Becoming Whole:
The Process of Individuation for Women and Their Bodies

by
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Abstract

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This thesis utilizes hermeneutic methodology and a depth perspective to explore how women's connection with their bodies impacts their growth during the individuation process. Western culture is discussed in terms of its emphasis on rational thought and progress—the realm of Yang and Logos. Although the phenomenon of the dominating masculine principle has enabled rapid technological and scientific development, repercussions may exist as a result of the suppressed Yin and Eros energies. Such ramifications are examined in relevance to Jung's theory of individuation and the body. Separation from the body is researched through studies on objectification theory, dissociation, disordered eating, and cosmetic surgery. Alternatively, practices including yoga, Vipassana meditation, Watsu, Authentic Movement, and image-based bodywork are reviewed to illuminate the benefit of somatic connection. Results indicate that integrating the body, mind, and soul through conscious awareness can facilitate Western women's journey toward wholeness.

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Dedication

For Lena Loucks, my cherished feminist sister in life. As your soul continues to dance to its own rhythm, may you find solace in the Eros realm. You are my constant teacher, and I will always hold your spirit in my heart.

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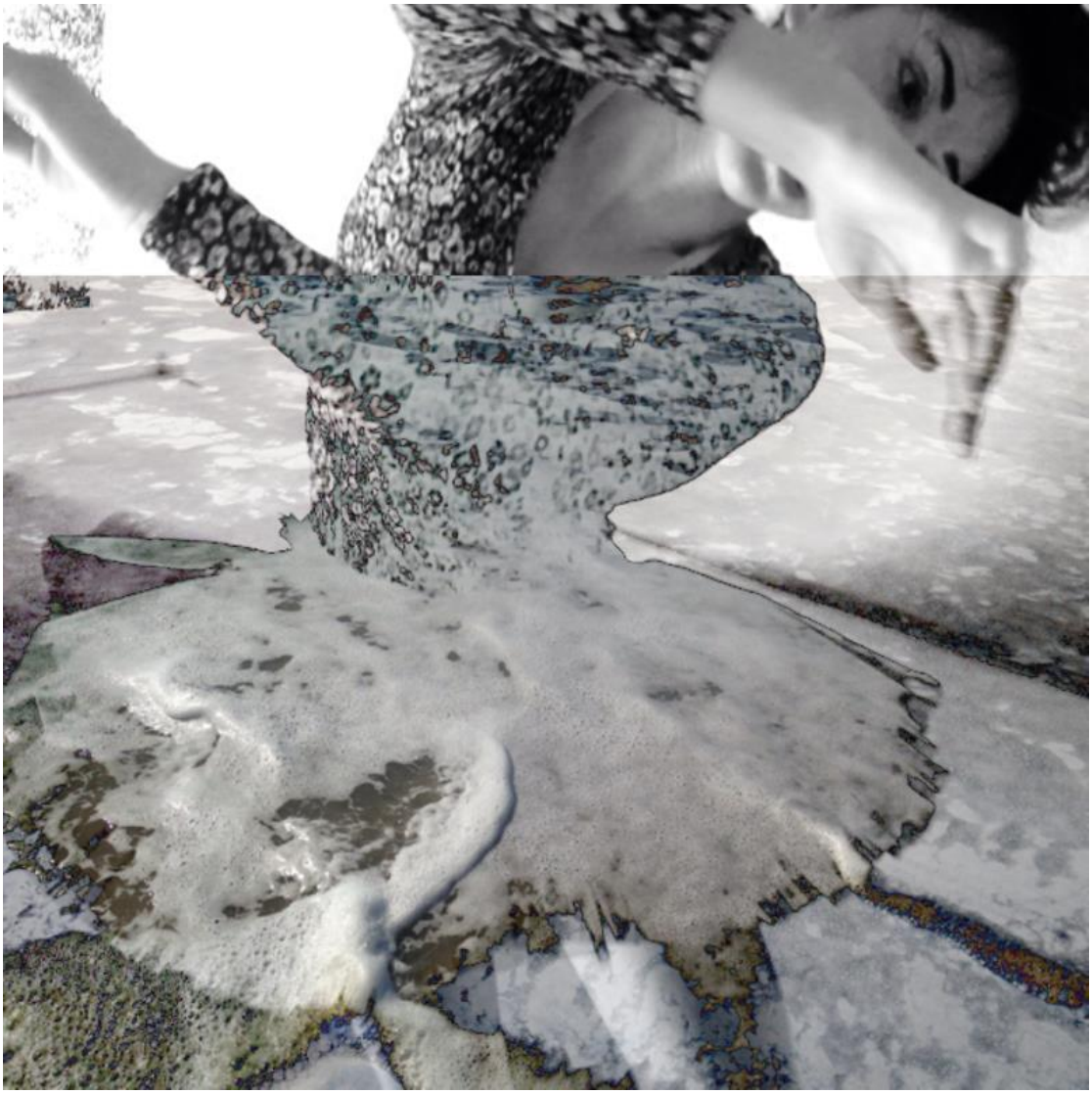

Figure 1. Bonnie Crotzer in Birdfall 1. Unpublished photograph by R. Bisio, 2014. Printed with permission.

Chapter I
Introduction

> Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the *questions themselves* like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.
>
> Rilke, 1929/1962, p. 35

Area of Interest

The body is the physical residence for an individual's lifetime of existence, just as the earth is the corporeal home for all living organisms. For decades there has been undeniable exploitation of the planet and its resources for the convenience of the rapidly growing human population. Paralleled, within Western culture there are rigid expectations for the body that are pursued through drastic measures, frequently guided by the pursuit of aesthetics. Relationship with matter, the tactile and visible, has become invasive and callous.

My interest in this topic ignited during my second year at Pacifica Graduate Institute. My journey of self-exploration led me into prolonged cravings for time in the feminine realm, a space of presence and fluid connection (Sullivan, 1994). I sought fulfillment by submerging myself underwater or wandering directionless, opening my senses to the surroundings. Although it felt introspective, this space fostered expanded experiences with others. The connection I had with my body in those moments was drastically unfamiliar. My usual judgmental and pejorative contact was in stark contrast

to this gentle coexistence. In this thesis, I thread my fascination with this feminine space into my research on Western women and their bodies. The work is grounded in depth psychology and examines the Jungian process of individuation as a symbol of psychological cohesiveness.

The terms *masculine* and *feminine* can be described as energies that are intrinsic in both men and women (Sullivan, 1994; Woodman, 1985). The masculine, referred to correspondently in this thesis as Yang or Logos, is associated with logic, advancement, and power (Sullivan, 1994). The feminine, which I use interchangeably with Yin and Eros, represents the concept of being and receiving. The Yin principle is in relationship with its surroundings, bringing playfulness, harmony, and nonjudgment to the environment. Western culture favors Yang energy, which enables technological advancement and independence. Although this has led to many advantages for society, it resulted in the suppression of Yin (Sullivan, 1994). This thesis examines how subdued feminine energy has impacted women in their relationships with their bodies, and in their journeys of individuation.

Individuation is the process of integrating unconscious material into consciousness to facilitate growth toward wholeness within the self (El Saffar, 1994; Jung, 1939/2014, 1946/2013; Stein, 1998, 2006; Woodman, 1985). Throughout this thesis I refer to psyche and soul to describe the greater self that contains collective archetypes and the unconscious. The body carries latent parts of the psyche that remain unrecognized unless pursued (Castillejo, 1973; Conger, 1994, 2005; Goldenberg, 1990; Woodman 1982, 1985, 1993). Culturally, there is a split between the self and the body, which is perpetuated by the masculine way of being (Castillejo, 1973; El Saffar, 1994;

Goldenberg, 1990; Sullivan, 1994; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993). The alienated body will react with symptoms (Castillejo, 1973; Goldenberg, 1990; Woodman 1982, 1985, 1993) that perpetuate masculine-oriented restraint.

In my own initial phase of processing unconscious material, I have become sensitive to the frequency with which women literally and metaphorically disparage their bodies. It seems indicative of this Logos-preferring culture that the tangible part of the self receives such strong projections. Complexes are formed unconsciously as a result of unsettling experiences (Stein, 1998). If complexes with the body remain unprocessed, how is individuation affected?

Guiding Purpose

The goal of this thesis is to provide a thorough exploration of women's relationships with their bodies within Western society, and the significance this has for their individuation processes. Because this culture fosters dualism between the psychological and the physical self (Birke, 1999; Castillejo, 1973; Conger, 2005; Goldenberg, 1990; Miranda, 2014; Woodman, 1982, 1985), I am curious about the effect this has on a woman's capacity to become whole. It is my hope that this thesis educates the reader about the body's role in the process of individuation.

Rationale

Western society places great value on physical appearance despite the psychological repercussions that ensue (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). There is a widespread phenomenon of attitudes and actions that result from dissatisfaction with the body (Calogero, Davis, & Thompson, 2005; Dingman, Otte, & Foster, 2012; Erchull, Liss, & Lichiello, 2013; Markey & Markey, 2009; Nelson & Muehlenkamp, 2012). There also

exist methods of cultivating a deeper relationship with the body (Bacon, 2012; Casey, 2005; Flower, 2009; Zeng, Oei, & Liu, 2013). It is critical to examine women's relationships with their physical selves in a culture that condones several polarized approaches to interacting with the body.

