poets considered here are American but they also have their different, historical backgrounds. They have diverse cultural backgrounds. But they have the same goal of attaining self actualization. Their goal is to emerge as successful, individual, women poets who can make a change in the society they live in. They strive for it and by examining their poetry and their lives, we understand that they finally emerge as self actualizers, maintaining their own separate entities but being independent, creative poets in America with a voice uniquely their own.

An analysis of Rich and Giovanni in the context of their lives and works prove them to be self actualizer poets. According to Maslowian theory, a person seeks for individual growth only when he sets a personal goal to achieve. This goal of self actualization, of the need of personal fulfillment
motivates him to seek change and grow according to what he sees fit. The need for personal fulfillment differs from person to person. Abraham Maslow states that this personal goal attains an apex point for a self actualizer.

According to the Maslowian need-hierarchy theory, a person ought to fulfill the lower needs to a certain level before he seeks the higher ideals. The social, economical and physical environment in America usually provides for the primary needs of most people. The physiological and safety needs too are satisfied for most people. Both the poets come from an atmosphere where the basic needs are fulfilled. Both have caring parents and the needed security to think of the higher needs in life.

The belongingness and love needs constitute the third hierarchical level. Her strict father who insisted on tradition and her stifling relationship with her husband makes her long for a sense of belongingness. This she finds only through her poems which she writes amidst her household chores. *CW* is published imitating the older poets. But as she longs for friendship and belongingness, she has the will and courage to change the course of her life. She starts writing poems in spite of her unending tasks and she revels in the outcome. She dives deep into herself and tries to find the source of her wreck. She emerges as a person who finds herself. *Snapshots* marks a sharp turn in her life and in the next volume, she fights vehemently against political injustice. *Leaflets, The Will to Change* and *DW* are volumes which highlight her political career. But even in the
course of revolution, she tries to satisfy her belonging needs and she finally realizes that she finds solace in the company of other women. She acknowledges her love life and begins her partnership with Michelle Cliff. She publishes *Twenty-One* in which she exalts lesbianism and the fulfillment it brings. For Rich, her intimate relationship with Michelle Cliff gives her the needed feeling of being loved and cherished. Now that her love and belonging needs are satisfied according to her wants, she is ready to explore the esteem needs, the next step in the Maslow’s theory.

Considering Nikki Giovanni, she begins her poetic career as a ‘Black’ revolutionary as is evident in her first published volumes of poetry, *BF*, *BT* and *BJ*. She strongly advocates the African American cause and is a fiery revolutionist initially. But eventually, she is dissatisfied with the African American revolutionaries and their way of being dominant and disregarding to the needs of their women. This makes her fight against both forms of oppression. She recognizes that her love needs will be fulfilled only if she gains strength from the women in her life. She declares that she is free to do whatever she wants to do and she proves this through her life experiences. She learns to be strong from her maternal grandmother and she openly acknowledges the fact. In *My House*, she defiantly states that it is her home and she will live in it the way she wants to live and will not be dictated by anybody else. Her bold decision is reinstated by the fact that she opts for single motherhood and she raises her son, Tommy, on her own.
She declares that she is bored with categories. She shuns all that keeps her within boundaries. Her love needs are satisfied with the relationships she has with her grandmother, mother and her son. Her love and affection for people of her own race also fulfills this specific need. She upholds the power of the African American people and celebrates her love and determination and this is evident in her poems.

As the third hierarchal level is fulfilled for both these poets, the esteem needs can be considered. Self respect and esteem from other people are the two ways of achieving this need. The former includes the desire for competence, confidence, personal strength, adequacy, achievement, independence and freedom. An individual needs to know that he or she is worthwhile of mastering tasks and challenges in life. Once that is known, the esteem need can be fulfilled. Esteem from others includes prestige, recognition, acceptance, attention, status, reputation and appreciation. Along with self esteem, esteem from others too can pave the way for self actualization. Both Rich and Giovanni can be hailed as women poets who are recognized by others and who possess high self esteem. They both know what they want from life and they go forth to do it irrespective of the obstacles in their life.