Within psychology, splitting from the body can take a number of adverse forms, ranging from body image issues (Calogero et al., 2005; Dingman et al., 2012; Impett, Daubenmier, & Hirschman, 2006; McKinley & Hyde, 1996) to dissociation (Casey, 2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Price & Thompson, 2007). It is likely that mental health professionals will encounter clients with problems related to the body throughout their careers. This thesis serves to expand awareness about the pertinence of the body within the context of individuation and healthy psychological growth. Jungian analyst and feminine theorist Marion Woodman (1982) wrote that the goal of therapy is to decrease the separation between the mind and body, thereby healing the fractured self; the body is a source of wisdom throughout this process. This thesis sheds light onto this theory.

Methodology

Hermeneutic methodology. Throughout this thesis, I use hermeneutic methodology, which is a style of research that involves collecting information from various sources and initiating discourse between the material in search for something new and creative, a more expansive meaning. Conversation is facilitated between theories using the existing research as the foundation for this process. This method "places concepts in dialogue with one another to look for deeper meaning through exploring their relationships to each other and involves the comparative study of various source materials" (Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2014, p. 51). Hermeneutic research is employed

in an attempt to gain accurate understanding of scholars' writings. Interpretations are manifested through the interaction between the writer and the concepts being researched (Moustakas, 1994). Critique of the source material is incorporated to illuminate questions and to connect the work to the research problem.

The hermeneutic approach is appropriate for this work because the subjects of individuation and of women and their bodies have been extensively researched. The work of various theorists is integrated to paint the background of the research question, using assessment to foster discussion. Being that the ideas and concepts of any given source are subject to inaccurate interpretation, hermeneutics is limited by the author's potentially biased point of view (Gadamer, 1988). This limitation is an ethical concern because my extractions are not entirely neutral. Although this thesis is specific to my perspective, I have endeavored to moderate my biases to the greatest extent possible.

Research problem and question. Individuation is a core concept in depth psychology. In Western culture, women's bodies are highly scrutinized and extensively researched. Combining these two areas of interest, I explore the impact that women's relationships with their bodies have on their individuation processes. My research question specifically asks how separation from the body negatively impacts women's individuation processes, and how, in turn, connection with the body may encourage growth and the journey toward wholeness.

Ethical Concerns

In addition to the concern mentioned above regarding biased interpretation of the material, further ethical considerations of this work are the abstractions made about women's connections with their bodies. Although processes of connection and separation

with the body are supported by academic research, the concepts discussed are not necessarily applicable to every woman. The relationship with the body is profoundly subjective and cannot possibly be addressed entirely in this thesis.

Overview of Thesis

Chapter II introduces research concerning women and their bodies and provides a description of individuation. This chapter specifically examines how separation and connection with the body impact women's well-being. Beginning with disconnect from the body, several studies are described depicting how women's observation of their bodies from an external perspective can lead to negative self-perceptions, dissociation, and destructive behaviors (Calogero et al., 2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Impett et al., 2006; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). These studies demonstrate that self-objectification is another result of this interaction with the body, which is associated with shame and dissatisfaction (Calogero et al., 2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Impett et al., 2006; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Studies on eating disorders and cosmetic surgery demonstrate the range of practices that are pursued to achieve beauty ideals (Calogero et al., 2005; Dingman et al., 2012; Markey & Markey, 2009; Thornton, Ryckman, & Gold, 2013). The chapter then presents studies that exemplify methods of actively connecting to the body through physical movement, breath, and conscious attention (Casey, 2005; Impett et al., 2006; Kinsaul, Curtin, Bazzini, & Martz, 2014; Price & Thompson, 2007; Thomas & Shaw, 2011). Lastly, individuation is defined from the perspective of founder of analytical psychology Carl Jung (1920/2014, 1928/1971; 1939/2014; 1946/2013, 1997) and Jungian analysts (Franz 1978/1980; Hannah, 1988; Sharp, 1991; Singer, 1994; Stein, 1998, 2006).

Chapter III discusses the body and its relevance to women and their individuation processes. Individuation is described in terms of the challenges that women face in Western culture (Castillejo, 1973; El Saffar, 1994; Wehr, 1987; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993). Two complexes in particular are expanded upon, that of seeking fulfillment through others, and that of the false self (El Saffar, 1994; Gilligan, 1993; Wehr, 1987; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993). The body, as the physical representation of the self, may receive projections (Birke, 1999) that are rooted in such complexes. The ignored body will express itself physically (Castillejo, 1973; Goldenberg, 1990; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993). The chapter then explores the repressed feminine and the impact that this has on the body and on the individuation process (Castillejo, 1973; El Saffar, 1994; Rowland, 2002; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993). Yin and Yang principles are examined as they appear in American culture and as methods of approaching the body (Castillejo, 1973; El Saffar, 1994; Sullivan, 1994; Wehr, 1987; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1993). The chapter concludes with clinical applications for attuning to the body and the potential that this connection has for achieving psychological growth and wholeness (Bacon, 2012; Conger, 1994, 2005; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993; Zeng et al., 2013). In Chapter IV, I summarize the findings from the previous chapters, address the clinical implications of the work, and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter II
Literature Review

> When an individual has been swept up into the world of symbolic mysteries, nothing comes of it, nothing can come from it, unless it has been associated with the earth, unless it has occurred when that individual was in the body. You see, if your soul is detachable, as in the primitive condition, you are simply hypnotized into a sort of somnambulistic state or trance, and whatever you experience in that condition is not felt because it has not been experienced in the body; you were not there when it happened. Only if you first return to the body, to your earth, can individuation take place, only then does the thing become true.
>
> Jung, 1997, pp. 1313-1314

Introduction

In the United States, the relationship with the body has taken an array of forms, from disconnection to profound reverence and curiosity. There are a number of disorders that are characterized by specific experiences with the body, such as somatic symptom disorder, illness anxiety disorder, anorexia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Additionally, there are practices of nurturing the body such as yoga, authentic dance, and meditation. Women especially face specific challenges in their relationships with their bodies (Erchull et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Kinsaul et al., 2014; McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Thornton et al., 2013). Some feminist perspectives claim that "the feminine body is constructed as an object" for observation and evaluation (McKinley & Hyde, 1996, p. 182). Western cultural values propagate the message of appearance being more important for women than their nonphysical attributes. As women internalize society's emphasis on physical attractiveness, they may experience a number of unfavorable results (Calogero et al.,

2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Markey & Markey, 2009). However, as women work toward decreasing the distance between psyche and body, well-being is promoted (Casey, 2005; Impett et al., 2006; Thomas & Shaw, 2011). This literature review explores the repercussions of women's connection and dissociation with their bodies, as well as offers insight into the individuation process.

Separation From the Body

Body surveillance and self-objectification. In America, women's bodies are sexualized in the media (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Across various ethnic groups and socioeconomic statuses, body image issues begin at young ages for some girls (DeLeel, Hughes, Miller, Hipwell & Theodore, 2009). One third of girls ages 9 and 10 desired to be thinner than their actual size, highlighting the propensity for young girls to develop body image dissatisfaction even before puberty (p. 773). These results were consistent for Caucasian and minority groups of girls. Research has found that both male and female children base their self-worth on their physical appearance above all other traits (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In general, society values women by their physical features rather than their life accomplishments (Dingman et al., 2012).

Physical ideals are marketed to women, creating specific norms for attractiveness (Thornton et al., 2013). Sexual objectification occurs when women are valued solely for their appearance, a phenomenon that separates women from their bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In anticipation of sexual objectification of their bodies, women can "become chronic self-monitors of their own physical appearance . . . thus to exert some control over how others treat them" (Calogero et al., 2005, p. 43). The exclusive focus on the sexual aspects of women's bodies can lead them to self-objectify, which means

engaging in surveillance of their own bodies, but from an outside perspective (Impett et al., 2006; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Women adopt external interpretations of their bodies, mirroring the objectification they receive from the culture (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This act is associated with body shame, low self-esteem (Impett et al., 2006), disordered eating (McKinley & Hyde, 1996), anxiety, depression, sexual dysfunction, and can interfere with peak experiences (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Additionally, self-objectification and body dissatisfaction are correlated with self-harming behaviors (Nelson & Muehlenkamp, 2012).

Dissociation and shame. As women self-objectify, they psychologically distance from their bodies (Calogero et al., 2005; Impett et al., 2006), thus increasing their susceptibility to "body shame, anxiety, negative attitudes toward menstruation, a disrupted flow of consciousness, diminished awareness of internal bodily states, depression, sexual dysfunction, and disordered eating" (Calogero et al., 2005, p. 43). Experts in objectification theory, Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts (1997) claimed that, in general, women are less attuned to their bodily experience than men. This may be a result of restricted eating or dieting and denying the body's cues to eat. Fredrickson and Roberts also theorized that the tendency to self-objectify causes a woman to evaluate her body based on its appearance rather than connecting to its internal states. This may decrease a woman's ability to notice inner sensations.

Specific behaviors may be adopted as a woman detaches from her body and self-objectifies (Calogero et al., 2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Nelson & Muehlenkamp, 2012). Dissociation is defined as the "avoidance of internal experience" (Price & Thompson, 2007, p. 946). This behavior is

observed in people who have experienced trauma and "involves a period of time in which thoughts, feelings, and experiences are not integrated into one's memory and everyday stream of consciousness" (Erchull et al., 2013, p. 585). This separation of the mind and body serves to protect the individual from feeling unwanted sensations, such as pain or trauma (Price & Thompson, 2007). Professors and feminism experts Mindy Erchull, Miriam Liss, and Stephanie Lichiello (2013) researched media internalization and found that because women who self-objectify have traits of dissociation, this phenomenon is found to be mildly traumatic. Individuals who experience this separation are more likely to become depressed. Erchull et al. discovered that self-objectifying women also may use self-harm as a means to alleviate the feelings of detachment.

Some women relate to their bodies by "[associating] body surveillance with self-love, health, and individual achievement" (McKinley & Hyde, 1996, p. 183). This altered relationship with the body can occur when beauty ideals "become integrated into one's self-perception" (Calogero et al., 2005, p. 47), which is also referred to as internalization. This means that an ideal body is assimilated into the individual's own perspective of how a body should look. It has become the norm for young women to internalize body standards that come from media images (Erchull et al., 2013).

The persistent comparison of the body to the ideal standard can lead to body dissatisfaction and shame (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Body shame is one of the results of self-objectification, occurring when there is discrepancy between the actual body and the ideal body (Calogero et al., 2005; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). It is associated with body-monitoring, eating disorders, self-harm, and depression (Erchull et al., 2013). Research indicates that women associate self-worth with their

ability to meet the cultural body image standards (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). This demonstrates reliance on perceived beauty for a "positive self-concept" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 179). Body dissatisfaction can result in shame, not only of the body, but also of oneself (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

In a study involving women suffering from chronic pain, expert in Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy® Amy Casey (2005) found that the participants experienced dissociation in the form of fragmentation, as if they could no longer access a part of themselves. This prevented them from feeling whole. Because their bodies were the source of the discomfort, the women rejected their bodies with shame and animosity. They felt unworthy as people because they perceived their bodies as having failed. This split from the self can lead to "[disconnection] from other people; from one's inner strength and knowing, as well as from a person's passion for living" (p. 33). Casey claimed that healing from this split involves returning to the traumatic experience to release the associated emotions. As mind-body specialists Cynthia Price and Elaine Thompson (2007) pointed out, dissociation decreases when connection to the body increases.

Eating disorders and cosmetic surgery. Internalization and self-objectification can often lead women to desire a slender body, increasing their risk for disordered eating as they strive for "attainment of unrealistic cultural body ideals" (Calogero et al., 2005, p. 48). In addition, body shame is known to be a precursor to disordered eating (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Rigid control of eating can develop in an effort to reclaim control over the objectified body (Calogero et al., 2005). It is also theorized that women's limited access to economic and career advances in society leads them to attempt to gain control over their lives through their relationship with their bodies (McKinley & Hyde,

1996). In two case studies, women exerted control over their bodies by engaging in dangerous activities as compensation for their feelings of powerlessness (Katz, 2010).

Eating disorder expert Dana Levitt (2004) identified the perception that women who are thin experience a number of benefits, including career opportunities, economic power, physical attractiveness, greater confidence, and attention. Although many assume that thinness is associated with happiness, women who engage in disordered eating to achieve slender bodies become increasingly reliant on external approval as their disordered patterns become more entrenched. As such, not being thin is recognized as "personal and social failure" (p. 111).

Women also pursue cosmetic surgery in order to mirror body image ideals (Markey & Markey, 2009; Thornton et al., 2013). According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) (2014), "more than 11 million cosmetic surgical and nonsurgical procedures were performed in the United States in 2013" ("Statistics, surveys & trends," para. 1). With 91% of cosmetic surgery patients being women (Thornton et al., 2013), liposuction and breast augmentation are the most common procedures in the country (ASAPS, 2014). In a survey conducted with American women, 50% declared that they imagine they will pursue a beauty-enhancing procedure at some point in their lives (Dingman, et al., 2012). There was a 90% increase in cosmetic surgery between 2000 and 2013 (Thornton et al., 2013), and the population seeking surgery is expanding across various ethnic and socioeconomic groups (Markey & Markey, 2009).

The portrayal of ideal body types in Western culture has ignited competition between women to embody traits that are considered highly desirable (Thornton et al., 2013). As a result, cosmetic surgery is increasingly accepted as a means for women to

obtain such beauty standards, as well as to "enhance their self-esteem and improve their social and career potential" (Thornton et al., 2013, p. 67). Advertisements and media images market the idea that transforming the body is a choice (Dingman et al., 2012). The physical body is now considered malleable as "cosmetic surgeons attempt to repair, reverse, or disguise the temporal embodiment of human existence" (p. 186). Psychology professors Charlotte Markey and Patrick Markey (2009) pointed out that although some research indicates that women who undergo surgery have improved body image, other studies highlight the ostensible risk that the rise of surgery may perpetuate negative body perceptions as appearance ideals become progressively intangible.

Research psychologists Bill Thornton, Richard Ryckman, and Joel Gold (2013) compared two categories of competitiveness and found that "hypercompetitiveness was positively related to cosmetic surgery acceptance, whereas personal development competitiveness was unrelated in this regard" (p. 70). These results indicate that hypercompetitive women are more likely to have an open attitude toward surgery in order to obtain features that are considered superior to other women. Individuals who are hypercompetitive also tend to have negative self-perceptions and a reduced ability to introspect. Thornton et al. emphasized that these traits may underlie hypercompetitive women's propensity for accepting surgery as a method of enhancing their appearance.

When marketing cosmetic surgery, body modifications become associated with happiness (Dingman et al., 2012). Parts of the body that do not meet societal ideals are considered inhibitors to satisfaction. Women seeking surgery may be attempting to ameliorate anxious feelings associated with aging. Markey and Markey's (2009) researched showed that those who internalize media images of ideal bodies and those

who were teased for their bodies are more likely to be dissatisfied with their appearance, thus increasing their likelihood of seeking cosmetic surgery.

Connection: Mind and Body

The mind and the body are deeply interconnected (Katz, 2010). Repressed emotions or experiences can reside in the body when the mind is not able to assimilate the feelings. There are cases in which the body expresses the unconscious material of the mind. In this separation within the self "the body . . . absorbs the damage of overwhelming affect and so preserves the mind's ability to function relatively comfortably, although often on a concrete level" (pp. 443-444).

There are various methods for augmenting connection with the divided self. Mindfulness is the experience of creating awareness of sensations and thoughts in the moment (Price & Thompson, 2007). The practice of Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy® incorporates humanistic and transpersonal psychology, focusing on healing the whole person—mind, body, and spirit (Casey, 2005). This work involves reframing unconscious and harmful beliefs that the individual has by using unconditional love and acceptance. Clients revisit the "rejected shadow part" (p. 28) of themselves, enabling them to "realize that they are not their body, mind, illness, or pain; rather, they are something bigger, more profound, and more complete than they currently experience" (p. 38).

Varying methods exist for relating to one's whole self. Experts in gender and sexuality Emily Impett, Jennifer Daubenmier, and Allegra Hirschman (2006) identified the practice of embodiment, which refers to awareness of the body and its feelings, as a method for relating wholly to the self. Yoga, a physical practice that encourages embodiment, is a ritual of connecting the mind to the body, using breath and awareness to

notice body sensations. Being that focus on appearance leads to negative consequences for women, Impett et al. (2006) studied women relating to their bodies through experience and movement as opposed to self-objectification. Women who engaged in a 2-month yoga immersion program reported decreased self-objectification and increased concern with their inner bodily feelings as opposed to their outward appearance. The results of the Impett et al. study demonstrated that yoga connects women to awareness of their bodily sensations through movement, which in turn augments their well-being. In another study by qualitative health researchers Roanne Thomas and Rhona Shaw (2011), women who had breast cancer and took a 6-week yoga program reported a greater connection between their minds and bodies. Rather than considering their bodies disease-ridden and incapacitated, these women noticed energy, movement, and health that was previously undetected.

Body image researchers Jessica Kinsaul, Lisa Curtin, Doris Bazzini, and Denise Martz (2014) studied feminism as an avenue that encourages appreciation of women for more than just their physical attributes. Feminism can be defined as an orientation that questions traditional gender roles. This theoretical perspective amplifies connection with the body on multiple dimensions. Because they challenge social norms, women with feminist values tend to have more positive perceptions of their bodies and fewer incidents of disordered eating. Specifically, "self-efficacy, defined as personal confidence to successfully engage in a specific behavior" (p. 64), as well as feminism and empowerment, are correlated with normal eating patterns and increased capacity to assimilate body image issues.

Individuation

Jung (1939/2014) defined individuation as becoming one's true self. It is "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'" (p. 275). The unconscious is a significant part of the self and is necessary to awaken in this journey. "Self-realization" (Jung, 1928/1971, p. 122) involves integrating the unconscious and the conscious ego into a unified whole, a journey that is both internal and in relationship with the surrounding world (Jung, 1946/2013).

Vitality, Jung (1920/2014) posited, is accessible only when shared values and personal autonomy is promoted. It is optimal for society to hold strong collective norms and values while also encouraging individual expression and freedom. Although the person must first comply with societal norms, such standards must ultimately be surpassed. Jung claimed that individuation is not possible within conventional guidelines because it involves separation from the collective and development of the distinctive self. This process can provide purpose and self-worth, a concept that can be affirming to those who feel they are incapable of meeting societal standards (Singer, 1994). For women who struggle with comparing their imperfect bodies to the culturally-constructed beauty ideal, individuation offers the journey of expanding the relationship with the self that transcends cultural norms.

Although individuation requires relationship and participation as opposed to isolation and inaction, it "is a process of *differentiation* . . . having for its goal the development of the individual personality" (Jung, 1920/2014, p. 448). Jung emphasized that as the person moves toward individuation, connection with others becomes more

substantial. Additionally, the ability to differentiate between external influences and the unique self is developed (Singer, 1994). It is a balance of exploring the self while also interacting with the societal collective. Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz (1978/1980) explained, “There exists no individuation process in any one individual that does not at the same time produce this relatedness to one’s fellowmen” (p. 177). By diving into one’s own journey, connection with others is generated.