Rich ends her stifling marriage as she feels she ought to pursue her career and her love for other women. She emerges as a victorious, lesbian poet who believes in her convictions and lives her life to the fullest. She
fights for her rights in and through her poems. She yearns for a common language and she is proud of her country. But she deplores the injustice rampant in her country and tries to rectify it, in ways possible to her. She feels that she ought to seek her Jewish roots to enrich her self esteem. She declares her Jewish roots from which she had hitherto refrained because of her father’s upbringing. Her poem, “Sources” accepts her Jewish origins and she is proud of acknowledging it at last. Native Land, An Atlas and Dark Fields are volumes which deal with the different aspects of her country America. She is proud of her country but at the same time laments the disparities found there. She is heralded as a popular poet of her country.

Giovanni’s distinctive voice too is popular in America as she dares to go against established norms. Her awareness and her identity as an African American poet, is highlighted in all her poems. Through her poems, Giovanni keeps up the oral tradition of the African American poetry; she also revives the blues and the jazz tradition. Her self esteem remains intact throughout her poetic career. She believes in the strength of the African American community and she upholds this stand in all of her poetry. In WM and in Cotton Candy, she deals with different themes as she talks about the ephemeral things in life. She enjoys life to the fullest and all the while, she is thoughtful of the things which are necessary in life. In her volume Night Winds, she celebrates the courage of extraordinary African American men and women, hitherto unrecognized, who are leaders in their
own right. Her love for her fellow people is highlighted here. She insists in
upholding her esteem for her people and urges them to do so for each other,
thus enhancing the community feeling.

Her self esteem needs and her belonging needs overlap as she boldly
talks about love in Love Poems where she celebrates her love for her
people whose courage has taught her to persist even in adverse situations.
The poems herald her love for her people and her esteem for their fortitude
and fearlessness continues to be a motivating factor in her life. Blues is her
environmental work as she responds to the dire need of protecting the
balance of nature. She empathizes with the other living creatures of the
universe and feels strongly for their safety. She fiercely opposes human
beings, who in the name of construction and advancement uproot the
natural lives of countless living creatures. Giovanni is at her best when she
fulfills her need of being one with the environment. Her numerous poems
for children, written in a simple language, testify her love for them. Her
relationship with her grandparents and parents and her creative works for
the older folk speak volumes about her love for them. All these point to the
fact that she is truly an intergenerational poet who can relate to all people,
at all times.

As far as the two poets are concerned, their four levels in the need-
hierarchy theory are realized to such an extent that, inevitably, they aim for
the highest level of personal fulfillment of self actualization – the release
through creativity. During the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century, both the poets uphold their independent convictions while at the same time deplore the devastations caused by the heedless acts of terrorists and wrong-doers. In the midst of all the chaos at the turn of the century, both poets follow their different paths to find ways of fulfillment and they achieve to do so to a great extent.

Rich writes that she finds happiness in the little things of life. Public events disrupt private lives enormously as is explained in the *Ruins*. But Rich manages to live her own life, content with herself. Amid the political upheavals and unrest, people find happiness in their personal lives. Rich revels in writing poems even in her eighties and she urges her fellow women to do so too. Looking back at her life, Rich feels content that she has lived a full life, according to her own wishes and not at the dictates of other people. She realizes that she has made maximum use of her talents and capabilities. She is a self actualizing poet as she has been able to become the person that she is capable of becoming. Rich has emerged as a political activist, a white, lesbian, Jewish poet, capable of expressing herself. She gives her own views on motherhood and lesbianism and is a person famous in her own right as a woman poet. She blends her private life with her public life in a superb manner and she is known for her forthright views. She is a popular poet known to stand up for her
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convictions. And she can rightly be heralded as a self actualizing poet in her own right.

Through her poems down the years, Giovanni has proved herself as a popular poet, dearly loved by her readers. She is unique in her style of poetry as an oral poet who upholds and encourages the African American tradition. She shuns the disparities she finds in African Americans and shoulders her responsibility as a poet to point it out to them. She insists that her people ought to remember the courage and determination of her ancestors. In QBP, she gazes at the world during the beginning of the twenty-first century and meditates on humanity as a whole. She believes in her own strengths and abilities and hence can be called a self actualizing poet. Her success as an African American woman poet, a single mother, and an honest person who has a great deal to say to the children of her culture and to the older generation as well enhances her as a prominent self actualizer.

Both these poets, Rich and Giovanni, emerge as self actualizing people as they realize their own worth and set their lives apart in realizing their potential. Realization of their potentials enabled them to open new ways of living and thinking by way of which they reached out to their readers too through their poetry. Their readiness to grow and change their convictions for what they considered true is highly appreciable. Both these poets are recognized and rewarded for their true worth. Their numerous
awards for their creative works and their growing collection of poetry are proof indeed that they are accepted by their readers. These two poets strive on in their lives as self actualizing people.

There is evidence of many similarities in the characteristics of self actualization in the lives of both Rich and Giovanni. Both of them were brought up in homes where parents valued education and insisted on good education for their children. While Rich was home schooled and made to write poetry at a very early age, Giovanni was sent to school and then sent to live with her grandparents, who taught her to think independently and act differently. The first volumes of both poets were quite different from the volumes that they wrote later on in their lives. CW won Rich the Yale Younger Poets Award, which she wrote imitating the formal style of the older poets which she had read earlier. But Giovanni, who was instigated and encouraged by her grandmother to be an activist at a very young age, was a revolutionary to the core and she herself published the first volumes, BF, BT and BJ, which reflected her pride and her trust in her own self and in her culture.

Trained to be creative and independent, both Rich and Giovanni were on a search of identifying their true nature. Having married young and being a mother of three sons, Rich was soon frustrated with her busy, domestic life as she hardly found time to be creative. She had to find a way out, she wrote when she could find time in the midst of her domestic
chores and the result was a transforming volume of poems, *Snapshots*, where for the first time, she writes her own opinions, in her own style, defying traditional norms. This can be considered as her peak experience as she bursts into creativity as a release of her frustrated life in marriage and motherhood. The birth of the self actualizing poet is seen here. Her creativity, another characteristic of a self actualizer, is evident here as she experiments with her own style of writing poems.

Meanwhile, Giovanni tackles her African American community, encouraging them to stand up to fight for her rights. She also encourages her worth as a woman and she begins to exalt her Black female identity which is clear in *Re:Creation*. But she is dissatisfied with the behavior of the African American men as they did not treat their women properly. Giovanni is disgusted with this attitude of the men of her race and she openly lashes out against them, much to the anger of the male revolutionaries. She opts out from their tradition as she realizes that the revolutionaries too were chauvinists who fought or rebelled only according to their norms. *My House* clearly outlines her freedom to live by her own rules and decisions. She prefers the personal over the political ideologies. Her quest for her own identity has its beginning here. Her bold decision to depend on her decisions and live her own life can be considered as her peak experience. From here, she continues her journey towards the goal of self actualization. Her creativity bursts out in the later volumes of her poetry.
Both poets perceive reality in their unique ways and act differently. Rich explores the future by blending the personal and the political beliefs and has a growing feminist consciousness. Giovanni searches for her personal identity in her African American heritage and especially in the community of African American women. For her, relationships matter a lot. She remembers her mother and grandmother who influence her a lot and she also bonds with her son, Tommy. Without revealing who the father is, she opts for single parenthood. She relates with all people, irrespective of age and is loved by all, especially the African American folk. Her poems for children and the older Appalachian writers bear testimony to her involvement with them.