Individuation is not guaranteed for every person; in fact, it is rare to achieve profound psychological unity (Stein, 1998). Jungian analyst Murray Stein (1998) noted that even those considered to have successful lives may be internally divided if their consciousness remains separated from the unconscious. Assimilating the unconscious means becoming familiar with its content. This is a lifelong journey that does not end, as there will always be unknown aspects of the self (Sharp, 1991). Instead, individuation is a process toward wholeness rather than an ultimate achievement; this is because unexamined psychic material is perpetually created in the unconscious (Stein, 1998).

Some religious influences focus on the perpetual attempt to achieve perfection as opposed to embracing all dark and light aspects of humankind (Hannah, 1988). Repressing the unfavorable parts of the self does not equate to perfection—ultimately, such parts are unavoidable. Stifling the less savory aspects of one’s self can lead to turmoil, as “nothing can be repressed forever; the longer anything is caged, the more savage it becomes” (p. 9). Pursuing a journey toward wholeness is not only more realistic, it also embraces the inherent polarities that exist in most beings.

Stein (2006) explained how in the early developmental years of life, parts of the psyche are separated from consciousness as a result of environmental interactions and

maturation. This allows the ego to form and adapt to its surroundings (Stein, 1998). The shadow, behaving in opposition to the persona, embodies unwanted traits. The persona refers to "the person-as-presented" (p. 111), or the display of oneself that is shared with others. Although completely disregarding the shadow allows the persona to continue to meet life admirably, it also prevents the individual from moving toward wholeness (Stein, 1998). When energy is vehemently placed into one particular area, the self becomes unbalanced as equilibrium is disrupted. Finding balance again requires examining the most unpleasant and avoided parts of the self (Hannah, 1988). Through processing and facing the shadow there is capacity for psychological growth (Singer, 1994).

In the later stages of individuation, the opposing forces within the psyche become less polarized as "one reaches back and picks up the lost or denied pieces and weaves them into the fabric of the whole" (Stein, 2006, p. 212). The shadow and the persona, as well as the masculine and feminine parts of the self, become increasingly cohesive. As this integration occurs, the person "becomes conscious of [his or her] complexes and projections and in this way develops into a spiritually and morally more integrated and more whole personality" (Franz, 1978/1980, p. 172). Thus, the contrasting parts of the self become increasingly united.

If one could fully individuate, there would be "the conscious realization and integration of all the possibilities contained within the individual" (Singer, 1994, p. 134). Even though individuation is never-ending, the process itself holds value. Although most individuals can function with an unexamined psyche, a far more expansive life is possible through focused work on the self. The genuine self can only emerge if the individual can

first identify it (Singer, 1994). This suggests that energy must be spent consciously working on one's self if the journey toward wholeness is to transpire.

Jung (1997) stated that "individuation is not achieved without the body, it is born out of the body" (p. 869). Enormous psychological effort is required to engage in the process of individuation, and the body is integral to the journey. In the following chapter, the role of dissociation versus connection with the body is further explored in relation to women's individuation processes. The research discussed in this literature review serves as the foundation for the theories and questions that are investigated in Chapter III.

Chapter III
Immersion:
Experiencing Yin and Yang During the Individuation Journey

> The true feminine is the receptacle of love. The true masculine is the spirit that goes into the eternal unknown in search of meaning. The great container, the Self, is paradoxically both male and female and contains both. If these are projected onto the outside world, transcendence ceases to exist. The Self—the inner wholeness—is petrified. Without the true masculine spirit and the true feminine love within, no inner life exists. If we try to make perfection outside, try to concretize our unconscious inner ideal, we kill our imagination. We are left holding life in our rigid molds. To be free is to break the stone images and allow life and love to flow.
>
> Woodman, 1982, pp. 188-189

Individuation for Women

Integrating the self can be a lifelong process that is convoluted and different for every person. There are not clear instructions for how to achieve psychic wholeness or how to dismantle one's exterior shell. Stein (2006) explained that "individuation is the capacity for wholeness and evolved consciousness" (p. 197), thus reshaping one's way of existing in the world. Integration occurs by "gradually abandoning the previous collective definitions of identity and persona and assuming an image of self that emerges from within" (p. 210). The work involved inevitably includes profound connection to one's inner being.

Demystifying the complexes. The implications of individuation are to know one's self, a process that can vary considerably between women and men (El Saffar, 1994; Gilligan, 1993; Wehr, 1987). Professor and Jungian analyst Demaris Wehr (1987) proposed that individuation is complicated by Western culture's preference for

patriarchy. This orientation can result in two identifiable complexes for women. The first is that women live for the sake of pleasing and serving others. Whereas "male agency and authority are constantly validated" (p. 100), women's gratification is often measured in terms of the care that they provide for others. In this sense, women are discouraged from pursuing self-fulfillment. The second complex is that a false self is developed as a protection mechanism. This shields the psyche from damaging experiences and subsequently depletes the ego of agency. Although individuation involves "annihilation of the ego," women's "socially prescribed masochism" (p. 102) may necessitate that women reinforce their egos rather than obliterate them. Women experience oppression that has been internalized and thus require a path toward individuation that perhaps advocates for the fictitious self to be destroyed, rather than the ego. Wehr stressed that this may be necessary in order for the real self to be born. Despite the trend of women occupying an expanded range of roles in Western culture, oppression lingers, though often unconsciously. Wehr indicated that if the consequences of living in this society include adopting a feigned self that has been blurred by patriarchal values, then individuation must involve shedding oneself of this façade.

Anima and animus. In addition to cultural impediments for women's individuation, masculine and feminine energies further complicate the process. Jung (1920/2014) described the anima as the inner opposing energy of man, and the animus as the inner opposing energy in a woman's psyche. Jung believed that the anima is feminine and the animus masculine. Jungian analyst and feminist writer Ruth El Saffar (1994) expanded upon this theory. She emphasized that whereas men may seek union with the anima within, women, in addition to gravitating toward integration with the animus, may

also seek connection with the feminine anima energy because in general, the feminine is stifled in patriarchal culture. Although Jung acknowledged the anima and animus as present in both in men and women, he did not take into account the severely skewed preference of Western culture toward the masculine (as cited in El Saffar, 1994). Hence, women will have an interaction with the animus that differs from men and their anima.

Individuation begins with separation from the mother, the being with which every person was once connected (Murdock, 1990). Jungian-oriented psychotherapist Maureen Murdock (1990) indicated that women face the challenge of being the same gender as the figure from which they must differentiate, and therefore do not endure the same process of separation from the mother as men do (Castillejo, 1973; Gilligan, 1993). Jungian analyst Irene de Castillejo (1973) wrote that because women do not require full separation from their origin, they are in closer contact with their souls. In this sense, the animus is not as necessary to women as the anima is to men.

El Saffar (1994) had a slightly different interpretation that described the masculine as vicious. As a result of society's patriarchal inclination, she wrote that the animus must be met as something that is broken.

> The problem is that in the way of a connection to the feminine divine in women is the negative animus that initially drives them into acts of self-injury and feelings of self-loathing. It attacks her embodiment, her desire, her intellect, her creativity. Thus the women who rebel against the norms prescribed by culture wind up being thrown into deeper layers of the psyche, and engaging in acts destructive to themselves. (p. 99)

In order to work through potentially harmful consequences, women must reach beyond the animus to seek integration of their unconscious. The masculine has been tainted by the culture's blind rejection of the feminine. This inevitably obscures the path of individuation. El Saffar (1994) discerned that because the first person most people see

and love is the mother, individuation might be a process of connecting with this maternal feminine archetype rather than the opposing animus.

The death of Inanna. In ancient Sumerian culture, poems and songs from marriage rituals describe the female body and sexuality from the woman's perspective (Meador, 2011). Inanna, Queen of Heaven, is a goddess from this society who "[combines] earth and sky, matter and spirit, vessel and light, earthly bounty and heavenly guidance" (Perera, 1985, p. 144), representing wholeness in her embodiment of opposites. Inanna symbolizes flexibility and transition over boundaries. Often women experience profound transformation when they descend into their own depths (Murdock, 1990). The myth of Inanna describes her journey into the underworld. After having her belongings and clothing taken from her, Inanna's sister, Ereshkigal, slays her and hangs her corpse to rot. The image of a naked, raw corpse decaying in the underworld depicts how devastating the descent can be. This period of challenge and excruciating pain can be recognized as part of the sacred journey of becoming whole.

Inanna represents fertility as she rules over the land and offers love to her shepherd husband. When she yearns for sex she expresses joy and praise to her body (Perera, 1985). The myth tells of how "when she leaned against the apple tree, her vulva was wondrous to behold. Rejoicing at her wondrous vulva, the young woman Inanna applauded herself" (Wolkstein & Kramer, 1983, p. 12). These words depict a different reaction toward the female body than is typically observed in current Western culture. The myth portrays a woman who has sexual desire and excitement with her body, void of shame or the longing to alter it in any way.

Inanna also engages in battle with rage and pride. She "craves and takes, desires and destroys, and then grieves and composes songs of grief" (Perera, 1985, p. 145). This goddess has a wide range of emotions that she expresses. Other ancient stories emphasize the development of women's bodies as beautiful and celebratory, using direct language as opposed to the euphemisms that are commonly encountered today (Meador, 2011). These classic myths describe audacious women who fully experience themselves, both in how they behave and how they are in their bodies. This is in stark contrast to current themes of body shame and restriction.