Rich and Giovanni are seen to be committed to the cause of women rights. Giovanni asks her women folk to fight against the atrocities by African American men and the whites also. She exalts women like Rosa Parks who created history by their individual act. For Giovanni, the ordinary acts of the daring individual are quite important and essential. Rich is considerate about social issues like war and racial injustice. She also decries the subjugation of women by men. The social interest of both the poets, such as kinship with fellow beings, empathizing with them and being angry at realities like war and segregation are characteristics of a self actualizer. In DW, Rich explores the wreck in the form of a diver and is angry at the suppression of women. Her overtly
feminist poems in this volume authorize her emergence as a radical feminist. *Leaflets* reflect the social conditions like the Vietnam War and social, political student unrest while *Cotton Candy* reflects the conflicts and disillusionment faced by every individual.

Both poets are committed to their task of uplifting the defenseless women and making them powerful by finding their own innate potentialities. *Night Winds* hail the daring night riders who travel, despite the lurking dangers of the night. Likewise, *DCL* affirms the power and place of women in history. This volume also signifies an important aspect of Rich’s life as she comes out as a lesbian and writes *Twenty-One*. Another aspect of her person is revealed and she declares once again the independence of women. In contrast, Giovanni’s *Love Poems* talk about the love and respect for other people and of the different kinds of love, between women, lovers, and friends and between generations. The social needs of both these poets are realized as they bond with other women and are extremely happy in their relationships.

On the personal front, Rich, living with her partner, Michelle Cliff, and Giovanni, living with her son, are content and happy in their present living conditions. They are living their life according to their choices and they dare to be different by being independent. Their social needs are fulfilled through the people in their lives. They also connect with other women in their respective communities.
The social interest of the poets about situations in and around their country and their community is evident in the creativity achieved through their poems. In *Native Land* and *An Atlas*, Rich writes about the disappointments in their country and the aftermath of war and terror. The blending of personal lyrics and political outrage, which is characteristic of Rich, is evident in these poems too. She is a proud citizen of her country but she decries the war and segregation that is prevalent in her country. She catalogues her country through images of survival, frustration and marginalization and she deplores the inequality it brings forth. Along with the public review of the situation of the country, Rich searches for her personal sources as well. She examines her Jewish heritage which she had hitherto denied at the instigation of her father. And she also extends women power to include all women, women of other nationalities too. Having identified herself as a Jewish American, lesbian woman poet, Rich is able to empathize with other women of different race, creed and sexual orientations. She finally confronts and finds peace with the two Jewish men in her life - her father and her husband. This enables her to increase her self esteem as well as the esteem of others, like and unlike her. This paves a definite way towards self actualization for the mature, independent poet as acceptance of other people is a definite characteristic of a self actualizer.
Giovanni too reveals the impact of other people in her life. She also refers to nature and its beings and cares for it too. In her environmental volume, *Blues*, her esteem and concern for the natural world is evident. She contrasts between development and destruction, exemplifying how development and construction of sites and buildings often disrupt and destruct the balanced, natural life of nature and its creatures. Her appreciation of nature makes her a self actualizer in her own right. She also remembers to honor the courageous deeds and sacrifices made by African American men and women, and relates to them easily. Her high esteem for their deeds is evident in her pride seen in her poems about African American love and strength.

In *QBP*, written in the twenty-first century, Giovanni realizes and writes of the true potential of her African American folk and of their contributions to America. She affirms that it is their love, strength and persistence that have enabled them to be victorious and to be strong survivors in spite of many disheartening situations and she applauds this attitude. Her pride in her people is evident in this recent collection of poems. But she does not elude the disgusting situations that terrorism and war bring upon unsuspecting, individual lives and she shuns such atrocities with vengeance. She conveys to her people the message of hope amid hopelessness, the hope for a better tomorrow. It is this hope that keeps the African American people going. The goal of reaching self
actualization is being materialized here. The hope amid hopelessness reminds one of Rich’s poem, “The School among the Ruins” where the same theme is mentioned. Both the poets strive and succeed in attaining self actualization. Giovanni believes that it is this hope that has sustained her ancestors, and she passes on this message to the younger generation through her poems.

Giovanni, a true self actualizer, who has utilized her capacities to the fullest extent, as of the present, is urging her fellow African Americans to be assertive in their potentials too. Thus, through the spontaneous and simple creativity of her poems, Giovanni emerges as a victorious self actualizer.

At the same time, Rich is seen as a patient and mature poet, unlike the young, angry poet of yesteryears. She continues to think of art as her power and she reveals her truthful feelings in her poems, as always. She celebrates women, as usual. She finally gathers the treasures from the wreck, salvaging language and its power from the reality of the present world in *Midnight Salvage*. She tries to measure happiness, for this is what she can give others. She wants others to be happy and content in their lives too. *Fox* represents the art of survival for her, which she finds in her poetry and in her creativity. She has acquired the patience to achieve happiness in and through her poetry. Looking back at her life, she feels that she has achieved this through her life and her poems. She is
compassionate and she teaches the younger generation to hope in spite of hopeless situations surrounding them. She conveys this in *Ruins*. She mourns the destruction caused by bomb threats and terrorism in her country. She confronts the dislocations found in contemporary America. She persuades her fellow citizens to be optimistic and not to give up hope. She conveys the message that hope amidst hopelessness is worth aspiring. She empathizes with the sufferers but lashes out against the initiators of terror. She continues to be a force to reckon with, a poet with a mission of helping others to identify themselves and their potentialities, as she herself does. Her poems themselves, even when she is over seventy years of age, are a living testimony to the highly esteemed, self actualized poet of today.

The persistence of triumph in adverse situations has been the hallmark of both Rich and Giovanni all through their lives. They succeed in releasing their beliefs in their works and this enables them to realize their self actualizing needs in their poetry. They are an inspiration to the people around them.

Rich succeeds in life handling public events over private experiences while Giovanni succeeds in doing just the opposite. Rich prefers to be a political poet and a person conscious of the rights of women and their needs. She finds fulfillment in being a feminist and a lesbian poet and she raises her voice against the injustice she encounters
in her society. Her self actualization lies in her need to be satisfied in claiming the needs of the people around her, specially the women.

Giovanni upholds the triumph of the individual over any public event. Her self actualization needs culminate in the ultimate happiness of the individual. This realization of her life goal is released in her poetry which appeals to all people, regardless of age or race. She believes in the power of the individual and highly values the choice of every individual. She treats every person with utmost respect.

Respecting individuals and their differences is very important for the poet. She respects their individual choices too. She is truthful and honest in her life decisions and this is evident in her poetry too. Realizing the importance of individuals and striving towards the goal of self actualization enables Giovanni to release in her poetry her convictions and her individual choices. She triumphs in being an honest poet and her readers admire her all the more for it.

Humanistic Psychology is relevant today as it helps a self actualizing person to be courageous and to believe in his own convictions and to live by them. It helps individuals to develop their potentials and render self actualization possible for the betterment of the society. Humanistic Psychology helps in handling the emotional problems of modern man and directs him towards a better knowledge of himself and those around him.
In the contemporary American society, the physiological and security needs of most people are met – the government and social help systems aid the needy people. But the social and esteem needs of the people are to be developed. The social need to associate with other people, to be recognized and accepted by others and the society they live in is to be filled. People need to love and to be loved all over the world and Americans are no exception. Living in one of the most prosperous countries in the world, Americans find themselves in a rat race in the materialistic world where they are so caught up in their daily activities that they hardly find time to fulfill their social and esteem needs. This leads to frustration and meaningless relationships. People lose their self esteem and respect for others as they do not believe in their own capabilities. People need to nourish their hunger for self fulfillment or self actualization. This can be achieved only by recognizing one’s own capabilities and living accordingly, doing what they are capable of doing and thus enhancing their social and esteem needs in relationship with other people in their own society.

This study has aimed at tracing the fulfillment of the self actualizing need of two prominent American women poets. They have recognized and released their capabilities in their creativity, and have triumphed in it. Their needs are fulfilled in their community of sisterhood and their esteem needs are fulfilled by acknowledging their own abilities and those
of others around them. Aspiring to be better equipped, these two women poets go forward in life to do better and emerge as victorious popular poets of America. Their relationships to those around them are meaningful and they have the ability to relate to all people regardless of age or race. Their intense ability to deal with the hurdles they have to face is worthy of appreciation.