Inanna's goddess symbolism is abandoned in today's Western culture. Whereas Inanna was independent, erotic, passionate, determined, demanding, and powerful, contemporary women's roles have been more narrowly defined. Because women have been treated as subordinates and restricted in their choices, their expression of vitality has been restrained (Perera, 1985). The myth of Inanna implies acceptance of the body and its functions as opposed to repudiating specific parts of one's physical embodiment. Jungian analyst Sylvia Perera (1985) underscored how the repression of women and the natural diversity among their bodies can result in unhealthy expression of wild energy that can be destructive toward the self and others.

The Body's Role in Individuation

Woodman (1985) stated that the purpose of "the individuation process is the recognition of the Self, the regulating center of the psyche" (p. 27). This is achieved through ongoing interchange between the unconscious and conscious. The three stages of individuation are: first, to unite with the unconscious; second, to merge the psyche and the body; and lastly, to join with the outside world (Rowland, 2002). The middle stage of

unifying the soul and body is both ambiguous and extremely relevant. Professor and feminism scholar Susan Rowland (2002) wrote that in actuality, "the body is both a phenomenon with its own needs and indissolubly bonded to the psyche" (p. 35). Individuation is growth toward wholeness (El Saffar, 1994; Franz, 1978/1980; Hannah, 1988; Jung, 1939/2014; Stein, 1998, 2006) and joining the soul and body is part of this process (Rowland, 2002). The body cannot be ignored on the path toward individuation.

Rejection of the body. According to Woodman (1993), in previous centuries, women listened to the wisdom of their bodies. Woodman explained that women spent time honoring the unconscious and had rituals for their menstrual cycles. When linear perfection is pursued instead of the rhythm of life's varying phases, the body is not fully utilized. Woodman wrote that "life is a matter of incarnation—the soul is an entity we have to live with in the human body" (p. 18). There are repercussions when connection with the soul is missing; the abandoned body will be symptomatic, calling attention to the lost part of the self.

Professor of religious studies Naomi Goldenberg (1990) claimed that the body experiences profound complexity that is frequently left unattended. The body is considered a vessel in which the individual resides during a lifetime, but it does not direct the course of events of one's life. Although the body is frequently regarded as autonomous from the self, ignoring its manifestations renders it irrelevant. Goldenberg concluded that one such result of this alienation could be the suppression of feeling.

In Western culture people are encouraged to rely upon reason over instinct (Castillejo, 1973), which often leads to ignoring symptoms in the body that could be calling to a greater psychological need. The body continually delivers messages to the

mind if the person is able to notice them. Physical ailments are often a result of overwhelming or unknown psychological material (Castillejo, 1973). In its natural propensity for wholeness, the psyche will attempt to bring unexamined parts of itself into consciousness (Woodman, 1985). Just as the psyche communicates the unconscious through dreams, the body reveals itself through sensations (Woodman, 1982, 1985). The body seeks balance and "individuates along with the psyche and . . . attempts to preserve the totality" of the individual (Woodman, 1985, p. 131). These physical messages require recognition and attunement to amalgamate the self (Woodman, 1982).

Psychoanalyst John Conger (2005) believed that the shadow, the part of the self that is unconsciously rejected, is stored in the body. According to Conger, the body holds trapped energy that is not seen or readily accessible. If this is true, then the body, like the shadow, must be integrated throughout the course of individuation because "without the body, the wisdom of the larger self cannot be known" (p. 183). In Western culture there seems to be resistance to embracing the body in its free and natural state, which ultimately limits the maturity and growth of the individual along the individuation journey. Conger maintained that the youthful body, although lacking wisdom and self-knowledge, is idealized. Conversely, the aging or imperfect body that no longer qualifies as beautiful is disregarded. Stunted growth induces hollow existence; therefore, the abandoned body is a heavy weight for psychological maturation.

Woodman (1985) asserted that the soul resides in the body and "the body mirrors the soul" (p. 56). The soul is expressed through the instrument of the body while it is present in this world. Woodman contended that the psyche is not judgmental of the body in which it resides. Rejection of the body causes severe problems, and the soul attempts

to compensate through distorted expression, such as eating disorders and addiction. According to Woodman, reparation of this wound focuses on dissolving the blockage between the soul and body, developing the capacity to listen to the body's requests. The woman who lives with this split of the unconscious body walks with "the unbearable burden of her own body" (p. 57). The body becomes an encumbrance, causing problems that require solutions. Rather than experiencing harmony within the self, a battle of repudiation ensues.

Relationship with the mother. Woodman (1985) wrote that women who have a strong desire to escape from their lives often have similar underlying complexes. In these cases, the mother is unable to connect to her own body and cannot completely love the female body of her daughter. The child then becomes concerned with performing for others, attempting to live with her rejected body and her feelings of not being lovable. Genuine feelings are inaccessible because she is not permitted to listen to her intuition.

The girl mirrors her mother's relationship with her own body (Woodman, 1985). When this is one of disconnect, fulfillment is sought externally. The first complex is activated, building the illusion that wholeness is contingent upon the perception of others. The mother who is not synchronized with life's rhythms raises a child to be afraid of her natural instincts (Woodman, 1980). The fractured relationship with the mother disrupts the ability to be grounded in the body. Existence is predominantly in the mind and reliant on others (Woodman, 1982). The unloved body does not have a reliable sense of itself because it cannot trust its own wisdom. It becomes blocked in this state, causing the ego to mirror its rigidity (Woodman, 1985). Woodman (1985) cautioned that as long as the body's responses remain unconscious and one's inner experiences are unrecognized, the

individual is not capable of authentic expression. Healing must occur by severing the fused relationship between daughter and mother, and one must experience the true self, independently of others (Woodman, 1982). Once a woman is able to live for herself instead of another, this complex can be dispelled and individuation can begin.

Society's projections. The issue of the inauthentic self can be understood in the intricacy of Western society's associations with women and the body. There exists a portrayal of the body as ravenous and manipulative, as causing interference and entrapment for the individual (Bordo, 1993). Conversely, as feminist philosopher Susan Bordo (1993) highlighted, the absence of the carnal body represents light, superiority, and being closer to God. In general, Western culture favors lightness and happiness to the extent of avoiding the dark aspects of existence (Sullivan, 1994). Women, in their ability to give birth and become caregivers, are intimately bound to the body (Bordo, 1993; Goldenberg, 1990), with all of its life-giving but also unsavory characteristics. When the body is associated with shadow aspects of human existence, women also directly receive these negative projections (Bordo, 1993). Such connotations become unavoidable when women are described as a secondary sex to men (Pratt, 1985). When unexamined assumptions and projections are fueled, the false self is fabricated.

Body and soul. There is a tendency toward dominating and controlling the body, as demonstrated by the prevalence of body image standards, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgery. If an individual does not feel complete as is, then the search for wholeness is outside of the self (Woodman, 1993). This may involve changing the body as a means to achieve totality. Paradoxically, as modern archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1992) declared, the body "is not necessarily literal" (p. 137). People regularly

engage in activities with their bodies that imply meaning beyond the literal movement. Hillman argued that the body and soul lose their infinite potential when they are literalized. To reduce the body to a mechanic organism that exists for mere survival and aesthetics is to deny its connection to the soul. The tendency to cling to the literal obstructs connection to the self (Woodman, 1993). When this occurs, "the soul is left starving and the body is abandoned" (p. 16). The repair lies in the recognition of symbolic embodiment. Hillman (1992) explained,

> The moment we realize body also as a subtle body—a fantasy system of complexes, symptoms, tastes, influences and relations, zones of delight, pathologized images, trapped insights—then body and soul lose their borders, neither more literal or metaphorical than the other. (p. 174)

This perspective offers great respect for the body and its extensive significance. Such an interpretation renders destructive interactions with the body as negligent of its relevance to the course of individuation.

Rowland (2002) described the body, a corporeal entity, as being sought after as a means to ground postmodern theories. Despite its tangibility, it is subject to the same biased terms that are ascribed to other concepts within these theories. Although the body exists in the physical realm, the "understanding of it is subject to all those slippages of language and systems of ideas that pollute other apparently self-evident 'truths'" (p. 134). Just as the unconscious is unknowable in its entirety, so is the body. Hence, Jung considered the body to be metaphysical—the unresolved parts of the unconscious prevent the mind from clearly interpreting the body (as cited in Rowland, 2002).

In Jung's writing about the body and soul potentially being interconnected, he challenged the Western emphasis on dualism (as cited in Miranda, 2014). Jung (1954/2014) stated that because the body and soul are connected and share the same

existence, it is likely "that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing" (p. 215). The abstractions of body and soul are so intertwined that Jung could not clearly delineate the two. The psyche and body meet at what is referred to as the "zero-point" where the two entities "touch and do not touch" (p. 215). It is in this space that Woodman (1985) believed metaphor and the subtle body exist. This is where the soul's images can be translated into interpretive body expressions. Such presence with psyche necessitates dissolving the culturally enforced split between self and body.

The Repressed Feminine

Extroverted culture encourages measuring up to specific expectations and following certain trends. This drive to perform becomes an obsession with perfection (Woodman, 1993). This complex negates the ability to be connected to oneself, as solutions are sought externally. Woodman (1982) explained how embracing soul means to cherish it from within rather than attempt to mold it to a prescribed value system. Perfection is not human. It facilitates perpetual striving without presence or love—it means Logos absent of Eros. Pleasing the outside world becomes confused with fulfillment, and individuals are pulled away from themselves.