The realization of the two women poets that they are capable and are self fulfilling individuals enables them to be at their creative best. Their poetry and other works highlight this important aspect of their lives. They release their capabilities in their creativity. The realization of their abilities abets their release in their creative works. This in turn, enhances their role as self actualizing poets in their society and in the world at large.

Both Rich and Giovanni deal with relevant issues related to race, gender and politics and give their strong opinions about it. Their poems deal with relevant issues all the time. They do not shun their responsibilities as leaders and as poets with respect to their society. As is evident from the respective studies of the poems of the two poets, we can see that they finally emerge as self actualizing poets. Their ultimate aim of self actualization and satisfaction is acquired and this is further emphasized by the analysis of their most recent poems.

Both the poets achieve a level of contentment in their lives as a result of living their lives according to their own wishes. Looking back at
their lives during the present times enable them to be satisfied and contented. They have fulfilled their self determined goal of being self actualized.

In an interview with Mathew Rothschild, Rich says:

I happen to think [poetry] makes a huge difference. Other people’s poetry has made a huge difference in my life. It has changed the way I saw the world. It has changed the way I felt about the world. It has changed the way I have understood another human being (The Progressive 7).

Rich believes that her poetry has changed her and through her, the society she lives in. Nothing matters except the way in which individual people conduct their lives. Rich is clear that being able to realize one’s goal in life enables one to live life meaningfully in accordance with it. She realizes her life goals and releases it in her poetry, thereby being a self actualized poet to the highest extent possible. This process is truly enriching for the poet.

Nikki Giovanni’s latest collection of poems explores the connection of the self and the community in which she lives. She honestly relates the choices her community has made and celebrates in their triumph. Her latest volume, On My Journey Now (2007) reinforces her belief in the choices made by the African American people. Through the
words of the spirituals, she celebrates the ultimate triumph of her people in their individual choices. Their ways of surviving hardships and emerging triumphant in spite of dire adversities compels the poet to celebrate their triumph through her poems. In a section called “Spiritual Today and Tomorrow” in the new volume, the poet speaks about her hope for the future of her people in the twenty first century:

As we are going into this new century, we must recognize it is time to embrace all of us. Whatever America is, America is the “new”. It is the possibility of embracing yourself and recreating yourself. (64)

Giovanni is glad of the fact that her people have survived in America depending on their own inner strength and acting upon their own individual choices.

The immense hope that the poet has in the power of her people provides the needed impetus for her to go on striving to attain fulfillment in her life. For Giovanni, the individual matters the most. To quote from her letter dated 24 February 2007: “The individual is and should be special in every life. All we have is our lives. There is no question that individuals sacrifice for a greater good but that, to me, cannot be a frivolous decision. … We are individuals who form a community. When things go well we advance the community while it nourishes us. Sometimes relations between the community and its needs suppress the
individual, then the individual must be chosen.” Giovanni acknowledges the importance of the individual as she has always done in her life. She is very clear about her choice and this underlies her self actualization goal. She is satisfied in writing honestly and she believes that she can continue the public dialogue. In her letter, she also authorizes the fact that she is a self actualizing poet.

Having analyzed the progression of the self actualization of the two women poets in America, the thesis provides the way for analyzing the self actualization of women poets in India and elsewhere. The social and ethnic backgrounds being entirely different between America and India, the process of self actualization for a woman poet in India can be entirely different. This exciting journey is unexplored and can be studied in future.

In conclusion, this study establishes that the two poets are self actualizing poets. Both of them were able ‘to realize’ – Rich and Nikki accept and acknowledge that their lives reach fulfillment by the attainment of the lofty goal of self actualization. Living their lives to the fullest as independent individuals even while enjoying the intimacy of their society, these two poets sought ‘to release’ – and our world is gifted with the sparkling gems of creativity from the self actualizing poets Adrienne Rich and Nikki Giovanni.