The persistent yearning to achieve body ideals leads people to be on a constant trajectory, missing all that is in the present moment. The rhythm of the earth and the surrounding life is lost (Woodman, 1993). Woodman (1993) explained that "the feminine side of our being is a much slower, less rational side, a part that moves in a much more spontaneous, natural, and receptive way, a part that accepts life as it is without judgment" (p. 23). The desire for perfection is a concept that splits the self and its surroundings, rendering unity impossible. Woodman observed that patriarchal culture assigns distinct

polarities with no capacity for integration. Reparation, according to Woodman (1980), is connection with the repressed feminine.

Rowland (2002) asserted that "repressing the feminine is a source of psychic and cultural sickness" (p. 44). This neglected principle surfaces in alternative ways, and currently there is a phenomenon of seeking connection with the feminine through eating disorders (Woodman, 1993). Eating is associated with the Mother Goddess and the nourishment she provides. Woodman (1993) discussed how in society's disordered relationship with this feminine archetype, the relationship with food also becomes disordered. The body and the spirit are misunderstood (Woodman, 1980). Woodman (1980) indicated that regimenting one's diet using force and discipline is a masculine strategy, whereas eating in ways that nurture one's inherent being is feminine. Approaching the body solely through Logos reduces existence to one that is quantifiable, whereas Eros expands curiosity to the body's greater potential.

Beginning in the 16th century, in order to survive in society, women in Western patriarchal culture "had to internalize a masculine image of the self that encouraged repudiation of the body, and all connection to the earth and the mother" (El Saffar, 1994, p. 14). As women incorporated the Logos perspective of themselves that was prescribed by the culture, their Eros energy was rejected as weak and incompetent. According to El Saffar (1994), this demonstrates the negative impact of the dominating Logos way of being, as it can split the individual from herself.

In the middle ages, the only alternatives to marriage for women were to become nuns or prostitutes, both of which involve separation from the body (El Saffar, 1994). When ideals for society are held rigidly in place by politics and religion, women can be

perceived as threatening and are therefore restricted. In order to meet cultural expectations, a woman "almost invariably had to sacrifice her connection to her body and her sexuality" (p. 28). El Saffar (1994) warned that if a woman is unable to access a positive self-conception, she will remain separated from herself and from the feminine.

Eros, or Yin energy, is necessary for the process of individuation, and if all aspects of the self are to be explored, one must become open to embracing this principle. Jungian analyst Barbara Stevens Sullivan (1994) explained that the Yin way of being involves feelings and intuition that originate from the body rather than the head. Yin is opaque and mysterious, rather than clear and defined. Sullivan noted that people are capable of experiencing infinite ways of being, both in the masculine and feminine realms. Neither the masculine nor the feminine is complete without the other; balance is only achieved through integration of the two energies.

The suppressed feminine is not only an issue for women, but affects men too. Eros does not belong to one gender; rather, it is present in both (Sullivan, 1994; Woodman, 1985). Sullivan (1994) explained that living in a Logos- or Yang-dominated world has created a disadvantage for individuals; without a strong Yin presence, it becomes difficult to move toward individuation. Sullivan stated that "human wholeness has been the most important victim of humanity's biases against the Feminine" (p. 16). According to Woodman (1985), Yin energy is in the background of the self, revealed only through the experience of darkness. Individuation, therefore, includes integrating this repressed Yin shadow into consciousness (Castillejo, 1973; Sullivan, 1994).

Yin and Yang Approaches to the Body

Yin and Yang. Sullivan (1994) clarified that Yang energy is the categorization of concepts and the separation of opposites. Conversely, Yin is the willingness not to know, the capacity to experience. It is a way of being in existence and immersion with the other, as opposed to performing an action toward another. Sullivan further explained that the Yin principle is representative of the greater whole, of reproduction, and of continuing life, without simply focusing on one specific part. This energy embodies curiosity, connection, and creativity, accessible through the deeper self and the unconscious. Movement is spontaneous without desire for results. New experiences are cultivated for the sake of being rather than comparison with others. According to Sullivan, Eros is human connection and relationships where boundaries are merged and existence is the primary purpose.

Alternatively, Logos is grounded in progress and direction. It "seeks objective analysis, linear and rational thought, causes and effects" (Sullivan, 1994, p. 18) in an attempt to conquer literal challenges and reach defined goals. Results are tangible, as demonstrated in countless historical accomplishments, ranging from technological advances to the development of societies. Sullivan wrote about how people and places outside of the self are seen as separate entities to be dominated or surpassed.

Yang can be referred to as the "power principle" (Woodman, 1993, p. 23) because it is rooted in "the desire to control" (p. 28). As Woodman (1993) pointed out, many people are gripped by this obsession, perpetuating the suppression of Yin. Masculinity is rooted in distinction, whereas femininity is grounded in relationship (Gilligan, 1993). Western culture encourages undeviating movement, progress, and accomplishment. This

disregards the earth's natural cyclical patterns, causing profound fear and resistance to aging and death (Woodman, 1985).

Ritual. Woodman (1985) identified that ritual guides life transitions, marking the end of one's previous role and the initiation to the next. This creates safety and meaning for one's life. Without the security of this containment, individuals are directly exposed to the whirlwind of change. Although this immediate contact can be perceived as powerful, Woodman explained that such an experience often produces anxiety. Transition that is absent of a clear direction can be equivocal and uncomfortable. Without the navigation that ritual offers, feelings of emptiness may be insinuated. Woodman claimed that unhealthy behaviors may be adopted in an attempt to fill this abyss. Western culture, devoid of ritual, is no longer able to contain or guide the psyche.

Ritual has previously served the purpose of guiding transformation of the individual, taking into consideration the individual's connection with others. Woodman (1985) explained that an internal and external journey takes place during ritual.

> By allowing oneself to drop into the unconsciousness of one's emotionally charged body, one can break through the present ego barriers into the transpersonal energy infusing the group. Thus one's relationship to oneself and to the world is restored, and life has meaning within a mythical framework. (p. 74)

This is part of the journey of individuation: one's connection with the self and the outside world begins to deepen (Franz, 1978/1980). Eros is intertwined with this process as demonstrated by the quality of relationships that can develop as a result of this work.

Body disconnection through Yang. One of the most detrimental and erroneous labels assigned to the Yin principle is that it is passive rather than active. Although the feminine is receptive, it is energetic and active, far from docile. Sullivan (1994)

highlighted that this state of being open is both complex and humbling. Yin dives into the experience and "swims around in it" (p. 23).

Society dismembers and categorizes the body, which is a result of the Yang perspective, one that is logical and involves analysis, compartmentalizing, and rigid organization (Sullivan, 1994). The perfectionist is separated from her body, and has taught "herself *to do*[;] simply *being* sounds like a euphemism for nothingness, or ceasing to exist. When the energy that has gone into trying to justify her existence is redirected into discovering herself and loving herself, intense insecurities surface" (Woodman, 1982, p. 84). Woodman (1982) stressed that these tendencies must be respected because they hold powerful emotions that can overwhelm the ego. For example, a woman may learn to attune herself to the needs of her surroundings rather than to her own psyche and what it needs (Woodman, 1985). When working with the complex of living for others, refocusing on oneself can seem foreign and disquieting.

Woodman (1993) explained that the feminine can only be accessed in the present moment, but it is terrifying for many people to consider abandoning the masculine ideals of structure and authority. Knowing feels safe, and not knowing can feel defenseless. There are obligations that prevent people from wandering, living in the moment, and authentically participating in relationships. According to Woodman, focus is on the destination with little trust in the journey. Trust in the body seems to be deficient as well. Many of the body's processes are experienced as an inconvenience. The body has imperfections. It produces unwanted hair, it ages and wrinkles, it fluctuates in weight, and it experiences pain. There are endless solutions for these natural bodily phenomena that are rooted in the Yang principle of fixing and dominating. The receptive body

endures these imposed solutions in order to conform to societal expectations. The body's voice is trampled, its pain masked, and its appearance modified.

The body is a medium "upon which culture writes itself" (Birke, 1999, p. 32). The body receives projections from society and the unindividuated person. Separation within the self can lead to rejection of specific traits that are then projected onto others (Woodman, 1993). Projections occur when one's repressed psychic material is identified in another, causing a strong reaction in the individual (Castillejo, 1973; Wehr, 1987). This can take the form of great concern or obsession with another's trait (Wehr, 1987), whether it is positive or negative. Therefore, projection can also occur through the endeavor to ameliorate the body's flaws, as if mending the physical will lead to fulfillment. Projections that are not yet brought into awareness reside in the individual's unconscious shadow material. (Castillejo, 1973). When positive perceptions of one's own body are inaccessible, they may manifest in the idealization of another's body. De Castillejo (1973) believed that if these unconscious projections can be recognized as part of the individual, this aspect of the self has the potential to become integrated.

Whereas God once held the projection of perfection, now perfection is projected onto people and items (Woodman, 1982). This becomes obsession, which is the complete and blind focus on one specific aspect, such as a part of the body. Obsession becomes locked and rigid, devoid of movement, capable of escalating into addiction. Woodman (1982) expressed that "to move toward perfection is to move out of life, or what is worse, never to enter it. Addiction to perfection . . . psychologically indicates enslavement by a complex" (p. 52). In such drastic scenarios in which parts of the body are severed, complexes can impede one's ability to function.

In contemporary American society the preoccupation with Logos perfection is dwarfing the importance of Eros connection (Castillejo, 1973). As result of treating the body as an entity to be disciplined and controlled, it "becomes a passive recipient of cultural practices, denied even the agency of experience" (Birke, 1999, p. 34). Differences are perceived as threatening, and dualism is constructed through the separation of the conscious and unconscious (El Saffar, 1994). As a result, the tangible part of the self is isolated from consciousness. As Woodman (1982) stated,

> Society tends to reject the conscious body, the natural container for the divine breath; what it celebrates instead is a flawless machine . . . our bodies have become so rigid and so plugged with unexpressed emotion that there is no room in them for creativity. (p. 87)

Society emphasizes acceptance of ideal, unyielding images, which result in rejection of the feminine. As Eros is repressed, progression toward individuation is arrested.

Body connection through Yin. Whereas Logos is concerned with separating various parts, the feminine seeks connection with the unconscious. The felt experience is through the body rather than through evaluating eyes. There is not a split between perception and feeling because "one feels one's shape from the inside out" (Sullivan, 1994, p. 22). Sullivan (1994) explained that Eros begins in the core of the body with sensations, whereas Logos originates in the head. Yin emerges from feeling and observing as opposed to interpreting or judging.

The body speaks many different languages (Estés, 1992). Ascribing judgment onto how a woman's body looks essentially separates her from her own identity. A woman learns to value herself based on her physical appearance rather than who she is. Jungian analyst, professor, and storyteller Clarissa Estés (1994) wrote,

> To confine the beauty and value of the body to anything less than this magnificence is to force the body to live without its rightful spirit, its rightful form, its right to exultation. To be thought ugly or unacceptable because one's beauty is outside the current fashion is deeply wounding to the natural joy that belongs to the wild nature. (p. 200)

The Yin way of relating to the body is through feeling and presence, rather than judgment or logic. To be in one's own skin and truly appreciate the natural imperfections of the body is to maintain curiosity rather than criticism. It is only within this boundary-less, peaceful existence that connection may be fostered.

Loving the body is necessary for bridging the gap between psyche and soma. For humans, vision is often the most relied-upon sense. It seems, due to reliance upon vision, material that can be seen becomes that which is most highly valued. Physical appearance becomes the most celebrated part of the self. Focus on appearance saps energy away from other aspects of a woman's life (Estés, 1992). Estés (1992) claimed that even though she may not be able to completely reverse the influences of culture, each woman can decide how she will interact with her body. A dialogue can be fostered as the ego asks the body what it needs, wants, feels, and experiences. This shifts the focus away from the body's physical appearance (Woodman, 1982). This is a feminine approach to the body.

I believe that soul embodies both Yin and Yang principles. Due to the nature of soul's intangible existence, however, I believe it is only accessible through Yin. It is not possible to bridge contact with the unconscious and wise psyche from the rational state of Yang. The soul communicates through images and metaphors, absent of definition or boundaries. Therefore, connection is possible through the receptive Yin approach of presence and openness. Being with the body in this way can also constellate expanded

connection. Through contact and interaction with Eros, both masculine and feminine energies can be experienced from the soul and within the body.

Embodiment and Individuation

The body communicates through feelings and somatic responses (Castillejo, 1973; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993). When these experiences are brought into awareness, the individual develops the ability to connect with the body's needs (Woodman, 1985). Energy can be consciously exerted through creativity and movement as opposed to being restrained, which could erupt into self-destructive habits. The body produces unconscious images in the same way that dreams do. These images become accessible if the person is open to seeing them (Woodman, 1993). This concept requires that the individual reorient from leading with the mind to leading with the body. "Embodied consciousness" (p. 114) refers to "consciousness in matter" (p. 114) through which the Yin spirit can be experienced in the body.

Becoming conscious of the body involves time and work (Woodman, 1985). Deep breaths must be sent into places where energy has been blocked, causing release into these unconscious spaces (Woodman, 1982, 1985). Figures from dreams can be imagined in specific parts of the body, amplifying the image's energy into that region (Woodman, 1985). Once the connection between psyche and the body has been introduced, the unconscious and stagnant areas of the body can be identified (Woodman, 1982). Over time, the body's defenses soften and integration of unconscious material becomes possible (Woodman, 1985).

Being present with the body is not a familiar practice in Western culture (Conger, 1994). By raising awareness of the body's energy and experience, a greater sense of self

can be achieved. Embodiment creates flow and contact through the various parts of the body, igniting connection and fostering wholeness. According to Conger (1994), embodiment is the process of absorption of inner and outer processes into oneself. It "means giving up illusion, grandiosity, and specialness for the sake of an honest, grounded reality, genuine contact, relatedness and pleasure in the basic experiences of life" (p. 198). The emphasis on the ego and on external values must be set aside to experience the embodied self. This demonstrates the disassembling of the two core complexes by abandoning the need for external approval and relinquishing the false self in order to sink into one's own being.

Individuation redirects focus from the ego to the whole self. This process can be juxtaposed to the Hindu concept of *chakras*, which are "key psychical centers of consciousness" (Conger, 2005, p. 186) that are represented in specific areas of the body. The first chakra, located at the coccyx, grounds the individual on the earth. The second chakra, found at the sacrum, is feminine and symbolizes water and the descent into the unconscious. Next is the fire chakra of emotions, residing at the navel. At the heart and lungs is the fourth chakra of air, the connection between internal and external. Here, in the fourth chakra, is where individuation begins through access to the greater self. Thoughts and feelings meet at the heart center. The fifth chakra resides in the throat and allows projections to be reclaimed. The third eye is in the forehead and is the seat of the sixth chakra of intuition. The seventh chakra, the crown, is the highest and holds the capacity for connection with the eternal divine and enlightenment. Chakras expose the individual to palpable areas of the body that, when attuned to, can be experienced as symbolically meaningful.

Clinical Applications: Practicing Body Connection

Introduction. According to Woodman (1982, 1993), connecting to one's body takes approximately 1 hour per day. At first, it may be terribly uncomfortable to be present and listen instead of seek action. Over time, through simply being, energy is released (Woodman, 1982) and the body that is truly heard becomes highly attuned and sensitive to its surrounding world (Woodman, 1993). This hour of connection can take various forms, ranging from meditation to dance.

Yoga. Yoga is a practice that connects self to body through feeling, breath, and movement. This practice has been studied as a means of increasing physical and psychological health in women (Impett et al., 2006; Thomas & Shaw, 2011). Certain styles of yoga are Eros-minded in their approaches to the body, fostering present-centered awareness and attention to one's inherent self. Because there is a tendency in Western culture to reside primarily in the Logos realm, yoga offers a compelling means of providing augmented well-being through its access to Eros.

Watsu. Watsu is a form of bodywork in which the client is floated in a pool of warm water physically supported by a Watsu practitioner (Flower, 2009). As the client is moved by the practitioner, eyes remain closed and ears are submerged in the water to facilitate an introverted consciousness. Not only do muscles and joints relax in the warmth and weightlessness of the water, but the mind also can enter a profoundly meditative state. The experience can mimic "a safe, womb-like environment" (p. 66) in which the body is gently held and stretched by the other person. Naturopathic doctor Gilligan Flower (2009) claimed that this practice has also been shown to decrease chronic

pain for clients. Watsu holds a relational component of being in contact with another, cultivating Yin presence.

Authentic Movement. Authentic Movement is also experienced with another person present to facilitate the process. Professor and practitioner Jane Bacon (2012) described Authentic Movement as experiencing oneself through body awareness. In the presence of a witness, one begins with closed eyes and focuses on the present moment, allowing judgment and inhibition to slip away. Movement and shape are directed from within and expressed through the body. Both the mover and the witness maintain attention to the sensations that occur. Some consider Authentic Movement to be a descent into the unconscious, a state that is not grounded in logic. In a culture that "operates under the unspoken premise of the rational thinker" (p. 116), people may have a spiritual longing for something that feels meaningful. The body can serve as a point of access into the spiritual sphere. Because individuation involves assimilation of the unconscious and conscious, Authentic Movement can be considered an avenue toward this process, as it merges the two realms. Connection with the subtle body or the "the somatic unconscious" (p. 121) can be pursued through this practice. An alternative from the familiar Logos ways of functioning, Authentic Movement enables unknown parts of the soul to emerge through this Eros state.

Meditation. Internal observation of the body is also pursued through meditation. Mindfulness researchers Xianglong Zeng, Tian Oei, and Xiangping Liu (2013) described Vipassana as a meditation practice that centers on breath and awareness. Through Vipassana, one can bring focus to the body, noticing prominent sensations in addition to less distinct feelings such as pulses. This insight illuminates the consistent changes of the

impermanent body. Strong emotions also have physical components that can be brought into awareness through meditation. This practice can augment one's ability to recognize and dissipate impulsive emotional reactions, such as anger. Additionally, "focusing attention on bodily sensations with a nonjudgmental attitude" (p. 1696) can counteract perpetual negative thoughts. Criticism can be replaced with acceptance.

BodySoul workshops. Woodman (1982) also held workshops with the intention of integrating psyche and body through the slowing of breath and experiencing of the body. Although she has since retired, Woodman's workshops continue internationally. The BodySoul Programs incorporate "dreams, movement, voice, masks, creative expression and ritual" (Marion Woodman Foundation, 2014, "BodySoul programs," para. 1) to create a space for healing, transformation, and greater knowledge of oneself.

Psychotherapy. The repressed feminine has been a poignant subject thus far because its absence hinders the process of creating psychic wholeness. Ultimately, both the masculine and feminine are crucial components of the individuation journey. Images from alchemy are highly symbolic of the union of opposites. In a series of alchemical images, Sullivan (1994) explained how a king and queen meet naked at a pool of water, symbolizing their uniting and eventual reemergence as one. The masculine and feminine are joined in wholeness, an abstraction that occurs within the psyche.

The practice of psychotherapy can also demonstrate the merging of opposites. The alchemical tradition of experimentation resembles this process (Fontelieu, 2003). Jungian-oriented psychotherapist Sukey Fontelieu (2003) explained that in alchemy, there is a glass receptacle that holds the psychic material, called the retort. This physical and metaphorical space is where the therapeutic work occurs. The room is contained and

offers a confidential space. The metaphorical alchemical container is made of transparent glass so that the precipitation that beings to develop as psychotherapy unfolds can be seen to determine whether more or less heat is required. These beads of water are the emotions and reactions that the client has, which the observant therapist reads to adjust the intensity of the interventions. The matter added to the vessel is the *prima materia*, the core issues with which the client struggles. *Solutio* is the melting of the solid material into a liquid, rendering it capable of change. The therapist must create a dynamic that enables the softening of the exterior persona. Fontelieu described how through the therapeutic and alchemical process, the client's rigid defenses dissipate into a malleable state in which transformation becomes accessible.

In this sense, therapy can embody both masculine and feminine energies. The concept of being with something until it mollifies into a different form is a feminine act. The masculine component of this process is the vessel and boundary of the therapist's retort. Being with another person in a space in which Eros and Logos meet cultivates a safe container. It is from this space that the process of individuation can begin.

Conclusion. Western culture's denial of Yin energy makes it essential for women to pursue a connection with feminine energy in order to individuate (El Saffar, 1994). Rather than searching for the unconscious connection with the animus, women may be seeking "the lost feminine" (p. 27). The individuation journey is incomplete without a conscious connection to the feminine. Although several Yin styles of enhancing the relationship with the body have been described, this can manifest through an inexhaustible number of forms. The consistent thread is the willingness and capacity to

become aware of one's internal self through the language of the body. Evaluation, force, and distraction must retreat into the background for this to occur.

Part of the discomfort in connecting to the Yin state is the ineffable experience of not having boundaries or direction. Because Western culture operates and interacts heavily within the Yang realm, this contrasting feminine space can feel exposed or unproductive. Woodman (1985) believed that through experiences of remaining vulnerable, one can find strength in conjunction with complexes. It is in being with this discomfort, through feminine energetic experiences, that individuation can occur. Being with the body exclusively through Yang interactions diminishes attunement. Yin presence offers a relationship with the body—a key component to psychic wholeness—that ventures beyond aesthetic ideals, judgment, and rigidity. Individuation is feasible when access to the unknown self becomes possible.

Chapter IV
Summary and Conclusions

> It's hard to see the beauty because beauty is so defined and this body is so flawed. Yet I feel overwhelmed with sadness for this poor, sweet body. This soft, authentic, vulnerable, unloved, orphaned body. This part of me is horrified by the repudiation that could ever exist against such an innocent being that is so starved for connection.
>
> Author's Personal Journal, September 3, 2014

Summary

This thesis examined the relevance of the body in the individuation process. I focused on women's individuation, specifically and how connection with, as opposed to separation from, the body is essential to this process. There is prolific writing on individuation, and many women grapple with distorted relationships with their bodies. The inquiry revolved around how women's individuation is impacted by their interactions with their bodies. Using hermeneutic methodology, I journeyed into the existing literature in an attempt to explore this question.

Chapter II presented research on the myriad of interactions that women have with their bodies in Western culture. The literature review began with studies on body separation, with descriptions of the impact that sexual objectification has for women (Calogero et al., 2005; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Impett et al., 2006; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). It was found that an array of adverse reactions, such as dissociation and body shame, can result from disconnection with the body (Calogero et al., 2005; Erchull et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Research on eating

disorders (Calogero et al., 2005; Levitt, 2004) and surgical alterations (ASAPS, 2014; Dingman, et al., 2012; Markey & Markey, 2009; Thornton et al., 2013) were discussed, demonstrating current trends in women's relationships with their bodies. The chapter continued by examining the connection with the body through yoga, mindfulness, and deviation from societal norms (Casey, 2005; Impett et al., 2006; Kinsaul et al., 2014; Price & Thompson, 2007). The final section in Chapter II introduced the concept of individuation and the psychic integration required to embark on this journey (Franz 1978/1980; Hannah, 1988; Jung 1920/2014, 1928/1971, 1939/2014, 1946/2013, 1997; Stein, 1998, 2006).

Chapter III introduced theories on individuation and Western cultural influences in relation with the body. The research revealed that individuation is unique for women (El Saffar, 1994; Gilligan, 1993; Wehr, 1987), and certain complexes can emerge in response to societal oppression of the feminine (El Saffar, 1994; Gilligan, 1993; Wehr, 1987; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993). These modern afflictions were juxtaposed to ancient cultures that did not repress the feminine, but instead revered Eros (Meador, 2011; Perera, 1985). This chapter included a discussion on the importance of incorporating the body in the individuation process and looked at how symptoms can arise when the body is disregarded or ignored (Castillejo, 1973; Goldenberg, 1990; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993). The research indicated that current interactions with the body that are commonplace in present-day American culture may be associated with the repression of the Yin principle (Castillejo, 1973; El Saffar, 1994; Murdock, 1990; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993). Yin and Yang energies were explored within their cultural context and in interaction with the body (Castillejo, 1973; Sullivan, 1994; Wehr,

1987; Woodman, 1980, 1982, 1993). In the final section of this chapter, Yin approaches to the body were provided as examples of practices that foster body awareness and acceptance, leading to integration within the self (Bacon, 2012; Conger, 1994, 2005; Woodman, 1982, 1985, 1993; Zeng et al., 2013).

Clinical Implications

This work contributes to the field of counseling psychology by augmenting the understanding of the role of the body within the context of individuation, specifically in relation to women. Individuation involves "work[ing] . . . through different levels of consciousness until the body, soul and spirit resonate together" (Woodman, 1985, p. 26), culminating in an integrated and whole self. The body is an inherent part of the self. In a period of time in which the body is often treated as inferior to the mind, it is crucial to shed light on the body's importance in maintaining psychological well-being and increasing psychic growth.

The research reviewed in this thesis exposes examples of psychological separation from the body and the repercussions that may transpire as a result of denying the body's natural state and innate intuition. As a remedy to heal this rupture between mind and body, I have provided various modalities of connecting to the body that offer an expanded awareness of the self, which in turn can amplify the capacity for a woman's individuation process. Awareness of these body-based practices can support psychotherapists in having a broader understanding of the role the body plays in maintaining psychological health. In addition, psychotherapists, when indicated within their scope of practice, can incorporate such techniques into their therapeutic work with individuals who present with body-related issues. When these body-based practices fall

outside of psychotherapists' scope of practice, having knowledge around these alternative treatment modalities will allow for appropriate referrals. Overall, this work highlights the importance of acknowledging the body as a vital piece of one's integrated self.

Further Research

This thesis discussed a range of substantial topics that can be pursued in much greater depth. For example, other types of relationships with the body could be explored, such as trauma in the body, addiction, or extreme athleticism. In general, the role of the body and its importance in psychological integration could be investigated through more specific and identifiable stages of individuation, or through other depth psychological concepts such as the shadow, persona, anima and animus.

Additionally, future research could be oriented around men and their relationships with their bodies. This thesis underscored how the repressed feminine is detrimental for women's relationships with their bodies. However, at some level, this repression undoubtedly affects men as well. An important question to explore would be: What is the impact on men of Western culture's bias toward the masculine?

Conclusions

I arrived at this topic through my own hunger for contact with the feminine realm. This led me on a journey of grief for the experiences and parts of myself from which I have been disconnected. Murdock (1990) wrote about how repression of the feminine results in disconnection from one's self and the anger that surfaces as a result of this atrocity may evolve into grief. Through my grieving, previously unconscious complexes surfaced that were woven with Logos threads, many of them involving my body. I have now been able to build pathways of connection that are embedded in Eros, a practice that

is new and unfamiliar to me. The process of writing this thesis has been transformative for my own growth process, and has fed my yearning to paint the picture of a harmful phenomenon that I have observed and felt in society.

The repressed feminine is a detrimental cultural complex that every soul must navigate. Within the cultural values of measurable improvement and the explicit notion that advancement is superior, the feminine principle is inevitably stifled and inhibited. Instead of existing with the masculine in a balanced interplay of Yin and Yang, the feminine is reduced to an esoteric realm that must be sought through specific practices such as Authentic Movement or meditation. Awarding unquestionable and absolute power to Yang energy can cause connection within the self to be limited. This overidentification with the masculine realm can be destructive to many aspects of the self, including the body. If this issue is left unaddressed, the rigidity manifested in the self as a result of focusing solely on Logos can cause resistance against movement toward wholeness and individuation. Consideration of the repressed feminine has direct implications for the field of depth psychology and for psychotherapists and their clients, being that body issues are inextricably bound to psychological health. Through the amplification of experiences in the realm of Eros and by opening oneself to alternative ways of perceiving and interacting with the body, parts of the psyche may become more available for integration.

Appendix

Never Let Me Go
by Florence and the Machine

Looking up from underneath
Fractured moonlight on the sea
Reflections still look the same to me
As before I went under

And it's peaceful in the deep
Cathedral where you can not breathe
No need to pray, no need to speak
Now I am under

And it's breaking over me
A thousand miles down to the sea bed
I found the place to rest my head
Never let me go . . .

And it's over
And I'm going under
But I'm not giving up
I'm just giving in

And the arms of the ocean are carrying me
All this devotion was rushing out of me . . .
The arms of the ocean delivered me
Never let me go

Welch, Epworth, & Harpoon, 2012, track 4
(Printed with permission)

Figure 2. *Bonnie Crotzer in Birdfall 2*. Unpublished photograph by R. Bisio, 2014. Printed with permission.

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